

Recruitment and Appointment Procedures for Associate Professors, Readers and Chairs (Professors)

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	The Recruitment and Appointment Procedure	2
3.	Proposals to recruit to academic posts	3
4.	Active Recruitment	3
4.1	Establish a Departmental Search Committee	3
4.2	Potential Recruitment Bank	3
4.3	Engage and Build Relationships with Potential Recruits	3
4.4	Share Recruitment Opportunities Widely	3
5.	Documentation	4
5.1	Advertised Posts	4
a)	Advertisement, Job Description, Person Specification and Further Particulars	4
6.	Advisory Committee	5
6.1	'Panel Pools'	5
7.	Following Receipt of Documentation	5
8.	Receipt of Applications	6
9.	The Interview	6
9.1	Formation of the Panel	6
9.2	Organisation of the Interview	6
a)	Notice of Interview	7
b)	Informal Visits	7
c)	Organisation of the Interview Day	7
d)	Information about the Department, College and Benefits	7
10.	Nominated Posts	7
10.1	Documentation	7
	The following documentation must be provided by the other Faculties and Business School:	8
10.2	Appointment Procedure	8
11.	Post-Interview	8
11.1	Communicating with Successful Candidates	8
11.2	Supporting Newly Appointed Staff	8
12.	Appointment of a Head of Department	9

1. Introduction

An Associate Professor, Reader or Chair (Professor) is a College post, appointed to from either outside or within the College. Associate Professor, Reader or Chair (Professor) posts can also be created by conferment of title on a member of the academic staff already in post through the annual Academic Staff Promotions Exercise.

Imperial's future as a world-class university is dependent upon attracting and appointing excellent academic staff. In addition, the College wishes to promote diversity and improve upon its current representation statistics, particularly in relation to gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and disability. One way to achieve this objective is in the key area of recruitment and selection, and, specifically, to ensure that we seek a diverse range of potential applicants for posts and in how we handle our shortlisting and interview processes.

It is also essential that recruiters are aware of the potential effects of unconscious bias and stereotyping when they are involved in attracting and appointing new staff to the College and the College offers training in both unconscious bias and recruitment and selection.

With this in mind, the following procedure explains the process and details examples of good practice intended to open up opportunities to a wider pool of potential recruits and to ensure the process runs efficiently.

2. The Recruitment and Appointment Procedure

Departments should follow the procedure set out below if they wish to:

- a) establish a new Chair (Professor) or Readership or Associate Professor
- b) appoint to a vacant Chair (Professor) or Readership or Associate Professor without changing the existing title
- c) appoint an external candidate as a Head of Department

Departments should plan well ahead in respect of appointments to Chairs (Professors), Readerships or Associate Professors, for the benefit of both the recruiting department and the candidate experience. While every effort is made to recruit to these posts as quickly as possible, it should be noted that a longer period is required to complete the formalities than for most other appointments.

Questions should be addressed to Senior Appointments team:

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All costs incurred in making an appointment are charged to the department concerned.

3. Proposals to recruit to academic posts

Any proposal to recruit to academic post must have the agreement and approval of the relevant Head of Department, Faculty Dean and the Provost ([permission to fill](#)), before initiating the recruitment process. In the case of the Faculty of Medicine, approval from the Dean's Management Group must be obtained before initiating any academic recruitment process

Applications for nominations to Chair (Professor) or Readership or Associate Professor posts should be discussed with the relevant Dean before the application is made. Human Resources advice may be sought from the Director of Human Resources.

4. Active Recruitment

To attract an excellent and diverse range of applicants, departments should think beyond the standard advertising and recruiting practices to more proactive methods of engaging and recruiting staff.

Departments have found the following actions successful in attracting potential excellent applicants from the widest possible pool. The College, therefore, recommends that departments consider the following as part of the process:

4.1 Establish a Departmental Search Committee

A Departmental Search Committee would be dedicated to identifying potential excellent candidates, including those from underrepresented groups, and building relationships, so that they feel encouraged to apply when an appropriate position becomes available. A Departmental Search Committee should consist of staff with diverse research interests, disciplines and at different stages of their career, so that a wide net is cast for each opportunity.

