

RECRUITMENT POLICY (NC)

Policy statement

UCEM aims to be transparent about the process it employs to recruit, select, and onboard talent, which includes the process for internal appointments. This policy takes you through the different stages and elements involved in the process and provides comprehensive information for both external stakeholders (applicants) and internal colleagues (line managers, employees).

For ease and for the purposes of this policy only, the term 'recruitment' is used to cover all stages in the process, from the identification of a vacancy to the end of the onboarding process.

It is the policy of UCEM that line managers and the HR team are jointly responsible for recruitment activities, by working together collaboratively to achieve the best outcome for UCEM. In each year senior leaders will consider future recruitment intentions and budget accordingly.

UCEM aims at all times to recruit individuals most suited to advertised job vacancies. Recruitment will be based solely on individuals' abilities and merit as measured against the person specification criteria for the job role.

A summary of the recruitment procedure can be found at the end of this document.

This policy should be read alongside the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy and alongside the *Privacy notice for job applicants to UCEM*.

Important note for internal vacancies: UCEM may vary aspects of this policy for those vacancies which are only advertised internally. A specific section is included for internal vacancies, which is relevant to existing employees and line managers.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We are committed to applying our EDI policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting,

interviewing, and selection will always be carried out with due regard to the Equality Act 2010. All line managers taking part in the recruitment and selection process will need to have completed mandatory EDI training, including Unconscious Bias.

Any candidate with a disability will not be excluded unless it is clear the candidate is unable to perform a duty intrinsic to the role, having taken into account reasonable adjustments. Where identified on the Recruitment Check Form, reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.

For full information on how we ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process, please consult our EDI policy.

Budgeting for vacancies

In each budget year (1 August to 31 July) the HR team manages a centrally held recruitment advertising budget. A Recruitment Approved List (RAL) for approved new and existing job roles also exists, which is managed between HR, the Finance team, and budget holders.

When existing employees resign, vacancies will not automatically be replaced, permanently or temporarily, via an internal or external recruitment process. Line managers will instead take time to consider whether the work can be done or managed in a different way, or if there are other ways to achieve the outcomes of the job, before deciding to commence a recruitment process.

Job specifications

We will ensure all roles advertised either internally or externally (or both) are accompanied by a detailed and accurate job specification document.

This will include a job description and a carefully considered person specification.

We strongly encourage applicants to read the job specification thoroughly before applying for a role. It is vital applicants understand what they are applying for and what the role entails, along with the skills, experience, and qualifications required.

When it comes to salary level and benefits on offer, we provide full and transparent information within job specifications. We will always publish pay information when advertising internally and externally. Job specifications will also refer to the job level designation (normally a letter and number in the footer), which links to the institution-wide organisation structure and design.

Should a selection process involve an assessment other than interview, such as a test, presentation, or other task, this will be clearly identified in the person specification section of the document.

Advertising

HR manages the advertising budget carefully, aiming to extract the most value from funds available. We use a number of general online jobs boards to advertise roles, as well as both sector-specific and specialised boards. The type of job boards chosen is role-dependant however we always aim to cast the advertising net as wide as reasonably possible.

We will continue to seek and explore new advertising channels, including more specific diversity focussed jobsites, with the aim of reaching underrepresented groups and attracting diverse pools of candidates.

Typically external adverts run for two weeks maximum.

Format and management of job applications

At present, job applications are received into a recruitment mailbox where receipt is acknowledged. In time we aim to facilitate applications through other online means, such as via our website, or dedicated careers website.

Unless otherwise stated within the job specification, we require applicants to submit complete job applications. A complete application comprises a covering letter or email, up to date CV, and completed Recruitment Check Form (internal applicants need not submit this form). Should applicants require any adjustments to this process on account of a disability, we will consider what is reasonable on a case-by-case basis. Incomplete applications may not be considered, especially because they may signal applicants may have not read the job specification thoroughly.

Job applications are treated confidentially by the HR team and shared only with those individuals involved in the recruitment and selection process.

Due to the fact we take the applicant and candidate experience seriously, **all** applications will be responded to. If you are not shortlisted after the screening process, you will receive a rejection notice. After each interview stage candidates will be kept up to date with the status of their application, and feedback provided should your application be unsuccessful. We value the time taken to make a job application and the interest shown in UCEM.

