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1 Policy Statement

Effective recruitment and selection procedures are vital in attracting and retaining high quality research staff.

For recruitment and selection procedures to be effective it is essential that they are fair, rigorous and transparent. It is the Policy of University College Dublin to ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected. All decisions relating to recruitment and selection must be consistent with the criteria outlined for the post.

Commitment to this principle of appointment on merit reflects the University's Policy on Equal Opportunities (<http://www.ucd.ie/hr/policies>).

2 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies only to the recruitment and selection of Research Funded staff. These procedures should be consulted by all members of staff involved in any aspect of the recruitment and selection process of Research Funded staff. Advice and assistance can be obtained from UCD HR (Recruitment).

By order of the Governing Authority, no College, School or Unit will be entitled to seek derogation on grounds of claimed special circumstance from these procedures.

3 Establishing a Post

The recruitment and selection process is initiated once a vacant post is identified. This can be either:

- Creating a new position or
- Backfilling a vacant existing position

The first task is to clarify exactly what the post holder will do, and then prepare a job description. If it is an existing position, consider whether the job has changed, and whether the job description needs to be changed to accurately reflect what the person in the post will now be required to do.

4 Job Description

The job description is a clear description of exactly what is required of the position and will enable the University to select the most suitable candidate for the post.

4.1 Drafting the Job Description

Under the Research Careers Framework project standard [job descriptions](#) have been developed and agreed for the following positions:

- UCD Post Doctoral Research Fellow Level I
- UCD Post Doctoral Research Fellow Level II
- UCD Research Fellow

These contain set criteria which have been developed and must be included in the job description. There is also the ability to include further competencies which are deemed necessary and relevant to post.

For other Research posts please use the standard Non-Research Careers Job Description template.

5 Contract Management Policy

For details on the UCD Employment Contract Management Policy – Post-Doctoral Research Staff for both Science Engineering and Technology Colleges (SET) and Colleges under the Humanities and Social Sciences areas (HSS). Please go to <http://www.ucd.ie/hr/policies/> to choose the correct policy for your College.

6 Skilled Resource Pool

This pertains to research staff in UCD that have been issued with Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CID) and who must continue to be paid from and occupied on externally funded research work. For further details on the UCD Skilled Resource Pool Policy – Externally Funded Research staff with Contracts of Indefinite Duration please go to <http://www.ucd.ie/hr/policies/>.

6.1 Checking the Pool

Prior to requesting to fill a vacancy it is the responsibility of the PI to check to see if there is anyone from the Skilled Resource Pool who could fill the vacancy. An employee who holds a contract of indefinite duration should register themselves in the Skilled Resource Pool when their assignment ends. While a researcher is in the Skilled Resource Pool they remain the responsibility of the PI who was managing the researcher at the time the CID was issued.

7 Authorisation of a Post

All posts must be authorised before being submitted to UCD HR (Recruitment). The Principal Investigator should fully complete a [Research Authorisation Form \(RAF\)](#) appropriate to their College.

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The Research Authorisation Form requires the following approvals (signatures):-

1. Principal Investigator
2. Head of School/Unit
3. College Principal/College Officer/Vice-President
4. Vice President for Research and Innovation (for Research Fellow level only)

The Head of School and the College Principal/Vice President will confirm that the Skilled Resource Pool and the Contract Management Guidelines have been adhered to before authorising the post.

Additional authorisation is required from the Research Finance Office however this will be obtained after the Recruitment process has been completed and before the contract is issued.

8 Recruitment Advertising

Under the Research Careers Framework it was agreed that all Research Funded positions must be advertised to ensure openness and transparency. Please refer to the table below.

Type of Post	Advertise	Exceptions	Notes
New Grant/Funding PDI	Yes	Yes	Exceptions: 1. If the funding has been awarded on the basis of a named individual then a contract can be offered without advertising the post (e.g. Marie Curie IRCSET INSPIRE awards to specific researchers).*
New Grant/Funding PDII	Yes	Yes	Exceptions: If the funding has been awarded on the basis of a named individual then a contract can be offered without advertising the post (e.g. Marie Curie IRCSET INSPIRE awards to specific researchers).*
Additional Funding to an existing project PDI or PDII	Yes	Yes	Exceptions: 1.If the funding has been awarded on the basis of a named individual then a contract can be offered without advertising the post (e.g. Marie Curie IRCSET INSPIRE awards to specific researchers).* 2. If the additional funding is for less than 2 years and will enable the incumbent to complete their current level, a further contract may be offered without advertising to enable completion of the level (PDI or PDII)
Short Term Post i.e. Maternity leave, Leave of Absence	Yes	No	Could be advertised and filled internally from the Skilled Resource Pool or by a PDI or PDII coming to the end of their current contract

