

Promoting diversity in senior academic recruitment

**The University of Manchester
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Contents

1. Introduction by the Associate Vice-President

2. Initiating the search process

2.1 Composition of the committee

2.2 Scope

2.3 Job description and role specification

2.4 Additional considerations

3. Pre search: committee activity

3.1 Review of the national pool

3.2 Review of past School searches

4. During the search: recruiting activity

4.1 Widening the pool

4.2 Active recruitment practices

4.3 Shortlisting considerations

5. Campus visits

6. Making an offer

7. Evaluation

Appendix

A Sample evaluation form

1. Introduction

We have made and continue to make significant progress in the area of equality and diversity within the University. In the past two years we have developed a range of initiatives which will over time make a significant contribution towards changing the profile of staff working at all levels in the University. We have put in place many of the recommendations of the *Women in Leadership* report by Katherine Perera and we are also implementing the recommendations of the report I wrote on *Empowering Collegiality: strategies for advancing diversity and equal opportunities at the University of Manchester*. This is part of a multifaceted approach which encompasses better monitoring, development of key indicators in the OPR, the development of new policies around bullying and harassment, transparency in promotions, developing and supporting staff networks, training and mentoring and an overview of all our policies through a process of equality impact assessment.

It is my view that one of the most significant impacts we can make, especially in changing the profile of the demographics of the University, is in the area of recruitment and selection. We have examples of good practice, but equally there are examples of extremely poor practice across the institution. Our staff are our most valuable resource and recruiting and selecting the right staff is a pre-requisite for our future success as an institution. Recruitment and selection is also probably one of the least well resourced areas with the result that we fall back on customs and practices which have served us well in the past but are not fit for purpose for our current requirements. This is one of the reasons that the Equality and Diversity team have put together this guide as a means of developing good practice. The guide has been borrowed and adapted from the University of Wisconsin – it is widely used in North America and many of the suggestions can in our view be applied to the UK setting.

We hope that staff responsible for recruiting and selection will use it as means of reflecting on their current practice and consider some of the suggestions that are being proposed. With the improvement in our data collection, we are now in a position to monitor and evaluate the entire recruitment and selection process across all levels of the institution. We will feedback this information to all schools and work with them to improve the process.

I am certain that if applied constructively and in the spirit of improvement this guide can help us develop a much fairer, transparent and effective means of recruiting and selecting the best candidates to work at the University.

Professor Aneez Esmail
Associate Vice-President (Equality and Diversity)

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2. Initiating the search process

The composition of the search committee and its scope are factors likely to have consequences for the outcome of the search. It is important that issues of composition and scope be addressed deliberately and early.

The AVP (Equality and Diversity) is happy to meet with committee chairs or other decision makers to help think through issues associated with the composition of, and scope of, the search committee.

2.1 Composition of the committee

Search committees should include:

- members with different perspectives and expertise, and with a demonstrated commitment to diversity;
- underrepresented minorities¹ whenever possible;
- members from outside the School.

N.B. Underrepresented minorities, especially women, are often asked to do significantly more service than their male counterparts, so it is important to keep track of their workload and to free them from less significant tasks and/or compensate them in other ways.

2.2 Scope

The committee will need to consider:

- terms of reference that include a particular focus on equitable search practices including the goal of identifying outstanding underrepresented minority candidates for the position;
- clearly stating in its terms that diversity and excellence are fully compatible goals can and should be pursued simultaneously;
- identifying the selection criteria and developing the job description and role specification prior to beginning the search;
- how it plans to actively recruit underrepresented minorities prior to beginning the search;
- reviewing how its' practices will mitigate the potential for evaluation biases that research has identified that result in unfair evaluations for underrepresented minority candidates e.g. the impact of cultural difference in communication or stereotypical assumptions on lifestyle;

¹ The term 'underrepresented minority (/ies)' will be used throughout this document to nominally identify women, black and minority ethnic (BME) and disabled people. This term can also be used to consider recruitment of other underrepresented minorities in consideration of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

- how its plan addresses the School and Faculty's commitment to and strategies for, hiring and advancing a diverse staff body. In Schools where there are few or no underrepresented minority staff, it would be useful to develop long-term strategies for recruiting a diverse staff body e.g. using positive action initiatives;
- that the AVP (Equality and Diversity) is available to consult as questions arise through the search process.