Speculative applications

Due to the volume of recruitment activity and resources currently available to us, we do not consider speculative applications, nor do we retain them on file. This will be kept under review as part of the talent planning process.

Employee referral bonus scheme

We have in place an incentive bonus scheme for existing employees. This scheme enables employees to receive a bonus where they introduce a friend, family member, or other personal contact as a job applicant, and the referred person is then subsequently recruited and employed as a result of that introduction.

Applicants must clearly state the name of their referring employee within their job application **and** state that their application is being submitted under the terms of the referral scheme. Details of the scheme can be found within the Current Vacancies page on our website.

Interviews

Selection interviews are conducted by hiring line managers and normally there are two stages to this process; they may be via Teams/Zoom, face-to-face at our Reading office, or over the phone – or a combination. The HR team will contact you should you be selected for interview and advise you what is involved.

Questions asked at interview (as well as other assessments undertaken) are prepared in advance, using only the person specification for the role. They focus on the needs of the job and will not in any way be discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive. UCEM may share these questions or assessment guidance with you in advance to allow you time to prepare, as well as recognising the particular needs of candidates with neurodivergent traits.

Candidates will, as a minimum, be interviewed by a panel of at least two interviewers, and during the process you will meet a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Interviewers will be required to follow a standard and consistent format and make and retain records of interview answers and feedback. Interviewers must provide the HR team with comprehensive feedback for any unsuccessful candidates.

Should interviews take place at our offices, candidates must cover their own travel costs. We are unable to pay for or contribute towards those costs.

Internal vacancies and applications

In the interest of fairness and equity, all internal vacancies will be advertised prior to an appointment being made; employees will not be unilaterally promoted without such a process being undertaken. The only exception is when one of the following scenarios applies:

- The line manager is certain no other internal candidate could undertake the role.
- An existing employee's role is not changing, and they are receiving no new additional

responsibilities; this is in effect, a job title change.

- The proposed change to an employee's existing role does not leave a vacancy to backfill.

Advertising

Line managers can decide to advertise vacancies internally prior to advertising externally. All vacancies advertised to external candidates will automatically be advertised internally. Staff can access vacancy information from the HR intranet page and weekly Bulletin.

Typically, internal adverts run for one week.

Informing existing line manager

We encourage open dialogue between employees and their line managers at all times. Should existing employees wish to apply for a job vacancy within UCEM, we request they inform their current line manager without delay. We encourage conversations which involve line managers:

- Supporting internal applications.
- Offering advice in relation to applications.
- If they are not already aware, talking to team members about career aspirations.
- Addressing any concerns employees may have about their current job role hence wishing to move.
- If employees are unsuccessful in their application, line managers can support them after the process closes.

Keeping line managers informed will also be helpful in terms of resource planning. Early notifications about internal applications will enable line managers to plan, should applications eventually be successful.

Should employees feel unable to inform their line manager, we ask they seek advice from the HR team.

Interviews

Line managers may choose to implement a one stage interview process, as long as the relevant Senior Leadership Team representative is part of the interview panel.

Feedback

Recruiting managers will provide comprehensive feedback directly to any unsuccessful internal candidates. Ideally this will be provided in person or over the phone.

Notice periods

Employees who are successful in obtaining a role within another team, may be required to fulfil their contractual notice period in their existing role, prior to moving to their new role. This process is subject to negotiation.

Fixed term contracts

Should existing employees wish to apply for a fixed term job vacancy within UCEM, they will need to discuss this with their current line manager to understand what would happen after the expiry of the fixed term period, should they be successful and be appointed into another role.

The default position is if the employee is offered and accepts the fixed term role, they would relinquish their contractual permanent employment status with UCEM. This means following the expiry of the fixed term period, their employment with UCEM would cease, unless an alternative role is secured by the employee.

At the point of application for any fixed term role, employees have the option to negotiate with their line manager and discuss whether they are able to undertake the fixed term role as a secondment, thereby protecting their permanent employment status with UCEM. In practical terms this means that following the expiry of the fixed term period, the employee would return to their substantive role and retain their contractual status.

Please note approval for a secondment is at the sole discretion of the employee's line manager. It is not a given that employees can automatically return to their former job role after a fixed term period expires in another role, nor can any line manager be pressured to accept a secondment.

It is important these conversations take place prior to an employee's application, so they understand the impact any fixed term role will have on their employment status.

