**QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

**SUMMARY**

**(All Panel Members should read before each Interviewing Panel)**

1. It is a cardinal principle of the University’s recruitment procedure that prejudice should be excluded in all matters e.g. sex, religion, politics, disability, ethnic origin. The University’s policy is that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work.
2. The work of Interviewing Panels is of the utmost importance. The primary objectives of an Interviewing Panel is to make an unbiased assessment of the suitability of each candidate it interviews for appointment to the post under consideration, having regard to all the evidence, and by a systematic assessment procedure to rank them according to varying degrees of suitability and to place them in order of merit. It must be a special concern of Chairs of Panels to ensure not only that no prejudice operates, but also that as far as possible no candidate has any grounds for thinking that prejudice entered into the Panel’s questioning or assessment.
3. The assessment of the suitability of each candidate is a matter for judgement, and Panel members should endeavour to be as objective as possible. However the advice of experts/external assessors, when available, will be taken into account in individual assessments. The gathering together of relevant evidence is made more systematic and uniform by using the Rating Form. *The Rating Form does not of itself make interview assessments less subjective but provides the discipline of rating candidates from a number of different standpoints. Individual marks must not be simply averaged to produce a Panel mark.*
4. In all cases the Chair should complete a brief summary/report of the interview session. This report should summarise the Panel’s decision; including the selection of the successful candidate and reserve candidates. This is, of course, very important in its own right, but Panel members must also remember that, if unsuccessful candidates complain the Interviewing Panel papers may have to be produced in advance of any legal proceedings.
5. (a) In recruitment to academic posts, the Education and Experience elements of the interview rating forms (so called input factors) are pivotal to the decision and should form the dominant element of the overall assessment of the interviewed candidate.
   1. For non-academic posts, the Chair should ensure that the Panel is conscious that, in relation to any particular job, a score on one factor may be more important than a score on another. In order to reach a consensus it may be required to develop and agree a weighting scheme, ie. If Education is weighted by two in relation to Presentation this reflects the idea that it is twice as important as Presentation for the job concerned. The Chair’s role is to secure agreement on such a weighting scheme if required prior to the interview, and any weighting should be recorded on the Interview Summary Sheet.
6. In responding to accusations of prejudice or malpractice it is important that records of the whole recruitment procedure should be adequate. Panellists should therefore record, briefly, on individual interview records their reasons for awarding marks. Panel members should ensure that there is a consistency between their remarks and the ratings. All written material including notes, questions, etc. will be retained on file.
7. The whole of a Panel’s proceedings and all documents are strictly confidential to the members of the Panel, and members must not disclose anything said at the Panel, anything in the candidate’s papers or anything in the Panel’s recommendation. It follows that Panel members should not indicate to the candidate at any stage, either during or after the interview, that he or she may or may not be offered an appointment. They should not, either before or after the Interviewing Panel, communicate with any of the candidates any details relating to the recruitment process. This is the responsibility of Human Resources. However, on occasion the Chair of the Panel may be delegated the responsibility of advising the successful candidate of the Panel’s recommendation.
8. All enquiries concerning both shortlisted and non-shortlisted candidates should be referred to Human Resources. Under no circumstances should information concerning the appointments procedure be dealt with by individual members of the Panel or any other member of a department/office.

*All Panel papers should be returned to the Human Resources Business Partner/Assistant Human Resources Business Partner at the end of the Interview.*

*Panellists are reminded that removal of papers is specifically precluded by the Relevant Code of Practice.*

*Panel papers should not be photocopied for retention by individual Panel members.*

**Advice to Interview Panel Members**

YOU SHOULD:

* be familiar with the paperwork
* know what you are looking for – the qualities necessary to fill the post
* study all the papers involved (eg job description, employee specification etc)
* prepare an interview format and core questions in advance of the interview, including appropriate weighting
* plan your approach and watch timing
* put the candidate at ease
* be purposeful and friendly
* explain the purpose of the interview (Chair)
* discipline yourself to ask sensible simple questions without being ambiguous
* be as clear and concise as possible
* listen to the candidate and to your fellow Panel members
* guide interview into relevant and constructive channels
* ask supplementary questions where required
* cover loose ends
* make an unbiased impartial and objective assessment of each candidate
* assess by taking into account all the information available, including qualifications, experience, etc
* use the Rating Form as a framework for discussion when considering your markings
* be sensitive to the difficulties of those with disabilities
* remember that a disablement is not a reason for rejecting a candidate
* give the candidate the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview
* let the candidate know when he or she will be notified of the result
* make notes or comments in the space provided on the Rating Form and not on other documents
* complete the documentation in ink, not pencil
* if changes are to be made the reasons should be briefly noted

YOU SHOULD NOT:

* reveal information given in confidential reports
* reveal any of the Interviewing Panel’s considerations or recommendations
* grill or pressurise the candidate
* reveal your own views and opinions
* make assumptions
* use jargon
* ask questions in the sensitive areas relating to race, religion, sex, marital status or party politics
* ask leading questions
* ask long involved questions which require multiple answers
* ask closed questions requiring only yes or no answers
* waste time
* worry about short pauses
* be fobbed off by superficial answers: probe if necessary
* interrupt the candidate or your Panel colleagues while the interview is in progress
* let the candidate run the interview
* allow emotion to cloud your judgement
* upset candidates by asking personal, patronising or discourteous questions
* bracket candidates together on the Interview Summary Sheet as being equal
* decide a final agreed Interviewing Panel rank until the interview and discussion with your Panel colleagues have been completed
* communicate with any candidate before or after the interview any information relating to the recruitment
* make private or confidential notes regarding candidates; these have no place in the process. Indeed the removal of such notes, should they be made for any reason, is likely to be a breach of the relevant Code of Practice.

July 2008