

The University of Queensland Recruitment and Selection Manual



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Introduction

The University of Queensland Recruitment and Selection manual provides guidance for Hiring Managers, Chairpersons of Selection Committees and other staff involved in the University's recruitment and selection process on how they might implement the University's [Recruitment and Selection](#) policy. It also provides a basis for the conduct of training in the recruitment and selection process.

This manual should not constrain the members of a Selection Committee from applying the commonsense and judgement necessarily involved in best practice implementation, as long as such application is consistent with the Recruitment and Selection policy. Further advice on the implementation of the policy and use of this manual may be obtained from the Director, Human Resources Division.

The procedural guidelines for each step of the University's four stage recruitment and selection process are described under the following headings:

[Stage 1 – Vacancy](#)

[Stage 2 – Applications and Shortlisting](#)

[Stage 3 – Selection](#)

[Stage 4 – Appointment](#)

The steps common to all categories of staff (academic, research and professional) are set out first and any differences are then addressed. The policy principles of non-discrimination and appointment on merit must not be compromised under any circumstance.

A checklist covering each stage of the process, as a guide for the manager responsible for recruitment in the organisational unit seeking to fill a position, is available [online](#).

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1. Stage 1 – Vacancy

The steps in the process can be summarised as follows:

- Decision to fill a position
- Develop the position description
- Develop the Job advertisement
- Recruitment activity approval
- Source the job advertisement.

1.1 Decision to Fill a Position

Heads of organisation units must carefully consider a decision to create a new position, or fill a position when an incumbent leaves. Other options should be canvassed, such as discontinuation of the functions or service involved, re-allocation of duties, creation of a new position at a different level or part-time, or temporary filling as a fixed-term appointment, pending a restructure. The suitability of the position for job-sharing should also be considered.

This Recruitment and Selection Manual is aimed at providing an equitable, systematic and consistent approach to recruitment and selection in order to attract, select and retain the most capable staff through open competition on merit. Specific exemptions to the processes are provided in the following areas:

- Fixed-Term employment may be used for “Research Professional staff” engaged on research only functions for a contract period generally not exceeding five years.
- The Chief Investigator, without advertising, may fill positions where the appointment is for one year or less. The Chief Investigator must advise the Approval Authority if there is a possibility that the appointment could extend beyond one year. The Approval Authority will determine if the position should be advertised.
- Any change to an appointment is based on the recommendation of the Chief Investigator. Where a change in appointment involves a change in classification level, the Chief Investigator must demonstrate the basis for the reclassification to the satisfaction of the Approval Authority (Classification Guidelines).
- Staff members that are identified for a position in the research funding application can be recruited without advertising. Staff employed under these conditions may not be eligible for certain internal research grants ([Internal Schemes \(UQ\)](#)).

For Academic Research staff to be eligible for UQ grant schemes (such as the ECR – Early Career Researcher), it must be evident that they were appointed through a competitive recruitment process.

1.2 Develop the Position Description

The appointed Hiring Manager or Head of the organisational unit should prepare a position description, including a duty statement and selection criteria, before writing an advertisement. For academic appointments, this undertaking should be done in consultation with the Head of the organisational unit, senior colleagues and the Executive Dean. The following templates for University position descriptions are available online:

- [Academic Staff](#)
- [Academic Staff \(Teaching Focused Appointment\)](#)
- [Professional Staff](#).

The position description should provide applicants and Selection Committee members with a clear description of the duties and of the essential and desirable selection criteria, these factors enable selection on merit.

1.2.1 Background Information

Within each template, the first three paragraphs should not be altered as they provide background information about the University and its commitments to research, teaching and learning.

The remaining paragraphs can be updated to provided information that is relevant to the organisational unit including, a description of the work of the unit, its objectives and reporting relationships. This information is for applicants as it helps place the duties and selection criteria in context.

1.2.2 Duty Statement

The statement of duties in a position description must include the primary purpose of the position and a list of key tasks or responsibilities. However, the documentation needs to be sufficiently flexible to allow for changing requirements in the organisational unit. Consequently, the preamble to the list of duties should state:

“Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:”

The duty statement needs to be an accurate reflection of all the duties that are required of a position. Where possible it should be written in consultation with the incumbent to ensure that it reflects the actual requirements of the position. However, it should be made clear to applicants that duties are subject to change following the appointee’s Annual Review, or as a result of organisational restructuring.

Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) responsibilities should be incorporated into the duty statements of all staff. A description of the responsibilities for Senior Executives and Managers, Heads of organisation units, Supervisors and individual staff can be located at [Staff Responsibilities for Occupational Health & Safety \(OH&S\)](#)

The requirement to comply with the University’s [Code of Conduct](#) is to be included in duty statements to ensure that prospective staff members are aware of their obligation to treat all persons equitably and with respect. The University regards a staff member’s personal behaviour towards and interaction with others as a vital part of the duties of their position.

The duty statement must also outline a staff member's responsibility to minimise environmental harm in accordance with the University's commitment to sustainable practices. These responsibilities are principally based on the Environmental Protection (EP) Act 1994 and related legislation. The University Environmental Policy further reinforces these responsibilities.

The duty statement for academic positions must be consistent with the Academic Staff Position Classification Standards (Levels A to E) as set out in *Schedule 10* of [The University of Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2010 - 2013](#) (referred to as the Enterprise Agreement in the remainder of this document) and with University criteria for confirmation of continuing appointment. A probationary academic staff member's duty statement should not inhibit their chances of obtaining confirmation of appointment.

For academic positions, particularly those at senior levels, the duty statement should not be overly prescriptive in terms of the proposed area of academic specialisation. The range of academic specialties represented in the field of applicants may inform selection of the successful applicant.

1.2.3 Selection Criteria

Selection criteria are specified to ensure that shortlisting, interview assessment and reference checks are made on the same basis for all applicants. Selection criteria should be based on the following areas as they relate to the duty statement for the position and level of appointment:

- Qualifications
- Knowledge/Skills
- Experience (including for academic staff, prior performance in teaching, research and service)
- Personal Qualities.

Within each of these areas, essential selection criteria should be identified and listed first, followed by desirable criteria. This enables a wide field of capable applicants to be considered and allows the Selection Committee some discretion in choosing the most suitable applicant.

Selection Committees should be flexible in determining the relative order of importance of selection criteria. The Committee should not be constrained to ranking each applicant based on a strict mathematical comparison of scores against weighted criteria. In particular, with academic appointments, judgement will need to be exercised where an applicant is particularly strong in one area and could make a substantial contribution to the organisation unit, but may be lacking in certain aspects in comparison with other applicants.

For professional staff positions, the organisational unit has the discretion to waive the requirement for applicants to address the selection criteria in writing as part of the application process. Where this is done, applicants will still be required to address the selection criteria during the recruitment process, for example, at interview.

Qualifications

- For academic staff, educational requirements will generally be essential for appointment rather than desirable. Progress towards attaining higher degree qualifications is also considered.
- For professional staff, formal educational or trade qualifications may be essential for appointment to some positions and desirable for others. The University's Training Level or Qualifications guidelines for professional staff are set out in the current Enterprise Agreement. Again, the progress of an applicant towards attaining qualifications and demonstrated application of knowledge and skills from that course of study should be taken into account.

Knowledge/Skills

- The knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks and accept the responsibilities of the position should be specified. Alternatively, the capacity to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding or the required skills quickly might be acceptable. These can include communication, interpersonal, leadership and management skills. For academic staff teaching, research and representational skills may be specified.
- Professional positions at Higher Education Worker (HEW) Level 10 and academic positions at Level D and above that involve the management or supervision of staff or students should include a requirement for demonstrated knowledge of, and commitment to, equity principles.

Experience

- Either experience directly related to the duties of the position, or more general experience that may be relevant. Including experience that has provided the applicant with transportable knowledge or skills should be specified. For instance, organisational or communication skills, the ability to work well with other people or accept more responsibility and the ability to manage committee work effectively are only a few of the many transportable skills that may be acquired in or outside the paid workforce.
- For academic staff, quality of teaching, number and frequency of research publications and standard of publication medium will be important. For women, owing to the greater likelihood that they will have had breaks in their academic careers, it may be important to consider the rate of publications over a concentrated period so they will not be unfairly disadvantaged.
- For professional staff, such factors as the quality of the finished task, the quantity of completed work, timeliness and the level of service provided may be considered.

Personal Qualities

- Personal qualities should be considered insofar as they are relevant to performing the duties of the position. For example, qualities like; judgment, integrity, ability to relate to students, initiative, adaptability or readiness to co-operate with others may be relevant. Consideration of potential for further career development and the willingness and ability to perform the duties of other positions at the same or higher levels might also be appropriate:
 - In a position where the occupant is likely to be required to deputise for the occupant of another position at the same or higher level, or to serve as Head of an organisational unit
 - Where the occupant's effectiveness could be enhanced by the possession of a wider range of skills and experience.

