

Recruitment and Appointment Procedure for Senior Appointments:

Chairs, Professors, Readers and Associate Professors (Academic Job Family) and Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow (Research Job Family)

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 Senior Academic Posts	4
a)	Advertisement, Job Description (JD) and Person Specification.....	5
b)	For clinical posts.....	5
6.	Advisory Committee	6
6.1	'Panel Pools'.....	6
7.	Following Receipt of Documentation	6
8.	Receipt of Applications	7
9.	The Interview	7
9.1	Formation of the Panel	7
9.2	Organisation of the Interview	7
a)	Notice of Interview	7
b)	Informal Visits.....	8
c)	Organisation of the Interview Day.....	8
d)	Information about the Department, Imperial College and Benefits	8
10.	Nominated Posts.....	8
10.1	Documentation	8
10.2	Appointment Procedure.....	9
11.	Post-Interview	9
11.1	Communicating with Successful Candidates.....	9
11.2	Supporting Newly Appointed Staff.....	9
12.	Appointment of a Head of Department.....	10

1. Introduction

A Chair, Professor, Reader and Associate Professor (Academic Job Family), and Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow (Research Job Family), are Imperial College posts, appointed to from either outside or within Imperial. Chair, Professor, Reader and Associate Professor, and Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow 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 Imperial College and Imperial 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 or Professor or Reader or Associate Professor (Academic Job Family), and Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow (Research Job Family)
- b) appoint to a vacant Chair or Professor or Reader or Associate Professor (Academic Job Family), or Senior Research Fellow or Principal Research Fellow (Research Job Family), 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, Reader or Associate Professors, or Senior Research Fellows and Principal Research Fellows 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.

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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 (should the new post not be already within the approved FTE cap), before initiating the recruitment process. In the case of the Faculty of Medicine, approval from the Dean's Management Group (DMG) must be obtained before initiating any academic recruitment process. This applies also to Senior Research Fellow and Principal Research Fellow within the Research Job Family.

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

Once the proposed recruitment has been approved by the respective Head of Department and the Faculty Dean, 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 their guidance and forms for academic recruitment requests from their Departments which can be obtained via the Institutional Affairs Coordinator, Jesse Lecoy (Email: j.lecoy@imperial.ac.uk). The academic recruitment requests from their Departments are reviewed by the Faculty of Medicine's Dean's Management Group comprising the Dean and all Vice-Deans, Faculty Operating Officer and Faculty Finance Officer. If the Department's request for a particular recruitment is approved, then the recruitment request is sent to HR.

5.1 Advertised Senior Academic Posts

If the vacancy is to be **advertised** (in line with Imperial College's normal and preferred way of filling posts) the following must be supplied:

1. A draft advertisement – using [Textio](#) as guidance
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. These can be discussed with the Senior Appointments team.

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/>, [Who We Are - The PhD Project](#), <https://www.ethnicjobsite.co.uk/>, and [Black British Academics](#) 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 (JD) 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. Our JD's templates already have standard person specification for academic levels.

The draft advert, job description and person specification need to be in a standard format, (in Microsoft Word), in line with our [JD templates](#).

b) For clinical posts

In addition to the above, the draft job description should be agreed with the relevant NHS 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 General Medical Council's (GMC) specialist register before taking up a consultant's appointment. Also, to be included, is the option for trainees to explore the possibility of post-Certificate of Completion of Training (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 job description.

6. Advisory Committee

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

While the role membership is not prescriptive, the Head of Department, or the person responsible for coordinating the recruitment/Hiring Manager, must be mindful of Imperial's requirement that the Advisory Appointments 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 Appointments Committee will have attended Imperial's [unconscious bias training](#) in addition to the more general [recruitment and selection training](#).

Full Advisory Appointments Committee membership details are available at: [Appointment of Senior Academics, Senior Research and Senior Teaching staff | Administration and support services | Imperial College London](#)

6.1 'Panel Pools'

Departments that find it difficult to draw together a diverse Advisory Appointments 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 Imperial's equality-related committees. These individuals could then be approached to form part of the Advisory Appointments 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 Appointments team will seek approval from the Dean of the relevant Faculty. For the Faculty of Medicine, the Dean's Management Group (DMG) would send us their approval as the recruitment requests are submitted to them first for their review and approval.

Liaison will take place over the advertisement and job description, 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, TalentLink, 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 Appointments 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 are 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 effective 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 Appointments Committee together with a shortlisting form. All members of the Advisory Appointments Committee, with the exception of the 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 for the shortlisted candidates, (for those candidates who have given us permission to contact their referees prior to the interview) and invite shortlisted candidates for the interviews.

9. The Interview

9.1 Formation of the Panel

Candidates will be interviewed by the Advisory Appointments Committee. If the Head of Department has reason to propose a change to a member of the Advisory Appointments Committee at a late stage, they 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 Imperial'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 Appointments 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 to be based), and any

other necessary arrangements.

b) Informal Visits

Heads of Department may wish to offer shortlisted candidates the opportunity to visit Imperial before the formal interview, and this is normally organised by the department. In many instances, Heads of Departments may also invite candidates to give a research seminar to members of the Department prior to the formal Imperial 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 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, Imperial 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, Imperial College, benefits and support available to academic staff who are new to Imperial.

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

10. Nominated Posts

10.1 Documentation

Applications for nominations to these senior posts 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 these senior posts 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 guidance sent to all Departmental Operations Managers, as mentioned earlier.

The following documentation must be provided by the Faculties/Departments for consideration of the senior academic nomination cases:

- A full curriculum vitae
- Research and Teaching statement
- Job Description (JD)

- 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 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 Appointments Committee members, together with the CV, list of publications, job description 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 interviewed and arrangements will be made for the interview to take place as soon as possible. If, following the interview, the nomination for the proposed senior post is approved by the Advisory Appointments Committee, actions then follow as described below.

11. Post-Interview

11.1 Communicating with Successful Candidates

When the Advisory Appointments 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 Appointments Committee and the wider Imperial community.

11.2 Supporting Newly Appointed Staff

On appointing Chairs, Professors, Readers or Associate Professors, and Senior Research Fellows and Principal Research Fellows who are new to Imperial, 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 Imperial, London or the UK.

Regular contact should be maintained with the appointee before their arrival at Imperial, 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 senior academic staff joining Imperial, 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 Imperial document "The Roles and Responsibilities of a Head of Department", with the contract of employment.