

Academic Recruitment in the School of the Physical Sciences

This document describes how the provisions of the “Joint Report of the Council and the General Board on arrangements for academic recruitment” will be implemented in the Departments of the School of the Physical Sciences. The process will operate in accordance with the Joint Report, subject to the guidance set out below.

1. The process for the appointment to all academic offices, with the exception of Professorships, within the School of the Physical Sciences shall be determined by the Council of the School. The Head of the School will have overall responsibility for overseeing compliance with the process.
2. Before any academic office is advertised, the recruiting Department must obtain permission to fill (either for filling an existing vacancy or by requesting a new need), in accordance with existing process approved by the Council of the School, through the School’s Needs Committee.
3. Once permission to fill is obtained, the Head of the recruiting Department will be responsible for managing the recruitment process. In doing this, the Head of Department will take due account of the published guidance from the University.
4. Where an appointment is cross-departmental, it will be for the Heads of the recruiting Departments to agree a lead Department for the purposes of that appointment. The Head of the lead Department will then be responsible for managing the recruitment process and will be the Head of the recruiting Department for the purposes of this guidance.
5. Recruitment to any academic office shall be by a Selection Committee, which may be either a Standing Committee or an ad hoc Committee.
6. Where Committees are ad hoc, it is expected that a new Selection Committee will be determined for each appointment; although Departments may decide to appoint certain members to serve on all ad hoc Selection Committees. It is however, recognised that, provided the Selection Committee is appropriately constituted, there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for one Selection Committee to consider appointments to more than one post.
7. Each Selection Committee shall have a minimum of five members and normally no more than nine members present. In exceptional cases, and subject to the approval of the Head of School, it may be considered appropriate for there to be more than nine members on a Committee.
8. The majority of the Selection Committee members must be established academic officers of the University.
9. Special Ordinance C (x) further states that at least one member of the Selection Committee must be external to the recruiting Department(s). However, the School considers it to be good practice for at least two members of the Committee to be external to the recruiting Department(s). In addition, where particular expertise is required for an appointment, it may be appropriate to appoint a member who is external to the University as a full member of, or adviser to, the Committee. Provided such a member is appointed as a full member, they will be counted when determining quorum and entitlement to vote.
10. The gender balance of a Selection Committee should be as close to equal numbers of men and women as reasonably possible and, as a minimum, it is expected that there will normally be a minimum of two of each gender. Consideration should also be given to the racial and ethnic

diversity of the Selection Committee. It is acknowledged that there is potential for unfair pressure being placed on women and ethnic minorities to serve disproportionately in order to achieve a more balanced membership, therefore it is not expected that Committees should have a significantly different balance to the professional norm.

11. The Secretary of the Selection Committee shall be proposed by the Head of the recruiting Department.
12. The Head of the recruiting Department will submit the recommendations for the membership of the Selection Committee, including the Chair and Secretary, for approval by the Head of School. Departments are encouraged, where possible, to do this at the same time as seeking permission to fill the post.
13. Following approval of the membership, should a member exceptionally be unable to attend the Selection Committee meeting, and their absence would bring the number present below the minimum membership of five, the Head of School shall delegate authority to the Head of Department to appoint another person to serve as a member, provided all other requirements of Special Ordinance C (x) are met. The Head of the recruiting Department will inform the Head of School of such an appointment as soon as possible.
14. In addition, if it becomes clear that the approved membership appears unbalanced in light of the field of applicants, the Head of the recruiting Department may recommend changes to the constitution of the Committee to address this and resubmit the amended membership to the Head of the School for approval.
15. In addition, and subject to the minimum membership of five, if on the day of the meeting due to exceptional circumstances, the Chair is unable to be present, the members of the Committee present may appoint an appropriate Chair from amongst themselves.
16. All members are expected to attend the Selection Committee meeting in person. In exceptional circumstances, permission may be given for a member of the Selection Committee who is unable to be present to participate by alternative means of communication, provided all members are able to hear one another simultaneously. Where this is permitted, that member shall be counted as present in determining quorum and entitlement to vote.
17. In addition to serving on the Selection Committee, some members may also be involved with the earlier stages of the recruitment process e.g. shortlisting exercises, attending presentations. Not all members of the Selection Committee will participate in all stages of the recruitment process. However, if a member of the Selection Committee is involved in another stage of the recruitment process, they should, except in exceptional circumstances then be involved in that stage of the recruitment process for all candidates, to ensure that all candidates are treated the in same way.
18. It is hoped that decisions of the Selection Committee will be reached by a consensus of all members. However, if necessary, decisions shall be made by a two-thirds vote of members (rounded up to the nearest integer) unless unanimity is prescribed for any decision by the process in any School. The Chair shall not have a casting vote.
19. The Selection Committee will make a recommendation of a candidate for appointment to the post (or posts if set up to do so), the duration of the appointment and the duration of the

probationary period (if appropriate). The Selection Committee may also rank further candidates as recommended for appointment if the preferred candidate or candidates decline their offers.

