Diversifying Recruitment Guidance

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Human Resources

Your Guide to Diversifying your Recruitment

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Introduction

"We are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all"
Strategy 2030

Diversity of thought, perspectives, experience and skills brings 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**, 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.

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First Steps

Consider the diversity of your department/area and identify under-representation

A good place to start looking is the *EDI Dashboards*.

More granular data can be requested via 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 by fostering transparency and highlighting integrity and inclusion.

It may also 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.

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Positive Action
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 DISCIMINATION

- 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

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Read the **Positive Action Guidance**

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Reaching & Attracting Diverse Candidates

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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*'. Could potential be nurtured?

Demonstrate the University's commitment to EDI and the expectation that staff will contribute to EDI goals and uphold our Values

- Think how these are reflected in the essential or desirable criteria, as appropriate to the role.
- All Senior Leadership roles (UE10+) should have explicit criteria on EDI.
- You can see some examples of "EDI questions" in our FAQ

Job Advertising

The words we use in job **adverts can encourage some applicants and discourage others**

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

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

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Advertising Top Tips

1	**Consider using a tool**, such as _Bias Decoder | Totaljobs_, to identify words that may impact negatively on the diversity of your applicant pool
2	**Include a diverse range of staff** in creating the plan for advertising and ask them to promote the job opportunity through their own networks
3	**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
4	**Ask other UoE social media accounts** and communities to share the role such as (local) _EDI Committees_, _Staff Networks_, and _knowledge networks_.

Example inclusion statement:

We welcome applications from all qualified candidates, and particularly encourage applications from [insert demographic(s)] candidates, as we acknowledge they are currently underrepresented in our area/team/at this level

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Recruiting & Selecting Diverse Candidates

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Common Recruiting Biases

Halo/Horns
Allowing a single good or bad thing to impact your decisions about a candidate through the interview/processes
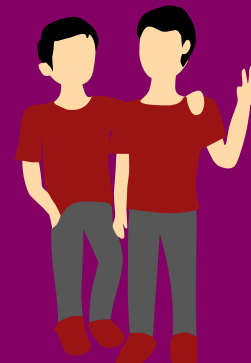
Prestige Bias
Favouring any experience of studying/working at particular institutions or publishing in particular journals

Contrast Bias
Comparing candidates to one another, or to other people, rather than scoring them as an indvidual

Affinity Bias
We tend to prefer people who are like us - this could be their characteristics, personalities or profressional background (and much more)

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Which biases might you have? Take a test and find out _here_

Creating Your Panel

Training
All panel members should have completed the these training modules:
1. *Getting Recruitment Right*
2. *Understanding Unconscious Bias*

It is also recommended that panel members complete the module:
1. *Inclusion Essentials*

Create 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.

Academic Research
Ensure that the panel members are mindful of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (*DORA*)

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.

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

Bias
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.

What's a "diverse" Panel?

A panel should aim to be diverse and represent , where possible, a mix of:
- Ages
- Cultural Backgrounds
- Career journeys
- Disabilities & Neurodivergence
- Ethnicities
- Genders
- + more

Shortlisting

1	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.
2	**Work independently and give yourself adequate time**, focus and comfort. When we are under pressure, tired, distracted, even hungry, the likelihood of making biased decisions increases.
3	**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.
4	**Keep secure records** of your scoring and decision-making for 6 months before destroying them as you might need them for providing feedback or justification of a decision.

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.

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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

Consider what it is that **you want to assess, and the most appropriate way to assess** this

Interviews should have a consistent structure and timings, with the same questions asked of all applicants in the same order.

Interviewing

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. Ask concise questions rather than long questions with multiple parts.

You should consider **including an EDI-related question for candidates.**

You should **aim to ask candidates for all senior leadership roles** how they would contribute to the University's EDI goals.

After each interview, **panelists 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.

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Accessible Interviewing Top Tips

1	**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**
2	You may wish to enable a richer and more considered discussion by **providing candidates with an overview of the interview questions in advance**
3	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**. You may also wish to provide the other candidates with an outline of the questions

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Choosing 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**

All panelists should be made aware that it is **permissible in law to prioritise candidates** from underrepresented groups over other candidates of equal merit - this is known as **'positive action'**

In decision-making discussions, **all panellists should have equal time to share** their evidence-based assessment of each candidate.