4.2 Potential Recruitment Bank

A bank of potential excellent future recruits could be established and updated regularly by academic staff members. Potential recruits might include the wide and diverse range of people met at conferences, former staff, students and collaborators. The bank can be used as a mailing list to circulate job opportunities and share departmental news to engage potential recruits.

4.3 Engage and Build Relationships with Potential Recruits

Departments have found it an effective recruitment strategy to establish relationships with potential candidates from a diverse pool, both within and outside of the College. This might be done by fostering collaborations with potential recruits, inviting them to departmental seminars and events, attending seminars given by them, and generally 'keeping in touch' with them throughout their careers.

4.4 Share Recruitment Opportunities Widely

Information on potential recruitment opportunities should be shared widely with collaborators and research networks, with the request that the opportunity be cascaded to potential candidates. Further good practice for sharing recruitment opportunities can be found in Advertising media guidance (page 4).

5. Documentation

Our recruitment and selection material is the College's 'shop window' as an employer. In addition to being as informative as possible about the vacancy, the department and the College, it is also essential that the documentation demonstrates our commitment to promoting equality and diversity and the behaviours encapsulated within [Imperial Expectations](#) and our [College values and behaviours](#)

Once the proposed recruitment has been approved by the respective Head of Department, the Faculty Dean and the Provost, the Hiring Manager should send the following documentation to the Senior Appointments team.

Please note: The **Faculty of Medicine** follows a specifically prescribed procedure according to the guidance and forms which can be obtained via the Dean's Executive Officer, Claire Puddephatt (Email: c.puddephatt@imperial.ac.uk)

5.1 Advertised Posts

If the vacancy is to be **advertised** (for the majority of appointments) the following must be supplied:

1. A draft advertisement
2. A draft job description and person specification
3. For clinical posts, additional further information as detailed below (see section 5.1. b.)
4. Additional details of the post, funding account codes, Disclosure and Barring Service requirement, suggested media for advertising, etc

A model advertisement and Job description can be obtained either from the Senior Appointments Team or from the [Academic appointments website](#).

Advertising Media guidance

To reach a diverse pool of potential applicants, positions should be advertised as widely as possible. Advertising locations such as <https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/>, <https://www.vercida.com/uk/> and <https://www.ethnicjobsite.co.uk/> are recommended for reaching a diverse pool of applicants.

Circulating the advertisement is also a useful way of widening the pool of potential recruits, whether through informal or formal networks known to the department or through diversity or research specific networks such as <https://blackbritishacademics.co.uk/> or <https://www.researchgate.net/jobs>.

Publications such as Nature, New Scientist and The Guardian also publish diversity and 'women in science' specific editions that offer a good opportunity to publicise a vacancy to a diverse audience. Senior Appointments Team can provide dates of such editions and further guidance on diverse advertising locations.

a) Advertisement, Job Description and Person Specification

In these documents, please supply as much detail as possible about the functions, duties and responsibilities, together with a clear indication of the skills, qualifications and experience required. Often, departments need to be very specific about the research and teaching experience required because they have an identified gap which needs to be plugged. Where possible, however, in order to encourage applications from a wide field of candidates, departments are encouraged not to be prescriptive when they draw up the person specification, as criteria that are too narrowly defined will tend to exclude applicants.

The draft advert, job description and person specification need to be in a standard format, (in Microsoft Word).

b) For clinical posts, in addition to the above, the draft further particulars should be agreed with the relevant Trust(s) and include:

- An Integrated Job Plan (precise details may need to be agreed once the speciality of the person appointed is known) and a weekly detailed job plan of the academic and clinical activities
- Accountability in relation to the separate facets of the Job Plan
- Clinical governance arrangements

The Person Specification should note that it is a legal requirement for all Doctors to be on the GMC's specialist register before taking up a Consultant's appointment. Also to be included, is the option for trainees to explore the possibility of post-CCT careers as soon as it is apparent that a CCT will be awarded in the near future. Thus, Specialist Registrars may apply for a consultant appointment provided the expected date of award of their CCT (or recognised equivalent, if outside the UK) falls no more than six months after the date of interview for the consultant post.

n.b. The Senior Appointments team will seek approval from the relevant Royal College for the advertisement and the further particulars.

