Appointment Policy

Establishment: Council, 12 June 2003

Last Amended: Vice-President (Corporate Services), 1 February 2017

Nature of Amendment: Change consequential to the approval of the Recruitment and Vacancy Management Procedure

Date Last Reviewed:

Responsible Officer: Director, People and Culture

1. Introduction

This policy governs the University’s recruitment, selection and appointment processes and provides a flexible framework for recruiting staff whilst adhering to relevant legislative requirements. The University aims to appoint the most suitable people to vacant positions through an appointment process that is applied in a fair, consistent, professional and timely manner.

The principles of merit and equal employment opportunity provide the foundation for this policy. The merit principle means that appointment decisions are:

- based on a candidate’s knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to those genuinely required for the key responsibilities of the position, and
- free from discrimination or patronage.

2. Application

This policy applies to all continuing, convertible and fixed-term appointments for academic and professional staff (including research-funded appointments) but excludes casual appointments. 1

3. Principles

3.1 Appointment processes will be open and subject to appropriate scrutiny and review, having regard to the confidentiality rights of applicants and the University.

3.2 All reasonable efforts will be made to achieve a balance between open recruitment and facilitating career development opportunities for existing staff.
3.3 Recruitment processes will, where appropriate to an area, actively seek out groups under-represented in the University’s staffing profile, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, school leavers, women, people from a non-English speaking background and people with disabilities.

3.4 As a general principle, all staff members holding a continuing position will have undergone a competitive selection process at some stage in their employment with the University.

3.5 The University will strive to ensure that all actions taken in relation to recruitment, selection and appointment will be free from conflicts of interest.

3.6 Heads of Cost Centres, Deans of School, University Librarian and Heads of Administrative Divisions are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

4. Approving a Vacant Position

Formal approval must be obtained to establish or continue a vacant position, and to recruit to that position, as follows:

4.1 Council will approve the creation or continuation of the positions of Vice-Chancellor, Deputy and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, Senior Vice-President and Vice-President, University Librarian and any other position to be established as part of the University’s senior executive.

4.2 All other staff vacancies will be managed in accordance with the University’s Recruitment and Vacancy Management Procedure.

4.3 Proposing and Approving Position Descriptions

All vacant positions require a Position Description, which contains information including selection criteria, key responsibilities, working relationships and organisational environment.

4.3.1 The Position Description for the position of Vice-Chancellor will be approved by Council

4.3.2 The Position Description for other senior executive positions will be approved by Council after considering a recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor.

4.3.3 The Position Description for a Dean of School will be approved by the Executive Dean in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor.

4.3.4 Position Descriptions for academic positions will be approved by the Head of Cost Centre on the advice of the Dean of School.

4.3.5 Position Descriptions for professional staff positions will be proposed by the Chair of the appointment committee and approved by the Head of Cost Centre.

5. Recruitment Options

5.1 Vacant positions may be filled using:

5.1.1 competitive selection processes (clause 6); or

5.1.2 nomination (without advertisement) (clause 7); or

5.1.3 lateral transfer (clause 8).

5.2 For professional staff positions in particular, the University encourages managers to consider opportunities for using a vacancy as a career development opportunity for existing staff members through options including internal-only competitive selection or lateral transfer.
5.3 The appointment of the following senior management staff will be made in accordance with competitive selection principles (clause 6). Actual procedures will be as follows:

5.3.1 For the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor the procedure will be as determined by Council from time-to-time.

5.3.2 For the appointment of senior executive managers, i.e. Deputy and Pro Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and Vice-Presidents, the procedure will be as determined by Council after considering a recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor.

5.3.3 A Faculty reference group will normally be established to inform and assist the Vice-Chancellor and appointment committee in the selection of an Executive Dean.

5.3.4 For the appointment of Deans of Schools, the procedure will be determined by the Vice-Chancellor after considering a recommendation from the relevant Executive Dean.

5.4 For all other vacant positions (excluding casual positions) the appointment procedure will be as provided in clause 6, 7 or 8 of this policy.

6. Competitive Selection

6.1 Recruiting candidates

6.1.1 Vacant positions should be advertised in a way that obtains a suitable pool of potential applicants. The mainstream press will often be the medium of advertisement chosen. Other options might include professional publications, other relevant organisations, ethnic, local or student press, the internet, professional associations and search firms.

