

## **Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta / Policies and Procedures**

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## 1. Policy Statement

Our staff are our greatest resource and in order to continue its success, the University of Galway (hereafter referred to as the University) is dependent on the recruitment of high quality staff who have the relevant competencies, knowledge, skills and behaviours. This is also key to the University achieving its strategic goals and objectives. It is essential therefore that the recruitment and selection process is planned, organised and managed in a way that supports those objectives and goals.

The [University's Equal Opportunities Policy](#) states that all applicants for employment/promotion are recruited and selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, while the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 prohibit discrimination in employment (including access to employment) on the following nine grounds: Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race and Membership of the Traveller Community. Effective recruitment and selection procedures meet the University's responsibility to adhere to open, transparent, and merit-based appointments, guaranteeing equality for all.

Effective recruitment and selection procedures are vital in attracting and retaining high quality academic research staff. By ensuring the best person for the job is recruited, open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R) improves the effectiveness of national research systems, guarantees equality, especially for under-represented groups, and boosts trans and international co-operation. This in turn promotes optimal circulation of scientific knowledge. At the University of Galway, we recruit based on OTM-R principles and have developed a set of competencies to help provide a systematic and objective method of assessing and selecting people. It is the duty of those involved in the recruitment and selection of candidates to ensure that the appropriate competencies are applied and that the University's commitment to selection on merit is seen to be clear and unambiguous.

Commitment to this principle of appointment on merit reflects the University's Equal Opportunities Policy.

All vacant posts within the University are required to be advertised and filled via open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment with a number of authorised exceptions.

No individual should be recruited for a period of less than 8 weeks. 'Once-off researcher posts with a duration of less than six months' cannot be renewed and contracts will be automatically terminated at the end of that period. [Request to hire a Researcher on a once off less than 6 months \(non-renewable\) contract. \(office.com\)](#)

The Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure, and subsequent training, ensures that the University meets these policy and legislative obligations. It also ensures that the University enables those behaviours which support our principles and values of equality, inclusiveness, respect, excellence, openness, and sustainability.

The procedures outline a competency-based recruitment and selection process which supports the objective assessment of a candidate's suitability. However, unconscious bias can influence decision making and the selection of candidates. The University is committed to ensuring that all assessment board members have undertaken unconscious bias training in addition to interview skills briefing/training.

The following procedures are designed to support an objective, transparent and merit-based recruitment, and selection process. The emphasis is on implementing good practice to ensure that staff are recruited and selected on the basis of their relative merits and that selection decisions are made following a fair,

consistent, and equitable process which reflects employment equality legislation and the University's principles and values. The recruitment and selection of staff also provides an opportunity for the University to present itself in a favourable light. Treating applicants in a professional, fair and equitable manner is more likely to leave them, whether they are successful or not, with a positive view of the University.

The Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with the appropriate Statutes of the University which are available on the University website.

The Post-coordinator is identified as the liaison person from the College or Unit, identified by the hiring manager to coordinate with central Recruitment. Where on-campus interviews are required in, room bookings and catering are facilitated by the post-coordinator.

The Recruitment Consultant is the member of central HR assigned to manage the competition to its conclusion, liaising with and providing advice and guidance to the hiring manager, the post co-ordinator and the candidates.

## **2. Scope of the Policy**

2.1 The Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to all recruitment activity within the University including Research Funded Recruitment. These procedures should be utilised by all members of staff involved in any aspect of the recruitment and selection process. The Recruitment team in the Human Resources Office will be able to provide advice and assistance to managers on any aspect of the process.

## **3. Relevant Legislation**

3.1. The objective of this procedure is to ensure best practice in relation to the recruitment and selection process. To achieve best practice, it is important to understand wider legislative context in this area. The following outlines the legislative details and it is imperative that all panel members are familiar with the relevant legislation:

3.2 [Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015](#): outlaws discrimination on a wide range of employment and employment-related areas. It protects all stages of the recruitment and selection process from the wording of the job advertisement, the job description, the selection criteria, shortlisting, conduct of the interview, questions and comments made at interview, through to the final selection decision. It also protects employee's conditions relating to equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment.

3.3 [Equal Status Acts 2000-2015](#): prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. They cover the nine grounds of discrimination including Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religious belief (or lack thereof), Age, Disability, Race (this includes colour, nationality and ethnic origin) and Membership of the Traveller Community.

3.4 [Disability Act 2005](#): places an obligation on public bodies to consider and respond to the needs of people with disabilities. Under Part 5 of the Act, 3% of jobs in public service bodies (local authorities,

civil service, the Health Service Executive and so on) are reserved for people with disabilities.

3.5 [Freedom of Information Act, 2004](#): established three statutory rights detailing :

- a right for persons to access information held by public bodies
- a right for individuals to have official information relating to themselves amended, where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- a right for individuals to obtain reasons for decisions affecting them

This legislation is relevant to the recruitment and selection process in that under the Act, individuals have a legal right to access their own personal information held by the University and their own employment records.

Those involved in the recruitment and selection process need to be mindful of the fact that any documentation or interview notes relating to selection decisions taken are open to discovery under the Freedom of Information legislation.

3.6 [The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation](#): These provisions oblige organisations to process data in a fair and transparent manner, for a specified and legitimate purpose, and that any data gathered is limited to that needed to fulfil this purpose. Data must be stored securely and only for the time necessary to fulfil the purpose.

3.7 Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018

The key provisions are:

- A requirement to provide a written statement of five core terms of employment on or by the fifth day of commencement of employment.
- Ban on the use of zero hours contracts except in very limited circumstances.
- A minimum floor payment where an employee is required to report for work but is not provided with the expected hours.
- Introduction of banded hours
- Prohibition on penalisation
- Changes to the National Minimum Wage Act 2000

3.8 Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003 places an obligation on each organisation to

- Improve the quality of fixed term work by ensuring the application of the principle of non-discrimination.
- Establish a framework to prevent abuses arising from the successive fixed term employment contracts of relationships.

