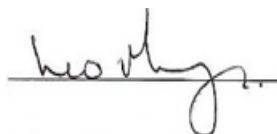


North West Regional College Policy and Procedures

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Approved by



Date 4 March 2021

Principal and Chief Executive

Issue	Document Title	Date of 1 st Issue	Date Last Reviewed	Responsibility of
2	Recruitment and Selection Policy	August 2010	June 2020	Sandra Kelly

North West Regional College Recruitment and Selection Policy



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The North West Regional College (referred to hereafter as the College) is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all employment practices.
- 1.2 In accordance with paragraph 46 of the Articles of Government this policy has been drawn up by the Resources Committee of the Governing Body in consultation with the recognised staff representatives for the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff other than senior staff.

2 AIM

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to promote good practice among all persons involved in making selection decisions and carrying the responsibility for implementing equality of opportunity.
- 2.2 Good personnel practice places an obligation on the College to review all employment procedures on a continuing basis.
- 2.3 This policy should be used and understood in conjunction with the following documents:
 - The Equal Opportunities Policy
 - A Code of Practice removing sex bias from recruitment and selection
 - Fair Employment in Northern Ireland Code of Practice
 - Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment
 - Code of Practice – Disability

All of the above documents are available from HR Services.

3 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The purpose of the policy is to define as clearly as possible the basis on which the College will seek to appoint and promote staff with the aim of ensuring the most suitable person is appointed to the post. The Recruitment and Selection process ensures that:
- posts within the College meet the requirements of the organisation;
 - people are appointed based on merit.
- 3.2 The criteria for selection and promotion will be determined solely by the requirements of the post therefore ensuring that people will be appointed on the basis of their merit in relation to relevant experience, ability, aptitude and qualification.
- 3.3 The College will provide this policy in alternative formats on request where reasonably practicable, eg, Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk, Audio formats, etc, and/or alternative language.
- 3.4 The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This policy should be interpreted in a manner consistent with the aforementioned legislation.

4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The College must bear in mind the statutory demands of current anti discrimination legislation which includes the following:
- The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 and 1988
 - Fair Employment (Monitoring) Regulations (NI) Order 1989
 - The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998
 - The Access to Children (NI) Act 1988
 - The Disability Discrimination (NI) Act 1995 and 2000 (Amendment)
 - The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and 2003 (Amendment)
 - Legislation pertaining to the Rehabilitation of Offenders
 - Employers' obligation under European law
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
 - Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (NI) 1999
 - Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970
 - Part Time Workers (Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
 - The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
 - The Freedom of Information Act 2000

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998

5 APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 5.1 The Principal and Chief Executive shall be responsible to the Resources Committee for ensuring that the policy is implemented.
- 5.2 The policy shall apply to all permanent and temporary staff, both teaching and support, within the College with the exception of the posts of Principal and Chief Executive and Directors. The relevant process for the senior posts is detailed in the Articles of Government for Colleges of Further Education.
- 5.3 The College will monitor applicants on the basis of the statutory requirements to facilitate completion of the annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return and the Article 55 three-year review. In addition, the College will endeavour to monitor on the basis of all 9 equality categories captured in accordance with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.
- 5.4 Records will be retained of all reasonable adjustments made to facilitate applicants with a disability.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall take effect from 27 November 2014 and shall be reviewed in consultation with the relevant and recognised Trade Unions, following a period of three years based on the agreed timetable for provision of Article 55 to the Equality Commission. Annual monitoring will also take place with a report to the Governing Body each year.

6.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

The Governing Body of the College has responsibility to:

- ensure that this policy complies with the arrangements outlined in the Articles and Instruments of Government for the recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff.

Principal and Chief Executive

The Principal and Chief Executive in conjunction with the LMT and relevant personnel will be responsible for:

- promoting compliance with the policy;
- ensuring that appropriate structures are in place for the implementation, review and evaluation of this policy.

HR Services

HR Services will:

- provide training, advice and support to line managers in relation to the implementation of this policy;
- ensure fair and consistent application of this policy;
- review and update policy and practice in accordance with changes in legislation and good practice;
- comply with all statutory provisions relating to reporting on fair employment data and recruitment and promotion practices within the College;
- report to the LMT and/or Governing Body as required.

Managers

Managers will:

- attend training and seek advice and support from the HR Services in relation to the implementation of this policy;
- ensure fair and consistent application of this policy.