When devising selection criteria, it should be recognised that applicants frequently have differing career paths. In assessing a person's potential for further career development, it may be important to consider how applicants who have been out of the paid workforce for a time have developed skills such as those listed above. The length of experience that a person has had in a paid position or how recently that experience was acquired are not necessarily reliable indicators of whether that person has, or could develop, the skills needed for the position. Accordingly, it is desirable that selection criteria be expressed in terms of knowledge and skills where possible rather than job specific experience, because experience (seniority) might be equated incorrectly with merit.

Ideally, the selection criteria should consist of no more than six items. This number is considered adequate for most positions. Applicants should frame their applications against the selection criteria. Interview questions can be based on them and referees can provide comments against the criteria. The overall aim of using selection criteria is to increase objectivity, avoid clouding debate at the end of the interview process and ensure that applicants have been assessed fairly.

Accordingly, in developing selection criteria it is preferable not to specify a narrow range of essential qualifications and experience, which may discourage all but a few potential applicants from applying. It is preferable to design a loose-fitting profile of the ideal applicant to attract the widest pool of applicants.

1.3 Develop the Job Advertisement

The aim of a job advertisement is to attract applications from the widest range and largest number of suitably qualified applicants. However, vacancies for a period of one year or less need not be advertised.

In addition to the more usual forms of advertisement, direct approaches in person or by email to invite potential applicants to apply are often effective ways of producing a high quality field of applicants.

University staff involved in writing job advertisements should use their supporting Faculty/Institute/Division/Central Human Resources (HR) staff member as a consultant in this vital part of the recruitment process.

HR staff members have considerable experience in the composition of advertisements, knowledge of the relevant legislation and University policy requirements, as well as knowledge of the most effective media for placing recruitment advertising for particular occupational groups.

Your HR staff member will help ensure that:

- Advertisements are of an appropriate standard and quality
- Advertisements are consistent with the recruitment advertising guidelines
- Advertisements are consistent with the requirements of industrial agreements and policy. In particular, University guidelines on Training Level and Qualifications for Professional staff, as set out in the current enterprise agreement
- Continuing or fixed-term professional staff positions of more than twelve months have been classified. If a position must be classified, at least two weeks should be allowed for the position to be classified before it is advertised.

Note the following:

- Job advertisements for professional staff positions greater than 12 months, including research-related professional staff positions, must be classified before they can be advertised. This is in accordance with the University's Policy on [Evaluation and Classifications of Positions](#)
- All positions over 12 months must be advertised
- All advertised positions must be placed on the UQ Jobs website. This enables potential applicants to access the UQ Jobs website, view advertisements placed by The University of Queensland and submit their applications online
- There is no Commonwealth government requirement to advertise academic vacancies for continuing appointments at level B and above in the Australian press before appointing an international applicant. However, if it is anticipated that it may be necessary to appoint an international applicant to an academic vacancy for a continuing appointment at level A, then the job must be advertised in either national print media, or locally in the Courier-Mail newspaper. This is necessary to meet federal Immigration and domestic labour market testing requirements before a visa can be issued
- Advertising academic vacancies in international print should be determined on a case by case basis by the relevant Executive Dean.

1.3.1 Internal and External Advertising of Positions

The organisational unit is responsible for determining whether a role should be limited to internal advertising. In making this assessment, the organisational unit will need to take into account a number of factors including the seniority of the position, nature of appointment and potential number of suitable internal applicants. External advertising is expected for all continuing academic roles and continuing professional staff roles at HEW 6 and above. External advertising is consistent with ensuring the recruitment process is transparent, consistent with merit-based appointments and targeted at finding the best possible applicant for the position.

When filling a position with an internal applicant, it is important to allow sufficient time for the staff member to be released from their current organisational unit.

Advertising of Short-Term Vacancies

Positions that are of 12 months or less duration are not required to be advertised (internally or externally).

Advertising Timelines

The minimum closing date on an internal only advertisement is six working days. Staff must have at least one weekend available after distribution of the position description to prepare an application.

Secondment Opportunities

The advertising of vacant positions may create secondment opportunities within the University. The release and return of a seconded staff member should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the releasing and accepting organisational unit and the staff member. The instrument documenting a secondment will normally be a temporary variation to a staff member's existing contract.

Redeployment

Where a staff member has been identified as suitable for redeployment to a vacant position, the processes outlined in this manual will not apply.

Re-advertising of Positions

If a position that has been advertised internally and externally resulting in no appointment due to the lack of suitable applicants, the post may require re-advertisement or filling by other means.

1.3.2 Drafting a Job Advertisement

The appointed Hiring Manager or Head of the organisational unit is responsible for developing the job advertisement using the [Web Ad template](#).

Job advertisements should be succinct and gain the attention of potential applicants, stimulate their interest in the job, make the opportunity appear desirable and encourage them to apply. A poorly written advertisement that fails to attract potential applicants wastes considerable time and resources.

Where possible use words that make the job sound positive and appealing, and avoid those with negative connotations. For instance:

Words that sound Positive:

Dynamic
Drive
Flexible
Strong
Vital
Initiative

Words that sound Negative:

Formal
Small
Staff
Hopefully
Somewhat
Limited

Words that sound Positive:

Challenge
Opportunity
Creative

Words that sound Negative:

Problem
Maybe
Serious

When creating an advertisement, keep in mind the AIDA technique. AIDA stands for Attention - Interest - Desire - Action and should be employed as follows:

- ATTENTION – JOB TITLE

Use a **descriptive title** for the position to get attention. This may necessitate using a generic title that is easily understood by potential applicants who are not familiar with job titles in universities.

- INTEREST – THE OPPORTUNITY and ROLE

Create interest in the job **opportunity** by describing attractive features of the organisation unit. Before writing anything, think about things that will interest potential applicants such as areas of research, teaching specialisation, size of budget and number of staff or students.

Stimulate interest by describing the **role**. State the University title for the position, the primary purpose of the position and, if applicable, any key accountabilities that are expected of the successful applicant. Also, include any career or professional development opportunities or future projects, if this information provides further appeal. **Do not repeat the complete statement of duties.**

- DESIRE – THE PERSON and SALARY

Encourage the potential applicant to pursue the opportunity by describing the **person** required for the role. Include key features from the selection criteria, but avoid being too prescriptive. Good potential applicants who are particularly strong in one or two areas may decide not to apply, if every aspect is listed as *mandatory* or *essential* and they feel they cannot meet every one. Try to appeal to the widest range and largest number of potential applicants. Avoid causing them to self-select out, unless the criterion is truly essential **[1]**. Use *essential* sparingly, or substitute with *highly desirable* where possible.

Provide the details on the type of employment (continuing or fixed term, full or part-time), level of appointment, **salary** and any other remuneration benefits. Note that for professional staff appointments, only one HEW level can be specified unless the position has been approved for broad banding. Academic staff positions should normally not span more than two levels.

An indication of flexibility with salary packaging may also be included where appropriate. For example, by indicating “salary negotiable” or “market related loading may be negotiated”. Also, specify any particular requirements such as travel, hours of work or normal location(s) of employment.

- ACTION – ENQUIRIES

The last section should prompt action from the reader. It should provide information on how to obtain further information about the job.

1.4 Recruitment Activity Approval

When the position description and job advertisement have been created, the Hiring Manager or Head of the organisational unit will seek approval to proceed with the recruitment activity.

This is done by creating the recruitment activity in UQ Jobs and initiating the approval process, or if the recruitment activity is managed outside UQ Jobs, the [Position Authorisation form](#) and associated documentation (for example, position description), are to be submitted to the relevant approvers for approval.

The persons required to approve a recruitment activity will depend on the Academic or HEW level of the position, for further details refer to the University policy on [Approval of Staff Appointments](#).

Note: Only jobs that do not require advertising should be managed outside of UQ Jobs.

1.5 Source the Job Advertisement

When a recruitment activity has been approved and the job is required to be advertised, the relevant HR staff member will place the job advertisement to the requested online posts (job boards). **Note:** The job must be classified before it can be advertised.

The responsibilities in relation to the placement of an advertisement are:

- HR staff members are responsible for the placement of approved advertisements to UQ Jobs, SEEK, UniJobs and other websites that *do not charge* a fee
- The Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) is responsible for the placement of approved advertisements in the print media, external websites (other than UQ Jobs, SEEK and UniJobs), email bulletins, journals and other such fee charging publications.

Details about the types of advertising that OMC offers, procedures for placing an advertisement with OMC, deadlines and the costs associated with advertising in a fee-charging publication can be found on the UQ Advertising web page "[How to place a non-corporate advertisement](#)".