6. Advisory Committee

In addition to the documentation detailed above, departments should send the names of suggested members of the Advisory Committee.

While the role membership is not prescriptive, the Head of Department, or the person responsible for coordinating the recruitment, must be mindful of the College's requirement that the Advisory Committee membership should be as diverse as is practicable. It is expected that the Committee will comprise female membership and that every possible effort must be made to have members with varied backgrounds. Feedback from male and female interviewees has shown that diverse membership is appreciated by candidates and shows that the employer takes equality issues and the recruitment process seriously.

It is expected that at least one, if not more, of the internal committee members must have attended recruitment and selection training. It is also essential that committee members be aware of the potential effects of their own unconscious biases when recruiting candidates. It is recommended that members of the Advisory Committee will have attended the College's unconscious bias training in addition to the more general recruitment and selection training.

6.1 'Panel Pools'

Departments that find it difficult to draw together a diverse Advisory Committee may find it helpful to develop a 'panel pool'. This would consist of a list of individuals (either internal or external to the department) trained in recruitment and selection and/or unconscious bias, or those with particular insight into matters of equality and diversity in recruitment, such as those who sit on the College's equality-related committees. These individuals could then be approached to form part of the Advisory Committee, or to suggest suitable members.

Departments that adopt this approach should make sure that the pool is well populated and rotated frequently.

7. Following Receipt of Documentation

On receipt of the documentation from the Head of Department/Hiring Manager, the Senior Appointment team will seek approval from the Dean of the relevant faculty.

Liaison will take place over the advertisement and further particulars, and approval will be sought from the relevant Royal College if the post is clinical. The Senior Appointments team will then arrange for the advertisement to be placed via our applicant tracking system, TalenLink and in other media, liaising with the Hiring Manager regarding the closing date. The interview date will be arranged in close consultation with key members of the Advisory Committee.

Managing Open Call Recruitment

Open call recruitment might be used where overall funding approval has been given but the exact number, level and subject area of posts is dependent on the calibre of applicants.

This approach may be effective in attracting a wide range of applications but care should be taken to ensure good communication is maintained and candidates are not kept in the dark about the status of their application.

The Senior Appointment team will work closely with departments to implement good practice in managing open call recruitment, to include:

- Acknowledging applications received
- Prompt responses to candidates' queries
- Sharing updates with candidates on the timescale of the recruitment process
- Giving reasonable notice and, where possible, flexible arrangements for the interview
- Communicating with unsuccessful applicants about the outcome of their application.

8. Receipt of Applications

The Senior Appointments team receive the applications and other relevant information from applicants.

After consultation with the Head of Department/Hiring Manager, copies of applications will be distributed to members of the Advisory Committee together with a shortlisting form. All members of the Advisory Committee, with the exception of the College Consul and the Chair (except for Faculty of Medicine where the Dean and/or Vice-Deans also shortlist), draw up a shortlist, usually by correspondence. The Senior Appointments team will take up the references, usually prior to interviews, (with the permission of candidates) and invite shortlisted candidates for interview.

9. The Interview

9.1 Formation of the Panel

Candidates will be interviewed by the Advisory Committee. If the Head of Department has reason to propose a change to a member of the Advisory Committee at a late stage, he/she must liaise with the Senior Appointments team

9.2 Organisation of the Interview

The Senior Appointments team will liaise with candidates and schedule the interviews, ensuring these run smoothly and that the candidate's experience of the interview and the College's recruitment process is the best possible. The Senior Appointments team also follow good practice in relation to:

a) Notice of Interview

Wherever possible, the interview date should be stated on the advertisement. If it is not possible to advertise the date in advance, every effort will be made to provide reasonable notice of the interview to candidates, with consideration given to preparation time and travel requirements. If a candidate is unable to attend on the nominated day, effort will be made to find an alternative date to suit both the candidate and the Advisory Committee.

The Senior Appointments team will also make arrangements for interview room booking, audio-visual equipment, provision of refreshments (funded by the department where the post is based), etc.

b) Informal Visits

Heads of Department may wish to offer shortlisted candidates the opportunity to visit the College before the formal interview, and this is normally organised by the department. In many instances, Heads of Departments will also wish for candidates to give a research seminar to members of the Department prior to the formal College interview.

c) Organisation of the Interview Day

The format of the interview will be organised by liaison between the Senior Appointments team and the Hiring Manager, and as soon as possible to ensure enough notice is provided to shortlisted candidates. Every effort will be made to ensure that candidates feel welcomed during their visit.