Offers of employment

Once a hiring manager has selected their chosen candidate, they will liaise with HR about the offer to be made. Once formally signed off, offers of employment are made verbally by a member of the HR team (not the hiring manager) and followed up in writing with full details of the offer. For the avoidance of doubt, offers will not be made during the interview process.

Where an offer is accepted, the HR team will agree a start date in consultation with the successful candidate and the hiring manager; this is where the onboarding process begins.

Pre employment checks

We undertake thorough pre-employment screening as part of our onboarding process; this satisfies legal requirements, and it ensures we comply with the requirements laid down by those organisations with whom we have contractual arrangements.

Our standard pre-employment checks comply with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) and include identity, right to work (RTW), a Basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, three years of employment history, and qualification verification. We will fund the cost of any identity, RTW, or DBS check for new starters. **Important:** Any offer of employment will be conditional on these requirements being met satisfactorily.

Identity check

We engage a third-party Identity Service Provider (IDSP) in order to carry out identity checks on all new starters. Successful candidates will receive a link from our IDSP on behalf of UCEM and will need to provide the relevant identity documents.

Right to work

We can only employ staff with the requisite right to work in the UK. The HR team will inspect right to work documents or complete an online RTW check as part of the recruitment process.

Please note advertised job roles with permanent employment status, require indefinite leave to enter and remain in the UK, and right to work. Wherever possible, we will adopt a digital approach to verifying an applicant's right to work.

At this current time, we do not hold a sponsor licence, nor do we intend to apply for a licence in the foreseeable future.

Basic DBS check

Successful candidates will need to undertake a Basic disclosure criminal record check via GOV.UK, making sure to identify UCEM for payment. Please note we may carry out a follow up conversation with candidates if their certificate contains information. The presence of information on your certificate will not automatically make you ineligible for the role you have applied for; the conversation will be based on risk in relation to the job role you have been offered.

Employment history (references)

The HR team will request employment references for the successful candidate. References will mainly be used to confirm factual information such as employment and/or academic history and experience. References must cover three years of employment history and candidates should contact HR, if they have less than three years.

Qualification verification

We will seek original documentary evidence or certified copies, of the relevant academic and/or professional qualifications or memberships, which are detailed in job applications. Where candidates cannot locate original certificates for required qualifications, they are responsible for applying for replacement certificates. For the avoidance of doubt, it is not the policy of UCEM to pay for, or contribute towards, these costs.

Teacher prohibition checks

We will conduct a teacher prohibition check via the Teaching Regulation Agency for all teaching or lecturing roles. A prohibition check ensures the employee is not prohibited from teaching. This is a statutory requirement.

Disclosure of medical information

We are a supportive and inclusive employer with respect to both physical and mental health, as well as neurodiversity. As part of our onboarding process, we will ask candidates to provide any medical or health information they wish to notify to

our First Aid team in the event of an emergency, such as allergies, medical conditions, medicines/drugs etc. We will also ask candidates to provide any other medical or health information which may need to be considered, for their employment.

The HR team will work closely with candidates and line managers to consider what reasonable adjustments we can facilitate, to support employment and effective working.

Record keeping and data protection

A complete record of each recruitment process will be retained by the HR team. Typically we retain information for no more than six months, after a job offer has been accepted. More information on how UCEM processes this data, along with our data retention periods and destruction schedule, can be found in our *Privacy notice for job applicants to UCEM*.

Temporary workers (agency)

From time-to-time we may require the urgent support of a temporary agency worker (“a temp”). Wherever possible we will work with existing suppliers with whom we have long-standing relationships. Temps are generally used to:

- Assist with urgent work or assist during a very busy period.
- Cover for roles we are struggling to recruit.
- Cover for absence when a return-to-work date is unknown (e.g. sickness).
- Completion of a specific task.
- Cover short term project work.
- Fill intended temporary roles, perhaps where funding is time limited.

Line managers must seek approval via the internal Personnel Change Request (PCR) process for the recruitment of a temp. Line managers should provide HR with as much detail as possible on the assignment duration, skills, experience, and qualifications required.

HR will work with the agency to provide suitable CVs for line managers to consider. Occasionally

HR will ask the line manager to act as the main contact, particularly in the case of technical or specialist roles.

Wherever possible, temps should be based in our Reading office for each working day. Only in exceptional circumstances should a temp be offered an alternative working arrangement.