2. Stage 2 – Applications and Shortlisting

The steps in this process can be summarised as follows:

- Receive enquiries
- Receive and acknowledge applications
- Initial review
- Nominate the Selection Committee members
- Shortlist.

If the job advertisement has elicited no shortlisted applicants, it might be appropriate to engage a recruitment agency to assist.

2.1 Receive Enquiries

The nominated contact person in the job advertisement may receive enquiries about the job and email out additional information. In addition, depending on the nature of the position, it may be appropriate to email information that is more comprehensive. This could consist of information about Brisbane, the University and the organisational unit from the University's website, together with any relevant information on the organisational unit or the nature of the work involved.

For academic staff positions, the advertisement should list the Head of School, or a senior colleague as the person for prospective applicants to telephone to discuss the position. This gives the Head the opportunity to find out essential details about the person and encourage them to apply. The Head can also describe the job opportunity and outline the benefits of working at the University. It is advisable to record callers and their contact numbers. This enables the Head to follow up prospective applicants for the position if their application is not subsequently received. The prospective supervisor for senior professional staff appointments should do likewise.

2.2 Receive and Acknowledge Applications

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application online via the UQ Jobs applicant website. This ensures that an automated acknowledgement email is sent to the applicant. By submitting their application online, the applicant will also be able to monitor the progress of their application.

If an applicant does not have access to the internet or does not have an email account set up, a postal application must be accepted. Applications should be acknowledged within two days of receipt as a matter of courtesy to candidates and good recruitment practice. A template of the Application Acknowledgement letter is available [online](#). The appointed Faculty/Institute/Division/Central HR staff member will then create an application in UQ Jobs on behalf of the applicant.

Late applications should be referred to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee for a decision on acceptance.

2.2.1 External Applications Received for an Internal Only Job

If an application from an external applicant is received, for an internally advertised job, the Hiring Manager or appointed HR staff member should contact the applicant and advise them that their application will not be processed.

If the applicant is of a high standard, consider asking the applicant for permission to keep their details on file. This way, should another job become available, and decision is made to advertise the job externally, the Hiring Manager or appointed HR staff member can contact the external applicant and invite the applicant to apply for the job.

2.2.2 Encouraging Gender Balance

The appointed Hiring Manager or Head of the organisational unit should seek to attract a pool of applicants with an appropriate gender balance. If the Chairperson of the Selection Committee deems there are insufficient applicants of either gender in response to advertising, the Chairperson or Head of the organisational unit should seek assistance from the Director, Equity Office. In addition, for academic appointments, the Head of School may wish to personally contact, or request colleagues to contact, potential applicants from the non-traditional gender for the discipline concerned.

Another means of locating suitably qualified women is the [Universities Australia – Register of Senior Women](#).

2.3 Initial Review

Depending on the number of applications received, it may be necessary to perform an initial review and remove from the shortlisting process those applications that do not adequately meet the selection criteria. The Selection Committee can then consider the remaining applications for shortlisting.

If deemed necessary, the Chairperson of the Selection Committee, or Head of School if designated by the Chairperson, for academic jobs at Levels A to D, and one other member of the Committee should perform this initial review of the applications.

For academic jobs, the Head of School should designate which of the remaining applicants the Secretary to the Selection Committee should immediately seek referee reports for.

For professional jobs at HEW Level 7 and below, the Chairperson may elect to shortlist applicants for interview as part of the initial review, rather than convene the selection committee to do so.

2.4 Nominate the Selection Committee Members

It is recommended that the list of Selection Committee members be finalised before the recruitment activity is created in UQ Jobs. This enables the approvers to view and approve the composition of the selection panel.

Nominating the Selection Committee members early in the recruitment process also helps to ensure their availability for proposed meeting dates. Significant delays can occur because of the difficulty of supporting and arranging meetings of large Committees with insufficient notice.

There are many interests to be accommodated that tend to increase the size of Selection Committees. Hence, some compromise is necessary to prevent the decision making process becoming too slow and to avoid the loss of good candidates to other Universities.

For information about the role of a Selection Committee member, refer to section 3.2.1 Role and Conduct of the Selection Committee.

2.4.1 Academic Staff Selection Committees

The Selection Committee for academic appointments [\[2\]](#) at Levels A to D should comprise of four members for fixed-term appointments and each of the five members listed below for continuing appointments:

- Executive Dean (or senior nominee, other than the Head of School [\[3\]](#)) as Chairperson
- Head of School
- Academic staff member from relevant school
- Representative of Academic Board Standing Committee or, in consultation with the President of the Academic Board, academic staff member from cognate school/centre outside the school
- Student representative.

A quorum of three is required for Selection Committees for academic Levels A to D, consisting of the Chairperson, Head of School and a representative of the Academic Board Standing Committee or academic staff member from a cognate school/centre.

In addition, the Executive Dean may invite a representative of a conjoint funding body and/or a relevant profession to become a Committee member.

The Selection Committee for professorial appointments should comprise at least the following members:

- Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor, or other Vice-Chancellor's nominee as Chairperson
- Senate representative
- President, Academic Board or nominee
- Executive Dean
- Head of School/Director Faculty or University Centre
- One senior member of the school/centre selected from the full-time, fixed-term and continuing academic staff of the school

- Student representative, (postgraduate for research appointments) nominated by the Vice-Chancellor, after consultation with the President of the University of Queensland Union
- Such other persons from inside or outside the University as the Vice-Chancellor may approve.

2.4.2 Professional Staff Selection Committees

The Selection Committee for professional staff appointments HEW Levels 1 – 7 should comprise at least the following members:

- Head of organisational unit or nominee as Chairperson
- Direct supervisor
- Member of prospective or cognate work group, normally at the same HEW level or higher. In some cases, it may be appropriate for someone at a lower HEW level to be a member, where, for instance specialist technical or local knowledge about the position is required.

The Selection Committee for professional staff appointments at HEW Level 8 and above should comprise at least the following members:

- Head of organisational unit as Chairperson or, if the Head is the direct supervisor, nominee at least at the same HEW Level as the appointment
- Direct supervisor
- Member of cognate organisational unit, normally at the same HEW level or higher (Executive Director (Operations) and University Secretary for HEW Level 10 appointments).

In addition, the Chairperson may invite a representative of a relevant profession or organisation to become a Committee member, if such external expertise is necessary.

A Faculty or Central HR representative may be appointed as a Committee member to ensure equity and consistency in the process across organisational units.

2.4.3 Gender Balance

There must be 25% minority gender representation on all Selection Committees.

2.4.4 Secretarial Support

A HR Officer is to provide secretarial support, as directed by the Chairperson to the Selection Committee, for the conduct of the selection process for all academic appointments and professional appointments (at HEW Level 10). This includes creation of a University selection file for retention of all relevant approval and action documents.

2.4.5 Training for Selection Committee Members

Prior to serving on Selection Committees, members should (if possible) attend a training workshop on recruitment and selection, offered through the University's [Staff Development Program](#).

Normally the Chairperson should have completed relevant recruitment and selection training and at least one other member of the Committee.

2.5 Shortlisting

2.5.1 Review the Applications

Using UQ Jobs, Selection Committee members may choose to log in to UQ Jobs and view the applications online. During the advertising period, Committee members can review and record their comments and recommendations for interview in UQ Jobs.

Alternatively, an indexed PDF file containing the application of each applicant can be created and sent to each member of the Selection Committee.

Within UQ Jobs, Selection Committee members can view and update their own comments, but only the Chair can view comments of other Committee members. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure the comments, entered by Committee members, are written using an appropriate language. This is necessary as these comments will be stored in UQ Jobs as part of the official record of the recruitment activity, and could be subject to judicial review.

2.5.2 Select Applicants for Interview

A meeting of the Selection Committee should be convened as soon as possible after the closing date to discuss the applications remaining from the initial review and shortlist these applicants for interview based on their written applications. The Notice of shortlisting meeting template is available [online](#). The Committee should consider the applicant's curriculum vitae and, where required by the application process, statement addressing the selection criteria, as well as referee reports obtained to date in the case of applicants for academic appointments.

When convened, the Selection Committee should also review the adequacy of the gender balance of the applicants shortlisted for interview.

2.5.3 Reference Checks for Academic Staff

The Secretary to the Selection Committee will normally be tasked by the Chairperson to obtain written referee reports for academic appointments. The Secretary should contact the referee, preferably by email to request a written report and provide the position description. The referee will be able to obtain an understanding of the requirements of the position from the duty statement and can make comments with respect to the selection criteria described in the position description. The Reference request letter template is available [online](#).

If time is short, the Chairperson, or nominee from the Selection Committee, may call referees to request a report by phone at a time convenient to the referee. The position description should be sent by email or fax for the referee to consider before the referee is called back. The person obtaining the referee report by phone should take notes of the referee's views to relay to the Committee.

