



Exeter College

Recruitment and selection policy

1. Introduction

We recognise the importance our recruitment processes and practices make to the continued success of our organisation. Current and future employees are a key resource in the delivery of our services.

This policy is not contractual, but sets out the way in which Exeter College seeks to manage its recruitment activities.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all recruitment activity for established posts within the College, including internal promotions and secondments, and including roles that are filled on a fixed-term contract basis.

The policy does not apply to the recruitment of casual staff, although the College will still seek to follow fair processes wherever possible for these roles.

3. Aims of this policy

We seek to employ the best individuals to fill our vacancies, and to provide the essential skills and attributes to meet the current and future needs of the College. This approach naturally embraces diversity, to provide expertise, challenge and imagination, and all individuals should be recruited solely on the basis of their ability and in accordance with our Equality and Diversity policy.

4. Legal considerations

4.1 Equality

The Equality Act prohibits discrimination on grounds of a protected characteristic (sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, pregnancy/maternity, marital status/civil partnership or gender reassignment). However, care should also be taken to ensure that part-timer workers and those on fixed-term contracts are treated fairly.

This is broadly interpreted, and unlawful discrimination may take a number of forms: direct, indirect, harassment, victimisation, discrimination by association and discrimination by perception. The candidate does not necessarily have to hold the protected characteristic themselves in order to bring a claim, therefore.

A decision to shortlist, interview or offer employment will not take account of an applicant's trade union membership or non-membership.

It is unlawful to refuse to employ someone purely because they have reached the State Pension Age or over, unless this can be objectively justified.

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4.2 Positive discrimination

Positive discrimination (selecting a candidate purely because they hold an under-represented protected characteristic) is unlawful, with the exception of employees on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave or at risk of redundancy, where special rules apply.

However, employers are permitted to take positive action in favour of under-represented groups in the workforce: for example when advertising roles, or when choosing between candidates who are otherwise equally qualified.

4.3 Data Protection

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and other relevant legislation, unsuccessful candidates can request copies of any notes held on them that are stored in a structured way. Therefore it is essential to record selection decisions in an objective and non-discriminatory way (i.e. demonstrating where the candidate does/does not measure up as well as other candidates with regard to the skills and knowledge for the job).

Notes of all interviews should be made using our standard documentation, and should be kept on file for between six to twelve months after the selection decision is made.

4.4 Safeguarding

In line with its Safeguarding policy and relevant legislation, the College will seek to conduct its recruitment activities in line with Safer Recruiting best practice. This will include, where possible:

- Ensuring that adverts and/ or Further Particulars inform candidates that a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check may be required for the role in question, if that is the case;
- Requesting that candidates complete an application form, so that standardised information is collected from all candidates;
- Ensuring that interview panels probe any unexplained gaps in CVs;
- As appropriate, asking questions to establish a candidate's suitability to work with children or young people;
- As far as is practicable, conducting face-to-face interviews;
- As far as is practicable, establishing a candidate's true identity by conducting a right-to-work check at the interview stage;
- Taking up references from former employers, and/ or other relevant individuals;
- Training managers in effective recruitment practices.

5. The recruitment process

Whenever a vacancy arises the decision whether to recruit a replacement will be carefully considered by the appropriate Head of Department, who will evaluate whether the duties of the role should be carried out in a different way.

Heads of Department and line managers who have responsibility for recruitment must ensure they undertake any recruitment in a clear, consistent and professional manner, and in line with our Equality and Diversity

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policy. Selection will be conducted on an objective basis and will focus on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements.

To ensure objectivity, the duties and the skills required of the post will be reviewed, and any existing documentation updated, so that candidates are assessed against the same framework. Person specifications will be carefully considered to minimise the risk of direct or indirect discrimination and to ensure they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post - especially with regards to qualifications and previous experience.

We use standard documents and forms for all recruitment and selection to ensure a professional and consistent approach. All candidates (including internal applicants) will be asked to complete a standard application form to ensure better comparability of information.

6. Internal applicants

Vacancies will normally be advertised both externally and internally. Internal candidates will be considered on an equal basis with external candidates.

In some instances we will decide to only advertise roles internally. This might include, but is not limited to, times where there is a reorganisation within a department and we have members of staff "at risk" of redundancy for whom we will seek posts in the new structure, or where we have an obligation to place somebody in another post (e.g. for health or safety reasons, or for an employee returning from maternity/adoption/shared parental leave whose original job is no longer available). In these instances, the needs of the staff member to be redeployed will take priority.

7. Attracting candidates

To ensure that the best candidate is attracted and appointed we may use any or all of the following methods: advertising the vacancy on the College website; external advertisement in an appropriate paper or journal; using networks including our own staff network (although balancing this with the need for diversity); Find a Job website; online job-boards.

The way that we recruit reveals a lot about the College to external candidates and contacts. In addition to describing the role well, therefore, it is also essential to convey the culture and environment within which we work. Adverts will normally state: "Exeter College is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity." A copy of our Equality and Diversity policy may also be made available to candidates upon request.

Where appropriate, advertising materials should normally advise candidates that the post is subject to a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.

All applications will be handled in confidence, and should only be circulated to those directly involved in the recruitment process.