N.B. Underrepresented minority internal candidates wish to be evaluated for academic positions on the basis of their scholarly credentials. They will not appreciate subtle or overt indications that they are being valued on other characteristics, such as their gender, disability, race, ethnicity or age. Underrepresented minority candidates already realise that their minority status may be a factor in your considerations. It is important that contact with underrepresented minority internal candidates focus on their scholarship, qualifications, and potential academic role in the School.

2.3 Job description and role specification

The committee will need to consider these points in identifying and developing the job description and role specification:

- defining the position in the widest possible terms consistent with the School's needs. There should be consensus on specific specialities or requirements, whilst planning to ensure that the candidate pool is unnecessarily limited by focusing too narrowly on subfields in which few specialize;
- considering selection criteria for all candidates that identifies their ability both to add intellectual diversity to the School, and to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues;
- how the School will support the individual and the individual's area within the School if recruitment is not targeted at the centre of the School's focus or interest. It should consider "cluster hiring" which involved hiring more than one staff member at a time to work in the same specialisation.
- establishing selection criteria and procedures for screening and interviewing candidates, and keeping records of meetings before advertising the position;
- ensuring that the selection criteria is directly related to the requirements of the position and is clearly understood and accepted by all members of the committee;
- reaching consensus on the relative importance of different selection criteria through creating multiple short lists based on different key criteria (see section 4.3 below).
- using proactive language in job descriptions to indicate a School's commitment to diversity e.g.

- “The School is particularly interested in qualified candidates who can contribute, through their research, teaching, and/or service, to the diversity and excellence of the academic community.”
- “Women, black and minority ethnic or disabled people are encouraged to apply.”

2.4 Additional considerations

It is critical that all search committees recognise that it is inappropriate and illegal for an individual’s marriage or family status to affect evaluation of their application. Knowledge, or guesses, about these matters may not play any role in the committee’s deliberation about candidates’ qualifications or the construction of the shortlist. All committee members should recognise this and help maintain proper focus in committee deliberations. The committee chair will have ultimate responsibility to ensure that the discussion excludes any inappropriate considerations.

Regardless of the candidates’ personal characteristics (and without knowing anything about an individual’s partner or family status), one feature of the University environment that is likely to be important and attractive to all candidates is policies that make it a human work setting. The following points should be considered:

- it is common for academics to be partners with other academics but academic women are more likely to be partnered with other academics than academic men are. This means that disadvantages that affect two career academic couple have a disproportionate impact on women;
- the variability among women in their personal and household circumstances. Do not assume one household type (e.g. a husband and children) applies to all women;
- that there might be a perception that Manchester offers only limited opportunities for a candidate’s spouse or partner. Make sure candidates know about the diverse employment possibilities their partners might find not only at the University, but also throughout Manchester and the North West;
- consider identifying someone in the School who can offer to have a confidential conversation (one not to be conveyed to anyone else in the School) with candidates about these issues. This person should be well-informed about the Universities’ family friendly policies and willing to describe or discuss them with candidates, without transmitting information about the candidate’s personal circumstances to the School or the rest of the search committee. Another possibility is to have this person come from outside the interviewing School;

3. Pre search: committee activity

The search committee should engage in a relatively extended review of the wider disciplinary context, as well as the School's own past history of the searching and hiring, before beginning a new search. The School is more likely to be able to achieve a different outcome from past outcomes if it has some understanding of factors that may have played a role in limiting past success in recruiting underrepresented minorities.

3.1 Review of the national pool

The committee will need to take steps to identify the national 'pools' of qualified candidates for the field as a whole and for subfields in which you are considering hiring; subfield pools are sometimes quite different from overall pools.