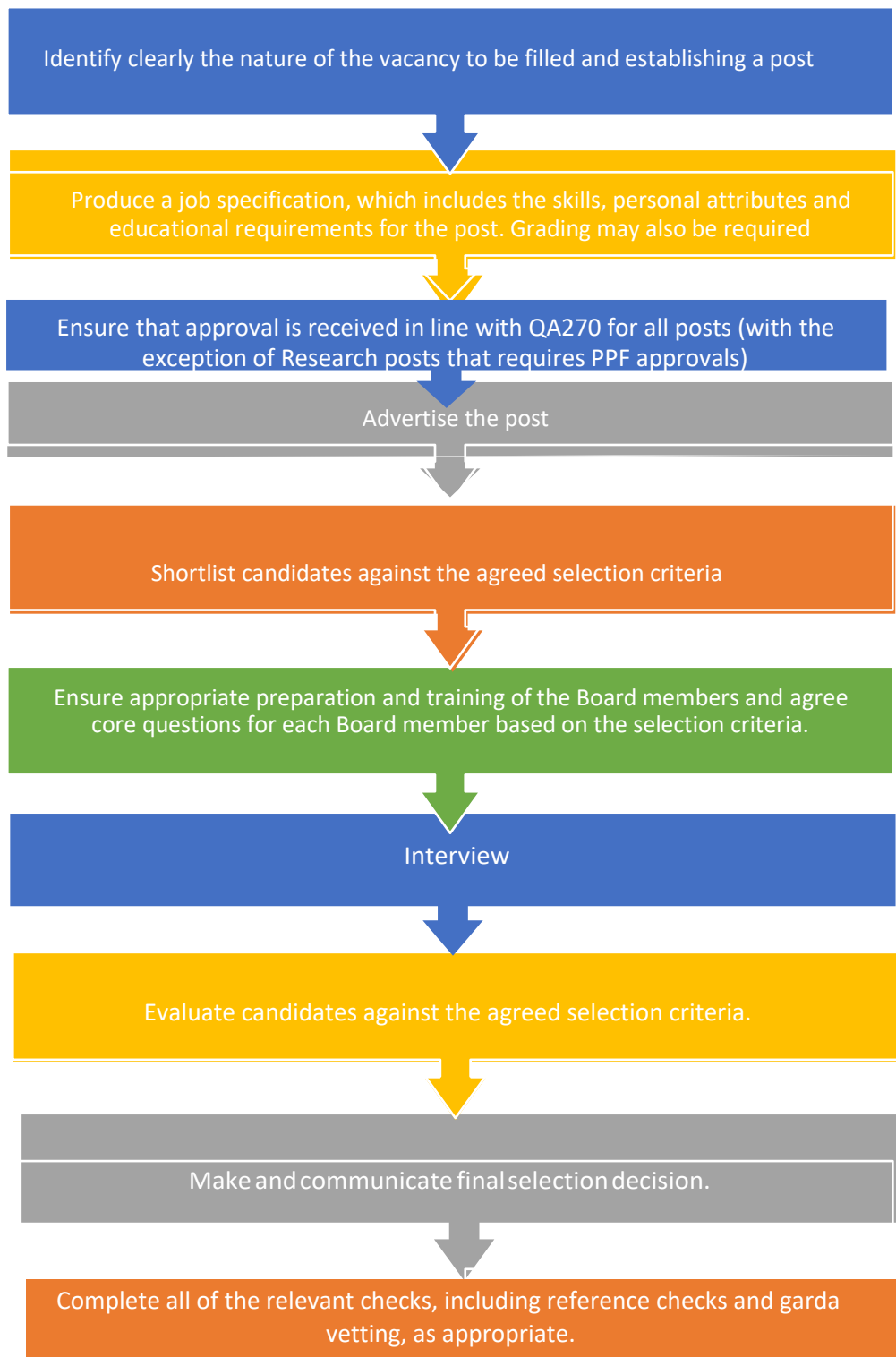
3.9 The European Union (Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions) Regulations 2022, S.I.686/2022

These regulations amended a number of pieces of employment legislation and introduce new obligations for employers and limit the use of certain clauses in contracts of employment, including the requirement to provide employees a statement of employment within 5 days of the commencement of employment plus regulations regarding probationary periods.

- 3.10 Employment Permits Acts 2003 to 2014 creates a specific offence for both an employer and employee where employment is entered into in the absence of the requisite permit.
  
- 3.11 National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 ensures employers who engage in working with children and vulnerable adults will have to have their employees and prospective employees vetted in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012, this 2012 Act provides a legislative basis for vetting.

#### 4. Recruitment and Selection Procedure

4.1. The following provides a brief overview of the key elements of the recruitment and selection process.



## 5. Establishing a Post

5.1 The recruitment and selection process is initiated once a post is identified. This may arise through:

- The creation of a new position, or
- Backfilling a position which has recently become vacant

Once it is established that there is a vacancy and post to fill, the next step is to identify what the post holder will do and then prepare the job specification for the role. The Resourcing Planning Policy guidelines for the approval process led by Colleges and the Professional Service Units QA270 should be followed for non-researcher posts.

5.2 Researcher posts are approved initially via an Advertising Request Form (ARF), with financial approval provided post interview by the Research Account Office utilising the Post Proposal Form (PPF).

## 6. Job Specification

6.1. Once the vacancy is identified, it is necessary to carefully plan and prepare for the successful recruitment and selection. The first task is to clearly identify the job that needs to be done.

6.2. The job specification sets out the overall context and purpose of the job, the key duties and responsibilities, the reporting structure and the operating environment within which the job is done, the skills, knowledge, experience and personal attributes and other relevant factors which are required for undertaking the role effectively.

6.3. The benefit of a clear job specification is that it provides those involved in the recruitment and selection process with clarity and agreement on the purpose, content, duties and responsibilities of the job, the location and reporting structure. It is also of benefit to applicants as it provides them with a clear insight into what exactly the job involves.

6.4. The purpose of the job specification is to set out the agreed criteria to be used in the selection of candidates. Agreed criteria provide a consistent and objective set of standards for all applicants and a structured means of candidate assessment.

6.5. Information on the summary of competencies for various roles can be seen below:

[Competency-Framework-Guide-for-Academic-Roles.pdf \(universityofgalway.ie\)](#)

[Summary-of-Competencies\\_Lecturer-with-Definitions.pdf \(universityofgalway.ie\)](#)

[Researcher-Roles-Competencies.docx \(live.com\)](#)

6.6. The extent to which it is necessary to describe the different duties associated with the job will vary depending on the nature and the responsibilities of the post. However, all jobs need some description of what is involved and clarifying this at the outset will avoid issues later.



