

Recruitment of Staff Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

East Kent Colleges Group (the Group) has ambitions to be the best it possibly can and in so doing aims to ensure the appointment of the best people through a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure the workforce of the Group is its greatest asset. Specifically, the policy's objectives are to:

- Recruit staff with the appropriate technical and personal skills, and with behaviours that are consistent with the Group's ethos in order to meet the organisation's current and future needs.
- Develop and enhance the reputation of the Group and strive to ensure that it is an employer of choice and a quality provider of further and higher education.

Work to a fair, effective and transparent recruitment procedure, which is consistent with employment legislation and the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy.

- To ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, that only staff who are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults are employed.
- To ensure that staff appointed to posts involving teaching responsibilities are qualified to carry out such duties or are working towards an appropriate qualification.

The Group embraces diversity in all its aspects and aims to employ a workforce, which reflects at every level, the community it serves.

Policy scope

This policy is applicable to all staff and worker recruitment, irrespective of staff group or nature of employment and encompasses all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process.

Responsibility for ensuring that the correct procedures are followed lies with the hiring manager responsible for recruitment activity within their area of responsibility,

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whilst the ongoing effective conduct of this policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Resourcing team and their respective management structures.

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are expected to ensure that their actions are consistent with the core principles defined in this policy.

General principles of the policy:

1. The Group will seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process will ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and the college.
2. The Resourcing team will oversee all appointments and will offer advice and guidance to hiring managers on good practice in the recruitment process.
3. The Group uses permanent and fixed term contracts, and casual worker letters of engagement agreements to enable business and individual needs to be met.
4. All vacancies will be recruited through the Group's online Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to ensure a fair and consistent approach to shortlisting and robust vetting and pre-employment checks. Exceptions to this are internal uplifts under 0.2FTE; senior posts (GLB) which may require a specific external recruitment campaign and special situations such as redeployment.
5. Assistance will be provided to any candidate who requests a reasonable adjustment or experiences difficulty accessing or using the recruitment platform. Vacancies will normally be advertised externally and internally to attract a diverse talent pool and ensure a fair, transparent process. In some cases, such as role enhancements or ring-fenced opportunities during organisational change, roles may be restricted to certain groups of employees. These exceptions will be applied consistently and in line with legal and policy requirements. The Group is committed to attracting a diverse range of applicants and particularly welcomes applications from underrepresented groups within our communities and from candidates with disabilities. The Group holds Disability Confident accreditation and offers a guaranteed interview to disabled applicants who satisfy the critical/minimum criteria for the role.

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6. The Group is committed to attracting and employing skilled workers from both the UK and overseas, in line with current UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) legislation.

Where a role meets the criteria under the Skilled Worker visa, the Group may act as a licensed sponsor to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced individuals. Sponsorship will only be considered where:

- The role is eligible under the UKVI Skilled Worker occupation codes and meets the minimum salary and skill level requirements.
- The candidate can provide verified evidence of their right to work in the UK, in compliance with statutory right to work checks; and
- There is a demonstrable recruitment need, such as a specialist vacancy, a shortage occupation, or a post that has proven hard to fill through normal recruitment methods.

The Group will ensure compliance with all sponsor duties, including record-keeping, reporting, and monitoring obligations, to maintain its sponsor licence status. Sponsored employees will be supported in understanding their visa conditions and any changes in immigration legislation that may affect their employment.

The Group reserves the right to review its sponsorship practices periodically to ensure continued alignment with Home Office regulations and the organisation's workforce planning priorities.

7. The Group will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.
8. The only staff who can be designated as hiring managers are Deputy Heads and above (for Education vacancies) and Heads and above (for Group Support vacancies). Exceptions to this may be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on departmental structure.
9. The Group will provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in recruitment and selection activities. As a minimum, all hiring managers will attend hiring manager training every three years which covers topics such as

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removing unconscious bias, effective interview techniques, and much more, whilst the Chair of the interview panel will have up to date safer recruitment training. Any member of staff involved in the selection of staff should satisfy themselves that they are appropriately trained and can comply with the requirements of this policy and the internal Group Resourcing Procedure.

10. Recruitment and selection should enhance the reputation of the Group. As such, the Group will treat all candidates fairly, with dignity, respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.
11. The Group will promote best practice in recruitment and selection. It will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow the implementation of new ideas and approaches.
12. The Group will ensure that its recruitment and selection process is cost effective.
13. All documentation relating to candidates will be treated confidentially in accordance with Data Protection Legislation. A Privacy Notice advising candidates about how their data is processed will be available at the point of application. Candidates have the right to request access to any job selection documentation held about them in accordance with that Legislation. Details relating to candidates unsuccessful at interview will not be held on file by the Group after six months at which point, they will be destroyed/deleted. The exception to this is if candidates have asked us to hold their data on file as part of the talent pool.
14. When candidates create an account, they will be required to declare any personal relationship with a Group employee as part of their application. Any hiring manager or member of an interviewing panel must also declare any personal relationship to a candidate both at shortlisting and interview stage. Adjustments within the shortlisting process and recruiting panel may have to be made accordingly. Consideration will be given as to whether there is a conflict of interest leading to a necessary change in process or panel and each case will be judged on the circumstances pertaining to it at the time.

PROCEDURES:

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There are five key stages in the recruitment and selection process, namely Planning, Advertising, Shortlisting, Interview and Offer. These are outlined in detail below. Management guidance is available for each stage of the process. A more thorough step-by-step guide can be found in the Resourcing Procedure.

1. Planning

- 1.1. Once a vacancy has been identified, the hiring manager will raise the vacancy on the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) using the templates available. This will include all the details of the post, how it will be funded and any essential information for advertising and recruitment. All staffing requests will be authorised by the relevant Principal or Business Unit Director before being forwarded to the Resourcing team for review and processing.
- 1.2. The hiring manager will ensure that an up-to-date job description and person specification is in place for the role. The content of the job description will clearly reflect the duties, skills and experience required for the post as well as the essential and desirable criteria. Job descriptions will have been evaluated in accordance with the Group's job evaluation process to ensure that the salary and job grade is as fair and as competitive as possible. All proposed changes must be submitted to the Resourcing Team via TopDesk for review.

When a Hiring Manager proposes to ring-fence a position - whether due to remission or other protected reasons - a formal case, including justification, must be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team for endorsement and to the Chief Executive Officer for final approval. This does not apply in the case of a restructure.

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2. Advertising

- 2.1. As a minimum, adverts will be placed on the Group's website pages, however most vacancies will be advertised more widely on digital jobs boards. The Resourcing team may also advertise on sector specific sites and sites which candidates with certain protected characteristics may use.

Adverts will use inclusive and welcoming language to attract a diverse range of candidates, reflecting the Group's commitment to equality and diversity. We particularly encourage applications from underrepresented groups, such as women, minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and care leavers.

- 2.2. Adverts state an interview date or interview period so that candidates can plan ahead.
- 2.3. External adverts will be published for a minimum of two weeks, unless the Resourcing Team agrees to reduce this to one week where a high volume of applicants is anticipated. Internal adverts will be live for a minimum of one week.
- 2.4. It may not be appropriate to advertise a vacancy externally where:
- an appointment may be made via an internal advertisement only to support career development and/or retention.
 - other circumstances, in which case, advice should be sought from the Resourcing Team.

3. Shortlisting

- 3.1. Shortlisting decisions will be fair, objective, non-discriminatory and properly documented. Shortlisting decisions will be recorded on the

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Applicant Tracking System so that candidates can seek feedback if they ask for it.

- 3.2. Within two days of the vacancy closing the initial shortlisting of applications will be carried out by comparing evidence in the application against the essential and desirable criteria for the post as set out in the job description.
- 3.3. Shortlisting will be carried out by the hiring manager and one other person, usually the line manager for the role, both of whom should sit on the interview panel.
- 3.4. Staff who shortlist will not have access to a candidate's personal information/identifiers until such time as a candidate is selected for interview. This is done to ensure that the shortlisting process is objective and free from bias.
- 3.5. Where a candidate discloses a criminal conviction on their application, this information will be made available to the Resourcing team who will discuss the circumstances of any convictions with a candidate. This may occur prior to the interview taking place or after, depending on circumstances of information disclosed. This information will not be available to staff who shortlist or interview. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily debar someone from working in education. It depends on the circumstances of each case which will be carefully explored, and risk assessed by the Resourcing team in collaboration with the candidate.

Candidates invited to interview will typically meet the essential criteria outlined in the person specification, as these are considered fundamental for successful performance in the role. Where a candidate does not meet one or more essential criteria, they will not usually progress to interview. If a high number of candidates meet the essential criteria, shortlisting scores and desirable criteria may be applied to identify those most suitable to proceed to interview.

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- 3.6. Where a candidate has disclosed that they have a disability and they meet the essential criteria, they will be invited to interview and can request reasonable adjustments to help them fully participate in the interview. Applicant Guidance and Candidate Charter documents will be provided with every advert, offering support and information to all applicants, including those who may need reasonable adjustments.

Shortlisting Weighting are as follows:

Criteria	Description	Weighting (what the score will be out of)
Critical / Minimum requirement	<p>These criteria are essential for the role i.e. it would be extremely difficult for the person to carry out the role without already having these essential skills, experiences or qualifications.</p> <p>This also assists in our commitment to being a disability confident employer whereby we interview all candidates who have declared a disability as long as they meet the minimum criteria for the post.</p>	6
Important	<p>These criteria would be significant to the candidate being successful in the role. These may be skills, experiences or qualifications that have substantial meaning for the role but could be supported or taught on the job. You would consider the candidate as long as a higher proportion of the significant criteria was met.</p>	4
Other relevant	<p>These criteria are desirable but not a 'deal breaker'. It would be great if the candidate had these, but it is not expected for the candidate to be shortlisted. If you still have a large number of candidates you may want to consider the scoring of the 'desirable' criteria.</p>	2

Scoring will be made under 3 criteria based on the evidence that has been provided in the application:

- Fully meets criteria – full marks
- Partly meets criteria – half marks
- Does not meet criteria – no marks

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4. Interview and Assessment

- 4.1. A minimum of seven days' notice of invitation to interview will be given to candidates. Interviews should be no longer than ten days' notice.
- 4.2. All interviews for one post will be conducted by the same panel, usually on the same day.