To avoid wasting a referee's time and delaying the recruitment process, referee reports should only be sought for about five applicants, who have a reasonable chance of being appointed.

At this stage, it should not be necessary to call for referee reports for professional staff appointments.

For further information about reference checks, refer to section 3.4 Reference Checks.

2.5.4 Interview Types and Seminars

As part of the Selection Committee meeting, members should also decide what type of interview is required in the first instance. For example, it would be appropriate to interview interstate or international applicants via tele-conference or video-conference before incurring the cost of a face-to-face interview.

When a seminar is to be conducted as part of the selection process for academic appointments, the Committee should also decide on the topic, format and participants.

When only two people apply for a professional staff position that has been advertised internally only, the Selection Committee should interview both applicants, unless one is manifestly unsuitable with respect to the selection criteria. In cases where there is doubt about the suitability of a preferred internal applicant, and to ensure selection of the best person for the job, the position should be advertised externally.

2.5.5 Notifying the Shortlisted Unsuccessful Applicants

Using the communication templates in UQ Jobs, the Faculty/Institute/Division/Central HR staff member will generate and send an email to the internal unsuccessful applicants advising them of the outcome and thanking them for their application. Alternatively, where the recruitment activity is managed outside UQ Jobs, the Unsuccessful Applicants Letter template that is available [online](#) can be used.

The HR staff member will initiate the communication to external unsuccessful applicants after the final interviews have been conducted and the preferred applicant has been selected.

2.6 Engagement of Recruitment Agencies

Recruitment agencies should only be engaged with the approval of the Director, Human Resources Division, when the University's advertising and shortlisting procedure has failed to produce an acceptable shortlist of applicants. In the case of senior or highly specialised appointments, it may be appropriate to engage an agency immediately, with the concurrence of the Director, Human Resources Division, because the normal advertising process is deemed unlikely to succeed.

One of the main advantages agencies offer is their ability to run an advertisement without identifying the employer. This may elicit interest from applicants who might not otherwise consider working at The University of Queensland, or even in the tertiary sector. The other is their capacity to draw on a proprietary database of potential applicants and make a personal approach to prospective applicants, again without disclosing the University's identity as employer, until an applicant has responded positively to the opportunity on offer.

2.6.1 Guidelines

Advice should be sought from the Director, Human Resources Division, on possible agencies to be engaged and the process to be followed. A University Selection Committee must still interview applicants sourced by an agency. Agencies may be engaged on a retained or contingent basis.

Guidelines for Retained Assignments

Generally, one reputable recruitment agency [4] should be invited to submit a proposal to undertake a retained assignment. The agency should take a client brief on the position to be filled and must fully understand the requirements set out in the position description.

The agency should then be expected to submit a proposal describing how applicants will be sourced. Often, this will entail an advertising strategy and, depending on the nature of the position, this may be combined with or supplanted by a search strategy. A search strategy is more time and resource intensive because the agency will need to identify potential applicants and make a personal approach. However, the search can target high calibre applicants.

If advertising is to be part of the strategy, the agency should prepare a draft advertisement and recommend suitable advertising media for consideration and approval before placement.

The agency should take all enquiries in response to the job advertising and vet all applicants. The agency should then present a shortlist for interview by the Selection Committee, together with copies of each applicant's curriculum vitae and the agency's report on each applicant's match against the selection criteria.

When a search only strategy has been adopted, the agency may present a number of recommended applicants to the Selection Committee for the Committee to determine the shortlist for interview.

For record keeping purposes, the Hiring Manager, Head of the organisational unit or HR staff member should enter the shortlisted applicants provided by the agency for interview in UQ Jobs (as a minimum, the preferred applicant should be recorded).

The agency may sit in on the Selection Committee's interview with the applicants to provide advice and clarify any issues to be followed up through reference checks. The agency should be tasked to conduct reference checks on the preferred applicant and provide a written report on the outcome of each check.

Agencies will probably seek to charge between 15 and 20% of the remuneration package for the position as commission for sourcing the successful applicant primarily from an advertising strategy. A search only strategy may cost between 25 and 35% in commission. These fees are usually exclusive of advertising and travel expenses.

Agencies may seek their commission for a retained assignment on the basis of one third on acceptance of their proposal, one third on acceptance of a shortlist and the balance on appointment of an applicant. In the case of a search only strategy up to 50% may be sought at the beginning, given the time consuming and resource intensive nature of the search activity. The agency must be expected to provide at least a six month guarantee of finding a replacement at no extra commission fee to the University if the appointed applicant leaves the position for any reason.

An agency engaged on a retained basis should be expected to dedicate effort and successfully source at least two or three applicants suitable for interview by a Selection Committee. The agency should continue working diligently on the case until an applicant has been appointed.

Guidelines for Contingent Assignments

Several recruitment and selection consultancies may be invited to provide suitable applicants for a position on a contingent basis. This should be undertaken on the basis that if an applicant referred by an agency is appointed, then a fee of not more than 20% of the remuneration package will be payable to the agency concerned.

Agencies engaged on a contingent basis should still take a client brief on the position to be filled and must fully understand the requirements of the position description. The agencies will seek to locate applicants from their own databases and other sources. Consultants may advertise the role, but should not expect reimbursement.

For record keeping and reporting purposes, the Hiring Manager, Head of the organisational unit or appointed HR staff member should enter the shortlisted applicants provided by the agency for interview in UQ Jobs (as a minimum, the preferred applicant should be recorded).

The agency referring an applicant may be invited to sit in on the Selection Committee interview. If an offer of appointment is contemplated, the agency should be expected to conduct reference checks on the applicant and provide a written report on the outcome of each check.

The agency must be expected to provide at least a six month guarantee of finding a replacement at no extra commission fee to the University if the appointed applicant leaves the position for any reason.

Several consultancies engaged on a contingent basis are unlikely to dedicate as much effort as one working on a retained basis. Nevertheless, they may be able to locate and refer applicants, who have otherwise failed to respond to University job advertisements.

3. Stage 3 – Selection

An effective and equitable selection process is essential to identify the best applicant on merit. The aim is to make the selection decision as objective as possible, to make the right decision, to avoid wasting time and resources, to be fair and seen to be fair.

The role of Selection Committees in considering written applications and conducting interviews with short-listed applicants is a key part. They must also consider other relevant factors, including seminars for academic appointments, work assessment tests, job-related medical assessments and reference checks, before reaching a final decision.

The steps in the process can be summarised as follows:

- Arrange Selection Interviews
- Selection Interviews
- Other Selection Activities
- Reference Checks
- Selection Decision.

3.1 Arrange Selection Interviews

3.1.1 Committee Notification

The Secretary to the Selection Committee should arrange times for the conduct of the selection interview with applicants and confirm pre-arranged dates with members of the Selection Committee as soon as the shortlist has been determined. The Notice of Selection Committee meeting template is available [online](#).

The Committee should convene at least 15 minutes prior to interviewing the first applicant to discuss the conduct of the interview. Interviews should be scheduled for 30 to 60 minutes depending on the level of the position.

3.1.2 Shortlisted Applicants Notified

Using the communication templates in UQ Jobs, the Secretary to the Selection Committee or the Recruitment Assistant will generate and send an email to invite the shortlisted applicants for interview. Alternatively, where the recruitment activity is managed outside UQ Jobs, the templates for inviting professional or academic staff for interview are available [online](#).

Applicants should be given at least one days notice to attend an interview. They should be advised who Committee members are, including title, first name, last name and position. Internal applicants interviewed for professional staff positions at HEW Levels 4 – 9, need not be interviewed a second time if still under consideration for selection, when subsequent interviews for external applicants are held.

Applicants for academic appointments who will be required to present a seminar to prospective colleagues and students as part of the selection process should be advised about the topic, format and participants.

Anyone making contact with applicants at their current workplace should be conscious of the need to maintain confidentiality, especially when leaving messages.

3.1.3 Travel and Accommodation

The University, if deemed appropriate by the Chairperson of the Selection Committee may fund travel and accommodation arrangements for applicants to attend a selection interview. The cost will normally be borne by the organisational unit concerned. The Secretary to the Selection Committee is to make the necessary arrangements with the applicants involved, in consultation with the Head of the organisational unit.

3.1.4 Applicant Visits

Applicants for academic positions from outside Brisbane should be in Brisbane for at least three days, whenever practicable. This allows the Selection Committee to obtain adequate information about the most appropriate applicant for the position. It also permits applicants to make an informed decision regarding their future with the University.

Heads of Schools should arrange for those applicants to be met and hosted from the time of their arrival until departure. This should include a chance to meet colleagues in the school and view the University and its facilities. Overseas applicants should also be given a tour of the city and local suburbs appropriate to the housing and schooling needs of their family, if applicable. It is an opportunity to explain the benefits of working at the University and living in Brisbane, and to convey information that applicants may pass on to colleagues who will be potential applicants for other positions at the University.