- 6.7. It is important to ensure that all criteria are clear, relevant to the job, justifiable and non-discriminatory in terms of the grounds set out under the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015 and The Equal Status Acts 2000-2015.
- 6.8. The selection criteria can be divided into those that are Essential and those that are Desirable. The essential criteria are the minimum requirements deemed necessary for satisfactory job performance and should be assessable from the application form. Soft skills should be identified as such and assessed during interview. Desirable criteria are those factors that would be beneficial to optimising job performance. All applicants must meet each of the essential selection criteria in order to be shortlisted. The desirable criteria are those that could be used to further reduce the numbers to be called for interview, if required.
- 6.9. Care should be taken to ensure that the criteria included in the job specification are clearly defined and capable of being assessed and evaluated by the Assessment Board at both the shortlisting and interview stages.
- 6.10. The job specification will be used throughout the process when drafting the advertisement, shortlisting, structuring the interview, preparing interview questions and evaluating the candidates.
- 6.11. The job specification should be screened for gendered language which may unintentionally have the effect of discouraging applicants from the underrepresented gender to apply for the posts. HR will advise on the applicable software tool being used at the time.
- 6.12. The provision of further particulars in relation to the post on offer can help to influence the quality of the applications received. Details may include background on the University, the relevant College/School, professional support units, site location, strategic direction, objectives, plans and priorities, information on work life balance and terms and conditions of the job. This information will assist potential applicants to decide whether or not to proceed with their application.
- 6.13. The further particulars may also include guidelines for job applicants. These may include information on the selection criteria for the post and advice to applicants to demonstrate how their skills, experience and qualifications relate to the criteria. This will assist those with responsibility for shortlisting to determine whether or not the selection criteria have been met.

## **7. Job Sizing**

7.1 Job sizing is the process by which the grade for a particular post is established and is applicable to all new professional support posts within the University. Grading will occur prior to advertising when:

- A new post is established
- A vacant post has substantially changed

7.2 The Job sizing Committee meet once a month and all paperwork should be submitted to Human

Resources by the preceding Thursday prior to their meeting. Please see the [Grading of Posts](#) link for further information. The job description submitted for grading will not differ from the final job description utilised for advertising.

## 8. Approval of a Post

### Academic and Professional Support Posts

- 8.1 Consideration should be given to all vacancies in the context of strategic objectives, business needs and budget availability.
- 8.2 Posts must be approved by the relevant Dean or UMT member before being submitted to the Recruitment Team for advertising. The budget must be approved by the College Finance and Business Manager for College posts or Management Accounts Office for the professional service units. Clarification on whether Gaeilge is an essential requirement of the post should be established in advance of submission to avoid any delays.
- 8.3 The Recruitment Initialisation Form (RIF) must be completed in full to confirm these approvals have been received:
- [RIF - Academic](#)
  - [RIF - Support](#)
  - [RIF - Technical](#)

A fully completed Recruitment Initialisation Form (RIF) and Job Description must be emailed to [recruit@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:recruit@universityofgalway.ie)

- 8.4 A post **will not** be advertised without a fully completed and approved RIF and a complete job description that aligns with the core competencies required of the post. Scanned signatures or Electronic signatures are acceptable.

### Research Funded Recruitment

- 8.5 A fully completed Advertising Request Form (ARF) and Job Descriptions must be emailed to [hrresearch@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:hrresearch@universityofgalway.ie).
- 8.6 A post **will not** be advertised without a fully completed and approved ARF and a complete job description that aligns with the core competencies required of the post. Scanned signatures or Electronic signatures are acceptable.
- 8.7 Due to the alternative funding routes and timing considerations applicable to research funded recruitment, budget approval in the form of an approved Post Proposal Form (PPF) is not required until after the successful candidate has been identified.
- 8.8 Different retirement ages apply to different cohorts of public sector staff, primarily based on their

date of recruitment. It is important to note that employment post-retirement posts require additional approval from the HEA.

- 8.9 Particular care should be taken in the case of new or renewed fixed term or temporary posts where objective grounds for the post will be required in order to comply with the terms of relevant legislation. Objective grounds for not offering a permanent contract of employment can include short term projects or temporary leave cover.
- 8.10 Hiring managers within the University of Galway must be able to demonstrate that a new fixed term or temporary post, or the further renewal of a current post, is appropriate and necessary to achieve a legitimate objective.

## **9. Executive Search Agents**

- 9.1 The services of Executive Search Agents can be requested for consideration, where appropriate, for appointments to senior positions or positions which have proved difficult to fill, or where it is agreed with the Director of Human Resources that the post has unique elements that make the role difficult to recruit through normal recruitment mechanisms. The engagement of Executive Search Agents should be exceptional and not considered routine.
- 9.2 The Search Procedure is an additional mechanism to assist the normal arrangements for recruitment and selection by open competition and should run in conjunction with the University advertisement of the role.
- 9.3 Where the University agrees to engage an Executive Search Agent, it must be done through the agreed procurement procedure.

## **10. Advertising the Post**

- 10.1 It is important that whatever advertising channels are used are effective and will help to ensure that the widest pool of suitable applicants is made aware of the vacancy to be filled.
- 10.2 Vacancies will be finalised by the Human Resources team and advertised via the key standard University's websites. The Human Resources Office will cover the charge of one additional publication/website within reasonable cost. Any additional cost for requests for advertising in websites or publications other than those included on the RIF or ARF will be covered by the units/college/grant fund.
- 10.3 Hiring Managers are encouraged to circulate vacancies amongst their own professional networks.
- 10.4 All requests to advertise a post will be dealt with in order of receipt to [recruit@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:recruit@universityofgalway.ie) or in the case of research funded recruitment [hrresearch@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:hrresearch@universityofgalway.ie).
- 10.5 Posts will be advertised as follows in line with required minimum advertising periods:

- Assistant Secretary and above posts will be advertised both internally and externally for minimum 4 weeks but recommended 6-week period.
- Library – Assistant Librarians upwards will be advertised both internally and externally for minimum 3 but recommended 4 weeks.
- Permanent academic posts will be advertised both internally and externally for 6 weeks.
- All other academic posts will be advertised both internally and externally for 4 weeks.
- All administrative posts from Grade 3 to Grade 5 and all Technical and General Operative posts will be advertised internally in the first instance for two weeks and if not filled internally, posts will be advertised externally for a further 3-week period. Grade 2 posts will be filled from the G2 panel while it is in existence, otherwise G2 vacancies will be advertised internally for 2 weeks and if not filled internally, will be advertised externally for a further 3 week period.
- Only In exceptional circumstances the DHR can waive the internal advertising period. This will only be in exceptional circumstances such as where the post has required external advertising in the previous 6 months where no internal candidates were received.
- Research funded posts will be advertised both internally and externally for a minimum of 2 weeks.