Once a suitable temp has been identified, HR/IT/FM require a minimum of **three** clear working days between confirming with the agency to supply the named temp, and the temp starting at the Reading office. In the rare event a temp has an alternative place of work, HR/IT/FM will require a minimum of **seven** clear working days. This ensures internal teams have enough time to source and set up equipment with the required items. The above timeframes have been mutually agreed between HR, IT, and FM and must be respected by line managers.

Where a temp is no longer required for the original assignment duration, the temp and their agency must be given reasonable and respectful notice. The minimum period of notice is one week minimum. We value the relationship we have with our suppliers and the temps with whom we are supplied.

Whilst temps are not subject to the same pre-employment checks listed elsewhere in this policy, we may ask them to undertake appropriate mandatory training, which may vary depending on the role.

Contractors

A contractor is an independent external third party who may be a self-employed individual, or a person who provides their services through a limited company.

Line managers looking to engage a contractor or consultant will need to contact HR, so a work assessment (for tax/employment) can be undertaken, prior to the search process commencing.

Working together, HR and the line manager will conduct this assessment. The result will determine how we legally engage and pay the contractor. HR

will then assist with contract preparation (contract for services *or* contract of employment).

Line managers are responsible for liaising with their Finance Business Partner regarding budgeting and costs. If the tax/employment assessment outcome requires us to add the person to payroll, there may be on costs including holiday pay, pension, and National Insurance.

Whilst contractors are not subject to the same pre-employment checks listed elsewhere in this policy, we may ask them to undertake relevant mandatory training, which may vary depending on the role. We will also ensure any contractors have sufficient qualifications and experience for the type of work to be undertaken.

Recruitment procedure

Below is a summary of the procedure to fill a job vacancy at UCEM:

Step 1: Approval to recruit (line manager)

Establish the agreed budget for the post. All roles to be recruited should be found on the Recruitment Approved List (RAL). If this is a new, unbudgeted role, you will need to follow the Personnel Change Request (PCR) DocuSign process in consultation with your Finance Business Partner.

Step 2: Prepare vacancy (line manager)

Alert the HR team of your intention to recruit by emailing the Recruitment mailbox.

Prepare a full and up-to-date job specification document; this includes both the job description and person specification (a template is available on the HR section of the intranet). If a job specification already exists from an earlier recruitment, this will still need to be reviewed before use.

Send the job specification to the Recruitment mailbox, highlighting any specific advertising requirements which might be outside of the ordinary, such as specific wording to include or specialist jobs boards. Alongside this, provide a 'meet the team' overview which will be posted with the role on the Current Vacancies page of the UCEM website.

Step 3: Finalise, advertise, and manage vacancy (HR)

Finalise the job specification for publishing. This includes reviewing the required skills, experience and qualifications listed, and challenging where required. Send final version to the line manager.

Prepare advert words and post on relevant job boards, negotiating costs as required. Follow the standard HR operating procedure (SOP) to manage the vacancy from this point onwards.

Step 4: Screening/Shortlisting/Interviews (HR and line manager)

HR will conduct an initial screen of applications and provide line managers with a long list, along with a request to supply interview details (dates/times, interviewers, etc.). Line managers should provide HR with a final shortlist of candidates for interview along with the required interview information.

Line managers prepare for interviews by using the person specification to write interview questions, referring to the sample questions provided by HR on the intranet.

HR will manage the invite to interview process, which includes checking right to work, in accordance with the SOP. HR will act as the link between candidates and the line manager and will keep the line manager apprised of any developments.

Once interviews are complete and interview notes finalised, line managers send HR interview outcomes and candidate feedback. This includes completing the DocuSign offer form.

Step 5: Manage offer and rejections (HR)

Continue to follow the SOP to make the offer and keep the line manager informed of progress.

Make sure all applicants and interviewees have received a response in writing with the outcome of their application.

Step 6: Prepare for new starter (HR and line manager)

Once start date is confirmed, HR will notify internal teams through the new starter workflow process and commence onboarding activities.

Line managers should prepare for the new starter arrival including planning induction activities and notifying the team. Please make use of the 'Welcome to UCEM' guide for new starters. It is vital a new starter feels welcomed and has a structured induction process.

It is recommended line managers contact new starters prior to arrival, to let them know what time to arrive on day one and the activities planned.

Step 7: Onboarding and close vacancy (HR)

Continue to onboard the new starter until all activities complete. Close down recruitment process in line with GDPR privacy notice.

This policy and procedure is non-contractual.