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Type of Post	Advertise	Exceptions	Notes
New Grant/Funding Research Fellow	No	Yes	<p>This does not need to be advertised if this is prestigious independent funding awarded to an individual following a competitive peer reviewed process</p> <p>Exception: If it is decided that a particular programme of work on a large, complex research project requires a Research Fellow level appointment to lead that work. In this case the Research Fellow may not be in receipt of their own funding, and would work under the direction of the PI/Grant holder, This must be approved by the Head of School, College Vice Principal for Research and Innovation and College Principal and advertised. In addition, the interview panel must also include one of these approvers and a delegate of one of the others.</p>
Additional Funding to an existing project for Research Fellow	No	No	<p>Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If this is prestigious independent funding awarded to an individual following a competitive peer reviewed process 2. Incumbent originally had a specified purpose contract and original funding did not enable completion of the project. In this scenario a new contract would not be required and incumbent would continue with the project through to completion.
Research Fellow position arising from a review under 'bespoke' contract arrangement	Yes	No	<p>Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval for a bespoke contract/advertisement approved in first instance approved by Head of School, College Vice Principal for Research and Innovation. Interview board will have included one of the approvers and a delegate of another approver. 2. The review built into the contract should be led at College Level by the College Vice Principal or their nominee and 2 Heads of School.

Naming individuals on Grants:

The prevailing institutional rules and regulations relating to the employment of research staff will supercede any agency rules and the naming of an individual on a grant application should not be construed as a commitment to employ them. The issue of grant applications and subsequent posts needs to be kept separate. Where an agency asks if the person has a post for the duration of the application being submitted, the answer will be "yes", subject to the rules and regulations of the institution.

8.1 Confirmation of Grant Approval

Once a PI has received official notification from a funding agency confirming they are to receive a grant but the set up process within UCD is not complete, UCD HR can advertise vacancies for Research staff on presentation of this confirmation. However, no contract may be issued in the absence of a fully completed and signed Research Authorisation Form.

UCD HR (Recruitment) is responsible for the placement of all recruitment advertisements. Independent recruitment advertising by Colleges/Business Units is contrary to University Policy.

Our policy is to advertise all vacancies in line with our equal opportunities policy and to ensure that equality of opportunity is afforded to all staff and potential staff of the university. In some exceptional circumstances advertising may not be necessary, but in all cases this will only be with prior agreement from UCD HR (Recruitment).

In general, a formal offer of employment will not normally be made unless a post has been advertised for a minimum of 1 week.

To advertise your post you must submit a fully completed and authorised Research Authorisation Form and a detailed Job Description to UCD HR (Recruitment).

A [Board of Assessors \(BOA\) form](#) must be sent to HR along with the Research Authorisation Form and Job Description template when a position is to be advertised. This will facilitate setting board members up with access to the applications on the [ESS](#) system. The Principal Investigator will then nominate a Chairperson and one other member of the Assessment Board.

UCD currently utilises a “signpost” style advertisement for external websites and publications. This style of advertisement contains basic information and directs the candidate to the UCD website for full details of the post. In addition to the UCD website, UCD HR (Recruitment) have access to a number of national and international websites where we can advertise as appropriate on your behalf.

UCD HR (Recruitment) will discuss with you any additional advertising requirements you may have. Specialist Advertising over and above the standard websites noted above will be charged back to Research Account.

Further details on UCD’s advertising process are outlined in Appendix 1 of this Policy. The detailed guidelines provided will assist you with advertising your Job.

9 Selection Process

The primary method of selection in UCD is by means of an Assessment Board.

An Assessment Board is established in respect of each post and is asked to recommend a candidate for each post. The Assessment Board assesses all applications against the selection criteria. Should the Assessment Board wish to use these criteria as pre-screening question(s), please notify the HR Recruitment Representative prior to advertising so that they can include as part of the online application form.

For the majority of UCD's vacancies, written or on-line applications, short listing and interviews will form the basis of the Selection Process. These may sometimes be supplemented with a presentation or seminar.

10 Assessment Board

The Assessment Board should have a minimum of three members. The purpose of the Assessment Board is to assess the merit of each applicant and to recommend for appointment the applicant with the greatest merit in relation to the criteria as specified for the post. The deliberations of the Assessment Board should at all times remain confidential. Please refer to Appendix 2, UCD HR's Guidelines for Assessment Boards for further details.

For Research Fellow positions only, the interview panel must also include one of the approvers (Head of School, College Vice Principal for Research and Innovation or College Principal) and a delegate of one of the others.

10.1 Conflict of interest

To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest UCD staff involved in recruitment and selection should avoid interviewing and/or making hiring decisions on immediate family. If these circumstances arise then it is expected that the Assessment Board member will resign from the board and the Chairperson will identify a replacement.

Assessment Board members may also have a friendship or other form of relationship, positive or negative, with one or more of the applicants for a position. In these circumstances, they should inform the Chairperson and other Assessment Board members prior to commencement of the short listing and interview processes.

If the member of the Assessment Board feels that the relationship may make it difficult for her/him to apply the merit principle, or feels that her/his participation may compromise application of the merit principle, then the Assessment Board should decide whether it is appropriate for the Assessment Board member to be part of the selection process.