10.6 Candidates must have a minimum of 3 months service to be eligible for internal vacancies.

## **11 Equal Opportunities**

11.1 The University is committed to ensuring that we are attracting the widest applicant pool to embed our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. we aim to attract a minimum of 30% representation of men and women in the applicant pool for all posts, and will positive approaches to ensure representation where required. This action is supported by continuous monitoring, considered word choice and prudent essential criteria thereby ensuring job descriptions are inclusive, clear and unambiguous and that appropriate recruitment channels are leveraged to attract a gender-diverse applicant pool.

## **12 Pre-Interview Information and Discussions**

12.1 It is usual and reasonable for applicants for academic and senior professional posts to seek detailed information about the post. Applicants may also wish to visit the University to see the facilities and the work undertaken by the College/School or profession support unit in question.

12.3 Where it is considered reasonable to do so, arrangements will be made to facilitate such requests, as the University considers pre-interview discussions and visits to be an important part of the recruitment process for such posts. Contact names and details of the arrangements for pre-interview discussions and visits will be made known to applicants in the advertisement, in the recruitment information pack or via the invitation to interview. In such cases to ensure equality of experience, it is important that the same opportunities are afforded to all candidates to avoid any unfair advantage.

### **13 Confidentiality and conflict of interest**

- 13.1 It is important that all those involved in the selection process treat applications in strict confidence.
- 13.2 Applications must be stored securely at all times. In compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), candidates' applications must not be disclosed or circulated to other staff or any third party. (See the University's [Data Protection Policy](#) for further details). Any documentation associated with a competition must be returned to HR at the end of the process and any duplicate copies deleted.
- 13.3 Members of the panel should also avoid informal solicitation of information about particular applicants (i.e. contacting a colleague who works with the applicant for an informal 'reference', and any information not relevant to the process). This practice can undermine a fair and transparent recruitment process.
- 13.4 It is essential that the recruitment and selection process is fair and transparent. In situations where a member of the Board of Assessors has a potential conflict of interest because of a personal or other relationship with a candidate or candidates, this conflict must be made known to the Chair and to the other Board members before the shortlisting or interview stage. In particular circumstances, the Board may decide that the involvement of the individual might detract from the fair and balanced application of the relevant procedures. In such instances the board member should be replaced.
- 13.5 To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest University of Galway staff involved in recruitment and selection must avoid interviewing and/or making hiring decisions on immediate family. If these circumstances arise then it is expected that the Assessment Board member will resign from the Board and the Chair will identify a replacement. All board members will be required to sign a form declaring no conflict of interest exists in advance of the first interview {Link to form}
- 13.6 Assessment Board members may also have a friendship or other form of relationship, positive or negative, with one or more of the applicants for a position. In these circumstances, they must inform the Chair and other Assessment Board members prior to commencement of the shortlisting and interview processes.
- 13.7 If the member of the Assessment Board feels that the relationship may make it difficult for her/him to apply the merit principle, or feels that her/his participation may compromise application of the merit principle, then the Assessment Board must decide whether it is appropriate for the Assessment Board member to be part of the selection process
- 13.8 The Assessment Board may seek advice on this matter from the Human Resources Office. If a member of the board of assessors by virtue of their relationship with a candidate, has a vested interest in the success that particular candidate over another, then they must recuse themselves.

### **14 Canvassing**

- 14.1 The University recognises that it is appropriate to provide potential applicants with the fullest information through the Search or 'Pre-Interview Discussion' process. Canvassing occurs when an applicant, or an advocate of an applicant, endeavours to gain unfair advantage in relation to

employment.

- 14.2 If a member of the Recruitment Panel is approached in such circumstances, a record of the nature of the discussion should be made and reported to the Human Resources Business Partner. Ultimately it will be for the Director of Human Resources to decide whether the applicant should be disqualified from the selection process.

## **15 The Board of Assessors**

- 15.1 The composition of the Board of Assessors will vary according to the level and type of post being filled. Consideration should be given to ensuring that:

- The Board of Assessors includes members with the relevant subject/technical expertise to assess candidates.
- All Board of Assessors must be gender representative comprising minimum 40% of men and women.
- The Chair and all other members of the Board of Assessors have received appropriate training in the recruitment and selection process. This will include training on the policy and procedure, interview skills, and unconscious bias training.
- Members of the Board of Assessors take collective responsibility for the decisions arrived at and for ensuring that their performance on the Board conforms to the agreed procedures.
- All Board Members should be at minimum at the same level but ideally at level above the advertised position (an exception may be made to this policy if there is a need for the Board member with specific expertise).
- Staff members may not participate in the Board selecting their own successor or replacement.
- External interview board members are entitled to travel and subsistence expenses only.

- 15.2 Composition of Board of Assessors

### **Academic Post**

#### **Established Professorships/ Professor In**

- Chair – President (or nominee)
- Dean of College of primary affiliation (or nominee)
- Two other internal assessors
- Two external assessors

#### **Approval required:**

Nominations for Board of Assessors for Professorship roles, should be approved in line with University Regulations. Once approved, the Post Coordinator will inform the HR Office (via the RIF) of the final approved Board.

### **Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer**

- Chair – President (or nominee)\*
- Head of School (or nominee)\*\*
- Two other internal assessors
- One external assessor

\*normally the Executive Dean of the College of primary affiliation

\*\*nominee only exceptionally and related to the non-availability of the Head

### **Approval required:**

Nominations for Board of Assessors for Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer, should be approved in line with University Regulations. Once approved, the Post Coordinator will inform the HR Office (via the RIF) of the final approved Board. Once approved the Post Coordinator will inform the HR Office (via the RIF) of the final approved Board.

### **Research Posts**

#### **Research Assistant**

- Principal Investigator
- Postdoctoral Researcher

#### **Postdoctoral Researcher/Research Associate**

- Hiring Manager/Principal Investigator
- One other internal assessor (at least one grade senior)

#### **Research Fellow**

- Hiring Manager/Principal Investigator
- Three other internal assessors (at least one grade senior)

### **Approval required:**

No approval required for Research Board of Assessors, but HR will review and sign off on the Board of Assessors subject to the no conflict and gender representation in place.

### **Professional Services Posts**

#### **Grades 2 – 3 : at a minimum**

- Appropriate Supervisor
- Member outside of the School/Unit

- The Interview Board will be reviewed and approved through the Human Resources Office.

#### **Grades 4 – AO : at a minimum**

- Chair Head of School/Unit (or nominee)
  - Appropriate Supervisor
  - Two people from outside of School/Unit or External
- The Interview Board will be reviewed and approved through the Human Resources Office.

