



**PROCEDURES FOR THE RECRUITMENT
AND APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF
IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document outlines the procedures for the recruitment and appointment to academic posts at the University of Limerick in limited exceptional circumstances; e.g. candidates in receipt of a portable European Research Council or similar award; or those with critical skills for strategic needs. The objective of the procedures is to attract and select, in limited exceptional circumstances, the above-defined candidates in a fair, transparent and effective manner. The procedures do not replace the procedures for recruiting and appointing academic staff but rather to supplement them in limited exceptional situations that are of strategic importance to the University.

In accordance with public sector recruitment and appointment procedures and norms, all appointments of candidates in exceptional circumstances to academic posts of 12 months or longer will be subject to the procedures set out in this document. The Governing Authority will consider and approve, if appropriate, all appointments subject to these procedures.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 To whom does the Procedures for Appointment of Academic Staff in Exceptional Circumstances apply?

This Procedure applies to all candidates who would be a key academic appointment in pursuit of the University's strategic objectives. This procedure will not apply to current academic staff at the University of Limerick but may apply to internal research staff in receipt of a prestigious/major portable European Research Council award or similar award.

2. Approval Process

2.1 Process Initiation

Members of the University of Limerick (UL) management team may identify a candidate(s) who would be a key strategic appointment in pursuit of UL's strategic objectives. The identification of candidate(s) should normally be done through a search committee. The search committee process will not apply to candidates in receipt of a portable European Research Council award or similar award as such candidates will have been assessed by an international panel of experts convened by the relevant funding body. The relevant Faculty Dean(s), Head(s) of Department and Director(s) of Research Institute (where applicable) will submit for approval to the President a proposal that sets out the strategic relevance of the identified candidate(s) and HR must be advised.

2.2 Proposal Requirements

The proposal document must contain the following:

- Proposed discipline area.
- Relevance to UL's strategic goals.
- Proposed grade of the academic post.
- Sustainability plan for the proposal with approved budget for costs.
- Approval from Recruitment Committee.
- Detail on the mechanism by which the candidate has been identified by UL's management team.
- An outline of the area of research of the proposed candidate and how this fits with the University, faculty, department and (where relevant) research institute's strategic plans.
- An outline of how the faculty and department/school will encompass the new appointment within the relevant strategic plans.
- An assessment of the achievements of the candidate in research, teaching, leadership and other areas relevant to the grade of the academic post, including a brief curriculum vitae in an appendix.

2.3 Conflict of Interest

An individual (or members of their family) who is involved in the preparation of a proposal may not be put forward as a candidate. Conflict of professional or personal interest must be declared to the Provost or Director, Human Resources prior to the preparation of the proposal.

2.4 Candidate Visit

Once the proposal has been approved by the President, the Faculty Dean(s) (in conjunction with HR) will invite candidates to visit UL. The purpose of the visit is to facilitate the candidates to engage with academic staff and students and for the University to become familiar with the candidates. The following activities will occur during and after the visit:

- Candidate will give a public presentation on their research.
- Faculty Dean will schedule one-to-one meetings for candidate with Head(s) of Department, Director(s) of Research Institutes and academic staff, as appropriate.
- Faculty Dean will arrange individual meetings of at least 30-minute duration for candidate with the President, Provost and the Vice President Research (VPR).
- Other meetings may be arranged as required.
- The Faculty Dean may then determine that the candidate give a second, shorter public presentation to illustrate the synergy they have identified between their research interests/plans and those of the department, faculty and University.

They should also stipulate how their research maps onto UL's strategic research themes.

2.5 Post Visit Feedback

After the visit, the Faculty Dean(s), Head(s) of Department and Director(s) of Research Institute (in conjunction with HR) will document the feedback from the meetings with the candidate(s) to capture all recommendations and reservations on the candidature of the candidate(s).

2.6 External Assessor Reports

The Faculty Dean(s) will source a minimum of four external assessor reports. The primary role of the external assessors is to provide the President with advice concerning the scholarly abilities and attainments of the candidates and their suitability for appointment on this basis. External assessor reports may be taken up verbally. In such instances the verbal report will be recorded and the recording and a transcript of the recording will be forwarded to the President and both retained on file.

The independence of external assessors must be always assured. The Faculty Dean(s) will pay particular attention to the selection of external assessors to ensure gender balance (minimum 30%) and that the assessors are independent of UL and external to Ireland. The Faculty Dean will discuss and agree the external assessors with the President.

2.7 Recommendation to President

The relevant Faculty Dean(s), Head(s) of Department and Director(s) of Research Institute (where applicable) will submit a detailed recommendation to the President. The recommendation will be in the form of an updated proposal as outlined in section 2.2 above and must include the feedback from the candidate's visit to UL, including recommendations and reservations, and the external assessors reports.

2.8 Review by President

The President will consider the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Dean(s), Head(s) of Department and Director(s) of Research Institute (where applicable). The President may consult others as they deem relevant and may request additional information.

3. Human Resources (HR Division)

The HR Division will be responsible for ensuring that these procedures are fully complied with and will provide advice on the process as required. They will

- Hold a copy of documentation on file

- Engage the services of an appropriate search consultant when required.
- Ensure that documentary evidence of qualifications is verified.
- Arrange for a pre-employment medical where appropriate.
- Issue any Offer or Contract documents.

4. Governing Authority Approval

In cases where the President endorses the recommendation, they will make a proposal to Governing Authority recommending the appointment. The proposal should include a reasoned argument outlining the rationale for the appointment and the merits of the candidate.

5. Search Committee

5.1 Search Committee Members

The President may convene a search committee to identify candidates who could potentially be key strategic appointments in pursuit of UL's strategic objectives.

The search committee will comprise:

- A nominee of the President
- Faculty Dean(s)
- Relevant Head(s) of Department
- Director(s), Research Institute (where relevant)
- Director Human Resources or their nominee
- Associate Registrar
- Manager, Research Support Services
- At least one internal subject specialist at professorial level
- Search consultant (in attendance when required)

Due regard will be given to the requirement for appropriate gender balance (minimum 30%) on the search committee. To ensure appropriate gender balance on the search committee, the President may co-opt additional members (internal or external) to the committee.

5.2 Chairperson of Search Committee

The relevant Faculty Dean will chair the committee but if the appointment is across faculties; the relevant Deans will agree the Chair from among their number.

5.3 Search Consultant/Consultants

The service of professional search consultant(s) may be engaged by HR to conduct an international search to generate a pool of candidates with appropriate profiles for consideration by the search committee.

The search consultant(s) will:

- Take the time to become familiar with the specifics of the particular strategic needs of the University
- With assistance from the members of the search committee develop an understanding of the discipline and the preferred candidate profile.
- Liaise on an ongoing basis with the search committee regarding the calibre of potential candidates. To guide the work of the search consultant(s), the search committee may ask external advisers for the names of potential candidates.
- After conducting a thorough international search, the search consultant(s) will determine the bona fide interests of potential candidates.
- Submit to the search committee their final list of potential candidates for consideration.

5.4 Unavailability of Search Committee Member

If a search committee member is unavailable, the President may nominate a replacement. Alternatively, the President may decide, at their absolute discretion, not to appoint a replacement, in which case the committee may proceed with the process.

5.5 Equal Opportunity Employer

UL is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to selection on merit. Consequently, the procedures for identifying candidates will be equitable and transparent and will seek to treat people in similar circumstances equally and fairly.

Individuals will not be discriminated against on the basis of disability, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief or lack of religious belief, age, race or membership of the Traveller Community.

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