The Assessment Board may seek advice on this matter from UCD HR (Recruitment). If the Assessment Board member continues in the selection

process, then her/his opinion should be canvassed last in any discussion to avoid any perception of them influencing the outcome.

10.2 Changes to Assessment Board membership

While changes to Assessment Boards are generally to be avoided, if it is necessary to vary the membership the following procedures apply:

- A replacement member must be given the opportunity to review all applications, and may add any applicants to the shortlist for interview or consideration.
- Assessment Board members must be present for all interviews. If, in exceptional circumstances, a Board member cannot be present for all interviews he/she should withdraw from the Board and cannot make a case for any of the short listed applicants or vote for the appointment of any applicant. A substitute may be invited to participate on the Board in order to cover a particular area of expertise and this substitution must be clearly documented.
- If a new Head of School takes up duty during the interview process the former Head will remain on the Assessment Board in his or her original role as chair, if still a member of staff.
- If the Assessment Board composition drops below the minimum requirements, the Assessment Board must be reconstituted at a later date.

11 Short listing

Short listing is the process whereby candidates are assessed by the Assessment Board against the agreed criteria, on the basis of information provided in the application documentation, in order to eliminate unsuitable candidates and identify those candidates who meet the criteria for further assessment.

Once the Board of Assessors Form is provided, the Board of Assessment will be able to access the applications through their [ESS](#) accounts.

The Assessment Board members will then assess applications to determine who will be invited to interview.

11.1 Short listing Process

Ideally all members of the Assessment Board should attend a short listing meeting arranged by the Chairperson.

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Where this is not possible he/she must forward their draft shortlist, together with the applicant ratings to the Chairperson in advance of the short listing meeting. The Chairperson will consult with them before the final shortlist is agreed.

Each Assessment Board member will:

- Log into [ESS](#) to access the applications.
- Read each application and rate applicants according to the essential and desirable selection criteria only.
- In the first instance, shortlist all applicants who possess the essential criteria stated in the advertisement or information package.
- Note any additional information required either before or at interview.
- Note briefly the reasons for not short listing each unsuccessful applicant.

When short listing, members should not:

- Make negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived over-qualification.
- Make negative assumptions or decisions about overseas qualifications with which they are unfamiliar.
- Recommend for interview any applicant, whether internal or external, who does not meet the essential criteria.
- Predetermine the number of applicants to be interviewed.

If it is not possible for the Assessment Board to meet, the Chairperson is responsible for contacting all members about their individual shortlists, drawing up a final shortlist acceptable to all Assessment Board members.

The Assessment Board will:

- Agree on and record a final shortlist if unanimous.
- Include in the shortlist all applicants about whom there is dispute if unanimity cannot be achieved.
- Consider re-advertising the position if no applicants meet all the essential criteria.
- Shortlist further, where a substantial number of applicants possess all the essential criteria, to either remove those applicants who do not possess the desirable criteria, and/or rank those candidates who best meet the essential criteria.
- Agree on a set of questions based on the selection criteria, which will form the basis of the Interview Plan.

11.2 Short listing Documentation

The Chairperson must complete a definitive selection sheet included in their shortlisting pack in order to verify and record the Board's decisions. These reports

will facilitate any subsequent feedback requests from candidates and should provide clear and comprehensive reasoning as to why candidates were excluded.

Individual scoring comments are only necessary should an applicant fail to demonstrate a clear correlation between their skills, knowledge and abilities and the pre-defined selection criteria for the position.

Once the Board has agreed a shortlist the PI (or nominee) should contact candidates and arrange the interviews for the position.

12 Interviews

Interviews are the most commonly used assessment tool enabling you to:

- Assess the personal attributes, past performances, technical skills, strengths and weaknesses
- Gain insight into attitudes and values
- Probe for inconsistencies and contradictions
- Provide candidates with more detailed information about the position

12.1 Video Conferencing

Many of UCD's vacancies attract international applicants. For some of these candidates an interview via video conference can prove to be a suitable alternative to international travel.

Candidates may be interviewed for positions by using either video conferencing or via Skype. It is essential that the links are tested prior to the scheduled interview time. The PI must ensure that the location being used for interviews is suitable and is quiet and bright so that the candidate may hear and see the interview board properly. All members of the interview board must be present.

Please refer to your UCD HR (Recruitment) Representative for further information.

12.2 Telephone Interviews

Some circumstances will necessitate conducting interviews by telephone however this is only recommended in exceptional circumstances.

The PI must ensure that the location being used for the telephone interview is quiet and that the phone being used has the correct functionality to allow for all board members to hear the candidate clearly and vice versa.

Please refer to your UCD HR (Recruitment) Representative for more information.

12.3 Interview Preparation

At the short listing stage, the Assessment Board (under the direction of the Chair) should draft an Interview Plan with specific areas of questioning identified for each Board Member.

The Assessment Board should:

- Agree a set of core questions which will form the basis of the interview and will be asked of all applicants. Supplementary or clarifying questions can be used in addition to the agreed core questions
- Base their questions on selection criteria as specified in the Job Description
- Focus on the skills, experience and knowledge required for the job
- Determine in advance how they will rate each of the applicants against the answers they give to each question.