#### **Assistant Secretary & Above**

- The UMT Member/VP/Director nominates the membership of the BOA for appointment. The Interview Board will be approved through the Human Resources Office.
- The Board of Assessors will include at a minimum:
  - Chairperson
  - Relevant UMT member (where not the Chairperson)
  - 3rd person from outside the unit
  - External Expert in the area being interviewed.

#### **Technical Posts - at a minimum**

- Chairperson (Head of School or nominee)
- Member of Academic Staff from the School (at least one level higher)
- Chief Technical Officer or alternative as recommended by the Chair/ Head of School.
- External Member (specialist in the field, preferably from outside the University)

#### **Approval required:**

The Post Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Head of School/Unit nominates the Board of Assessors and then contacts each member listed to participate on the Board to seek their agreement. Once the Head of School/Unit approves the Board, the Post Coordinator will inform the HR Office, via the RIF, of the final approved Board.

- 15.3 It is important that Board of Assessors members, including external members meet at a pre-interview stage to agree on how the interview will be conducted, the areas and sequencing of the interview questions and the candidate evaluation procedures.
- 15.4 In any situation where a Search Committee and a Board of Assessors are appointed, membership of these Committees shall normally be mutually exclusive unless provided for within a key policy.

## **16 The Role and Responsibility of the Chair**

- 16.1 The Chair has overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the selection process. The duties of the Chair begin in advance of the interview itself, either at shortlisting or at a meeting prior to the interview and therefore, in general terms, the person taking on the role needs to be available to take part in all stages of the process. It is the duty of the Chair to make sure that the process is carried out in



accordance with the appropriate procedures.

- 16.2 It is preferable that the Chair meets with the other Board of Assessors members before the day assigned for interviews. This meeting provides an opportunity for the Chair to agree with individual Board members their respective roles, the interview questions each will cover and the procedures for candidate evaluation.
- 16.3 If some members of the Board of Assessors are unfamiliar with interviewing methods and techniques, it may help if the actual wording of the questions to be put to the candidates is agreed on in advance.
- 16.4 The responsibility of the Chair at the interview itself is to introduce the Board of Assessors members

to the candidate, to outline to the candidate the way the interview will be conducted and the areas that will be covered by individual Board members, to ensure that Board members fully explore the selection criteria with each candidate, to complete the interview at the appropriate time, and to oversee the evaluation process.

- 16.5 It is essential that the Chair ensures that candidates are marked collectively by the Board on the basis of objective criteria set out in the job specification.
- 16.6 It is essential that the Chair ensures that all notes made by members of the Board at interview are retained and returned to the Human Resources Office. The Chair should also provide a list of the questions and areas covered at interview by the selection panel.
- 16.7 At the end of the interviews, the Chair ensures that all members have signed the record of the decision arrived at (via physical scanned signature or electronic signature) and that the appropriate documentation is passed on to the Human Resources Office without delay, normally within 24 hours of the interview concluding.
- 16.8 With the exception of researcher posts, the Human Resources Office will be responsible for officially informing all the candidates of the outcome of the interview, whether successful or not. However, if the Chair of the interview board wishes to contact the candidates to inform them of the outcome of the interview process, this is also permitted. Researcher candidates are informed of the outcome of the interviews by the Principal Investigator.
- 16.9 The other members of the Board of Assessors should not contact the unsuccessful applicants after the interview process, unless nominated by the Chairperson of the Board as the person who will provide feedback.
- 16.10 The Chair (unless otherwise agreed) will be the nominated Board of Assessors' member to provide feedback to candidates should such a request arise.

## **17 Changes to the Board of Assessors**

- 17.1 While changes to Boards of Assessors should be avoided, if it is necessary to vary the membership the following procedures apply:
- Please notify the Recruitment Consultant regarding the change to the Board of Assessors membership as soon as possible.
  - Where the change impacts the gender representation, every effort must be made to try and ensure the replacement identified will restore the appropriate representation.
  - The replacement member must be given the opportunity to review all applications, and may add any applicants to the shortlist for consideration by the Board.
  - Members of the Board of Assessors must be present for all interviews. If, in exceptional circumstances, a Board member cannot be present for all interviews he/she should withdraw from the Board and cannot make a case for any of the short-listed applicants or vote for the appointment of any applicant.

- If the Board of Assessors composition drops below the minimum requirements in terms of gender representation or composition, then a new board of assessors will need to be appointed.
- Recommended levels in very exceptional circumstances may vary. However, this should be discussed in advance with the Recruitment Consultant.
- In the case of changes to the Board of Assessors for permanent Academic posts, the change can be approved by the Dean, in line with the approval process above.

## 17 Shortlisting

- 18.1 It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to determine who will participate on the shortlisting committee. (minimum participation level 75%).
- 18.2 Applications will be consolidated electronically and provided to the Board of Assessor electronically within 5 working days of the closing date of the competition or in the case of Research funded posts, applications are emailed directly to the Principal Investigator by the candidate.
- 18.3 It is also the responsibility of the Chairperson to advise the board, particularly external board members of the procedure, ensure they have received the necessary training and are familiar with the University's recruitment and selection procedures.
- 18.4 The responsibility of the Board of Assessors is to select for interview only those applicants who meet the selection criteria. This must be done in a manner that is valid, fair and consistent and in accordance with the legislation set out above. For example if a post requires a PhD qualification, the hiring manager must outline at the outset if they are willing to accept candidates who have not yet defended their thesis but have a scheduled date for their viva voce.
- 18.4.1 Posts which have a requirement for competency in Gaelige will have an assessment conducted after shortlisting and those candidates who do not meet the required standard will at this point be eliminated from progressing further.
- 18.6 The Chair of the Board of Assessors is responsible for initiating the shortlisting process. It should also be identified at this point if shortlisted candidates will be required to make a presentation as part of the interview process.
- 18.7 Applications for research funded posts are emailed directly to the Principal Investigator. The shortlisting form should be used to record applications as they are received.
- 18.8 The Board of Assessors shortlists the applicants by reviewing each application and eliminating, in the first instance, those candidates who fail to meet the essential criteria. If it is considered necessary to reduce the number of applicants further, the Board may then apply the desirable criteria to agree the final shortlist. The Board of Assessor then agrees the list of candidates being brought forward from shortlisting stage to interview.
- 18.9 It is important to remember that no new criteria should be introduced at the shortlisting stage. Subjective or personalised comments about individual applicants should not be made and the focus will be on whether or not the applicants meet the agreed criteria. It is, therefore, important to ensure that sufficient time and thought is put into identifying appropriate selection criteria when the person specification is being produced.
- 18.10 At least 75% of the Board of Assessors (gender balanced if possible) should undertake the shortlisting. Those involved in the process may decide either to carry out the shortlisting at a joint meeting or alternatively to draw up their own lists of candidates on an individual basis and then engage in a meeting to discuss and agree the final shortlist.
- 18.11 If additional tests are required to assist with the selection process such as IT Skills, then this can be arranged by HR and the unit must cover the cost. The Hiring Manager should identify this requirement on the RIF or ARF at the outset to allow for scheduling of same.