Interviews are expected to be held on site to provide the best candidate experience. In exceptional circumstances, or where a reasonable adjustment is required, interviews may be conducted via Microsoft Teams.

- 4.3. The hiring manager will invite all candidates to select an interview slot via the Applicant Tracking System, advise them about the interview schedule and if there are any assessments or skills tests which need to be undertaken prior to the interview.
- 4.4. Candidates will be asked to bring a form of photographic ID to the interview which will be checked by the hiring manager.
- 4.5. Candidates for teaching positions will be required to deliver a micro-teach session prior to the interview. Where possible, this should take place with students; however, when students are not available (e.g., during non-term periods), the session may be delivered to a panel of staff.

Where possible, candidates applying for non-teaching roles should undertake a skills test devised by the hiring manager as part of the selection process.
- 4.6. In all cases, if the skills test or teaching session reveals a safeguarding concern, candidates will not progress to interview stage.

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- 4.7. All teaching sessions and skills tests will have accessibility and inclusivity designed into them so that candidates are not discriminated against or disadvantaged if they have a disability or learning need.
- 4.8. Candidates for middle leadership positions and above will be asked to complete a psychometric profile assessment and responses will be explored during the interview.
- 4.9. Interviews will involve a minimum of two people. One of these must be the hiring manager. For all Head and Director of Service posts and above (i.e. Group Directors, Principals and Group Leadership posts) the appropriate Group Leadership Board member will be on the panel. For heads of curriculum an education member of GLB will be on the panel.
- 4.10. There is also an option for the hiring manager to call on other staff to be on the panel as well as external independent persons where particular knowledge or skillset is required. Where an external independent person may be required, this should be discussed with the Resourcing team in advance.
- 4.11. All candidates will be asked a standard format of questions. This is done to ensure equity in the selection process. All questions must be related to the job requirements and the candidate's suitability to undertake the role. At least one question will cover the candidate's understanding of safeguarding and how it applies to the role. Gaps in employment and other safeguarding matters raised in the application will also be explored.
- 4.12. Each interview will be chaired by the most senior member of staff present at the interview. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that the interview is conducted professionally and in accordance with legislative requirements. The chair will cover the following with each candidate:
 - Welcome and introduction to the interview panel
 - Ask if the candidate requires any further reasonable adjustments not yet catered for

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- Advise that notes will be taken
- Ensure that all the questions are covered
- Ask if the candidate has any questions
- Advise that any offer is subject to two satisfactory references, an enhanced DBS check, ID check, right to work check, occupational health assessment, teacher prohibition check (if relevant) and section 128 check (if relevant), International criminal records check (if applicable). Candidates should be advised that we may also carry out online checks.
- Advise about The Group's staff policies, benefits and working conditions
- Advise when and how the candidate will hear the outcome of the interview and thank them for attending.

4.13. Unsuccessful interview candidates will receive notification of the outcome of the interview via a phone call as soon as possible after the interviews have been completed. We will not routinely give further feedback to unsuccessful external candidates, but where this is requested, feedback will be fair and constructive. Internal candidates will always be offered feedback where they have not been successful at interview so that any development needs can be captured in development and career plans.

5. Offer

- 5.1. The hiring manager is responsible for making the verbal offer and once accepted, informing the other candidates they were unsuccessful.
- 5.2. Whilst making the offer, the hiring manager should advise about the Induction process for new colleagues including the MyEmployer induction and welcome event which takes place within their first month and may involve travelling to a different site.
- 5.3. They should also discuss the qualification and training requirements for the role and where the candidate does not hold these advise how this will

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be addressed and supported via the People Development and Performance Policy and Staff Development process.

- 5.4. The hiring manager is then responsible for processing the outcome through the Applicant Tracking System and keeping in touch with the candidate once the offer has been made and accepted to ensure that they feel welcomed, engaged and ready to start the onboarding process.
- 5.5. The Resourcing team is responsible for drawing up the letter of appointment and contract and confirming that the candidate agrees to the terms and conditions offered.
- 5.6. All appointments to posts will be subject to pre-employment checks under the Group's DBS and Vetting policy and this will be clarified at the offer stage.

The Group reserves the right to carry out online checks before an offer is made for the purposes of safeguarding, protecting the Group's reputation and to check the candidate's eligibility.

Associated policies and procedures

- Resourcing Procedure
- DBS and Vetting Checks Policy
- Data Protection policy
- Relocation scheme
- DBS risk assessment process
- Online checks process
- Internal recruitment procedure and management guidance
- People Development and Performance Policy

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