

**Good Practice Guidance for Vacancies with Internal Candidates**

Interviews are a two-way process that are as much an opportunity for candidates to explore if the role is right for them as they are for the University to assess suitability. It is therefore essential that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently.

We want all candidates, whether successful or not, to have a positive experience during the recruitment process. Whilst internal interviews can be particularly nerve-wracking for current employees (after-all they will continue to work alongside those involved in the process) when the process and feedback is handled well there is a genuine opportunity to support career development.

Internal candidates who are unsuccessful at interview will continue in their existing role, perhaps reporting to an individual who was interviewed alongside them for the same role. A poor recruitment experience can significantly impact their engagement with the University and they may seek alternative employment elsewhere.

These guidance notes provide good practice tips for managing the recruitment and selection of internal candidates.

***Not Shortlisted for Interview:***

When internal candidates are not shortlisted it is important that they receive constructive feedback from the Chair of the shortlisting panel as soon as possible. Advice on giving feedback, whether after shortlisting or interview, is provided further below.

***Shortlisted for Interview:***

When an internal candidate is selected for interview alongside external candidates it is important that all candidates are treated consistently so that they are all equally encouraged to perform at their best. The following guidance should be followed:

* The Chair of the interview panel must ensure that the same selection process is applied for all candidates whether internal or external. Sometimes interview panel members may know an internal candidate well. Whether you have worked with the candidate closely or just know off them, it’s important you assess them using the same criteria and interview process. Just because you know somebody well doesn’t mean you know whether they will be able to perform well in the new role.
* As always, robust interview notes and scoring are essential. This will not only help with giving feedback but candidates may request recruitment documentation through a Subject Access Request and if you have not assessed an internal candidate consistently the individual may feel discriminated against.
* Wherever possible a member of the Human Resources team should be part of the interview panel for interviews that include internal candidates.
* Internal candidates should be advised that no assumptions will be made and therefore responses to interview questions should be in the same way as if they were attending an external interview.
* All candidates should be advised, as part of closing the interview, when they will be likely to hear the outcome of the interview. Please do not over commit as leaving candidate hanging when they expected a sooner response will antagonise. Allow sufficient time to consider all the selection results properly and to follow up with the chosen candidate before rejecting other candidates.
* Where an internal candidate is not successful the Chair of the interview panel should meet with them to provide constructive feedback on why they were not successful and offer guidance on potential development areas. Advice of giving meaningful feedback is provided below.

***Providing Constructive Feedback***

Feedback should be offered in person, either face to face or by telephone rather than by email, as soon as possible after the shortlisting or interview process. Feedback may become distorted if left too long and a proactive response will demonstrate to the employee that they are valued. Candidates will likely have spent considerable time and effort on their application and preparing for interview and deserve to be given meaningful feedback.

Before speaking with candidates, make sure you are prepared for the conversation. Take time to read the interview notes and to refresh your memory. Never provide feedback if asked on the spur of the moment, instead arrange another time to speak with the employee so that you can ensure the feedback is accurate and helpful.

Rejecting a candidate is never easy, especially if they are a colleague, so it may be tempting to soften the blow by skirting over areas of short fall. However, candidates will usually see through this approach and are more likely to respect honest and constructive feedback especially alongside a genuine commitment to their career development. Instead explain to the candidate succinctly that they have not been successful this time and give them a brief overview why focusing on the specific to the job criteria and requirements and giving examples from the interview.

Feedback shouldn’t just inform a candidates where they have fallen short. They need to know where they have performed well so they continue to do so. Aim for balance and pick out at least one area that impressed the panel.

Finally, remember that whilst the candidate was not right for this role at this time, with support and development they could well be an excellent candidate for other roles in the not too distant future.

***If you require further guidance please contact your HR representative.***