The Chairperson must ensure that the questions asked are relevant to the position and based on the agreed criteria. The Chairperson must also ensure that questions could not be construed as discriminatory under any of the nine areas covered by the Employment Equality Act, 1998 (Gender, Sexual orientation, Disability, Civil status, Religion, Race, Family status, Age or Membership of the Travelling Community).

12.4 Interview Scheduling

The Principal Investigator (PI) or nominee is responsible for identifying and booking a suitable location for the interviews to take place.

They are also responsible for scheduling all interviews.

The PI will contact short-listed candidates and invite them to attend for interview in accordance with previously proposed interview dates.

It is essential that candidates receive sufficient notice of an approaching interview so as to allow them ample time to prepare for interview. In many cases candidates will often have the added requirement of co-ordinating travel arrangements. It is recommended that candidates receive notice of 1 week before interviews.

Should the candidate not be able to attend on the allotted date, the Board will decide whether or not an alternative interview date can be facilitated. This might not be possible particularly where an external assessor is included on the Board of Assessment.

12.5 Conducting the Interview

Prior to the first interview (ideally one week in advance) the Chairperson should:

- Allow time to discuss, and decide the order in which the questions will be asked and allocate specific areas of questioning to each member;
- Identify any member of the Assessment Board who has prior knowledge of any of the applicants (conflict of interest);
- Advise Assessment Board members of the procedures for documenting the assessment of each candidate and final decision.

At the start of each interview, the Chairperson should:

- Introduce each applicant to the Assessment Board
- Explain the purpose and structure of the interview to the applicant
- Indicate to the Applicant that Assessment Board members may take notes.

Detailed guidelines on conducting an interview including sample questions are contained in Appendix 2 of this document.

12.6 Determining the recommended candidate

The selection decision should be made based on the outcome of all selection tools and consideration should be given to how candidates rated across all of the areas of the job's requirements, be that research, publications, teaching, leadership or administrative factors. The best person for the job will not necessarily be the person who performed best in the interview.

Detailed guidelines on determining the recommended candidate are contained in Appendix 2 of this document.

If the Assessment Board cannot reach agreement on the nominated candidate, the final decision rests with the Chairperson.

If the Assessment Board determines that no candidate is deemed to fulfill the criteria for appointment, no appointment will be made.

12.7 Documenting the selection decision

The selection decision and any supporting evidence must be documented.

Scoresheets should comment on the relative merit of recommended applicant(s) on the basis of the selection criteria only. Clear and detailed documentation will assist if post-interview feedback is requested.

The recommendation sheet is completed and signed by all members of the Assessment Board and returned by the PI to UCD HR (Recruitment) along with any other relevant documentation including notes taken during interviews. All other documentation (including copies of applications) should be safely disposed of.

Assessment Board members should be aware that any notes that they make about any of the candidates may be discoverable under Freedom of Information legislation (see <http://www.ucd.ie/foi/> for further details).

Again, Appendix 2, UCD HR's Guidelines for Assessment Boards outlines further information on both the formation and responsibilities of Assessment Boards and Assessment Board members.

Once a candidate is appointed for a position UCD HR will seek authorisation from the Research Finance Office to proceed with the proposed salary.

13 Verification of Qualifications

All candidates applying for a job will be requested to provide **original** academic transcripts to HR Recruitment. An academic transcript lists the complete academic history: programmes attended, courses studied, overall result at the end of each year examination (1H, 2H1, etc.), the degree and conferring date. A breakdown of marks for each subject can also be provided. No other form of verification will be accepted (e.g. degree certificate) and if received will cause a delay in the recruitment process until the correct documentation is received. The cost of requesting an academic transcript will not be covered by UCD. For qualifications obtained in UCD HR Recruitment can verify these at source.

No appointment will be made unless the UCD HR is satisfied that a candidate's academic qualifications are bona fide.

13.1 Hiring Post-docs who have not yet been awarded their PhD

In order to carry the Post-doc title individuals will be required to have submitted their thesis and provide evidence of having successfully completed their Viva examination. Where a PI wishes to recruit someone who has submitted their thesis but is still awaiting examination, they will be offered a post as a Research Assistant and on the Research Assistant pay rates until the achievement of the required criteria. A clause will be written into their contract indicating an automatic move to the role of UCD Post Doctoral Research Fellow Level 1 and the appropriate salary scale on the attainment of the required criteria. This clause will also allow for the termination of the contract if the criteria are not met within an agreed timeframe.

14 Other Pre-Employment Activities

A number of posts in UCD, particularly in the areas of medicine, health, social work and education, require staff to undertake activities that will bring them into contact with children or vulnerable adults.

