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| Diversifying Recruitment Guidance  V2.2 Plain |



## Introduction

The University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for all, and these principles are at the heart of our institution’s values and strategic vision:

*“We are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all” - Strategy 2030.*

Diversity of thought, perspectives, experience and skills bring demonstrable benefits to our work and to our decision making, as well as to our ability to build a truly inclusive institution. The University’s Equality Outcomes, published [here,](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/outcomes)  commit the University to increase the diversity of our staff, including at senior grades, in leadership roles and on key decision-making bodies.

This guidance is intended to support you to create a recruitment strategy that attracts and fairly considers a talented, diverse pool of candidates. It should be used to inform your reflection and decision-making so that you can recognise how and where biases and inequalities can arise and take steps to mitigate these.

This guidance should be used alongside the University’s wider recruitment guidance which includes policies, training courses and practical information.



## 1 - Starting Out

**First Steps**

**Consider the diversity of your department/area and identify any underrepresentation**, based on clear evidence.  A good place to start would be the [EDI Data Dashboards](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/GSP-BI/SitePages/EDI.aspx?xsdata=MDV8MDJ8fGY4ZTJiNjg1NDAxNDQzNTBiYWFlMDhkYzc0MjIwMDNlfDJlOWYwNmIwMTY2OTQ1ODk4Nzg5MTBhMDY5MzRkYzYxfDB8MHw2Mzg1MTI5MzY1NjE1ODg5MTB8VW5rbm93bnxWR1ZoYlhOVFpXTjFjbWwwZVZObGNuWnBZMlY4ZXlKV0lqb2lNQzR3TGpBd01EQWlMQ0pRSWpvaVYybHVNeklpTENKQlRpSTZJazkwYUdWeUlpd2lWMVFpT2pFeGZRPT18MXxMMk5vWVhSekx6RTVPalF6TlRSbFlXTTVZbVV4WkRRMlptRTRZekU1Wm1Wak5qSXdNV0U0TVRNMVFIUm9jbVZoWkM1Mk1pOXRaWE56WVdkbGN5OHhOekUxTmprMk9EVTFORFE1fGFjNjA4YTQ4ODUyZDQyNThiYWFlMDhkYzc0MjIwMDNlfDgwOTRhZDZkNGE0NzQyNjRhZDYyNjFlZTBkNTdmODJm&sdata=V1NmREhOR3YyQnB1QVFhOWhiV1JaQWV5L1BnTGwzSzRlVW1xUlQydlIraz0%3D&ovuser=2e9f06b0-1669-4589-8789-10a06934dc61%2Crwoolle2%40ed.ac.uk), but more granular data would be available on request via [HR Helpline](https://human-resources.ed.ac.uk/about/hr-helpline)

**Include your staff in the recruitment exercise.**  This can help to grow the understanding and confidence of your staff in the recruitment process, may help to grow your pool of internal candidates in the future, and will enable you to draw on your staff’s expertise and networks as appropriate. Communicating to your staff throughout the process enables you to promote the transparency and integrity of your recruitment strategy by demonstrating that:

* diversity and inclusion have been considered
* decisions have been reached fairly
* bias has been mitigated.

**Positive Action vs Positive Discrimination**

Make sure all those involved in recruitment **understand the difference between lawful positive action and unlawful positive discrimination**.

**Positive action** is lawful in recruitment and can include:

* actively seeking candidates from underrepresented groups and encouraging them to apply
* setting diversity targets and challenging yourself to achieve these;
* taking forward candidates from disproportionately underrepresented groups over other candidates who have scored the same.

**Positive discrimination** is unlawful in recruitment and would include:

* appointing an unqualified or less qualified candidate solely because they have a protected (equality) characteristic;
* setting quotas (versus setting targets) for appointment of candidates with particular protected characteristics.



## 2 - Reaching & Attracting Diverse Candidates

**Job descriptions**

**Reflect on whether particular educational qualifications and/or experience in a similar role are truly necessary for the job.**  These can exclude certain groups, such as those underrepresented/disadvantaged in (higher) education or in a particular role/sector/area, as well as those who have taken career breaks.  Consider whether the ‘essential skills’ required for the job can ‘be evidenced in different ways, and reflect if these are ‘essential’ or ‘desirable’.