3.2 Selection Interview

3.2.1 Role and Conduct of the Selection Committee

The Selection Committee is responsible for assessing all the short-listed applicants in order to recommend the most suitable person for appointment against the duty statement and selection criteria for the position.

Chairperson

The Chairperson must ensure due process is followed in the conduct of interviews, where each applicant should be given the same opportunity to present their case. All applicants must be considered on their merits. Particular care must be taken not to discriminate on any ground other than the requirements of the position.

Members

All members of the Committee should understand the nature of the position as set out in the duty statement and the characteristics of the person sought, as described in the selection criteria. They must thoroughly familiarise themselves with each application, noting any shortcomings or anomalies in an applicant's resume or statement addressing the selection criteria to follow up during the interview.

Secretary

For academic staff positions and senior professional staff positions (HEW Level 10) a HR officer will act as Secretary to the Selection Committee. The Secretary can provide advice on policy and procedure, and provide support for all stages of the process. For professional staff and research-related positions, the Chairperson should nominate a staff member from the organisational unit concerned. The Secretary supports the Chairperson with the organisation and conduct of meetings, as well as administrative aspects of the selection process, including record keeping.

All Committee members must be conscious of the need to:

- Maintain the principle of open competition on the basis of merit
- Provide equal opportunity for all applicants, with sensitivity to cultural differences and caution about stereotypes
- Encourage members of employment-disadvantaged groups
- Maintain applicant confidentiality.

Confidentiality

The following guidelines should be observed in maintaining confidentiality, especially with respect to internal applicants:

- The selection process is confidential and Committee members should respect the confidentiality of all documents and discussions relating to individual applicants. Committee deliberations should not be discussed with applicants (potential or actual), except where the Committee gives a member delegated authority to do so. Such delegation would normally only be given to the Chairperson or Head of the organisational unit. It is unethical to discuss an applicant's prospects with them or offer to support their candidacy in the Committee.
- The identity of applicants should not be disclosed outside of the Committee, unless applicants have agreed to do so.
- The identity of the successful applicant should not be revealed until the applicant has accepted an offer of appointment in writing. The identity of unsuccessful applicants remains confidential.
- The Committee's deliberations should not be discussed with anyone outside of the Committee, even at a high level of abstraction ("Was there much disagreement within the Committee?"). In particular, there should be no discussion of who was for or against a particular applicant.
- Remuneration is confidential between the University and the individual staff member. The details of remuneration paid to existing members of staff in similar appointments should not be discussed with applicants.
- Any concerns about confidentiality, equity or lack of due process should be discussed with the Chairperson in the first instance.

3.2.2 Conduct of the Selection Interview

The interview is a two-way process aimed at exchanging information between the applicant and the Selection Committee. Communication is helped by planning key aspects; including careful preparation of the physical arrangements for the interview, creating a relaxed atmosphere, asking appropriate questions and concluding the interview well.

Physical Arrangements

The Secretary to the Committee should arrange interviews to take place in a private office or room that maintains the confidentiality of the discussion, without interruptions from the telephone or other staff. A suitable separate waiting area for applicants should be provided, where they can sit alone in peace and compose themselves for their interview.

Chairs and tables for the interview should be arranged to make the Committee and applicant feel comfortable, for example, by avoiding facing glare from a window and arranging seating so the applicant and Committee sit more in a circle, rather than directly opposite each other.

The Secretary to the Selection Committee may sit in on the interviews at the discretion of the Chairperson and should attend deliberations at the end when the selection decision is made. The Secretary should assist applicants prior to and after the interview with any administrative enquiries, as well as arrange refreshments for the Committee if required.

Accommodating Disabilities

The Secretary to the Selection Committee should ensure that the needs of applicants with disabilities are accommodated. This may mean, for example, employing an interpreter if the person is hearing impaired, ensuring wheel chair accessibility or providing written material in alternative formats (an alternative formatting service is available from Student Services).

Relaxed Atmosphere

More information can be obtained by creating a good relationship between the applicant and the Committee. In a relaxed atmosphere, applicants will often reveal information that might not otherwise be volunteered.

To create a relaxed atmosphere it is necessary to gain the applicant's confidence and make them feel at ease and ready to talk. This can be achieved by:

- Inviting applicants to visit the organisational unit prior to the interview to meet other staff and gain a feel for the work environment (this will provide more information for the applicant and feedback to the Committee)
- Greeting applicants pleasantly
- Starting the interview with some "small talk" or pleasantries
- Maintaining an open and attentive listening posture that communicates interest in what the applicant has to say.

Starting the Interview

To begin the interview the Chairperson of the Selection Committee should:

- Welcome the applicant and introduce Committee members
- Explain that the sequence of the interview will consist of questions from each member with an opportunity for the applicant to ask any questions at the end
- Invite the applicant to explain why they want the position and why they feel they are best suited. This lets applicants talk about their motivation and strengths, which also helps gain their confidence
- Avoid telling the applicant all about the job. Instead, get them to talk as much as possible about their claim to it.

Interview Questions

The reliability of an interview for determining the best applicant for the job may be limited for several reasons, such as:

- Failing to ask each applicant the same questions
- Not relating the questions to the job
- Not defining an acceptable answer
- Asking the questions in such a way that the acceptable answer is obvious to the applicant
- Failing to get the applicants to do most of the talking.

Structure

A semi-structured interview should be conducted, with the same questions asked of each applicant. Additional specific questions for each applicant should also be considered, but without limiting the chance for Committee members to pursue issues with individual applicants arising from their responses to questions. It is important to pursue whatever is left unsaid or only partially explained. Probe for specific examples and do not accept vague or incomplete answers.

Committees should devise a variety of questions relevant to the Duty Statement and Selection Criteria to give applicants the opportunity to explain the relevance of their skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities. Where possible, applicants should be asked to explain past situations where they have applied their attributes or otherwise explain how they might react to a particular situation in the future. Other areas to be explored by the Committee include the applicants' teaching philosophies for academic positions and understanding of and commitment to the principles of equity in employment.

Behavioural Questions

A key to accurately predicting how an applicant will perform is to evaluate the applicant's behaviour in past situations and use this information as a guide to the applicant's likely performance in similar situations in the future.

Behavioural questions probe for specific examples of an applicant's behaviour in situations similar to what will be found in the new job. The answers need to include:

- An example of a specific work-related situation faced by the applicant
- The applicant's action in response to the situation
- The outcome of the applicant's action.

Pose questions that focus on specific work-related situations, for example:

- For a personal assistant role: Give me an example of when you had to handle a sensitive matter on behalf of your manager. How did you go about it and what was the result?
- For a client service role: Give me an example of a time when you had to deal with an upset client. What did you do specifically? What was the result of your actions?
- For a project manager role: Tell me about a time when a specific project was behind schedule and/or over budget. What did you do and what was the outcome?

Flexibility

Selection Committees have discretion in the relative weighting of selection criteria, the judgement of the merits of applicants against those criteria and in the assessment of potential or ability to perform other duties. Especially for academic positions, an applicant may not meet one of the essential selection criteria in one area, but more than compensates with strengths in others and, accordingly, will still be able to make a significant contribution. Committees should deliberate and apply collective judgment, rather than develop a strictly mathematical approach to weighting criteria and pedantically assessing compliance.

While interviews should be semi-structured, with each applicant being given an opportunity to respond to similar questions, this does not preclude pursuing individual leads or exploring particular areas within the interest or experience of applicants. The aim of ad hoc questions could be to:

- Test depth and/or width of expertise in an academic or other relevant area
- Test ability to reason
- Obtain relevant factual information
- Highlight views and attitudes, say, towards a particular academic or other work-related development
- Expose strengths and weaknesses
- To differentiate between applicants in specific areas.

Equity

The principles of equity to which the University is committed include:

- Promotion of equal access of women and men in academic work, in staffing and decision-making structures
- Use of inclusive language in University practices and procedures to avoid all forms of direct and indirect gender discrimination
- Provision of an educational environment, which is free from prejudice and discrimination.

It is illegal to discriminate in employment, including recruitment and selection processes, based on the following attributes:

- Sex
- Marital status
- Pregnancy
- Parental status
- Breastfeeding
- Age
- Race
- Religion
- Impairment
- Political belief or activity
- Trade union activity
- Lawful sexual activity
- Association with, or relation to, a person identified as having any of the above attributes.

However, it is not unlawful to discriminate in the work or work-related area if there are genuine occupational requirements for a position. For example:

- Selecting an actor for a dramatic performance based on age, race or sex for reasons of authenticity
- Considering only women applicants for a position involving body searches of women.