All recommended candidates who are intended to be employed in an area where they will have access to children and/or vulnerable adults in the course of their employment/engagement must complete the Garda Vetting Form and authorise UCD to conduct a background check via the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána (Vetting Bureau). The vetting process will be carried out by UCD HR. UCD HR has an Authorised Liaison Person who is the liaison between UCD and the Vetting Bureau (see **Garda Vetting Policy** for more information).

15 Appointment

Assessment Board members are not to commit the University to an appointment or to a specified salary. Candidates may be told only that salary will be within the advertised range, although notation may be made on the report of any comment an applicant wishes to make in regard to salary. The salary offer will be made to the candidate by UCD HR (Recruitment).

Assessment Board members other than the Chairperson should not contact the successful applicant until after a formal offer has been made by UCD HR (Recruitment).

16 Advising unsuccessful candidates

UCD HR (Recruitment) will advise unsuccessful applicants within 3 days of receipt of the Assessment Board's Report.

Assessment Board Members should not contact the unsuccessful applicants after the interview process.

17 Reserve candidature and eligibility

Where the Assessment Board recommends a reserve candidate, that person, should the recommended candidate decline acceptance of the post, would automatically be offered the position. The PI is immediately notified when a reserve candidate based appointment is proposed. No more than 2 reserve candidates should be identified.

18 Post Shortlisting or Interview Feedback

As previously outlined, a written record of the decision making process is maintained by UCD HR (Recruitment) throughout the relevant stages of UCD's recruitment and selection process. These records are essential to support the likelihood that candidate(s) will often request feedback at either the post Shortlisting or Interview stages of recruitment.

Formal feedback **must** be provided in either instance when requested, and in the majority of cases, this feedback will be provided by the Chairperson; unless a suitable alternative is nominated on the basis of their specialist knowledge.

The purpose of feedback is to provide factual and accurate information on the selection and decision making process, however, feedback on areas where a candidate(s) may improve on interview skills and interview preparation might also be discussed; of course, it is important to confirm if this level of supplementary feedback is desirable before offering constructive advice.

Feedback can be given verbally or in writing. The conversation or email/letter **must** be confined to feedback which centres around a candidate(s) performance against clearly advertised selection criteria. In addition to the feedback above, a candidate may also be given a copy of his or her shortlisting / interview scoring form.

Advice and assistance on preparing and delivering candidate feedback is available from UCD HR (Recruitment).

19 Work Permits, Green Card Permits, Spousal Permits & Hosting Agreements

UCD operates a policy of strict compliance with current employment legislation; specifically the Employments Permit Act 2003.

It is currently an offence under the above Act for either a UCD Employer (Head of School/Unit) or employee (if a non-EEA national) to engage in an employment based relationship within UCD without previously having acquired appropriate authorisation to do so. UCD HR (Recruitment) currently co-ordinates the application and renewal processes for either, Work Permits, Green Card Permits Spousal Permits and Hosting Agreements, where necessary.

[UCD's Policy on Work Permits](#) outlines clear guidelines on who will require a work permit in order to take up employment in UCD, as well as, the steps to follow in order to ensure UCD meets the requirements laid down by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Guidelines for advertising your Post

Introduction

With the following information we hope to offer you a straightforward guide on how to advertise any vacancy you may have.

- The University has a commitment to openly advertising career opportunities as part of its strategy of attracting top quality staff. The advertising strategy for any particular post will give due consideration to:
 - the duration, grading and employment category of the post;
 - candidate availability and interest;
 - cost effectiveness.
- Recruitment advertising is coordinated on behalf of the University by UCD HR (Recruitment).
- UCD HR (Recruitment) will review all advertising related documentation prior to the promotion of a vacancy in order to ensure that they conform to current policy, agreed University format and relevant legislation. Where serious queries arise as a result of this review, documents will be referred back to the relevant Head of School or Unit.

It is important to note that UCD HR (Recruitment) is not able to facilitate any advertisement requests until we receive confirmation that a grant has been awarded and a fully completed [Research Authorisation Form](#) (RAF) and [Job Description](#) are received.

- Completed and authorised documentation should be sent directly to UCD HR (Recruitment).

Cost of Advertising

All costs incurred in advertising posts funded by research grants are to be met by the research fund.

Advertising Options

When requesting that a post be advertised, the Principal Investigator should discuss their media preference with a member of UCD HR (Recruitment). UCD HR (Recruitment) will look to target the most appropriate press and/or web-

based advertising sources likely to produce the best quality candidate pool for your vacancy.

Internet Advertising

All vacant posts will, as a minimum, be advertised on the University's web page under www.ucd.ie/jobvacancies. The University's web site is the primary site from which candidates will access and download information regarding a particular job opportunity. Supplementary media will be used where appropriate, to alert candidates to vacancies arising and to point prospective candidates to the web site for comprehensive details.

www.jobs.ac.uk is a UK based web site that specialises in academic posts. Good results have been achieved by using this web site in the past to supplement press advertising.

Candidates should be directed to the www.ucd.ie/jobvacancies web page to peruse the correct application procedures.