**Demonstrate the University’s commitment to EDI** and the expectation that staff will contribute to EDI goals and uphold our Values, and how these are reflected in the essential or desirable criteria, as appropriate to the role.

**All Senior Leadership roles (G10+) should have explicit criteria on EDI.**

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**Job Advertising**

Be mindful that **the words we use in job adverts can encourage some applicants and discourage others**. Consider using a tool, such as this [Bias Decoder | Totaljobs](https://sfdora.org/about-dora/), to identify words that may impact negatively on the diversity of your applicant pool.

**Consider the platforms and the professional and social networks** that are available to you and how you can use these **to reach diverse audiences**.

* Include a diverse range of staff in creating the plan for advertising and ask them to promote the job opportunity through their own networks.
* Make use of social media features such as tagging and hashtags to highlight opportunities that may be attractive to underrepresented groups such as hybrid working, mentoring and development programmes
* Ask other UoE social media accounts and communities to share the role. such as (local) [EDI Committees](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/edi-groups) S[taff Networks](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/edi-groups), and [knowledge networks](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/inclusion)

**Consider including a statement in your job advert to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.** You may wish to **engage a recruitment and/or media agency to reach diverse audiences**.

Example inclusion statements include:

*“We welcome applications from all qualified candidates, and wish to particularly encourage applications from women and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic candidates, who are underrepresented at this level”*

*“We encourage applications from all candidates, particularly disabled people and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as we acknowledge they are currently underrepresented in our area”*

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## 3 - Recruiting & Selecting Diverse Candidates

**Creating your Panel**

**Training**

All panel members should have completed the training modules:

* [Getting Recruitment Right](https://elxw.fa.em3.oraclecloud.com/fscmUI/redwood/learner/learn/redirect?learningItemId=300000009138797&learningItemType=ORA_COURSE)
* [Challenging Unconscious Bias](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/training/training-modules)

It is also recommended that panel members complete the module:

* [Inclusion Essentials](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/training/training-modules)

**Creating a Diverse Panel**

Having a diverse representation of staff on the panel promotes inclusivity, will support a diverse candidate pool and should enable a fair and inclusive decision-making process.  You may wish to consider including more junior colleagues on the panel to improve diversity and inclusivity, and/or colleagues from other departments.

One **panel member should be appointed as EDI Champion**, to pay keen and close attention to potential bias in the selection process.

For **academic research** recruitment, ensure that the panel **members are mindful of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (**[**DORA**](https://sfdora.org/)**)**.  Panellists must be aware that bias is deeply ingrained in research metrics, and should avoid using journal and funding-based metrics as a proxy measure of the value and quality of individual research.

**All panel members should remain alert** to instances of bias and be prepared to challenge each other.  Remember - it is often easier to spot bias in others than in ourselves.

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**Shortlisting**

As a panel member, you should have a **clear understanding of the assessment criteria** and how to complete the scoring record used to evaluate applications, noting **evidence-based comments** for panel discussion.

**Work independently and give yourself adequate time**, focus and comfort. When we are under pressure, tired, distracted and even hungry, the likelihood of making biased decisions increases.

**Be aware of your thought processes**. Are you starting with a feeling, assumption or decision and then seeking evidence to support it and/or overlooking information that contradicts it? Are you favouring any experience of studying and working at particular institutions or publishing in particular journals? Have you allowed a single strength or weakness, or your impression of a candidate to influence your ratings across all criteria? Are you confident that your scoring is based solely on comparison with the assessment criteria and not by comparison with other candidates?

**Be prepared to justify the conclusions you have reached** to progress or reject candidates. In shortlisting discussions, articulate aloud how you reached your decision to reject or progress each candidate. This helps to reduce bias by providing a greater sense of accountability. Challenge constructively by asking each other for specific examples to support a decision and keep secure records of your scoring and decision-making for 6 months before destroying them.