Employees

Employees will:

- be aware of and comply with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

7 OVERVIEW

The recruitment process consists of various stages from vacancy to appointment and includes:

- panel compositions;
- defining the job (job description);
- defining the suitable candidate (personnel specification);
- advertising;
- shortlisting;
- assessment/tests (if applicable);
- planning and organising the interviews;
- making a decision to appoint.

8 PANEL ARRANGEMENTS

On occasions as agreed by the HR Manager a representative from HR Services will be in attendance.

8.1. **Level 1** – Head of Department

The selection panel will comprise:

- the Principal and Chief Executive (or a nominated representative);
- the relevant Director;
- one member of the Governing Body (if a Director is unavailable the Principal will nominate another panel member).

8.2 **Level 2** – Principal Lecturer and Support Staff (Band 8 and above)

The selection panel will comprise:

- the Principal and Chief Executive (or a nominated representative);
- the relevant Director (or a nominated representative);
- another Director or Head of Department or one Governing Body member.

8.3 **Level 3** – Lecturer (at least 12 months' duration), and Support Staff (Bands 6 and 7)

The selection panel will comprise:

- one relevant Head of Department (or a nominated representative);
- one Deputy Head of Department/Head of Section (or a nominated representative);
- one Curriculum Manager or relevant Manager at least one band above the post being recruited.

One Curriculum Manager or relevant Manager at least one band above the post being recruited.

8.4 **Level 3** – Lecturer (less than 12 months' duration)

The selection panel will comprise:

- one Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department;
- two Curriculum Managers.

8.5 **Level 4** –Support Staff (Bands 1 – 5)

The selection panel will comprise:

- one Deputy Head of Department /Head of Service/Head of Section;
- two other panel members at Band 6 or above.

Panel members to be representative of at least 2 areas of responsibility.

The panel shall have delegated authority to make an appointment. No appointment shall be made until all relevant pre-employment checks have been carried out and are deemed to be satisfactory.

9 PANEL COMPOSITION

Panels should be convened as detailed above.

If in exceptional circumstances it is not possible to have the composition identified above, substitute panel members at the appropriate level will be appointed. Details of the circumstances and panel membership will be held in the job file.

Where practical, panels should consist of male and female members and be representative of both main communities within Northern Ireland.

The College also recognises that a range of legislation pertaining to equality of opportunity impacts upon the Recruitment and Selection Process and it is committed to ensuring that the provisions of such legislation are met within the terms of this policy and procedure.

Where the College considers it necessary, an assessor may be appointed as part of the selection process. (Section 14 refers).

The College will ensure that panel members and members of the Governing Body involved as voting or non-voting members in any part of the selection process will not participate in such procedures if a family relationship, as defined below, is known to exist between the panel member and any person who is applying for a particular post within the College.

For the purposes of this paragraph, a relevant family relationship shall be deemed to exist between a College employee and/or Governing Body member and a person who is a candidate for employment with the College if they are husband or wife, or partner (civil or otherwise) or if the person who is a candidate for employment is the:

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Child
- Grandchild
- Brother or Sister
- Uncle or Aunt
- Nephew or Niece, Spouse/Partner

In addition panel members should not participate if one of the candidates is a close relation to their spouse/partner i.e. Mother, Father, Brother or Sister.

Whenever reasonably practicable, a panel member should not participate in the selection process where they are aware that a complaint is pending against them by one of the applicants. In such circumstances, advice should be sought from the HR Manager.

Chairpersons of panels must have attended Recruitment and Selection training and the requirements of the legislation relating to equality of opportunity.

The College seeks to ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process will undergo appropriate training to ensure a high standard of service and consistency of treatment towards people to include compliance with the equal opportunities policy and fair employment practices and to avoid direct and indirect discrimination practices.

Panel members should have attended training on Recruitment and Selection and the requirements of the legislation relating to equality of opportunity.

10 CONFIDENTIALITY

Panel members should be reminded by the chairperson that they should not discuss the applicants outside the panel meetings, and that all information on candidates should remain confidential.

11 VOTING RIGHTS

All members of the panel shall have voting rights with the exception of the professional assessor and the HR representative referred to in Paragraph 8

12 CHAIR

A Chairperson should be appointed from the voting panel members. Normally this will be the member of the Governing Body or the most senior voting panel member.

13 QUORUM

The quorum shall be three persons present and entitled to vote. In exceptional circumstances for posts at level 3 with less than 12 months' duration and level 5 the quorum will be two persons present and entitled to vote, the two persons must be representative of at least 2 areas/Departments, and must have attended Recruitment and Selection training and the requirements of the legislation relating to equality of opportunity.

Without a quorum the panel shall be reported as cancelled. Only in exceptional circumstances will a panel member be substituted at interview stage. A record of this change and the circumstances will be contained within the relevant job file.

14 ROLE OF ASSESSOR

Where the College considers it necessary a professional assessor may be appointed to give guidance to interview panels on the professional and technical suitability of applicants. This will normally be in circumstances where, in the view of the panel Chairperson, determines that sufficient expertise in the key functional areas of the post does not exist within the panel.

The Assessor will provide guidance to the interview panel on the professional and technical suitability of applicants. They may also provide information on any point requiring clarification, for example qualifications and level of experience at the shortlisting stage.

Where possible, the Assessor should assist in:

- Agreeing the person specification
- Determining the shortlisting criteria before the post is advertised in order to avoid any errors or problems in interpretation at the shortlisting meeting.

The Assessor should participate fully in the recruitment and selection process but does not have voting rights.

Where possible the Assessor should be a serving employee from within the education sector however, where appropriate, a person from outside the sector may be appointed.

The Assessor shall be advised of their duties and responsibilities in relation to the selection process. The Assessor should regard the proceedings of the selection process as confidential.

The Assessor may be asked to put questions to the applicants following the Chairperson's introduction. When the last candidate has withdrawn, the Chairperson shall invite the Assessor to comment on the professional or technical competence of each candidate and to supply information on any point requiring clarification by panel members. Comments should be restricted to the professional and technical competency of each candidate and care must be taken not to lead the panel members.

15 THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND THE PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

A job description identifies what the post entails while the personnel specification identifies what an applicant must have in order to perform effectively in the job described.

16 JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description as the term implies, describes the purpose, scope, main duties and responsibilities of the job and is the foundation upon which all other processes are based. The personnel specification, job advertisement, selection criteria, performance measures, training, development, and job grading should all be established from the job description.

17 PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

The purpose of a personnel specification is to identify the special aptitudes, competencies, qualifications, skills and knowledge which are necessary for effective performance in the job. All criteria must be recorded on the personnel specification and only criteria relevant to the job will be considered.

The recruitment and selection process will not be activated until a personnel specification has been established.

Care must be taken when setting criteria to avoid unnecessary conditions, which may discriminate on grounds of sex, marital status, race, age, religious affiliation, disability or sexual orientation. This is especially relevant when considering qualifications and length of experience. A template personnel specification is available from HR Services.

It will be the Line Manager's responsibility to prepare a personnel specification for approval by the HR Manager or nominee.

18 THE SCORING SYSTEM

When all the criteria have been selected, consideration must be given to the relative importance of each factor i.e. the weighting.

Particular attention must be given to the weighting allocated to experience, knowledge and competencies and what proportion they comprise of the whole job.

Depending on the nature of the job the importance of each attribute will vary.

It is partly through the weighting process that standards are set for selection and these should be consistent from one job selection to another where the jobs are identical. However these should be reviewed in accordance with operational requirements each time a post is advertised.

The method for scoring of candidates should be agreed prior to interview and used consistently by each panel member for all candidates.

19 ADVERTISING

When any vacancy is to be filled, the Line Manager must complete and sign an Intention to Recruit form available from HR Services and the NWRC Staff Portal. This form should be approved by the Directorate and must be accompanied by a Job Description and Personnel Specification. Prior to advertising, level one posts must be approved by the Resources Committee of the Governing Body.

In relation to the Part-Time Lecturer register, on receipt of a request from the relevant Head of Department, HR Services will initiate the recruitment process.

The content of the advertisement should encourage all eligible and suitably qualified persons to apply.

A statement promoting the College's Equal Opportunities Policy will be included in all advertisements.

When necessary, due to affirmative action, a welcoming statement will also be included in the advertisement.

All posts will normally be publically advertised to as wide a pool as possible. It is the College's policy that posts are advertised in such a way as to guarantee circulation to both communities, target underrepresented groups, and to create a suitable pool of applicants for the post being advertised. In addition, advertisements will be placed on the College website, social medial platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and any other e-recruitment provider deemed appropriate.

The Resources Committee of the Governing Body will review community background of applicants on an annual basis.

20 CANVASSING

Canvassing of members of the Governing Body or staff of the College directly or indirectly, in connection with any appointment within the College will disqualify the applicant. A member of the Governing Body or staff of the College will not canvas for any person to be appointed within the College.

21 SHORTLISTING

The purpose of shortlisting is to decide which applicants meet the minimum criteria which have been set out in the personnel specification and those most suitable to progress to the next stage. It is imperative that only the applicants who meet the criteria are shortlisted. Applicants with a disability who fail to meet the essential experience criterion will be shortlisted.

It is desirable that all voting panel members are present at the shortlisting meeting. Where necessary panel members may shortlist via the online

shortlisting tool and will only be required to convene in circumstances when shortlisting discrepancies occur. This process will be co-ordinated by HR Services.

If a large number of applications are received it is appropriate to use the desirable criteria at shortlisting stage. The desirable criteria must be agreed and prioritised prior to considering the applications. Care should be taken when strengthening criteria to ensure the criteria is not discriminatory.

In the event there is in-sufficient information on the application form for the applicant to be shortlisted, the missing information can be obtained prior to an appointment decision being made.

A record of the shortlisting proceeding must be retained stating clearly the decision of the panel in respect of each candidate.

The qualifications required should be obtained at the closing date for the post, unless in exceptional circumstances when applicants awaiting results are invited to make application. The date obtained will be determined by the date printed on the certificate/parchment.

The duration of experience required should be held at the closing date for the post. In cases where post qualifying experience is required, this will be determined by the date printed on the certificate/parchment of the relevant qualification(s).

Candidates not shortlisted should be advised of this fact as soon as possible. Details of criteria used for shortlisting should be disclosed to an individual applicant on request.

22 ASSESSMENTS / TESTS

Selection panels will determine if an assessment/test is appropriate. Assessment/tests will be more appropriate for posts requiring technical knowledge, technical skill or managerial competencies but may also be used to deal with job files containing large applicant numbers. Eligibility criteria and tests used for recruitment or promotion must be related to job requirements and be non-discriminatory. Candidates who proceed to the next stage following shortlisting will be advised if an assessment/test is required, the nature of the assessment/test and areas to be assessed. Only those candidates who complete the assessment to a satisfactory level shall proceed to the next stage. Criteria and tests will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they do not have a disproportionate impact on particular groups or individuals

23 APPLICATION FORMS

College application forms advertised on the GetGot job page are the only acceptable method of application to the College. Only information included in the application form will be accepted. Casual or speculative requests for employment will not be accepted.

College application forms are available in alternative formats on request.

An application form received after the closing time and date will not be brought forward to the shortlisting stage unless due to exceptional circumstances such as College technical errors. This decision will be made by the nominated officer in HR Services not by the panel.

24 INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be fully accessible and reasonable adjustments will be made to allow candidates with a disability to attend the interview without being placed at a disadvantage. Where candidates have particular requirements, consideration will be given to the adjustments/adaptations needed to enable the candidate to do the job.

In complying with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the College will make 'reasonable adjustments' as required to enable a successful applicant with a disability to take up an appointment.

Interviews are a two-way communication, in which applicants are deciding whether they want to work for the College as much as panels are deciding who is right for the post. Interviews, therefore, need to be carefully planned if a satisfactory outcome is to be achieved in the available time.

Prejudice must be avoided if interviews are to be conducted in a fair, unbiased and effective manner; there must be no discrimination on grounds of age, disability, race or ethnic origin, gender, marital status, political opinion, religion, sexual orientation or dependents.

In exceptional circumstances alternative formats of interview using electronic communication technologies will be considered.

25 PRE-INTERVIEW

A number of basic principles apply in interviewing:

- Applicants are required to bring valid, photographic ID to their interview. Failure to produce valid photographic ID will result in applicants not being interviewed. This is in keeping with good safeguarding practices.

- The interview panel, must agree in advance the structure of the interview, the essential criteria to be checked during the interview and the areas of questioning which relate to these points.
- Questions asked during the interview should always relate to the personnel specification. However issues of clarification from the person's application form may be asked.
- If applicants are unable to attend and request that their interview is rescheduled, the panel must decide if this request can be accommodated, taking into account diary commitments, business needs and pool of applicants.

26 MAKING A SELECTION DECISION – THE PANEL PROCESS

Coming to a final selection decision as a panel as opposed to the individual decision of a selector requires a careful and sensitive approach by the Chairperson. Selection Panel decisions and reasons for such decisions will be recorded at each stage of the selection process. All documentation will be retained for at least three years.

All persons partaking or likely to partake in the selection process will receive training in Equal Opportunities with regard to recruitment and selection interviewing.

During the interview there may have been occasions when panel members were unable to take full notes, e.g. when questioning the candidate. Panel members should take the opportunity to complete notes and check the understanding from other panel members e.g. of professional or technical issues. This must be done in an objective manner and only for the purposes of clarity and in the context of the original personnel specification. Panel members should consider each candidate independently against the criteria using all the information they have gathered. Each candidate should be awarded points within the maximum scores decided by the panel and recorded in the personnel specification.

Where each panel member has scored each candidate they should rank the candidate on the basis of the Overall Assessment giving first place to their highest marked candidate and so on i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. When candidates score equally they should be ranked equally. The next rank number should be skipped e.g. 1, 2, 2, 4, 5.

Panel members should not discuss their individual scores or agree scores unless the question relates to an area of expertise not held by all panel members.

Every effort will be made to achieve an agreement by consensus. If this is not possible, the panel members should each vote based on their top ranking candidate and the appointment can be recommended based on a majority

vote. However, if the panel should reach an impasse, as a last resort, the panel should individually review how they have assessed candidates.

Where a panel have a difference of opinion regarding the highest scoring candidate this should be discussed with a view to reaching a unanimous decision. Any changes to scores resulting from these discussions should be noted and must be based on evidence available to the panel.

However, if an agreement cannot be reached at this stage, the rank of each candidate by each panel member should be totalled and on the basis of these total ranks an overall rank order of candidates should be made on a summary score sheet.

Candidates with the top totalled rank is the most appointable based on the Merit Principal.

Where this results in joint rank orders then account will be taken of the position of the individuals against the panels average scores awarded. Once the average scores are awarded candidates will be ranked again accordingly.

Whether unanimous or majority a post should only be offered to the top candidate who demonstrated an acceptable level of suitability.

In exceptional circumstances the Chairperson of the panel may recommend a second set of interviews for selected candidates. This decision should be made in consultation with the HR representative taking into account the difficulty differentiating candidates due to similar overall assessments.

If the Selection Panel determine that none of the candidates interviewed are suitable for appointment the post may be re-advertised.

The recommendation from the panel may include a shortlist of reserve candidates in order of merit from whom an appointment may be made if the successful candidate fails to take up the post or if the post is vacated within twelve months of the appointment date.

If another vacancy arises within twelve months the post will be offered to candidates from the reserve list. This is a post with a generic job description and on the same scale of pay.

The Resources Committee of the Governing Body will note all appointments to the College.

27 GENERAL

All relevant recruitment documentation will be retained in accordance with retention periods set out in the FE College Sector (NI) Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Due to the need to comply with legislation it will not be appropriate to recruit staff without adhering to the appropriate Recruitment and Selection process contained within this policy. Breaches of this policy will be deemed to be misconduct.

28 APPEALS

28.1 Where an employee wishes to appeal against a decision that they should not proceed to the next stage of the recruitment process or not to appoint him/her to a post following interview, or post interview due to pre-employment checks the following statutory grievance procedure will apply.

28.2 STEP 1

The employee must set out the grounds for the grievance in writing and send the statement to the Monitoring Officer so as to be received by not later than 5 working days of the date of receipt of the decision not to shortlist/appoint him/her.

28.3 STEP 2

28.3.1 A Senior Officer in HR Services must invite the employee to attend a meeting to discuss his/her grievance.

28.3.2 The meeting must not take place unless:

- 1 the employee has informed the Monitoring Officer what the basis for the grievance was when he/she made the statement under Step 1; and
- 2 the Senior Officer in HR Services has had a reasonable opportunity to consider his/her response to that information.

28.3.3 The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

28.3.4 After the meeting the Senior Officer in HR Services must inform the employee in writing of his/her decision as to his/her response to the grievance and notify the employee of the right to appeal against the decision if he/she is not satisfied with it.

28.4 **STEP 3 – APPEAL**

If the employee wishes to appeal, he/she must inform the Monitoring Officer in HR Services in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the decision issued at 28.3.4 above.

If an employee informs the Monitoring Officer in HR Services of his/her wish to appeal, a member of the Senior Management Team must invite him/her to attend a further meeting.

The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

After the appeal meeting the member of the Senior Management Team must inform the employee in writing of his/her decision.

No one involved as a member of the selection panel concerned should hear the grievance or the appeal.