

POLICY NAME: Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

APPROVAL BODY: People Committee

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1. Introduction

Altus Education Partnership's (the Trust) aim is to recruit the best people for the wide range of posts which are necessary to ensure the standards of excellence to which it aspires. The purpose of the trust's recruitment and selection policy and procedures is to ensure an appointment system that is transparent, consistent and unbiased.

The Trust will adhere to its responsibilities under the Equality Act and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) to ensure that the most suitable person for a job is selected based on their relevant merits and abilities and that no employee/job applicant is unfairly treated on any grounds including:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

2. Implementation

The Trust will achieve the aims of the Recruitment and Selection Policy by ensuring that:

- Vacancies reach as wide a pool of potential applicants as practicable and appropriate
- There are clear job descriptions and objective person specifications for every job
- Procedure and good practice for recruitment and selection for appointment or promotion is followed by every employee involved in the recruitment and selection of staff
- Staff involved in the recruitment and selection process are given adequate training on the trust's procedures, their responsibilities and good practice
- Unlawful and unfair practices are not introduced by regularly monitoring/reviewing its policy and procedures
- Positive action is taken to make this policy fully effective including steps to encourage applications from under-represented groups within the trust
- A member of the senior leadership team (SLT) is designated to each post to ensure that the Recruitment and Selection procedure is applied consistently through each stage and this person should be trained in Safer Recruitment

3. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff (Code of Practice)

3.1 Scope

This Code of Practice applies to all appointments within the trust, with the exception of the appointment of agency and casual workers.

3.2 Post authorisation

The Principal/Headteacher in conjunction with the senior leadership team (SLT) will approve in principle the request to release a post to be recruited to and this will be recorded in SLT minutes. This includes existing, as well as additional posts. The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review the structure, post and its duties, responsibilities and grade. Prior to advertising, consideration must

also be given to employees requiring redeployment due to redundancy or other reasons. A lead member of SLT will be appointed and will provide consistency through each stage of the procedure.

3.3 Job Description

A job description is needed so post holders know what is expected of them. It is used as a basis for assessing what knowledge and skills are required for the job. It defines the major activities and responsibilities of the post and indicates how the post fits in the programme area/department structure and the reporting relationships of the post.

All job descriptions should be clear, concise, use straightforward language and avoid the use of unnecessary jargon or technical language. The job description should also be gender neutral and written in a non-discriminatory way, as should the job title. It is important to remember that the job description should be based on the requirements of the post not on the individual. The job description should be reviewed periodically to ensure it is up to date. The trust pro-forma should be used.

3.4 Person Specification

The person specification describes the skills, knowledge, experience and other attributes that the successful applicant will need to carry out the duties of the post. The trust pro-forma should be used. The person specification is an important document as it provides the basis for the recruitment process from advert right through to the appointment decision and can be subject to scrutiny. The person specification should be specific, related to the job and not unnecessarily restrictive – for example only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified. The inclusion of criteria that cannot be justified as essential for the performance of the job may be deemed discriminatory under discrimination law, if these impact disproportionately to the disadvantage of specific groups. Satisfactorily meeting all required checks for the post (see Section 6) will be an essential criterion for the post.

The person specification should allow an interview panel the basis of preparing questions relevant to the requirements of the individual post. It further allows prospective candidates to target their application against the essential criteria.

3.5 Essential/Desirable Criteria

The essential criteria should be the qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge required to undertake the duties of the post. Problems arise when individuals are short-listed or even appointed when they do not meet the essential criteria on the person specification. Examples of this include appointing candidates with lower qualifications or less experience than has been detailed as essential. This can lead to claims of unfairness and must be avoided.

3.6 Qualifications/Experience

Qualifications are often an indication of a person's capabilities but care must be taken not to deter applicants who have the necessary skills and experience but not the required qualification. It may be therefore, relevant to specify a particular qualification or an 'equivalent' qualification. To aid clarification, it is necessary to specify a particular qualification that is deemed to be equivalent or alternative qualifications that are also acceptable.

Experience should be an area that is cautiously applied and should relate back to the skill. This is an area that can assist with selection at the application stage but needs to be tested at interview. Just

because someone has 5 years experience of teaching, does not mean that they are the best candidate and could potentially discriminate on the grounds of age.

3.7 Skills/ Knowledge

The specific nature of tasks needs to be identified on the skills/knowledge section of the person specification. It might be helpful to identify both qualitative and quantitative measures. It is important not to ask for a higher level of skill than is really required. When considering the skills, consider how they are going to be assessed.

Avoid requirements that unlawfully discriminate against candidates and it is crucial to remember the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

3.8 Advertising

Every vacancy will be approved by the Trust's Chief Financial Officer prior to a vacancy being advertised. All vacancies will be advertised internally to trust staff via email. The details will also be provided to staff who are absent from work due to maternity/paternity leave and long term illness (as appropriate).

When a decision is made to also advertise a vacancy externally, it will be advertised via media which will reach all sections of the community, including the Altus website vacancies page. Consideration will be given to targeted advertising where particular groups are under-represented. A reference to the safer recruitment process should be made in all advertisements.

4.0 Further Particulars

All applicants will be provided with the same information and opportunity to make an application. Comprehensive further particulars with up to date information will be available to candidates including:

- Trust/college/academy Information
- Job description and person specification
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Closing date
- Details of how to apply
- Recruitment contact
- Staff benefits
- Provisional date of interview

4.1 Application Forms

The trust has a standard application form. All candidates are required to complete this because the use of the application form ensures the provision of standard and consistent information from each candidate and assists the assessment process by ensuring that information can be assimilated and compared in an efficient manner. The application form also helps to ensure that candidates are given equal consideration. CV's are not accepted as an application in response to an advertised vacancy. Anyone submitting a CV or other form of application will be asked to complete the trust's form. Where appropriate, a letter of application may be requested in addition to the application form.

Special provision may be made for applicants with a disability or other need who may wish to submit their application in a different format.

Application forms will be anonymised by the HR/Recruitment Administrator before they are sent to the shortlisting panel.

Forms received electronically will be required to be signed at the interview stage.

A full employment history must be given with all gaps satisfactorily explained (or questioned at interview). If the trust is not satisfied with any explanations or gaps remain, for example when interviewing a candidate who lived overseas, further checks may be at the discretion of the trust.

4.2 Response Handling

The HR/Recruitment Administrator will undertake all response handling. Application forms and further particulars will also be available through the trust/college/academy website. At the closing date, the HR/Recruitment Administrator will prepare the applications for shortlisting. Unsuccessful candidates at the shortlisting stage will not be acknowledged.

4.3 Shortlisting

The shortlisting process identifies the applicants who meet the requirements of the post as defined in the job description and person specification, where those criteria can be assessed from the application form. The Trust shortlisting proforma should be completed for all applicants. Short-listed candidates must meet all essential criteria (that can be judged from the application form). To ensure objectivity, shortlisting should not be undertaken by one person alone. Candidates who consider they have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 who meet all the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.

The reasons for selection and rejection at the shortlisting stage should be clearly documented by the completion of the Trust shortlisting proforma.

5 The Interview

The aim of the interview is to select the best match between candidates and the person specification for the post and to extract relevant information in enough detail to reach a decision.

The process should be a two-way dialogue which also allows candidates to gain further information about the trust and the post. All interviews will be conducted by a panel of at least two people. At least one member of the interview panel must be 'Safer Recruitment' trained.

At least one safeguarding question should be included in all interviews to strengthen the Trust culture of safeguarding practices.

The trust may require candidates to complete job-related selection tests or ask candidates to deliver presentations as part of the selection process if there are some elements of the person specification that are difficult to test at interview. Candidates applying for posts with a teaching element may be required to deliver a lesson as part of the process. Selection tests will not be used in isolation in the selection process and will be appropriate for the criteria that need to be assessed.

To reduce the likelihood or risk of subconscious bias and for equality and diversity purposes, an appropriate panel should be established to include a diverse range of experience and expertise and where appropriate made up of a diversity of gender, ethnicity etc.

All documentation related to the interview will be held by the HR Department for a period of 6 months with the exception of the successful candidate whose information will be contained within the personnel file.

6. Recruitment Checks

6.1 References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions and to strengthen the safer recruitment checks. The information sought will include length and dates of employment, job title and brief details of responsibilities, reason for leaving, and details of absences. All details should be checked to ensure all questions have been answered. The trust requests details of at least two referees, one of whom should be the candidate's present or last employer. References will be sought directly from the referee. Unsolicited references submitted by candidates and addressed 'To Whom It May Concern' will be disregarded. References should also be taken for internal appointments.

References should be checked against details on the application form, for example employment history dates/reasons for leaving and also for inconsistencies between each other. Candidates who are not currently employed as a teacher should provide their most recent school or college as a reference and if they do not then the trust should contact this employer to gain a reference.

References should be taken up prior to interview, and for Safer Recruitment purposes the nominated SLT lead should review and check that the information is not contradictory or incomplete. Any issues with the reference should be taken up before interview. The remainder of the panel do not have access to references until a recommendation is made for appointment. At this point the information within the reference will be used to support their decision.

If a referee refuses or cannot provide a reference which would mean 2 satisfactory references have not been received, then the candidate could be asked to provide details of a further referee. The requirement for at least one reference from previous employers where the role involved working with children would remain. If satisfactory references are not received, then consideration should be given to withdrawing the conditional offer of employment.

Due to potential litigation, an increased number of referees are only providing limited information on candidates, e.g. only confirming employment and the dates of employment. An academy should investigate this further by asking the candidate to explore whether the employer will provide further

information with candidates consent. An academy could also consider requesting an alternative referee (where able). The academy should then make a final judgement, based on all the information available, and record the decision made clearly, especially if this results in the conditional offer being withdrawn.

6.2 Checks for the prevention of illegal working/proof of identity

Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires all employers in the United Kingdom to make basic document checks on every person they intend to employ. By making these checks, employers can be sure they will not break the law by employing illegal workers. As a result, all successful candidates are required to provide evidence of their eligibility to undertake employment of this nature within the United Kingdom and proof of identity. Identifications checking guidelines are used from the GOV.UK website.

6.3 DBS Checks and Rehabilitation of Offenders Declaration

The trust will not discriminate unfairly against applicants who possess a criminal record. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex-offenders do not have to disclose spent convictions. However, certain types of posts, particularly those that involve working with children or vulnerable adults or in other positions of trust or sensitive areas, are exempt from these provisions, and in these cases all convictions must be declared. The Disclosure and Barring Service provides wider access to criminal record information through its disclosure service. The type of disclosure that is required for posts at the trust is an enhanced check.

The trust undertakes electronic DBS checks and receives a notification if the DBS check is clear. If the DBS check is not clear, the successful applicant should contact the trust ASAP but within 14 calendar days to make arrangements to present in person the DBS certificate. The Principal/CEO /Headteacher or HR Officer will meet with the applicant to discuss the contents of the DBS certificate and Rehabilitation of Offenders form. The final decision regarding clearance will be made by the Principal/CEO/Headteacher. For more detail, please see the trust's Disclosure and Barring Services Policy and Procedure.

6.4 Teaching Regulation Agency checks/Teachers and others prohibited from the profession checks and Section 128 Direction checks.

In addition to the DBS check, the trust also completes a check of all appointments against the Department for Education Teaching Regulation Agency database, which is incorporated as part of the DBS check. This database contains details of people whose employment has been barred or restricted by the Secretary of State for Education under the terms of the Education (Restriction of Employment) Regulations 2000, and previous regulations. It also contains details of people who have been barred from teaching in Northern Ireland and removed from the Register of Teachers by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. People in these categories are not barred from employment in England and Wales. The database also includes people who are shown on the Department of Health Protection of Children Act (1999) List (POCALs). Anyone who appears on POCALS will also have been barred by the Secretary Of State for Education, and therefore will be included in the search.

A Prohibition order prevents a person from carrying out teaching work with children and is issued by the Secretary of State. Checks should be made using the Teacher Service System to prevent the confirmation of a job offer to a candidate with a prohibition order.

A section 128 direction prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an academy. This check is carried out at the same time as the DBS check for all management appointments.

6.5 Online checks

In accordance with KCSIE safer recruitment guidance, the Trust carry out online checks on shortlisted applicants. The purpose of these checks is to identify any public concerns or reputational risks that may not appear through traditional references or DBS checks.

The check will consist of putting the applicant's name into a search engine along with key words such as names known by + areas lived and worked + key words such as 'convictions' 'cautions' 'magistrates' 'court' 'sanctions' 'prohibition'.

7. Offers of appointment

Once the panel has made an appointment decision the successful candidate will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by the appointing manager.

All offers of appointment will be approved by the Principal/Headteacher and Chief Financial Officer and a conditional offer will be confirmed in writing by the HR/Recruitment Administrator. All offers of appointment are subject to:

- a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and Teaching Regulation/Prohibition check
- receipt of a satisfactory medical report from the trust's Occupational Health Advisors.
- verification that the applicant is legally permitted to work in the United Kingdom.
- verification of identity
- the receipt of satisfactory references considered suitable by the trust
- verification of all relevant qualifications referred to in the applicants application form.

8. Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates

It is good practice to provide feedback to candidates who have not been appointed and it is the responsibility of the appointing manager to provide this feedback on request. This needs to be carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable following the selection process. The Trust does not provide written feedback.

9. Pre-Employment health screening

The Health and Safety at Work Act imposes a general duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations specifically provide that employers should ensure that employees are provided with health surveillance appropriate to the risk within their job. For this reason, all appointments to the trust are subject to pre-employment health screening by the trust occupational health provider, Optima Health.

The HR/Recruitment Administrator will log in to a secure portal managed by Optima and submit the personal details, email address and an outline of duties of the applicant. Optima will make contact with the applicant by phone and perform an occupational health assessment. Optima will then provide the trust with an opinion on the applicant's medical suitability for the post. In some cases, a further occupational health appointment may be recommended by Optima.

10. Induction

Newly appointed staff must complete an induction programme. Early Careers Teachers staff (ECT 's) will attend an additional ECF programme over the period of 2 years and confirmation of appointment is dependent on successfully passing the ECF programme. Confirmation of appointment for all staff directly appointed by the trust is subject to satisfactory performance during a six month probationary period, a separate Probationary Policy and Procedure outlines these procedures.

11. Confidentiality and data protection

All information obtained from candidates during the selection process must be treated as confidential by the appointing panel and other staff involved in the process. Any personal data obtained and held by the trust as part of the recruitment and selection process will be subject to the Data Protection Act 1998.