18.12 The Board records their justification via a scoring mechanism as to why candidates were shortlisting based on the job description requirements. This record clearly and unambiguously identifies the selection criteria which have been met by the successful candidates and those that the deselected candidates failed to meet. It is important to avoid including in the record any subjective or personalised comments about individual applicants.

18.13 When shortlisting, Board members should not:

- Make subjective or personalised comments about individual applicants.
- Make negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived over-qualification.
- Make negative assumptions or decisions about overseas qualifications with which they are unfamiliar.
- Recommend for interview any applicant who does not meet the essential criteria.
- Predetermine the number of applicants to be interviewed.

18.14 The shortlisting form must be completed and signed (physically by scanned copy or via electronic signature) by all Board members in order for recruitment to progress. The shortlisting form must be returned to HR within 24 hours (excluding weekends) of shortlisting, to eliminate any perception of decision reversal, prior to invitation to interviews being issued. In response to and in support of the University's sustainability strategy the HR Office is now 100% paperless, therefore all documentation is required to be transmitted and managed electronically with associated scanned physical signatures or electronic signatures, where applicable.

When the shortlisting form is returned to HR, it should also include the presentation title and time allocation (if applicable).

18.15 Following receipt of the shortlist, HR or the Principal Investigator/Recruitment Consultant will email all applicants not shortlisted within one week to inform them of the outcome of their application. Approved template documents must be used.

18.16 Should the invitation to interview require the candidate to attend for interview on campus, shortlisted candidates are invited to highlight any special needs they may have in relation to their attendance at interview. This will assist in making practical arrangements or reasonable adjustments in advance for candidates with special needs in relation to the interview location, room layout or other aspects of the interview.

## **19 References**

19.1 References can provide useful additional information that can be used as part of the assessment process. However, their main benefit is that they can confirm factual information on issues such as dates of employment, attendance record and whether the candidate has the experience claimed.

19.2 The quality of references can be enhanced by providing referees with the job description and person specification for the post and by seeking specific information which is related to the selection criteria.

19.3 Candidates are required to authorise the University to seek references. No offer of appointment will be made unless satisfactory references have been received by the Recruitment team.

- 19.4 Referees should be provided with information about the position and be requested to address the selection criteria. References must be provided in writing.
- 19.5 Subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, and the Data Protection Act, 1988, as amended by the Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003, references are normally confidential to the members of the Board of Assessors and should not be passed on to third parties, including the candidate (unless a FOI request is made).
- 19.6.1 For academic and researcher appointments, references are taken up prior to interview by the Recruitment Consultant or Principal Investigator and are made available to the members of the Assessment Board. In the case of other appointments, references are usually taken up following the interview stage.
- 19.6.2 For Professional Services/Technical appointments the practice of requesting references in advance of Interview may also be applied to certain senior posts. However in general references are usually sought after the interview. A minimum of two references (in some instances three references) will be sought, and where listed on the application form, the referees identified will be contacted. The current employer should be one of the referees contacted.
- 19.6.3 Where the appointment is filled by internal competition, a reference from the current line Manager is required.

## **20 Unconscious Bias in Recruitment and Selection**

- 20.1 Competency based recruitment ensures that the right person is successful based on the needs and requirements of the role. However, evidence has shown that interview panel members should be aware of their position in making judgements and selections of people and the impact of their decisions. Selection should be based purely on the information provided throughout the recruitment process and personal, subjective opinions should not play any role.
- 20.2 While the University Recruitment and Selection Guidelines set out a fair transparent process for every position, members of selection panels each need to be cognisant of their own biases and prejudices.
- 20.3 Evidence shows that bias is demonstrated through quick or 'snap' judgements we make on other people. In recruitment, these judgements need to be scrutinised and challenged.
- 20.4 To overcome the risk of bias all staff who will be involved in a selection process are required to have undertaken the necessary unconscious bias training.

## **21 Preparation for Interview**

- 21.1** Careful preparation and organisation is fundamental to ensure that all aspects of the interview process are effective. Practical arrangements will be made in the following areas by the Human Resources Office.
- 21.2** While supporting the University's strategy on sustainability and the desire to reduce our carbon footprint, the method of interviewing will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board of Assessors. On-campus or on-line interviews must adhere to the Human Resources office's commitment to adopting paperless procedures.
- 23.3** Interviews are either wholly online or wholly in person. Hybrid options are only permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as illness, missed flights, and/or where requested by the candidate. This is to ensure that all candidates enjoy the same experience and avoiding any perception of bias.

## **22 Communication with Candidates**

- Clear information must be provided to candidates and board members on the type of interview and the schedule that would apply to them.
- Where applicable, advise the candidate where the candidate waiting area is.
- If a tour of the campus is being made to potential candidates, details will be provided.

## **23 Scheduling of interviews**

- The Recruitment Consultant or the Principal Investigator is responsible for scheduling all interviews. They will contact shortlisted candidates and invite them to attend for interview in accordance with the agreed interview date(s).
- It is essential that candidates receive sufficient notice of an approaching interview to allow ample time to prepare.
- Minimum notice requirements are:
  - Professional/Technical posts – 1 week by default and 2 weeks where a presentation is required..
  - Academic Posts – 3 weeks (to allow adequate time for advance references to be returned)
  - Research funded Posts – 2 weeks
- Should a candidate not be able to attend on the agreed date, the Board will decide whether or not an alternative interview date can be facilitated. This may not be possible where an external assessor is included on the Board of Assessments. In such cases all interviews must occur within one week.
- Ensure sufficient time is allocated for conducting presentations and/or interviews, to avoid candidates clashing.
- Schedule appropriate time for the Board of Assessors to plan and prepare for the interview.