Normally, interviewees are asked to give a ten minute presentation at the beginning of the interview on their current and future research and plans, and this will be communicated in their invitation to interview. Appropriate 'down time' for candidates to collect their thoughts before interview will also be factored in wherever possible.

Departments may wish to arrange for candidates to receive a tour of the department and introductions to potential colleagues and collaborators.

Consideration will also be given to any special arrangements required by individual candidates.

d) Information about the Department, College and Benefits

The department may wish to arrange for candidates to speak to a member of the department, outside of the interview process. This conversation would allow candidates to confidentially discuss the department, College, benefits and support available to academic staff who are new to the College.

Discussion around career and salary progression, and potential start-up funds is encouraged.

10. Nominated Posts

10.1 Documentation

Applications for **nominations** to a Chair or Readership or Associate Professor are made in rare instances where there are justifiable reasons why a better applicant cannot be found by advertising the post and that nomination is, therefore, the best method of recruitment. In such instances, these reasons should be discussed with the relevant Dean before the application is made. Human Resources advice may be sought from the Director of Human Resources.

Once the Dean's approval has been granted, an application for nomination to a Chair or Readership

Associate Professor can be made. For Faculty of Medicine appointments, approval must be given by the Dean's Management Group (DMG) and the documentation to be provided are per the Faculty documentation sent to all DoMs (Departmental Operations Managers) as mentioned earlier.

The following documentation must be provided by the other Faculties and Business School:

- A curriculum vitae
- Draft further particulars
- The names of at least three referees nominated by the candidate
- A list of publications
- A statement in support of the candidate from the Head of Department, including reasons why a nomination is the best method of recruitment and why the department believes a better applicant cannot be found via advertisement.

10.2 Appointment Procedure

Approval from the Senior College Consul and the Director of the Human Resources will be sought for all proposed nominations. Once approval is obtained, the Senior Appointments team will take up the nominee's references. On receipt, these will be sent to the Advisory Committee members, together with the CV, list of publications, further particulars and supporting statement from the department. In the case of Faculty of Medicine clinical nominations, the Trust and relevant Royal College will be involved, and the Royal College will have to approve the Job Description before candidates can be interviewed.

Nominees are normally interviewed and arrangements will be made for the interview to take place as soon as possible. If, following the interview, the nomination for Chair or Reader is approved by the Advisory Committee, actions then follow as described below.

11. Post-Interview

11.1 Communicating with Successful Candidates

When the Advisory Committee has agreed on the preferred candidate to be appointed, negotiations take place between the Head of Department and the candidate, involving the Director of the Human Resources as required, e.g. on personnel-related matters and salary.

The Hiring Manager then liaises with the Senior Appointments team in order that a final offer can be produced. An offer of appointment and a contract of employment are sent to the successful candidate. Once accepted, the appointment is reported to the Advisory Committee, the wider College community and the Council.

11.2 Supporting Newly Appointed Staff

On appointing Chairs (Professors), Readers or Associate Professors who are new to the College, the Head of Department, or a nominee, should discuss with the appointee their personal circumstances and ascertain what support might be of benefit in helping the appointee, and their family, make a smooth transition to the College, London or the UK.

Regular contact should be maintained with the appointee before their arrival at the College, especially when there is delay between the offer of the position and their start date. Through this regular contact and by inclusion in departmental events, appointees can feel involved and engaged in the work of the department and more able to 'hit the ground running' on arrival.

Individualised support for staff joining the College, their families, and for recruiting departments is available from the Senior Appointments team.

11.3 Communicating with Unsuccessful Candidates

The Senior Appointments team will inform unsuccessful candidates of the outcome in a timely and sensitive manner. Departments may be asked to provide constructive feedback where appropriate, as it is obviously important to treat unsuccessful candidates thoughtfully and with respect.

12. Appointment of a Head of Department

If the appointee is to be a Head of Department, they will be sent a copy of the College document "The Roles and Responsibilities of a Head of Department", with the contract of employment.

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