Members of Selection Committees must take care not to ask questions or make comments to applicants or others that may discriminate, unless related to a genuine occupational requirement. For instance, questions about personal circumstances, such as marital status, are inappropriate. However, asking all applicants questions about their availability for travel, overtime or shiftwork for instance, and explaining the relevance to the job, would be acceptable.

On the other hand, Selection Committees may explore a range of issues with applicants to ascertain their commitment to achieving gender equity. The type of issues and questions that might be explored is as follows:

- Explain or give examples of human resource practices you have implemented or might suggest to assist staff cope with family responsibilities (for example, permanent part time work, job sharing, home-based work, family or carers leave).
- How might women in non-traditional areas of the University, such as science or engineering, be encouraged and supported in gaining promotion?
- Provide examples of initiatives you have introduced or supported to further gender equity in previous employment contexts (for example, introduction of career mobility training schemes for female staff, initiatives to improve gender balance, education campaigns to develop staff awareness about gender equity issues and sexual harassment, or encouragement of employees to improve qualifications and engage in career planning).

Men and women frequently have different career paths because of family commitments. For an applicant who has been out of the paid workforce for some time, Selection Committees may usefully consider a person's transportable skills or potential, rather than concentrate exclusively on recent academic or other employment experience. Where appropriate, for instance, where the selection criteria include a capacity for problem solving, good time management or interpersonal skills, the Committee may explore this by focussing on an applicant's life skills. Questions might be asked such as:

- Can you describe a time recently when you were faced with problems or pressures that tested your ability to cope? What did you do?
- What experience have you had in resolving a misunderstanding with someone, or dealing with difficult situations involving people? How did you deal with it?

Some applicants may be overqualified for a position, but this may reflect career or lifestyle choices. This should not preclude them from consideration, provided the Committee is satisfied that the person is otherwise suitable.

Note Taking

Committee members should make notes during the interview about each applicant, including any aspects to be followed up with referees. This will assist later in the assessment of the relative merit of applicants by the whole Committee. A proforma to assist with note taking is available [online](#).

Concluding the Interview

Selection Committees should appreciate that, apart from its recruitment function, the interview and the entire selection process are also a public relations exercise. Through the interview the Committee can give applicants confidence in the University as a potential employer. At the end of the interview, the Chairperson should give applicants an opportunity to summarise their claim for the position and ask any questions.

Some applicants will ask questions about remuneration. They may be told what options exist within the classification limits advertised. However, promises should not be made. Applicants should be told a decision about remuneration will be made as part of the selection of the preferred applicant. This will be included in the offer of appointment and might be open to negotiation.

Applicants should be told what will happen next and when they can expect to be informed about the outcome. Finally, they should be thanked for their time and interest in the University.

Subsequently, if the process becomes prolonged the Chairperson should notify the interviewed applicants as a matter of courtesy and to maintain their interest in the position.

3.3 Other Selection Activities

The interview by the Selection Committee and consideration of each applicant's written submission inform the Committee's decision. Other important factors the Committee should take into account include reference checks and, where relevant, some form of work based assessment.

Short listed applicants for academic appointments should normally be expected to present a seminar as an integral part of the selection process. The Selection Criteria for some professional staff positions may include skills such as word-processing, competence with a suite of office applications, or client service, which can be assessed with a test, based on the requirements of the job, before the selection interview. In some cases, it may also be necessary for the preferred applicants to undergo a pre-placement medical examination, before an Offer of Appointment can be made, to mitigate health and safety risks.

3.3.1 Academic Staff Seminars

A requirement for applicants to present a seminar as a means of demonstrating their knowledge and skills is a highly desirable element in academic staff selection. It should be part of the selection process whenever practicable, prior to the conduct of the selection interview.

Heads of Schools should have a clear idea of the purpose of the seminar and what is to be assessed, which might include teaching ability or research capability and communication skills. Seminars based on the applicant's current research project might prove inadequate to gauge teaching ability. If the Head wishes to assess teaching ability, then applicants could be asked to teach on a specific topic structured to suit a specified audience.

The presentation of a seminar to prospective colleagues in the school and students will generally be more appropriate than requesting applicants to teach a class as part of a current course. Any clarification of the applicant's teaching philosophy or teaching evaluation results should be undertaken during the selection interview or seminar presentation.

Shortlisted applicants should be invited to present a seminar and informed of the purpose and procedures in the notification letter sent by the Secretary to the Selection Committee. The Head of School should also ensure that the Selection Committee and prospective audience are informed about the advice provided to applicants and the arrangements for the seminar.

Usually, at least the Head of School and the academic staff member from the school would represent the Selection Committee at the seminar and report back at the selection interview.

3.3.2 Pre-Placement Medical Examinations

It may be necessary to arrange for the University Health Service to conduct a pre-placement medical exam where a job poses a potential health or safety risk. This may occur when job requirements include:

- Manual handling, which is of high risk, or involves objects heavier than 16 kilograms
- Use of protective clothing, equipment, noise protection or respiratory protection
- Work with microwave radiation, laser radiation, or radio frequency equipment; handling human blood, tissues or body fluids
- Work with animals
- Use of hazardous substances specified in Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Regulations (including MOCA, acrylonitrile, asbestos, benzene, cadmium, creosote, crystalline silica, inorganic arsenic, inorganic chromium, inorganic lead, inorganic mercury, isocyanates, organophosphate pesticides, and 4-4 methylene dianiline)
- Use of cytotoxic or known carcinogens.

Advice on risk assessment, including working with hazardous substances, should be obtained from the Occupational Health and Safety Unit (telephone 336 52365). If a pre-placement medical examination is required, this must be included in the advice to applicants in the Selection Criteria section of the Position Description.

The Secretary to the Selection Committee is to arrange an appointment for a Pre-placement Medical Assessment with the Occupational Health Nurse at the University Health Service (telephone 336 54883) for the preferred applicant.

The results of the medical assessment and associated records are retained by the University Health Service and are kept strictly confidential. The Health Service will send notification of the outcome of the medical assessment to the Chair of the Selection Committee using the [Pre-Placement Health Assessment form](#).

3.4 Reference Checks

The rigorous conduct of reference checks is a vital part of the selection process. Referees must have sufficient knowledge about the applicant, gained through their work relationship - not social or family connections, to provide valid comment. Written referee reports for academic staff, called for prior to the selection interview, provide valuable information to the Selection Committee. In the case of professional staff, reference checks should normally be conducted by telephone after the selection interviews, **before making an Offer of Appointment**.

Applicants will usually be expected to nominate three referees, one of whom should be their current direct supervisor. However, the Committee may seek further information as necessary and may consult with anyone who might have relevant, substantial comment to offer on the applicant's likely performance in the job.

Reference checks can help differentiate between two applicants who otherwise seem equally meritorious for the position. They must be undertaken to ensure that claims made by an applicant in their written application and at interview are substantiated.

In cases where contacting an applicant's present supervisor may jeopardise their current position or career prospects, this reference check should be left until last for the preferred applicant and would normally be made by telephone. If an applicant offers compelling reasons as to why a direct supervisor should not be contacted, the Selection Committee should not pursue this further without the consent of the applicant. In that case, the Selection Committee should advise the applicant that their application might not be considered further.

3.4.1 Written Referee Reports

The Secretary to the Selection Committee will seek written referee reports for academic positions as part of the shortlisting stage of the process.

Referees should be invited to comment with respect to the selection criteria set out in the Position Description and any other matters they might consider pertinent. Positive referee comments with respect to teaching ability and research in particular provide valuable information. However, the possibility of disclosure of comments may inhibit the candour of referees in providing insights into an applicant's weaknesses.

When referees are requested to provide reports on applicants, they are asked to indicate their willingness to release their report to the applicant on request. Under the Queensland *Freedom of Information Act* referee reports made by an academic in their personal capacity, for example, based on their expertise in a relevant field of scholarship, or as a teaching or research colleague, can normally be expected to be withheld by the University.

However, a report provided by a referee acting in their capacity as an officer of the University of Queensland, for example, a Head of School or the applicant's academic supervisor, could not be regarded as confidential. In that case, the University would be bound to disclose the information to the applicant on request.

The Secretary to the Selection Committee or HR staff member will attach the referee reports to the applicant's application in UQ Jobs.

3.4.2 Telephone Reference Checks

Telephone checks must be conducted. They should be utilised to clarify written referee reports, validate information provided by an applicant at interview, or to explore concerns raised by members of the Selection Committee. Normally, for professional staff positions, the Chairperson or Head of the organisational unit will be delegated to conduct three telephone reference checks and inform the Committee of the outcome. These checks must include the preferred applicant's current and immediate past supervisor whenever possible.