Competition closing dates

All posts will be advertised for a minimum of 1 week. A longer closing date may be appropriate for some positions. UCD HR (Recruitment) will discuss this with you in advance of advertising your competition.

Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Assessment Boards

Introduction

The University's Strategic Development Plan recognises the critical role that the attraction and retention of high quality staff will make to our future. Effective recruitment and selection assists us to attract, retain and maintain our employees and to recognise the value of our people.

This guide has been developed to support you in your role as a member of an Assessment Board. It should be read in conjunction with UCD's Recruitment and Selection Policy.

The Assessment Board

The Assessment Board is responsible for undertaking a selection process that achieves a selection decision based on the principles of equity and merit. Every candidate should have the opportunity to compete in a fair and open competition.

Composition of the Assessment Board

Individual members of an Assessment Board are selected on the understanding that they meet the following requirements:

- adequate knowledge of the requirements of the job;
- an understanding of the recruitment and selection process;
- are of an equal or higher grade than the vacant position;
- are free from bias in relation to any candidate;

Assessment Board members should ensure that they are available to participate in all aspects of the selection process, including presentations where these are being used.

The Chairperson

The Chairperson will normally be the PI or nominated by the PI who 'owns' the vacant position

It is the role of the Chairperson to:

- Liaise with the Recruitment Administrator regarding the set up of the Board of Assessors;
- ensure all board members are kept informed of any changes affecting the boards composition;
- ensure the overall integrity of the recruitment and selection process;

- lead the short-listing and interview process - including the introduction of candidates to the Assessment Board and explanation of procedures;
- ensure that a Selection Report and recommendation is prepared and signed by all Assessment Board members;
- ensure that all Interview Notes generated during the interview process are collated at the end of the process for retention by UCD HR (Recruitment);
- co-ordinate the provision of feedback to unsuccessful candidates;

Selection Strategy

The Assessment Board's plan is referred to as the Selection Strategy and it involves determining:

- what tools you will use to assess the relative merit of candidates;
- what process you will use to rank/score candidate's performance against each of the tools.

Your decision on a selection strategy decision should give due consideration to:

- the requirements of the position;
- the size and quality of the candidate pool (it may not be possible to differentiate candidates by application, interview and reference check alone);
- the availability of time and resources.

The strategy the Board of Assessment adopts must be:

- Transparent – i.e. it is conducted in a way that would stand up to external scrutiny;
- Reliable – i.e. it provides a consistent measurement process for the assessment of each candidate;
- Valid – i.e. it is appropriate given the requirements of the job;
- Supports appointment on the basis of merit.

In most cases written applications and interviews will form the basis of the selection process.

Rating Scales

It is necessary to agree a rating scale that will be used consistently for shortlisting, interview and any other selection exercise by each member of the Assessment Board.

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The Assessment Board can develop its own rating scale to meet their specific requirements, however, the scale below is provided as a guide.

RATING	DESCRIPTION
1	Inadequate - the candidate's response was determined as unsatisfactory in meeting the minimum requirements of the job and the candidate was deemed by the Assessment Board to have an inadequate level of skill in this area.
2	Marginal - The candidate shows some ability however was deemed as not having met the required level of skill, knowledge or ability for the position; and/or the candidate was assessed as not meeting the criteria to the minimum level and requiring further development.
3	Acceptable - the candidate's response indicated that they were able to meet the minimum requirements of the criteria.
4	Good - the candidate's capability was assessed by the Assessment Board as demonstrating full competence in respect to the criteria, and was able to back this up with some examples that demonstrate ability. Examples reflected a lower level of skill, knowledge and ability than was considered excellent.
5	Excellent - the candidate's capability was assessed as excellent by the Assessment Board in respect to the criteria. The candidate demonstrated a comprehensive ability against all aspects of the criteria and was able to back this up with excellent examples. The candidate is deemed by the Assessment Board to have an exceptional level of skill, knowledge or ability in respect to the criteria.

Review of Online Applications and Shortlisting

All applications (UCD's on line application form, applicant's cover letter and curriculum vitae) are distributed on line to designated Board members within 48 hours of the application deadline passing. Once received, the Board should convene at a pre-arranged date and time to discuss the applications and decide collectively which candidates will be short-listed for interview.

Short-listing is a process used to:

- determine those applications that meet the selection criteria to an appropriate level;
- ensure that candidates meet any mandatory selection criteria;
- commence the assessment of a candidate's competitiveness and relative merit.

Should a candidate's written application fail to demonstrate sufficient evidence of skills, knowledge and abilities relevant to the selection criteria, their application may at this point be excluded from further consideration. The Chairperson must complete a selection report in order to verify and record the Board's decisions. These reports will facilitate any subsequent feedback requests from candidates and should provide clear and comprehensive reasoning as to why candidates were excluded.

Interviews

Interview is the most commonly used assessment tool. The key advantages of interviewing include the opportunity to:

- assess the personal attributes, past performances, technical skills, strengths and weaknesses
- gain insight into attitudes and values
- probe for inconsistencies and contradictions
- provide candidates with more detailed information about the position.