8. Use of external recruitment agencies

Where necessary (because of time constraints or specific skills shortages), consideration will be given to using external recruitment agencies. When this is the case, any agencies instructed will be fully briefed about the role and the College, and supplied with information to provide to all potential candidates.

Recruitment agencies may also be sent a copy of the College's Equality and Diversity policy, and may be asked to sign to confirm that they have read its contents and will abide by its principles.

9. Assessment methods

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Care will be taken to use selection methods and techniques that are relevant to the job. These will be reviewed regularly to ensure their fairness and consistency of application.

9.1 Interviews

Ideally, interview panels will comprise two or more people, and will include both men and women on the panel (where practicable).

Interviews should always be conducted or supervised by trained individuals. Where possible, the same people will be involved in the whole recruitment process, including shortlisting and interviewing. If interviews take place on separate days, the same people should ideally interview on both occasions.

All shortlisted candidates will be offered a face-to-face interview in person, or will be offered an interview by Skype or videoconferencing where this is not practical. Occasionally, we may conduct telephone interviews, for example where the recruiting manager wishes to clarify a particular aspect of a candidate's knowledge or experience as part of the shortlisting stage.

Interviews should be structured to follow an agreed set of questions, which will be asked of all candidates, and which mirror relevant aspects of the person specification. Questions asked of candidates will relate to information that will help us to assess their ability to do the job, and their suitability to work within the College environment.

Where appropriate, interview panels should ask candidates to explain any gaps in the career history given in their CV, and with a particular focus on promoting safer recruitment practices.

Questions about marriage plans, family intentions, religious or political commitments, caring responsibilities, or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked. Candidates will not be asked whether they plan to opt-out of auto-enrolment, nor will any statements be made (whether written or verbal) that either state or imply that the offer of a post could depend on whether or not they opt-out of an automatic enrolment pension scheme.

9.2 Testing

Selection tests will normally be specifically related to the job, and should measure an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job. As far as is practicable, candidates will be told in advance (e.g. as part of the interview invite) that they will be asked to complete a test, and candidates should be asked whether any reasonable adjustments will be required to enable them to undertake the test(s).

For certain roles, the College may seek to use personality assessment tools, or similar. If necessary, guidance from appropriate professionals will be given. Where any psychometric or aptitude tests are administered, qualified test administrators will normally offer appropriate feedback to candidates.

The information provided by applicants will be thoroughly considered. Where appropriate, candidates may be given the opportunity to ask questions or to provide feedback about their experience of completing the test(s).

10. Candidates with disabilities

At all stages of the recruitment procedure, reasonable attempts will be made to accommodate the particular needs of any candidate who has notified us of a disability. This may include: changing the timing or location of any interview to enable the candidate to attend; providing information in different formats or larger type; etc.

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11. Offers of employment

Offers of employment may initially be made verbally but should always be confirmed in writing, and may specify a timescale within which the successful candidate should confirm their acceptance or rejection of the offer.

Normally, offers of employment will be conditional upon the College receiving references that are satisfactory to us, unless the candidate has previously worked for us and left our employment no more than six months prior to the offer being made.

Where practicable, a copy of a draft contract of employment should be sent with the offer.

All appointments will be made subject to a satisfactory probationary period, usually of three or six months' duration.

12. References

Candidates will be asked to provide the details of at least two referees, one of whom should be their current or most recent employer, where applicable. References will always be taken up on external candidates, once an offer of employment has been made and accepted.

Where possible, references should be received prior to any new employee starting work for us and it may be that we delay the start date of a new employee until the references are received and checked. In the event of a reference being unsatisfactory to us, we may withdraw the offer of employment.

13. Pre-employment checks

Following the offer and acceptance of employment, employees should not normally commence working for us until all appropriate checks have been completed to our satisfaction. All successful candidates will be required to provide proof of their entitlement to work in the UK prior to starting work with us. In addition, and depending on the requirements of the post, we may also require proof of qualifications, driving licence or a medical report.

Where the duties of the postholder will involve working with children or vulnerable adults, any offer of employment will be conditional upon a satisfactory check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

14. Expenses

Candidates expecting to incur travel expenses as a result of attending interviews should inform the College **before** these arise, as receipts presented without the College's prior approval may not be paid.

Specifically, candidates should **not** book any travel or accommodation in Oxford before they have been informed, in writing, that they have been shortlisted for interview. Any costs incurred by the candidate as a result of a failure to follow this guidance will not be reimbursed.

Where prior written authorisation has been given by the College, candidates may be reimbursed necessary travel expenses which they have incurred as a result of attending interviews, in line with our current rates. The College follows HMRC's approved mileage rates for reimbursing road travel, and may reimburse off-peak standard train fares or low-cost standard flights outside the UK mainland if the costs are agreed in advance with the College. Candidates are expected to seek the most economical means of transport within reason, to ensure the least cost is incurred by the College.

Claims for reimbursement of travel expenses should be sent to the HR Officer at vacancies@exeter.ox.ac.uk

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15. Monitoring and review of this policy

The Governing Body of the College has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices. Part of this review process will include consideration of feedback from exit interviews of recent leavers to identify possible improvements which may avoid excessive turnover.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the HR Officer.

Related Policies

- Equality & Diversity policy

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