The committee should also identify any institutions or individuals that are especially successful at producing underrepresented minority doctorates and/or post-doctorates in that field or the desired subfield and look to recruit actively from these sources.

3.2 Review of past School searches

These points should be investigated and considered in the committee's review of past School searches:

- how many underrepresented minorities have applied for past positions in your School, as a percentage of the total applicant pool;
- how many underrepresented minorities have been shortlisted for interviews in the field in previous searches;
- if underrepresented minority candidates have been hired in recent searches, ask the search committees and the recently hired staff members themselves how they were successfully recruited;
- if underrepresented minority candidates have been offered positions but have turned them down, find out why they have turned them down. **N.B.** The Equality and Diversity are willing and able to conduct confidential interviews with such candidates, if you think they might be less than candid in talking with colleagues in the same field. Be sure, in any case, to collect multiple accounts; individual stories often differ. Listen for potential insights into School practices that might have been factors in candidates' decisions as stories that appear to be highly individual at first may reveal patterns when considered in the aggregate;
- find out what has happened to underrepresented minorities who were not offered positions in previous searches. Where are they now and does it appear that something interfered with the assessment of their likely success?
- if no underrepresented minorities have been offered positions in recent searches, could the School evaluation systems be redefined to take strengths of underrepresented minority candidates into account? For example, were the positions defined too narrowly or if candidates were

ranked on a single list, consider using multiple ranking criteria in the future.

4. During the search: recruiting activities

4.1 Widening the pool

The committee's task is a process of generating a pool as opposed to tapping into one. The committee will need to consider the following points:

- attending presentations at national meetings and develop a more diverse list of potential future candidates based on those; candidates will be in any field and not necessarily the one targeted for a particular search;
- identify a group of people from the committee who will identify underrepresented minority candidates, who could then be considered for targeted recruitment outside of subfield-defined searches;
- managing timescales effectively, taking into account that cultivating future candidates is an important activity for the committee to undertake and as a consequence may lengthen the search process;
- promising candidates invitations to visit the University informally to present research before those individuals might be ready for an active search;
- setting aside the traditional constraint against 'hiring our own' where there is a significant source of qualified applicants nationally. It may be important, if the School or related ones at the University is a significant producer of the pool, to avoid unduly constraining the search to those trained elsewhere;
- candidates from a wide range of institutions are identified, as some eminent universities have only recently begun actively to produce underrepresented minorities Ph.Ds;
- underrepresented minorities who have excelled at their research in Schools less highly ranked than the University's may be under-placed and might thrive in the University's research environment;
- reviewing the evaluation systems to ensure that well-qualified applicants from 'new universities' which generally have better representation of underrepresented minorities are not inadvertently screened out;
- placing suitable and equal value on non-traditional career paths, taking into account time spent raising children; getting particular kinds of training; unusual undergraduate degrees; and different job experiences. Research shows that evaluations of men frequently go up when they have such work experience, while evaluations of women with the same kinds of experiences go down;
- when more than one underrepresented minority candidate is brought in for an interview, underrepresented minority candidates are disproportionately more likely to be hired. Research indicates that interviewers evaluate underrepresented minorities more fairly when

there is more than one woman, BME or disabled applicant in the interview pool; when there is only one underrepresented minority candidate, they are far less likely to succeed;

- ranking candidates separately on several different criteria, rather than using a single aggregate ranking list helps to mitigate the tendency for 'halo' effects that result from reliance on overall impressions rather than evidence-based judgements of particular criteria;
- re-opening or intensifying the search if the pool of applicants does not include underrepresented minority candidates who will be seriously considered by the search committee.