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**Interviewing**

This section focuses on standard interviewing. Where there are elements to the selection process in addition to interview, consider the purpose, weighting and assessment criteria for each element. Where the wider staff community is involved in specific elements, such as candidate presentations and tasks, be clear about if and how you will use their feedback.

**Prepare all interviewers to be objective**, to assess against clear criteria, and to challenge their own and each other’s biases.  Think about how you can **create an interview which is inclusive and supportive** of people’s different needs. All applicants invited to interview should be given details of the interview format and setting, and asked if they require any reasonable adjustments to accommodate disability or any other adjustments to ensure candidates feel welcomed, safe and able to do their best.

**Consider what it is that you want to assess, and the most appropriate way to assess this.** You may wish to enable a richer and more considered discussion by providing candidates with an overview of the interview questions in advance.  Disabled candidates may request the exact questions in advance, which is often a very reasonable adjustment to the selection process, and you should aim to provide these at least 24 hours in advance. In such cases, you may also wish to provide the other candidates with an outline of the questions.

**Interviews should have a consistent structure and timings, with the same questions asked of all applicants.** Exceptions may be made to accommodate any reasonable adjustments.

**Ensure that all candidates receive the same level of positive encouragement and support** to enable them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills – for example asking probing questions should a candidate not fully answer a question

**Panellists should use plain English wherever possible and avoid abstract and/or unclear language**. All candidates should expect to easily understand the questions by asking concise questions rather than long questions with multiple parts.

**Be conscious of your thought processes**, asking yourself the same questions as you did during shortlisting – this can be more challenging as now a person is involved.  You should **consider including an EDI-related question** for candidates such as “If you were successful, how would you embed EDI in your work and in your behaviours?”. You should aim to ask candidates for all senior leadership roles how they would contribute to the University’s EDI goals.

After each interview**, panellists should have a period of quiet reflection to record their scores and comments individually**. Avoid influencing the scores and comments of one another. Be prepared to justify each decision to advance or eliminate a candidate. Keep secure records of your scoring and decision-making for 6 months before destroying.

**Deciding on the right candidate**

Consider whether it is **really necessary to take up references prior to final pre-offer** checks. If it is necessary, be aware that gender and racial bias in references is well-evidenced, and take great care to separate facts from value judgements.

Sufficient time should be built into the recruitment schedule to **allow panellists to discuss, in full, the scoring of each candidate**. In decision-making discussions, **all panellists should have equal time to share their evidence-based assessment** of each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to each of the criteria.  Within this dynamic, it is important that there is not a ‘rush to consensus’ or attempts to influence/cajole others into following the consensus. Your scores and comments do not need to align, so long as they are evidenced in your notes and are objective.   Panellists should be prepared and encouraged to openly share their own views, and to constructively challenge colleagues when there is a lack of evidence to support assertions. You must also be prepared to be challenged as well as challenge others.

All panellists should be made aware that, as at any stage of the selection process, it is permissible in law to prioritise candidates from disproportionately underrepresented groups over other candidates of equal merit, this is known as ‘positive action’.

**Giving meaningful feedback to unsuccessful candidates**

**Consider how you can give feedback to all unsuccessful applicants.**  Could you prioritise applicants from underrepresented groups for more detailed feedback to achieve recruitment success in the future? Be aware that different candidates may experience a lack of success quite differently. Internal and external candidates may warrant different levels of feedback and future support Reflect on if feedback is written or verbal. Ensure feedback is constructive so that candidates can reflect and improve.



## 4 – Diversifying the Future

Reflect on how you can improve the diversity of your network overall. Recruitment is only one of many interconnected elements of diversifying within your area, and improving other elements will both enhance, and be supported by, diversifying recruitment.

Consider how you can plan ahead for the future, enable a greater reach, stimulate potential and widen opportunities to engage underrepresented groups in the long term. This may include:

* Nurturing diverse future candidates, for example through EmployED internships, or national mentoring schemes for your discipline/area of work.
* Connecting and engaging with diverse colleagues and peers at conferences and meetings, and inviting potential future colleagues on visits to the University.
* Seeking out opportunities for public engagement and outreach with underrepresented groups.
* Actively diversifying your research and teaching portfolio into areas in which underrepresented groups are working.