20. In the case of an exceptionally strong field of applicants, a Selection Committee may wish to suggest to the recruiting Department(s) and to the Head of School that consideration be given to making an additional appointment from that field.
21. The recommendation of the Selection Committee will be submitted to the Head of School (copied to the HR Business Manager and PhysicalSciences@admin.cam.ac.uk) in writing, together with the documentation of the selection process and the lists of the candidates at each stage, including appropriate equality and diversity data relating to gender and ethnicity. The recommendation must also include a statement that all members of the Committee are satisfied that the selection process has been conducted in line with the required procedure and Recruitment Key Principles.
22. No discussions relating to a formal offer of employment should take place until the recommendation of the Selection Committee has been approved by the Head of School. The School recognises the importance of moving forward with these discussions as soon as possible and will make every effort to respond to recommendations from the Selection Committees in a timely manner to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays.
23. The authorisation of the appointment by the Head of School should always be submitted in writing, copying in the School Secretary, School Finance Manager, School HR Business Manager, most senior member of staff with HR responsibilities in the relevant Department and the Head of the Department.
24. Once authorisation for the appointment is given, and before a formal offer is made, the Head of Department will also need to ensure that appropriate School level approval is received for any additional payments, for example recruitment incentive payments and/or start-up grants, and where appropriate have had any request for a contribution from the School strategic reserve approved.
25. Where the Head of School is not satisfied that a Selection Committee has made a decision fairly, transparently, or in accordance with the required procedure or the Recruitment Key Principles, they may remit the decision back to the Selection Committee citing their concerns. In exceptional circumstances, where the Head of the School remains dissatisfied, the matter will be referred to the Council of the School for consideration of appropriate remedial action.
26. The University members of the Selection Committee and individuals taking part in any stage of the recruitment process prior to the meeting of the Selection Committee, must have undertaken recruitment training, and the online Equality and Diversity training, as specified by the Human Resources Division on behalf of the General Board.
27. The recruiting Department, with ultimate responsibility lying with the Head of Department, must ensure that the process for advertising the appointment, short-listing, interviewing and final selection follows best practice and complies with the Recruitment Key Principles (Appendix A) and the University's Recruitment Guidelines, and the appropriate administrative arrangements are in place to support the process.
28. Each member of the Selection Committee should also seek to ensure that the selection process has been conducted fairly and complies with procedures and the Recruitment Key Principles.

Should any member have a concern about the process, they should raise this with the Chair of the Selection Committee in the first instance. In the event that the member's concerns are not answered satisfactorily, the member shall be entitled to raise their concerns with the Head of School who will have the discretion to resolve the matter as they consider appropriate.

29. The appointment to a University Lectureship shall be subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation under arrangements approved from time to time by the University unless the waiver of this requirement is recommended by the Selection Committee and approved by the Head of the School.
30. The probationary period for established University Lecturers and University Senior Lecturers will be five years unless the Head of Department makes a case to the Selection Committee for the requirement to be reduced (to a period of not less than three years) or to be waived where the officer has held a senior academic position at another university and has already acquired relevant skills and experience.
31. Probationary arrangements for academic officers will be considered by a Selection Committee in accordance with University probationary arrangements for academic staff. A Selection Committee may either be convened specifically to carry out a probationary review or may be considered by a Selection Committee already convened for the purposes of recruitment.
32. The above information shall be published on the School's website, along with the memberships of each individual Selection Committee.

Version 2

APPENDIX A : RECRUITMENT KEY PRINCIPLES

All members of the Selection Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the selection process has been conducted fairly and transparently, and that it complies with the Recruitment Key Principles set out below. Any member independently of their seniority will be able to challenge the process at any time if that member considers that it is not being conducted fairly, transparently, in accordance with the required procedure or the Recruitment Key Principles.

The University members of a Selection Committee are expected to have undertaken recruitment training and training in equality and diversity matters as specified by the Human Resources Division on behalf of the General Board.

The Recruitment Key Principles are proposed to be as follows:

- (a) The recruitment and selection process should seek to attract and recruit talented people to the role and the University.
- (b) Recruitment should take place in a timely, flexible, and efficient manner.
- (c) There should be equality of opportunity in all recruitment processes to ensure the right candidate is appointed based on merit. Selection processes must be based on objective criteria that prevent implicit bias, that are impartial, and are applied consistently.
- (d) All candidates should be treated fairly using a transparent process. This includes documenting objective selection criteria, reasons for selection decisions, and providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates invited to interview.
- (e) The recruitment process is one of open competition that should attract a diversity of talented applicants. Potential candidates should be provided with access to information about the job, the required knowledge, skills, and experience, and about the selection process.
- (f) All candidates should have a positive experience of the University, whether they are successful or not. The recruitment process should ensure that the University is presented in a positive manner that enhances its reputation and attracts talented candidates.
- (g) All staff involved in recruitment should complete appropriate training including training in Equality and Diversity principles.
- (h) Declarations of interest must be made at the appropriate stages of the recruitment process.
- (i) All documentation must be treated confidentially and in accordance with data protection principles.
- (j) Recruitment processes should be conducted in a cost-effective manner.