In the case of academic staff, at least one telephone reference check should be conducted with the preferred applicant's current direct supervisor before making a final decision. In particular, this provides a last opportunity to explore collegial aspects such as interpersonal relations in the workplace, communication, co-operation with colleagues and treatment of students [5]. The University's [Code of Conduct](#) provides guidance on what is expected of prospective staff in the collegial environment of University.

A telephone reference check should be structured to gain the maximum benefit and ensure nothing is overlooked as follows:

- Start with a polite explanation of who is calling and why. Referees may ask for a telephone number to call back to check the caller is bona fide or talk at a more convenient time.
- Next, seek to clarify facts and build rapport with the referee by asking about the work relationship with the applicant and the applicant's current role.
- Then, seek explanation of how the applicant performed in the role and an overall assessment of strengths and weaknesses. Note any discrepancies in the referee's responses to those attributes claimed by the applicant against the Selection Criteria and probe any issues of concern to the Committee.
- Ask about the applicant's interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ask if the referee would re-employ the applicant in future.
- Ask why the applicant is leaving.
- Describe the position to be filled, and ask how the referee thinks they would fit in. Explore any essential selection criteria not yet covered.
- In closing, ask for any other comments or general opinion the referee might wish to offer and thank them for their time and input.

What a referee leaves unsaid can often be more important than what is said. Listen for nuance and probe ambiguity, or to obtain detail as appropriate. The person obtaining the referee report by telephone should use the reference check form provided in UQ Jobs to record the referee's views to relay to the Committee. The Record of Telephone Reference Check template is also available [online](#).

3.4.3 Disclosure of Reference Checks

The University is not required, under the Queensland *Judicial Review Act*, to provide a statement of reasons in relation to appointment decisions. However, selection processes used by the University could be subject to judicial review. In the course of such a review, it would be necessary to disclose written referee reports and any record of reference checks made by telephone. Consequently, take care with what is noted on written referee reports or recorded from telephone conversations to ensure accuracy and fairness to applicants on the part of the University.

If any doubt arises, applicants should also be asked to provide evidence of their qualifications for verification.

3.5 Selection Decision

3.5.1 Selecting a Preferred Applicant

The Selection Committee will deliberate on how well applicants meet the Selection Criteria and will take into account of any other information relevant to performing the duties of the position. The Committee may be able to come to a decision on a preferred applicant once all those shortlisted have completed any work-based assessment tests and have been interviewed. In that event, the final decision on proceeding to offer of appointment might be left to the Chairperson, subject to satisfactory completion of reference checks. If reference checks reveal something untoward, or are being undertaken to differentiate between two applicants, the Committee will need to reconvene. It might decide to undertake a second round of interviews, if necessary.

The remaining short-listed applicants should be determined either not appointable, or, if suitable for appointment, rank ordered behind the preferred applicant.

If the selection process becomes prolonged the Chairperson of the Selection Committee, Head of the organisational unit or Secretary to the Selection Committee, should keep the appointable applicants informed on progress.

If the Committee has any doubts about the preferred applicant and there is no suitable alternative applicant, then it should decide to re-advertise the position. This is far preferable to making a doubtful appointment just to fill the position quickly, which often costs much more in time and effort to rectify performance problems in the long run.

3.5.2 Record of Selection Process

If UQ Jobs is used to fully manage the recruitment activity, the system will hold all relevant information that the University has the obligation to keep about the recruitment process.

If the recruitment activity is managed outside UQ Jobs, the Secretary to the Selection Committee is to record the following detail about the selection process within five working days of the final Committee meeting:

- Names and appointments of the Chairperson and members of the Selection Committee
- Dates of Committee meetings
- Number of applicants not short-listed
- Names and telephone number of applicants short listed for interview
- Names and telephone number of short-listed applicants deemed not appointable
- Name and telephone number of the preferred applicant and other appointable applicants in rank order.

If the Chairperson is not the approving authority for the appointment (see Handbook of University Policy and Procedures, [Policy Number 5.30.2, Approval of Staff Appointments](#)) then the Secretary should record the Committee's reasons for selecting the preferred applicant. This, together with preceding record of the selection process, should be submitted to the relevant delegate for approval of the appointment.

A template for the Record of the Selection Process is available [online](#).

4. Stage 4 – Appointment

Once the preferred applicant has been selected, the steps in the process can be summarised as follows:

- Recommendation for appointment
- Offer of appointment
- Acceptance and negotiation
- Closure and record keeping.

4.1 Recommendation for Appointment

The Chairperson of the Selection Committee can inform the preferred applicant that the Committee has made a recommendation for appointment. The relevant authority must approve the recommendation before an offer of appointment can be made. The applicant is to be advised to do nothing until the University's offer of appointment has been received. Applicants should be reminded the offer of appointment will be conditional on them satisfying any immigration requirements, where applicable. Further information on immigration or eligibility to work in Australia can be found on the [Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship website](#).

4.1.1 Offer Approval

The Hiring Manager or Head of the organisational unit will create the offer approval activity in UQ Jobs and initiate the approval process.

If the offer approval process is managed outside UQ Jobs, the [Staff Appointment form](#) is to be completed.

The following matters should be considered, where applicable, and included for approval by the relevant approvers:

- Advanced salary increments
- Allowances or loadings
- Relocation expenses
- Light teaching load for the first year of appointment, or a teaching free semester
- Provision of research assistance
- Funding for conference attendance and travel
- Provision of research facilities/resources that might include computers, office/laboratory space or allocation of funds
- Any variation to the normal probation period.

The request for offer approval is to be sent to the relevant approvers for approval, together with the record of the selection process, including reasons for recommending the preferred candidate, where the Chairperson of the Selection Committee is not the approval authority.

The persons required to approve an offer will depend on the Academic or HEW level of the position, for further details refer to the University policy on [Approval of Staff Appointments](#).

In addition, for existing or former staff, the relevant HR Officer is to check the applicant's University Staff file, including the person's attendance record and Confidential Staff file, if one exists. Any information pertinent to the appointment is to be drawn to the approver's attention, such as misconduct, unsatisfactory performance, poor attendance, voluntary separation or redundancy from another organisational unit within the past 12 months. The approver must be satisfied there is no impediment to the person taking up the appointment, which might not have been known to the Selection Committee.

4.2 Offer of Appointment

The University must provide an "instrument of appointment" to prospective employees, in accordance with the requirements of Policy Number [5.43.1 Modes and Types of Employment](#). This is done in the form of an offer of appointment letter for continuing or fixed-term employment, which the candidate is requested to accept in writing within a specified time period, otherwise, the offer lapses.

Consistent with University policy the letter of offer will offer the preferred applicant the opportunity to be employed under the terms of the current Enterprise Agreement.

4.2.1 Create the Offer Letter

HR staff in the Faculty, Institute or Central Office must draft the University's offer of appointment letter. In the case of fixed-term employment, the circumstances permitting a fixed-term appointment Policy Number [5.43.1 Modes and Types of Employment](#) should be specified.

Where applicable, the offer of appointment will contain details of the travel, incidental and relocation expenses payable by the University in accordance with the University policy [5.50.3 Reimbursement of Re-establishment Expenses for New Appointees](#).

Offers of appointment may include a precondition that evidence of qualifications be provided for verification.

The relevant Executive Dean, member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive, Director, Human Resources Division (or HR staff member when delegated), normally sign the offer letter. **Note: Heads of organisational units are not otherwise authorised to make or vary offers of appointment, orally or in writing.** Documentation sent with the offer of appointment will include superannuation booklet, tax and bank detail forms, to assist prospective staff members in taking up their new appointment.

4.2.2 Probation

The probationary period will be stated in the offer of appointment.

Academic Staff

The length of probation for academic staff in continuing appointments at levels A to D is normally five years. The probationary period for fixed-term appointments is usually six months to provide the opportunity for the staff member to demonstrate satisfactory performance over a semester.

However, the Selection Committee may determine that five years might be too long for some academics particularly at levels C and D, depending on their past employment. Where recommended by the Selection Committee, probation lengths may be shortened by approval of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and would be included in the Offer letter.

Special probation conditions may also be specified in the offer of appointment, such as completion of a PhD by a staff member's final review for continuing appointment.

Professional and Research-Related Staff

The probationary periods for continuing and fixed-term appointments are normally as follows:

- HEW Levels 1 – 7: 3 months
- HEW Levels 8 – 10: 6 months.

4.3 Acceptance/Negotiation

Prior to accepting an offer of appointment, the preferred applicant may seek to negotiate on some of the terms of the offer. Any change must be discussed with and approved by the relevant parties. Any changes must be incorporated in a revised offer of appointment or otherwise confirmed in writing as a variation to the terms of engagement by a member of the Vice Chancellor's Executive, Executive Dean or Director, Human Resources Division.