Contacting short-listed candidates

Once the Board has agreed a shortlist the PI (or nominee) should contact candidates and arrange the interviews for the position.

The minimum notice requirement is 1 week.

Should the candidate not be able to attend on the allotted date, the Board will decide whether or not an alternative interview date can be facilitated.

Planning the interview

The Assessment Board should pre-plan the interview including the process to be used and the questions to be asked. The Assessment Boards should allocate sufficient time well in advance of the interview date for this to occur. The short-listing meeting is a useful opportunity to undertake this task.

Planning the interview environment

The PI (or their nominee) is responsible for arranging a suitable location for interviews. The following should be taken into consideration:

- adequate lighting and heating
- comfortable seating
- no noise distractions
- appropriate reception facilities – i.e. someone not on the Assessment Board to meet and acknowledge candidates
- appropriate waiting space for candidates
- appropriate literature to review while waiting for interview i.e. a copy of the Job Description.

Designing interview questions

Interview questions should be designed to elicit the desired responses from candidates and to assess their level of knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to the selection criteria.

It is essential that you use the same base structured questions for all candidates. You can use additional or probing questions to clarify points and to clarify claims made in their application.

Conducting the Interview

At the start of each interview, the Chairperson should:

- Introduce each applicant to the Assessment Board
- Explain the purpose and structure of the interview to the applicant
- Indicate to the Applicant that Assessment Board members may take notes.

The following guidelines may be used in conducting the interviews:

- The applicant should be put at ease so that he/she can answer questions to the best of their ability. This may involve asking simple introductory questions designed to relax the candidate i.e. How was your journey; any problems finding our location? etc.
- The relevant details of the application may be reviewed to give the applicant an opportunity to add information.
- The Assessment Board must ask all applicants the same core questions to ensure a consistent and fair approach. Ask supplementary questions if required to clarify issues, obtain further information or to explore areas that arise in the interview.
- Only questions relevant to evaluating an applicant's ability to fulfil the requirements of the job should be asked.
- The Assessment Board must question all applicants against the same selection criteria.
- The Assessment Board should actively listen and actively seek clarification.
- Members of the Assessment Board should obtain sufficient information from applicants to make accurate decisions. Assumptions must not be made about an applicant's capabilities to perform various aspects of the position under consideration.
- Applicants may be asked if they wish to discuss matters that may not have emerged in response to questions raised during the interview, to add any information, or to ask any questions.
- Applicants should be advised about the timing of decision-making and notification of the outcome of the process.

Determining Your Preferred Candidates

The selection decision should be made based on the outcome of all selection tools and consideration should be given to how candidates rated across all of the areas of the job's requirements, be they research, publication, teaching, leadership, or administrative factors. The best person for the job will not necessarily be the person who performed best in the interview.

Each Assessment Board member should initially make rankings on the basis of their own notes and assessment of each applicant's performance in relation to the criteria.

Applicants should be ranked suitable/unsuitable for appointment based on:

- Performance at interview(s).
- The written application.
- Further evidence (for example, alternative forms of assessment such as publications, skills testing).

The Chairperson should seek initial rankings from all members without discussion. Differences and reasons should then be discussed, at which time the Chairperson should ensure that Assessment Board members confine the discussion to relevant information.

The discussions should not include rumour, "general opinion", "the grapevine says", or unsubstantiated gossip.

Effort should be made to reach a unanimous decision, however if a unanimous decision is not reached a majority decision is acceptable. Where the Assessment Board vote is tied, the Chairperson has a casting vote.

If the Assessment Board determines that no candidate is deemed to fulfil the criteria for appointment then no appointment will be made. The Chair of the Assessment Board and/or relevant Head of School/Unit should liaise with UCD HR (Recruitment) regarding appropriate strategies to either re-advertise, or re-design the role to better meet the University's needs and the skills available in the job market.

In certain cases the Assessment Board may name a reserve candidate. A reserve candidate should only be identified if the Assessment Board is satisfied that the candidate is appointable **without reference back** to the Board, if the recommended candidate declines to accept the offer. In all other instances where a successful candidate declines appointment, the Post Administrator will refer back to the PI for further instruction.

Documenting Your Selection Decision

The selection decision and any supporting evidence must be documented. This

document is called the Selection Report and consists of the signed recommendation and completed score sheets for each candidate.

The Selection Report outlines the process that the Assessment Board undertook and their rationale for the appointment of the nominated candidate(s). The Selection Report also provides a useful reference to demonstrate that the appointment is being made consistent with the principles of merit, transparency, validity and reliability.

Feedback and Grievances

The Recruitment Administrator will notify all unsuccessful candidates in writing on the result of their application and that they can request feedback.

Feedback is normally given by the Chair of the Assessment Board, but may be delegated to other members of the board with their consent. The purpose of feedback is to provide the candidate with factual and accurate information on:

- the process used by the Assessment Board;
- the reasons why they were unsuccessful in being appointed to the position, relevant to the selection criteria;
- areas for future development.