6.1.2 The Head of Cost Centre (or nominee) will approve the method of advertisement on the advice of the supervisor/head of the area. Advertisement costs will be met by the relevant cost centre.

6.1.3 The Head of Cost Centre (or nominee) may consider an internal-only advertisement appropriate where:

- it is considered that there is an appropriate pool of suitably qualified applicants within the University;
- or
- the essential experience required is specific to the University, or the organisational area wishes to mitigate the effects of restructuring, or the position is considered a career development opportunity for existing staff.

6.1.4 To be eligible to apply for an internal-only vacancy, applicants must be employed by the University on a continuing, convertible or fixed-term basis at some stage during the period the vacancy is advertised.

A casual staff member will be eligible to apply for an internal-only vacancy if they have worked at the University in the six months prior to the closing date of the position and are employed during the period the vacancy is advertised.

6.2 Appointment Committees

6.2.1 An appointment committee will be established for each position to be filled through competitive selection.

6.2.2 Each appointment committee must include at least one woman and one man, and should include as equal a mix of women and men as possible.

6.2.3 With the exception of vacancies under 6.2.7 to 6.2.9, the membership of an appointment committee will be determined by the Head of Cost Centre on the advice of the supervisor/head of the area.
6.2.4 Each professional staff appointment committee will normally comprise:

- the position’s direct supervisor;
- a person with relevant and sufficient expertise in the area of appointment, and
- a person from outside the area who is sufficiently removed from that area to ensure a broader view of the process and transparency.

6.2.5 Each academic (teaching-and-research) appointment committee will normally comprise:

- the Dean of School (or delegate), who will normally be the Chairperson;
- the Head of the academic discipline area (if different from the above);
- one other member of the teaching staff of the relevant discipline area, who will normally be sub-professorial;
- a person from outside the area who is sufficiently removed from that area to ensure a broader view of the process and transparency, and
- a student member (currently enrolled as an undergraduate or postgraduate student in the cost centre concerned).

The Head of Cost Centre may participate at her/his discretion. Additional members may be co-opted as appropriate (e.g. for senior academic appointments).

6.2.6 The membership of an appointment committee for an academic research-only position will be as prescribed for professional staff appointments (refer to clause 6.2.4).

6.2.7 The membership of an appointment committee for a senior executive manager position will be determined by Council after considering a recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor.

6.2.8 The membership of an appointment committee for a Dean of School position will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor after considering a recommendation from the relevant Executive Dean.

6.2.9 The membership of an appointment committee for a professorial position will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor after considering a recommendation from the position’s supervisor.

6.2.10 Should appointment committee members consider that they have a close relationship with an applicant, which could unduly affect the selection process, they should withdraw from the committee.

6.2.11 The University will provide training and support in recruitment and selection procedures. The University is working towards a situation where at least half of the committee members, including the chairperson, will have participated in the University's recruitment and selection training program. In the transitional period, the expectation is that the chairperson and at least one other committee member will have participated in the training.

6.2.12 Each member of the appointment committee will normally be involved in each part of the selection process from short-listing to selection. If a committee member is unable to fulfil his or her responsibilities to the appointment process the committee chairperson should consult with relevant Human Resources staff.

6.3 The Selection Process

6.3.1 Applicants must meet the requirements of the Position Description, including the essential selection criteria, to be eligible for appointment. Appointment will be based on merit in relation to the Position Description.

6.3.2 At least one confidential referee’s report (either verbal or written) must be obtained to confirm the suitability of the recommended applicant before a recommendation to appoint is made by the appointment committee. An appointment committee will seek an applicant’s consent to contact a referee other than one nominated in the application.
6.3.3 A final recommendation to appoint will be made by a majority of votes cast by those members of the committee who are eligible to vote including the chairperson.

7. Appointment by Nomination

7.1 Appropriate circumstances

An appointment by nomination may be made in the following circumstances:

7.1.1 the nomination is required to meet an immediate or unexpected need. In this case, the nomination should not exceed 12 months, during which time the position should be advertised if it is likely to extend beyond 12 months;

7.1.2 the specialised skills/knowledge required for the position so limits the ‘pool’ of applicants that the person making the nomination is reasonably aware of all possible appointable applicants. In this case the appointment can be for a period up to three years;

7.1.3 appointment of a currently enrolled student to a grant-funded research position of 12 months or less;

7.1.4 in the case of research-only appointments, where the individual has been named in the grant. In this case, the nomination can be for the term of the grant;

7.1.5 to mitigate the effects of restructuring or changing work requirements, where the staff member meets the requirements of the position;

7.1.6 to facilitate a staff member’s redeployment, consistent with University policy, or

7.1.7 where a candidate declines an appointment or resigns within six months of the completion of the selection process, then the next ranked appointable candidate(s) may be nominated for the position.

