

HOW TO WRITE A RECRUITMENT ADVERT

Getting the job advert right is a key element of attracting the best candidate for the role from a diverse range of suitable applicants. The aim of the advert is to attract interest, clearly communicate the essential points, and to inform the candidate how to apply. These principles apply regardless of the method selected to advertise the position.

There are additional requirements and regulations that you need to adhere to if you anticipate your advert will attract candidates from outside the EEA that may require a Certificate of Sponsorship. You will normally need to meet the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) (i.e. to show that efforts were made to find a suitable person for the role who is already a settled worker in the UK but none was found). In these instances, please refer to the comprehensive guidance at <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/recruitment/step-2-recruitment-planning/advertise-vacancy/what-advertise>.

Advertising the position widely will ensure that you attract a diverse pool of candidates. Over recent years, on-line advertising has become a much more effective medium to attract candidates than print advertising and can provide both targeted and universal coverage. Advertising in print media can be expensive. Therefore when using print media, a shortened advert to direct candidates to the more detailed advert on the University jobs pages is the most cost effective approach.

1) What to include

- Adverts should be as concise as possible and enable the reader to quickly assess if it's appropriate for them and if so entice them to read further.
- Detailed information can be provided in the further information document.
- Get to the main point, quickly. Avoid lengthy preambles. Use simple language that your reader uses and short sentences; long paragraphs can be off putting, use bullet points instead.
- Involve the reader. Refer to them as 'you' and use the second person ('you', 'your' and 'yours' etc.) in the description of the requirements and expectations of the candidates and the job role. This will help people to visualise themselves in the role.

Ensure your advert includes:

- **Job title** - This is usually the headline of the advert. Therefore it needs to be meaningful and clear.
- General **location** of the job (e.g. Central Cambridge, West Cambridge).
- **Salary** range and any guaranteed allowances or payments
- Any **terms** of the offer (such as if there is a limit of tenure, limited funding or if the vacancy is part-time).
- Briefly **describe the role** picking out key tasks and responsibilities
- Describe the **key skills, qualifications and attributes** you are looking for in your ideal candidate highlighting those that are essential and those that are desirable. Focus on the essential skills, qualifications and attributes. Carefully assess the "essential criteria" for relevance to the role and remove any unnecessary qualifications. Remember that evidence¹ shows that women and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff are less likely to apply if they do not meet every requirement.
- If the role goes across more than one level e.g. Research Assistant/Research Associate or University Lecturer/University Senior Lecturer ensure that the skills and attributes are clear for each level
- The **closing date** for applications (all adverts should be advertised for a minimum of 10 working days however if a certificate of sponsorship is required the advert must be placed for a minimum of 28 days). Consider that diverse applicants are often harder to reach and therefore advertising for a longer period can enhance their chances to see the advert and apply.

2) Diversity Considerations

The recruitment process should be one of open competition that should attract a diversity of talented applicants. When drafting your advert consideration should be given to the following areas:

¹ Mohr 2014.

Positive Action

The University is aware that women and staff that self-identify as BME are underrepresented in many roles – you may help to attract candidates from under-represented groups by including appropriate wording in your advert. For further guidance please see: <http://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/recruitment/equality-law-and-recruitment/exceptions-equality-law/positive-action> and/or contact the Equality and Diversity section at equality@admin.cam.ac.uk.

The below example wording can be tailored appropriately.

“We particularly welcome applications from women / candidates from a BME background for this vacancy as they are currently under-represented at this level in our department/Faculty/School/University.

Flexible working

Consider whether the role can be advertised as an opportunity to work in a flexible way. This can include (but is not limited to) working part-time and job-share arrangements. Welcoming applications from individuals who wish to be considered for part-time working or other flexible working arrangements can broaden the pool of talented applicants and increase the number of women applying for the role. In addition, as the vast majority of part-time workers are women, a requirement to carry out duties full-time may amount to indirect sex discrimination unless it can be objectively justified.

Disability

Consider how you can make the job advertisement more attractive to a disabled applicant by including pro-active statements, e.g.

“We are happy to discuss any reasonable adjustments individuals may require in the recruitment process, on commencement, or once in post”

Gendered Wording

In the recruitment process stereotypes, unconscious bias and communications styles can unknowingly influence prospective candidates². For example job adverts with masculine language may be less appealing to women regardless of job type and can decrease the candidates anticipated “fit” within an organisation. Some examples are provided below:

Feminine	Masculine
A company's excellence in the market	A company's dominance in the market
Understands markets to establish appropriate selling prices	Analyse markets to determine appropriate selling prices
We are committed to providing top quality health care that is sympathetic to the needs of our patients	We are determined to deliver superior medical treatment tailored to each individual patient
Excellent communication skills.	Strong communication skills.
Respond to problems and find innovative solutions .	Analyse problems logically to determine the appropriate response.
Can motivate others to meet their potential.	Can challenge others to meet their potential.

To illustrate, when an advert for a position was constructed to sound masculine, it included sentences such as, ‘We will challenge our employees to be proud of their chosen career’ and ‘You’ll develop leadership skills and learn business principles.’

² **Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality** Danielle Gaucher, Justin Friesen, and Aaron C. Kay Online First Publication, March 7, 2011.

The feminine worded version of the same job advert included sentences such as, *'We nurture and support our employees, expecting that they will become committed to their chosen career'* and *'You will develop interpersonal skills and understanding of business.'*

Totaljobs.com provides an on-line decoder which can be used to highlight words that are predominantly masculine or feminine so that consideration can be given to these balances when constructing your advert.

<https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/gender-bias-decoder/>.

Qualifications

When asking for specific qualifications (such as GCSEs) make it clear that equivalent alternative qualifications will be considered, so as to be inclusive of people of different ages or nationalities. Careful consideration should be given as to whether particular qualifications are strictly necessary. It is preferable to focus instead on the competencies required in the post, e.g. 'proven skills of analytical thinking, innovation and problem solving'.

3) Standard inclusions

Further information is also available at (include link). Apply on-line at www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/ ref (include ref)

The University values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity.

The University has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK.