

Seven Suggestions for Recruiting the right person

Getting the right people into post is critical for the success of your project and your career.

1 Navigate the procedural and legal framework

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and changed, often reflecting changes in the legal framework that employers have to operate in. Rather than wade through all of this yourself, talk to your [Faculty Human Resources Team](#) who will be able to do the procedural and legal navigation for you.

2 Get the job spec. right

Job specifications are often done in a rush because there is a pressing need to get someone in post. Recruit in haste, repent at leisure! Time spent getting your job spec. right will reap rewards all the way through the project and beyond. Think carefully about the kind of applicants you want to invite and what really is essential and desirable (some people won't apply for jobs unless they have all the essential criteria, especially women). What do you actually want this person to do in the role? Will there be vast amounts of data crunching? Will they need to be able to work alone for long periods? Is it imperative that they can work well as part of a team? Be honest and clear about your expectations from the beginning and you will have a way of saying no to unsuitable candidates and dealing with any problems that emerge when the person starts the job. For advice on developing your spec. and getting your job advertised, try the University's [Resourcing web pages](#).

3 Plan your selection process

How are you going to find out whether your candidates are really genuinely up to the job? Some people interview brilliantly and disappoint later so think about what you need to find out before you make an appointment. If there is an essential skill or technique they must have and can you create a test or demonstration where they can show this? Think through what the person will need to do in post and make sure you ask questions about this. Competency-based questions like "Can you tell me about a time when something went badly wrong?" invite the person to share real experiences of how they have dealt with things. Research suggests that people's past behaviour is often the best indicator of future performance. Human Resources offers a huge [bank of interview questions](#) you can use and adapt.

4 Be clear about contract terms

Is the post paid for by short-term funding? Say so. Does the contract for the work end before the project does? Be clear about this and honest about potential opportunities afterwards. Make sure that the person is making an informed choice and there are no nasty surprises later. Include how much time there will be for them to pursue their independent work alongside the essentials of the job. If the job necessitates unusual working hours be clear about this and find out any difficulties that the person might have with field work, long experiments or international travel. Don't make any assumptions. Find out what the person's expectations of the job are and be honest if these are not really compatible with yours. It is important that the person has enough information to make a decision when you make them [a verbal offer](#). After they accept this, Human Resources will initiate contractual arrangements but you don't want people backing out later because something wasn't clear.

5 Be aware of your assumptions and prejudices

We all make assumptions and we all have prejudices. When it comes to making appointments you need to be aware of these and make a conscious decision to override them. Get clear about what the person needs to be able to do and include all these things in your job criteria and [selection process](#). If getting along well as part of the team is important, how can you break this down into specific behaviours? Is it really important that the person likes cricket and beer or is it actually that they share information and ideas, help others and can accept criticism? A very helpful [diversity checklist](#) on the Resourcing website outlines practical considerations to ensure your appointment is fair and legal.

6 If in doubt, don't appoint

Hopefully you will be in a position to choose between an array of wonderful candidates and your only trouble will be deciding between them. If this is your conundrum then it's a good idea to arrange to see the top contenders again (with at least two of the original panel members) and ask more focused questions to inform your decision. If the panel does not think that any of the candidates really meet the criteria for the job then don't appoint. It is better to face another round of the recruitment process, or to take stock of your needs, than to live with the consequences of someone who can't do the job well.

7 Support them when they arrive

Having got your appointment right, make sure that the new person's arrival and [induction](#) gets off to a good start. Make sure physical space and resources have been prepared so they are not floundering without a computer, email address or ID card. Make sure that you are there to welcome them on their first day and can take time to orientate them and set expectations for their new role. Take sufficient time to ensure that your new person understands what they are to achieve and how to go about this. Hand over the relevant information, access to systems and introduce them to colleagues and partners they will need to work with. Remember that there is a probationary period (known as [Initial Service Review](#)) to be completed. Set clear expectations for this and meet regularly to discuss whether these are being met.

"Never ignore a gut feeling, but never believe that it's enough" Robert Heller