7.2 Process For Nomination

7.2.1 To make an appointment by nomination, the supervisor (via the Head of Cost Centre) must forward a recommendation to the Director Human Resources (or delegate) including the Position Description. The Director Human Resources (or delegate) will ensure that the nomination is consistent with this policy.

7.2.2 Particularly in the case of professional staff nominations (including research assistants), consideration should be given to calling for expressions of interest (either within the immediate unit or University-wide) to test the Flinders University market.

7.2.3 A person who is to be appointed by nomination must meet the requirements of the Position Description for the position.

7.2.4 For appointments under 7.1.1 to 7.1.3, at least one other relevant staff member will normally participate in the appointment decision.

7.2.5 At least one confidential referee’s report (either verbal or written) must be obtained to confirm the suitability of the recommended candidate before a recommendation to appoint is made. The University will seek an applicant’s consent to contact a referee other than one nominated in the application.

7.3 Extension of a Nomination

7.3.1 From time to time, there may be valid reasons for approving the extension of a nomination for a short period beyond the time frame established in 7.1.1 to 7.1.4 above, for example, where an additional period is required to complete a project in progress.
7.3.2 The Director Human Resources (or delegate) may approve the extension of a nomination in appropriate circumstances. Such extensions should normally be limited to three months and will require the support of the Head of Cost Centre. Otherwise, advertisement of the position will normally be required.

7.4 Conflict of Interest

Where a person making a nomination has a close relationship with the person being nominated, which could unduly affect the nomination decision, they should withdraw from the decision making process.

8. Lateral Transfer

8.1 Prior to advertising a vacancy, and with the approval of the Head of Cost Centre, heads of areas may invite or call for expressions of interest from staff who wish to transfer into the vacancy at their substantive level.

8.2 The procedures described at 7.2.1 to 7.2.5 apply in respect of lateral transfers.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 Subject to clause 9.2, applications, including referee reports, and all proceedings of the appointment committee will be confidential to members of the committee and relevant staff in the Human Resources Division unless otherwise agreed with the applicant. Where there are public seminars or presentations as part of the selection process, these need not be considered to be part of the proceedings of the committee.

9.2 The University is subject to the South Australian Freedom of Information Act 1991 and as such may be required to produce documents if an application is made under the legislation. Appointment committees must ensure that referees are advised of this fact at the time information is sought.

10. Appointment

10.1 A formal offer of appointment can only be made by the Director Human Resources (or delegate). All correspondence regarding salaries and conditions of appointment must be conducted through HR Client Services.

10.2 Appointment committee members must not give any undertaking, or assurances, to an applicant in respect of conditions or terms of employment.

10.3 Where a full-time appointment is offered to an applicant who does not hold the necessary residency status, the University will sponsor such a candidate for either temporary or permanent residence depending on the nature of their appointment.

10.4 The University will require all new continuing and fixed-term staff to advise of any condition that would prevent them from fulfilling the duties for the position or which should be taken into account as part of their employment.

10.5 Applicants may request feedback from the chairperson of the appointment committee at the conclusion of the process.

11. Conversion to Continuing Appointment - Professional Staff

The Director, Human Resources (or delegate) may approve the appointment, without further advertisement, of a person in a fixed-term professional staff position to continuing if:

11.1 the position is converted to continuing, and

11.2 the staff member was first appointed to the position through a competitive selection process within the previous three years, and
11.3 the staff member’s performance is satisfactory.

1 Casual appointments will be made in accordance with the policies Casual Professional Staff and Casual Academic Appointments.

Related Links

Staff Appointment Resource Kit
Employment - Academic Staff (Enterprise Agreement clause C2)
Casual Academic Appointments
Employment - Professional Staff (Enterprise Agreement clause B2)
Casual Professional Staff
Employment Strategy for Indigenous Australians
Equal Opportunity Policy