It is important that there is **not a 'rush to consensus'** or attempts to influence others. 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.

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Could you **prioritise applicants from underrepresented groups** for more detailed feedback to achieve recruitment success in the future?

Internal and external **candidates may warrant different levels of feedback** and future support

Meaningful Feedback

Be aware that different **candidates may experience a lack of success quite differently**

Reflect on if feedback may be better given in writing and/or verbally

Ensure feedback is constructive so that candidates can reflect and improve
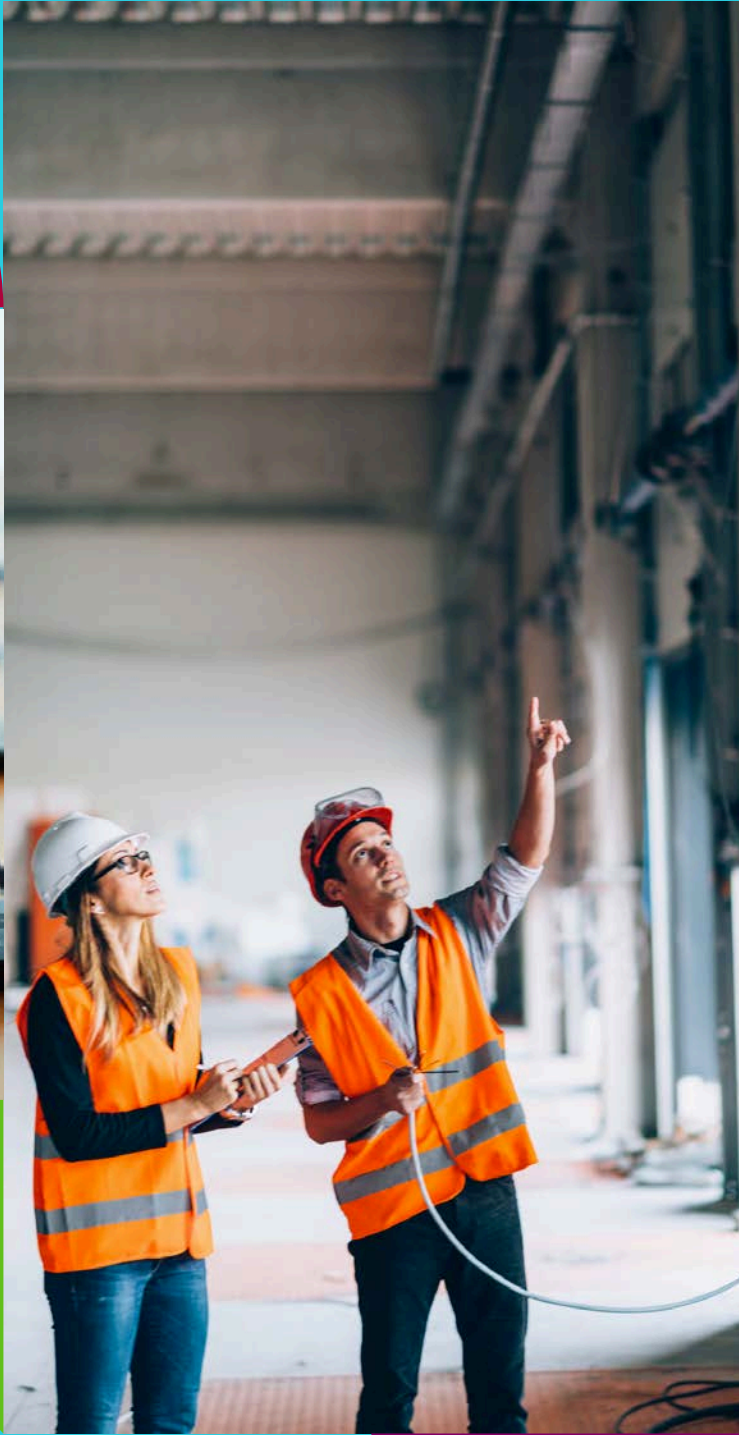
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Diversifying the future

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:

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

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Thank You For Reading

We encourage and welcome feedback via email to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk.

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