## **24 The interview environment**

### **24.1 Online interviews**

- Online interviews are scheduled via MS Team or Zoom
- Candidates are advised to ensure that they have the appropriate software installed to facilitate interview.
- Candidate must present for interview in a private location, free from noise, distractions and interruptions, ensuring no other individual is present in the room at the time of interview.
- At the commencement of the i interview, the Chairperson of the Board will introduce the board or assessors to the candidate.
- Where a presentation is required, candidates must share the presentation with the board during the course of the interview.

## **24.2 On-campus interviews**

On campus interviews are coordinated by the post coordinator identified by the hiring Manager at the outset of the process.

- Ensure the interview room is accessible.
- Ensure there is appropriate light, heat and ventilation in the room.
- Establish steps been taken to prevent interruptions and noise
- Ensure there is an appropriate layout of the table and chairs
- Ensure water and catering is available for the Board and for candidates
- Arrange name plates to identify members of the Board of Assessors
- Coordinate any technology required for the interview is available

24.1 The Board of Assessors will also need to be well prepared for the interviews.

Areas for consideration include:

- Ensuring that all Board members have reviewed the relevant documentation, including applications, job description and person specification
- The Chair will agree the format and structure of the interview and clarify each individual's role on the Board
- Agreeing on the areas and scheduling of interview including timekeeping
- The Board of Assessors will agree on notetaking responsibilities for the interview board members.

## **25 Conducting Interviews**

**25.1** The purpose of the interview is to identify candidates, having regard to all the evidence, who best meet the objective criteria and competencies required for the position and to place the candidates in order of merit on the basis of their perceived contribution to the University

**25.2** Every effort should be made to ensure that all interviews are held within core hours i.e. between 10a.m. and 4 p.m.

**25.3** Remote interviews require the use of approved technologies such as MS Teams or Zoom. It will be responsibility of the Post Coordinator in the hiring unit to ensure that the technology is available for the Board of Assessors.

**25.4** Where required, the venue for the interview will be booked by the post-coordinator. They will be responsible for the room set-up on the day of the interviews, including providing water for the Board and candidates, name plates, and catering, where required.

**25.5** All virtual paperwork for the interview will be provided to the Board of Assessors prior to the interview day through a link to Core or via email for researcher posts. The interview pack will also be emailed to the Board members or be provided by an online link and will include:

- Job specification
- Schedule
- References (if applicable)
- Chairperson's report (will go to Chairperson of the Board only)
- Interview summary sheet (will go to Chairperson of Board only).

**25.6** Recommended minimum interview duration guidelines for various grades are set out below :

***Academic:***

- 1 hour Professor
- 45 minutes Lecturer

***Research funded posts:***

- 1 hour - Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow
- 40 minutes – Postdoctoral Researcher and Research Assistant

***Professional Services Staff - 1 to 3:***

- 30 minutes

***Professional Services Staff - 4 and up & Technical Post***

- 40 minutes (to include 10 minutes for presentation)

**25.7** The interview process for Academic posts in University of Galway is highly structured and follows a competency- based format. This means that the interview is conducted by an Assessment Board and a standardised and consistent process for all candidates is followed.

**25.8** The primary aim of the selection interview, from the point of view of the interviewer, is to determine if the candidate is competent to do the job. Interviews should be used to assess how well the individual performs against the criteria for the post.



**25.9** To ensure that the interview process is effective at selecting the best candidate, the interview needs to be planned and well-structured and managed. Under the direction of the Chair, all members of the Board of Assessors will need to take joint responsibility for:

- **Ensuring** that the interview concentrates on gathering information that relates to the selection criteria already identified in the person specification.
- **Ensuring** that the control of the interview remains with the Board and that it is not diverted from its task by a particular candidate.
- **Participating** actively in all stages of the interview.
- **Ensuring** that candidates have sufficient time to talk through their applications and to ask and answer questions. The appropriate use of silence can sometimes be helpful to candidates in collecting their thoughts and formulating their responses to the questions.
- **Inviting** candidates to provide any additional information relevant to the selection criteria which they consider has not been covered.
- **Conducting** the interview in a fair, transparent and professional manner.

**25.10** It is important to remember that the interview is a two-way process in which the University is deciding on the candidates and they in turn are deciding on the University as an employer.

**25.11** The interview stage is primarily for information gathering; Snap judgments about candidates should be avoided at this stage. The evaluation of candidates is carried out at the post-interview stage.

## **26 Interview Questions**

**26.1** The choice of interview questions and how they are asked can affect the quality of response.

**26.2** To ensure fairness and consistency, the same areas/questions of competence will be explored with all candidates. This will provide the basis for an objective assessment of each candidate against the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified in the Job Description as required for the role. Therefore, clear questions will be agreed in advance and put to each candidate in turn.

**26.3** Where necessary, the Board may ask additional probing questions to ensure that specific areas of a candidate's application are explored in full.

**26.4** Questions should be phrased in a manner best suited to obtaining the information sought.

- **Behavioural** Questions – designed to measure how a candidate demonstrated a particular skill, knowledge or behaviour in the past.
- **Situational** Questions – hypothetical questions to identify how a candidate would behave in a particular situation.
- **Open** Questions – encourages the candidate to demonstrate competencies.
- **Probing** Questions – seeks clarity and find additional information.

**The following type questions should be avoided where possible**

- **Closed** Questions – only elicit a yes/no answer
- **Multiple** Questions – confuse the candidate.
- **Leading** Questions – lead the candidate to a preconceived opinion or to a ‘correct’ answer.

**26.5** As far as possible it is important to avoid confusing the candidate by the use of jargon or specialised terminology which is not relevant to the job.

**26.6** Questions that could be construed as indicating an intention to discriminate on any of the grounds identified in the Equality Acts should not be asked in any situation.

## **27 Presentations**

**27.1** Presentations are often used to supplement the interview, especially for academic appointments, senior positions or for posts where the presentation of information is an important element of the work.

**27.2** Where a presentation is required, the shortlisted candidates will be given advance notice of what is expected from them in terms of content and the expected length of the presentation. These details will be provided to the candidate when they receive notification of their interview details.

**27.3** The Board should be clear about the purpose of the presentation and about what exactly is being evaluated. It is essential to agree in advance on whether it is the subject knowledge that is under consideration or the presentation style of the candidate, or both of these factors.

**27.4** The Board will also need to agree on what marking will be attached to the presentation in relation to the overall evaluation of candidates.

**27.5** Where presentations are used, these should be incorporated in the interview process and all Board members must be in attendance for the presentations.