The preferred applicant should accept an offer of appointment online or in writing. However, if an employee starts work and accepts remuneration paid by the University without providing an official acceptance of the offer, the terms and conditions of the offer (including remuneration) are deemed accepted. In either event, the Offer of Appointment letter constitutes the basis of the contract of employment with the University.

If the preferred applicant declines the offer of appointment, the Chairperson of the Selection Committee may recommend that the second ranked appointable applicant be offered the job. If there is no alternative applicant, then the position may be re-advertised, or the Selection Committee might consider other recruitment strategies.

Successful internal applicants are required to give two weeks notice to the Head of their organisational unit on accepting an offer of appointment elsewhere in the University. A longer notice period may be negotiated, if necessary, between the Heads of the gaining and losing organisational units.

4.3.1 Employment of Partner

Some applicants may raise the issue of providing a position at the University for their partner as a condition of accepting an offer of appointment. If such concerns are not identified from the outset, it can cause difficulty and embarrassment for the University and the applicant. During the selection process, the preferred applicant should be asked, "Are there any impediments to you accepting the position?" However, ensure the question is not couched in any way that might be construed as asking about marital or family circumstances/ status or other grounds for discrimination.

The University may seek to assist partners, if possible, to find employment. However, the University will not undertake to find a position for a partner, which has not been advertised and subject to selection based on merit. This should be made clear prior to offering an appointment.

4.4 Unsuccessful Applicants

The unsuccessful shortlisted applicants should be handled courteously in a sensitive manner. The Chairperson of the Selection Committee, Head of the organisational unit, or Secretary, if delegated, should telephone unsuccessful applicants to advise them of the outcome in the first instance. It is important to treat them well, especially because it might become necessary to select an alternative, if the Committee's first choice applicant is not approved, or rejects the offer of appointment. Unsuccessful applicants who were deemed appointable should be advised accordingly. All should be informed that an email confirming the outcome will follow.

4.5 Closure and Record Keeping

Once an applicant has accepted the offer of appointment, the recruitment and selection process is closed, with the notification of unsuccessful applicants and the closure of the recruitment activity in UQ Jobs, or the submission of recruitment statistics and filing of relevant documentation (if the activity has been managed manually).

4.5.1 Notification and Feedback

Using the communication templates in UQ Jobs, generate and send an email to the unsuccessful applicants. They should be thanked for their interest and effort in applying for the position, and informed they may seek oral feedback by contacting the Chairperson, or Head of the organisational unit if delegated. Alternatively, where the recruitment activity is managed outside UQ Jobs, the Unsuccessful Interview Letter template that is available [online](#) can be used.

If requested, the Chairperson or Head may provide oral feedback on the applicant's match with the selection criteria and any key factors that might have caused the Committee to consider the applicant less competitive than others. Written feedback will normally not be provided.

The aim of post-selection feedback for internal applicants is to:

- Provide comment on the applicant 's strengths and weaknesses with respect to the selection criteria
- Help identify individual development needs
- Promote confidence in the selection process
- Resolve any misunderstandings or concerns about the process.

Where two or more applicants are closely matched, it is often difficult for the Chairperson or Head to provide meaningful feedback without disclosing confidential considerations about applicants or differences of opinion within the Committee. In any event, some applicants will seek to debate their merits against those of the successful applicant. Suffice to say in such situations, "the Committee felt the preferred applicant was more competitive overall than others deemed appointable."

4.5.2 Recruitment Statistics (Academic Staff)

The Equity Office seeks to monitor equity in recruitment advertising and selection outcomes for equity target groups based on gender, disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking background. In addition, HR staff seek to identify advertising sources for shortlisted and successful applicants.

Recruitment Statistic Reporting

Where the recruitment activity is managed outside of UQ Jobs, the Secretary to the Selection Committee is to collate information about selection committee composition and training, applications, short listed and successful candidates, including advertising sources, and appointment details. A Recruitment Statistics Report form is online for collating and submitting the required information by email to the Director, Equity Office (equity@uq.edu.au).

Where the recruitment activity is managed using UQ Jobs, statistical data gathered during the recruitment activity will be output from the UQ Jobs system and stored in the Data Warehouse.

The Equity Office and each Faculty, School, Institute and Division will be able to use the Business Objects reports provided in the Data Warehouse to:

- Monitor equity in recruitment advertising and selection outcomes for equity target groups based on gender, disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking background
- Measure key initiatives, such as Indigenous staff recruitment
- Identify advertising sources for shortlisted and successful applicants.

4.5.3 Record Keeping

Academic and Senior Professional Staff Appointments

The appointed HR Officer for each recruitment process that is conducted outside UQ Jobs must establish an official University Selection file ("Green" file). This file should be used for the keeping of all official records in relation to the advertisement and selection process, including advertising arrangements and the record of the selection process (refer [Stage 3 – Selection](#)). The file and all unsuccessful applications will be sent to Records Management Services once the recruitment process has been finalised. This file is then stored by Records Management Services and recorded in the corporate records management system.

Where the activity is managed using UQ Jobs, a "Green" file is not required to be established. Instead, the information will be stored in the UQ Jobs system.

Other Appointments

Where a recruitment activity is conducted outside of the UQ Jobs system, the organisational unit concerned is required retain a copy of the record of the selection process and copies of applications from shortlisted applicants for 12 months.

All other copies of documentation should be securely destroyed to maintain the confidentiality of the process.

Successful Applicant

The Human Resources Officer responsible for processing the appointment of the successful candidate is to ensure that all relevant documentation is sent to Records Management Services to have an official University Staff file established for new employees or, in the case of existing staff, added to the Staff file.

The documents can be sent in electronic format (from UQ Jobs) or hard copy. The documents sent to Records Management Services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Position description
- Original application from the successful applicant
- Job card / Position Authorisation form
- Offer card / Recommendation for Appointment form signed by delegate
- Offer of appointment letter
- Signed acceptance of offer of appointment letter.

4.6 Complaints

Any concerns about the recruitment and selection process should be referred in the first instance to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee. If the Chairperson is unable to resolve the issue, or requires advice or assistance, the matter is to be referred to the Director, Human Resources Division. Alternatively, written complaints may be submitted to the Director, Human Resources Division.

Complainants should be made aware that the University does not have an appeal process against the decisions made by duly constituted Selection Committees concerning the recruitment and appointment of staff. Selection Committees have discretion in the relative weighting of selection criteria, the judgement on the merits of applicants against those criteria and in the assessment of potential or ability to perform other duties.

Appointments of successful applicants cannot be challenged based on the Selection Committee's determination of the relative merits of each applicant.

Nevertheless, the University is concerned about any alleged impropriety or lack of due process in its recruitment and selection processes. Accordingly, when a complaint is referred to the Director, Human Resources Division, the Director will confer with the Chairperson of the Selection Committee and institute an investigation of the complaint, if appropriate. Complaints submitted in writing will receive a written response. The University would not rescind an offer of appointment based on a complaint by an unsuccessful applicant, unless an investigation was to reveal gross irregularities or misconduct on the part of the staff involved.

4.7 Timeliness

Time is of the essence in the recruitment and selection process. Tardiness and delay causes additional work for staff covering the vacancy and will cause potential applicants to lose interest and pursue other employment opportunities. It also creates a poor image of the University as a high profile organisation and large employer.

The Chairperson and the Secretary to the Selection Committee must have a sense of urgency and ensure Committee meetings are organised as far in advance as possible. Prompt action should occur to progress matters at each key juncture. In particular, conduct shortlisting immediately after the closing date for applications and then complete selection interviews and reference checks within two weeks from deciding the shortlist for professional jobs and four weeks for academic jobs. The recommendation for appointment or Offer card should be submitted for approval as a matter of priority to enable the offer of appointment to be posted (online or by mail) within five working days of the Selection Committee's decision.

Human Resources Division will monitor recruitment and selection timelines for benchmarking against other members of the Universitas 21 network.

Footnotes

[1] Note that for professional staff positions a degree can only be specified for HEW Level 5 positions and above. However, it cannot be made an essential criterion for HEW Levels 5 to 9, because our Enterprise Agreement requires that the University accept "an equivalent combination of relevant experience and/or education/training". Advertisements citing tertiary qualifications for such general staff should include the words, "or equivalent combination of experience and qualifications."

[2] For research only academic staff appointments see Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion of Senior Research Staff above the level of Senior Research Fellow, [Policy Number 5.42.1](#)

[3] Head of School includes Directors of Faculty and University Centres.

[4] If more than one agency is invited to submit a proposal for a retained assignment, those unsuccessful will probably work on the brief on a contingency basis in any case. This can create confusion for potential applicants and may cost more in commission fees.

[5] If any adverse matters are raised the Committee may need to seek further information or confirmation from the previous employer in the interests of fairness to the applicant and due diligence.