4.2 Active recruiting practices

Active recruiting practices will need to include:

- advertising the position for at least thirty days before the application deadline;
- using electronic job-posting services targeted at underrepresented minority groups or professional networks in your discipline;
- making personal contacts with underrepresented minorities at professional conferences and invite them to apply;
- asking staff and graduate students to help identify underrepresented minorities;
- contacting colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of students nearing graduation or other interested in moving laterally, making sure to request inclusion of underrepresented minorities;
- placing announcements in and actively using websites, listservs, journals and publications aimed specifically at underrepresented minorities;
- identifying suitable underrepresented minority staff members at other institutions, particularly staff members who may currently be under-placed and send job announcements directly to them;
- contacting relevant professional organisations for rosters listing underrepresented minorities receiving PhDs in the field. Many of these may be non-UK based.

4.3 Shortlisting considerations

The committee should be mindful in its evaluation of the kinds of evaluation biases that research has identified in both women's and men's judgements of job candidates. Additional checkpoints should be built into the shortlisting process to reduce the potential for these biases and to satisfy the committee that it has followed due process with the pool of candidates that has been generated:

- consensus should be achieved on the multiple criteria that will be used to choose candidates for interviews considering all criteria that are pertinent to the School's goals. In addition, the relative weighting of the different criteria should be agreed in the likelihood that no or few candidates will rate high on all of them;

- a 'medium' list should be developed prior to the short list. At this point, the committee will need to check as to whether there are any underrepresented minorities on it. If not the committee should consider intensifying your search before moving on to shortlisting.
N.B. Consider contacting the Equality and Diversity team for advice or help.
- create separate short lists ranking people on different criteria, such as research, potential, collaborative potential and mentoring capacity. The final shortlist should be developed by taking the top candidates across different criteria. This step should then be evaluated before finalising the list to identify as to whether any bias may still be affecting the committees' choices.
- alternatively, a separate 'medium' list could be generated that ranks the top underrepresented minority candidates (by minority group) if only one or two underrepresented minorities show up on the first medium list. The committee will then need to consider the potential for evaluation bias e.g. the tendency to underestimate underrepresented minority candidates' qualifications and overestimate white, male counterparts. This can be reviewed by comparing the top underrepresented minorities on the new medium list with the original medium lists. A new short list can then be developed by drawing the top candidates from both 'medium' lists;
- plan to interview more than one underrepresented minority candidate (see section 4.1).

5. Campus visits

The campus visit is an important opportunity for the School to communicate three messages:

- You are seriously interested in the candidate's scholarly credentials and work;
- Manchester is a good place to come because it is intellectually lively, and committed to diversity in the faculty, staff and student body;
- Manchester is a good place to come because it has a variety of humane, family-friendly and flexible working policies in place.

How these messages are communicated can make a critical difference in recruiting underrepresented minorities to a School where they will be vastly outnumbered by potentially older, white, able-bodied male colleagues. These points should be considered:

- make it clear that you are interested in the candidate's scholarship and skills, rather than his or her demographic characteristics. It is generally not helpful to make a point with candidates that the School is eager to hire underrepresented minorities;
- distribute information about family friendly and flexible working policies to all job candidates regardless their demographic or perceived demographic status;

- how can the School represent the University as a whole as a place in which underrepresented minority staff can thrive;
- how can the School represent itself as a place in which underrepresented minority staff can thrive? When a School currently has few or no underrepresented minority staff members it should consider promoting:
 - clear and transparent policies and procedures for performance review and promotion;
 - mentoring programmes for staff members in general and underrepresented minority staff members in particular (and ensuring these programmes are annually evaluated and reported);
- schedule interviews and events with consistency in achieving outcomes, recognising that different means may be required e.g. white male candidates may automatically be meeting with white male staff members, given the composition of the School. When recruiting candidates with different physical or mental ability, race, gender or age characteristics, it will be equally important for them to meet people who share important demographic characteristics, but you may need to make particular arrangements to ensure that this happens. There may be other personal characteristics that the candidate is particularly concerned with the availability of a community identified with a particular family status, sexual identity, religion or belief etc. Steps should be taken to help them meet with appropriate members of that community;
- provide the candidate with an opportunity to interact with the School's staff members in multiple venues and include Q&A sessions and other less formal interactions as formal talks may not reveal every candidate's strengths;
- ensure information and access to staff who might represent opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration are offered;
- ensure equivalent information is gathered from all candidates, so all candidates can be evaluated through the same criteria. This does not require use of uniform questions with all candidates, but does require care in obtaining comparable information;
- Introduce underrepresented minority staff members of the School to all candidates, not just underrepresented minorities. **N.B.** If underrepresented minority staff members are expected to play an especially active role in recruiting new staff, be sure to recognise this additional burden in their overall work load;
- focus on the candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of the job and avoid making assumptions based on perceived underrepresented minority status;
- ask staff to provide feedback about specific facets of the candidate's potential as opposed to generic feedback (see Appendix A). Research shows that when people focus on particular issues of performance, they are much less likely to rely on implicit biases.