### **27.6 Academic Presentation**

Academic Presentations will take place for all senior academic positions, and discretion with the Executive Deans on other Academic posts. The Board of assessors will decide on the title of the presentation at shortlisting stage. The audience to the presentation will be sent by the relevant school office, where the posts within a school, or College Office in the case of college wide posts. The invitation will be extended to members of the University management team where the appointment is also a member of UMT. The names of the candidates are not shared in the invite, as our recruitment process is confidential and sharing names could be a breach of GDPR. The invitation will clearly advise that those attending presentation must attend all presentation, and the information in regard to presentation is confidential.

The presentation should not be more than 15 minutes with 10 minutes for Q&A. Feedback can be provided to the chair of the board of assessors, which will only be considered at the end of the interview process. All feedback is subject to Freedom of Information rules.

## **28 Candidate Evaluation**

- 28.1** The Board of Assessors must use an agreed marking scheme. The marking scheme must be based on the essential and desirable job criteria, with a score and weighting attached to each relevant criterion.
- 28.2** The benefit of an agreed marking system is that it provides a systematic approach to evaluating the candidates against agreed criteria.
- 28.3** In discussing the merits of the candidates, the Chair should invite each Board member in turn to outline his or her evaluation of each individual candidate. This evaluation is based on weighing the merits of each in relation to the selection criteria.
- 28.4** It is advisable that the Chair waits until the other members have given their views before putting forward a personal opinion. This avoids the possibility of unfairly influencing members of the Board who may be less experienced or external to the University.
- 28.5** Marks and weighting per competency area will be agreed in advance of the interview.
- 28.6** When the Board members have made a final decision on the person/persons to be recommended for appointment, each member of the Board will sign a report in writing recommending in order of merit, in the opinion of the Board, a list of one or more candidates for the post.
- 28.7** If there is disagreement about the final decision, resulting in an equality of votes, the Chair will normally have a casting vote.
- 28.8** To be deemed eligible for appointment, the candidate must reach a **70% mark** or higher in each of the competency areas and **80% overall**.
- 28.9** The Interview report, together with individual assessment forms plus the interview report and interview notes, will be sent to the Recruitment Consultant through safe electronic means within 24 hours (excepting weekends) of the interview date.
- 28.10** Softcopy completed and signed interview paperwork with appropriate numeric evaluation (scanned or electronic signatures accepted) must be returned to the Recruitment Consultant by the Chairperson of the Board within 24 hours of completion of interview (excluding weekends).
- 28.11** It is the responsibility of HR to store, process, protect and maintain personal data, therefore it is a key responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board to ensure all information associated with the recruitment competition is returned to HR and not saved or stored by any of the Board of Assessors, on any device.

## **29 Verification of Qualifications**

**29.1** The University reserves the right to obtain and verify the candidate's academic qualifications before confirming an offer of employment. All candidates applying for a job where a qualification is a mandatory criterion will be requested to provide original academic transcripts to the HR Recruitment unit. The cost incurred by the applicant for requesting such original documents will not be covered by University of Galway.

### **30 Pre- Employment Medical Assessments**

30.1.1 The primary purpose of the pre-employment medical is to assess the individual's ability to carry out the duties associated with a particular post.

30.1.2 The appointed Occupational Health Physician with responsibility for carrying out the medical should be made aware of any special factors or issues relating to the job which might impact on the individual's ability to perform it. All details provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be accessible to the Occupational Health Provider.

30.2 All medical assessments are initially conducted via the online questionnaire but, on occasion, a further telephone or person to person consultation with the Occupational Health Physician may also be required.

30.3 Given the broad definition of disability under the Equality Acts, an organisation cannot withdraw a job offer if, following a medical assessment, it becomes clear that the prospective employee has a disability, unless the doctor certifies that the candidate could not do the job, or because of the health and safety risks to the applicant or others in a particular employment situation.

30.4 Confirmation that an individual is "Medically fit for the proposed position" must be received prior to University of Galway issuing a contract of employment.

### **31 Garda vetting (Police clearance)**

**31.1** Garda Vetting is conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons. We will make such enquiries with An Garda Síochána or a Scheduled Organisation, as deemed necessary, to establish whether there is any criminal record or specified information relating to the applicant.

**31.2** Where Garda vetting is required, candidates are precluded from commencing employment until the vetting disclosure has been received. Leadtime with the bureau is on average 6 weeks.

**31.3** A Garda Vetting disclosure is issued directly to the liaison person in the University.

**31.4** Garda vetting will only be conducted on the written consent of an individual vetting subject.

**31.5** An individual vetting subject may obtain a copy of their Garda Vetting disclosure from the liaison person.

## **32 Offer of Appointment**

**32.1** Once the Board of Assessors has made its recommendation to appoint one or more candidates, the agreed procedures for making an appointment will be followed. It is the responsibility of the Human Resources Office to contact the successful candidate and make a written offer subject to pre - employment checks.

**32.2** No candidate may commence employment prior to the successful exchange of the contract of employment.

**32.3** Whilst the Chair of the Assessment Board may congratulate the successful candidate, they should not commit the University to an appointment at a particular salary. The salary recommendation will be made by HR in line with public pay policy and the University's Remuneration policy.

**32.4** A panel may be formed of successful candidates and will remain live and in place for a period of 12 months with the option to extend to 18 months where further vacancies are likely to occur, after which time the panel will expire and no further appointment will be made to same.

## **33 Advising unsuccessful candidates**

**33.1** The Recruitment Consultant assigned to the post or the Principal Investigator will advise unsuccessful applicants within 4 days of the return of the Assessment Board's Report.

**33.2.1** The members of the Board of Assessors should not contact the unsuccessful applicants after the interview process, unless nominated by the Chairperson of the Board as the person who will provide feedback.

## **34 Post Interview Feedback**

**34.1** Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates needs to be handled with care and sensitivity. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the desire and need to provide helpful feedback to unsuccessful candidates does not prejudice the position of the University.

**34.2** The responsibility for providing feedback to candidates lies with the Chairperson of the Board of Assessors or an agreed other designated member of the Board of Assessors. Any other Board member approached for feedback should refer the applicant to the appropriate person in the first instance.

**34.3** Feedback should be constructive and focus on the candidate's performance in relation to the selection criteria.

**34.4** It is not appropriate to discuss the relative skills and abilities of other candidates or to comment on their interview performance with the person seeking feedback. Feedback should focus only on the unsuccessful candidate's skills, and abilities relative to the post, as well as their performance at interview.

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