The discussion should be confined to comparing the candidate's abilities, knowledge and skills against the selection criteria and genuine job requirements. Briefly document the feedback given and pass these notes to the UCD HR (Recruitment) for retention alongside individual candidate selection reports.

FOI and Record Management

The University's recruitment and selection procedures are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and 2003 and the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003. It is important that your decision making process is clearly and comprehensively documented, and that all assessment records, including any individual notes of panel members are retained and returned to UCD HR (Recruitment) for storage in accordance with the University's records management producers. If in doubt about the status of assessment records contact UCD HR (Recruitment).

Support Documents

1. Checklist for Chairperson

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	Assessment Board	Board created in accordance with guidelines
	Selection Strategy	Assessment Board has collectively agreed on Selection Strategy
		Rating Scale is agreed
	Short-listing	Board members have reviewed all applications
		Short-listing matrix and notes completed
		Applicant assessment applied fairly in line with Selection Strategy
	Pre Interview	Interview Dates agreed
		Seminar and Interview locations confirmed
		Interview Questions prepared
	Interviews	Location is suitable, seating, lighting, no noise
		Administrative support to meet/greet candidates
		Board members are briefed on the structure of the interview and appropriate questions have been assigned to all
		Board members are aware of the risks associated with inappropriate questions or probing.
		Selection reports fully completed and are signed by all the Assessment Board members.
		Board members understand the need for confidentiality during the remainder of the appointment process. Recommendations are not communicated outside of UCD HR (Recruitment) until Transcripts have been received.
	Post Interview	Completed Selection report returned to UCD HR (Recruitment) Administrator
		PI or nominated Assessment Board member is agreed for feedback requests

2. Interview Guidelines

The following principles are provided as a guide to support your interview process:

- begin by exchanging a few pleasantries and introducing the candidate to the members of the Assessment Board;
- proceed to ground familiar to the candidate, such as current work responsibilities (to reduce nervousness and help establish rapport with the Assessment Board);
- ensure that all questions are relevant to the job requirements, even those used to open the interview;
- probe each content area completely before moving on. For example, in determining the supervisory experience of the candidate it is not enough simply to know whether or not he/she has had supervisory experiences.

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Interviews should determine how much experience in terms of the number and level of persons supervised;

- if the candidate cannot answer a question (after a reasonable pause) try rephrasing it;
- spread the task of posing questions evenly among members of the Assessment Board;
- use the same base structured questions for all candidates;
- use additional or probing questions to clarify points and to clarify claims made in their application;
- don't make assumptions about candidates or question in a way that infers unfair or biased attitudes such as gender, Civil status, age, disability, race, colour, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. These are factors which have no bearing on the selection criteria or an applicants ability to perform the role;
- maintain individual interview notes that will be useful in supporting your assessment and rating of the candidate; these are retained by UCD HR (Recruitment) along with a definitive assessment record for each candidate for the provision of feedback and in compliance with current Freedom of Information Legislation;
- do more listening than talking - ideally, the ratio of listening to talking should be around 70% to 30%.

3. Designing Interview Questions

There are a range of different question types that can be used in interviews. However what is most important is that all questions are relevant to the selection criteria and job requirements. A summary of each type and use is outlined below as a guide.

Question Types	Purpose	Examples
Open	Encourage candidates to talk Provide space for candidate to expand his/her thoughts Relax the candidate at start of interview, need to be framed succinctly	Please tell us what you know about this School or Unit.
Closed	Encourage specific, short responses Typical answers are yes/no, true/false	Have you had experience managing people? Do you find problem solving difficult?

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	<p>Tactfully 'slow' a talkative candidate, but need to ensure that flow of interview is not interrupted</p> <p>Obtain clarification</p> <p>Check technical knowledge</p>	
Probing	Seek clarification, expansion or more detail	You mentioned having some time off. What did you do between September 1997 and January 2000?
Problem Solving	<p>Simulates a situation and enquires how a candidate would respond</p> <p>Can be used to preface a behaviour-based question</p>	What would you do if one of your staff members was late for work several days in a row?
Reflecting	Clarifies the Assessment Board's understanding of the candidate's response and probes for more information	You say you enjoy minimum supervision. Do you see any drawbacks to this?
Focusing	Focus the discussion back onto position-related criteria	Let's return to organisational skills. How do you actually organise your work?
Self-Appraisal	To have the candidate appraise him/herself	How well do you think you can manage deadlines? What did you learn from your experience in that position?
Statement Questions	To present a point of view and ask for an opinion and justification.	Decentralised, accountable management. What does this mean to you?

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20. Policy Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
6.0	March 2012	Policy Versioning Implemented	UCD HR
7.0	January 2013	Updated section 8 to include naming on grants	UCD HR
8.0	Sept 2014	Removed Executive Head of School	UCD HR
9.0	Feb 2016	Added section 15 "Other Pre-employment Activities" to highlight the new Garda Vetting Policy	UCD HR
10.0	Sept 2018	Section 12.7 amended by UMT.	UCD HR