6. Making an offer

The way an offer is negotiated can have a huge impact not only on the immediate hiring outcome, but also on a new hire's future career. Candidates who feel that Chairs conduct negotiations honestly and openly, and aim to create circumstances in which they will thrive, are more satisfied in their positions and more likely to stay at the University than those who feel that a Chair has deliberately withheld information, resources, or opportunities from them. Initial equity in both the negotiated conditions and in the Chair's follow through on the commitments it makes, are important factors in retention as well as recruitment.

Underrepresented minority candidates may have received less mentoring at previous career stages than their counterparts, and may therefore be at a disadvantage in knowing that they can legitimately request in negotiations. In addition, research shows that women are less inclined to negotiate for themselves than men are. To ensure equity, aim to empower the candidate to advocate on his or her own behalf, by providing all candidates with a complete list of areas it would be possible for them to discuss in the course of negotiations. This list will vary by field, and should include those items that will maximise the likelihood of candidate success in that field. For some fields these might include:

- Salary
- Course release time
- Lab equipment
- Lab space
- Renovation of lab space
- Research assistant
- Attractive teaching opportunity
- Travel funds
- Discretionary funds
- Moving expenses
- Assistance with partner/spouse position
- Other issues of concern to the candidate
- Clerical/administrative support

The committee should consider appointing an advocate or mentor to help candidates through the negotiation process. It should also ensure that clear, detailed information is provided about mentoring practices, annual reviews, third year reviews, tenure reviews and post-tenure promotion reviews.

8. Evaluation

Evaluating the search process will help to ensure inform future recruiting activities. When the committee hires an underrepresented minority candidate, it is important to consider what factors may have enabled it to do so and to keep a record of good practices and successful searches for future reference.

When the applicant pool was not as large, as qualified, or as diverse as was anticipated, the committee should reflect upon these questions:

- how could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
- how could the committee have recruited more actively?
- was there any criteria for this position that was consistently not met by underrepresented minorities?

When an underrepresented minority candidate was offered a position that they chose not to accept, what reasons did they offer? The committee should also consider as many factors as it can identify to inform actions that the School could take to make itself more attractive to such candidates in the future. **N.B.** The AVP (Equality and Diversity) is willing and able to conduct confidential interviews with such candidates, if you think they might be less than candid in talking with colleagues in the same field.

This evaluation should be shared with School decision-makers and inform future search processes.

Appendix A: Sample evaluation form

Candidates name: _____

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (tick all those that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Read candidate's CV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Met with candidate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read candidate's scholarship	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended lunch or dinner with candidate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read candidate's letters of recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please explain):
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended candidate's presentation	_____	

Please comment on the candidate's scholarship as reflected in the presentation:

Please comment on the candidate's teaching ability as reflected in the presentation:

Please rate the candidate on each of the following from 1 – 6, where 1 is excellent and 5 is poor, 6 is unable to judge

<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential for (evidence of) scholarly impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential for (evidence of) research productivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential for (evidence of) research funding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential for (evidence of) collaboration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fit with School priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ability to make contribution to School's climate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential (demonstrated ability) to attract and supervise graduate students
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduates
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential (demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious university community member

Other comments?
