Imperial College London

NHLI Key Things to Consider When Recruiting

The following document highlights some things to think about when you are recruiting. Links have been provided so that you can explore each element in more detail. This is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the whole recruitment process so please use these guidelines in conjunction with the College's full recruitment policy and the Faculty's HR webpages.

Creating an advert

Following the introduction of Talentlink in October 2017 new templates for job adverts have been created:

- Standard advert template
- Reader and Professor advert template

You may want to give particular attention to the first paragraph as this will appear on the College's 'Jobs' search. You are encouraged to enter an opening and compelling strapline to grab your candidates attention and really make them want to read more.

So that your role stands out from other adverts and appeals to potential candidates you may want to consider one of the following opening sentences:

- Are you a highly motivated person with a passion for…
- We are looking for an experienced and proactive xx to…
- An exciting opportunity has arisen in…
- Would you like to join a vibrant and successful team that is…
- Are you looking to develop your career by…

Your advert should be succinct but should include key responsibilities of the role as well as the essential requirements (i.e. knowledge, skills, experience) needed to do the role.

Consider how to 'bring the role to life' and help potential candidates to imagine themselves working at NHLI. Think about how to attract appropriate candidates – why would someone want to come and work here? What does the role offer in terms of opportunities for growth and development? What support, collaborations and opportunities are available? How would you describe the working environment in which the post-holder will be based? e.g. '*We are looking for a research associate to join our successful/ dynamic/ collaborative/ friendly/world-leading/vibrant/diverse group'*. Provide some highlights about the work of your group/section and your future direction.

Promote what the role is rather than what it is not e.g. if you are advertising a non-clinical role put this in brackets after the job title for clarity rather than using it as a prefix i.e. use *Lecturer in xx (non-clinical)* rather than *Non-clinical Lecturer in xx*.

Describe the role in a positive (but realistic) way to capture the attention and interest of potential candidates.

Inclusive language

In line with our Athena work on equality we want to ensure that NHLI recruitment documents use inclusive language and don't unintentionally influence the perceptions and actions of potential applicants. There is some evidence to suggest that women can be put off by the use of 'masculine' words in a job advert (Gaucher, Friesen & Kay, 2011). When masculine wording was used women indicated that they found the job less appealing primarily due to the perception that they would not belong in the job/organisation.

GO AHEAD

Inclusive language – the following words/phrases are considered to be inclusive and can be used throughout recruitment documentation

Adaptable	Collaborative	Creative	Curious	Excellent
Flexible	Imaginative	Intuitive	Multitasking	Resilient
Self-aware	Socially responsible	Thoughtful	Trustworthy	

STOP and THINK

It is recommended that the following 'masculine' words are replaced with more inclusive words:

Ambitious	Assertive	Autonomous	Competitive	Determined
Dominant	Lead/Leader/Leadership	Self-confident	Strong	

We also want to highlight the Athena SWAN work that we have been doing in NHLI and how we promote a supportive and inclusive environment. It is therefore a good idea to include the following sentence in your job advert:

NHLI holds an Athena SWAN silver award and is committed to promoting equality for all within the workplace and creating a diverse, inclusive and supportive working environment (http://www.imperial.ac.uk/nhli/about-us/equality-and-diversity-at-nhli/).

Where to advertise or share your vacancy

Most jobs are advertised on the College website and on www.jobs.ac.uk. You may want to consider whether there are publications, networks, job lists that are particularly relevant for your area of work. Think about distributing the vacancy on email lists for groups and networks that you are a member of/affiliated to, and sharing on LinkedIn and Twitter.

It is thought that many people find new roles through 'weak ties', these are acquaintances or friends of family/friends or people that you may know via someone else. By advertising your vacancy on LinkedIn and Twitter and by circulating via email lists you are reaching a much wider audience of 'weak ties'. Remember that someone may see the role and think it is perfect for someone else that they know.

Consider how you can reach and encourage applications from a diverse range of candidates. Ask your colleagues to distribute the vacancy to their networks and contacts. To increase the number of female applicants consider advertising on WISE or WES.

Please keep a record of how and where you advertise and what impact this has on applications so that we can determine which approaches appear to be more effective and share this information with others. This will also help us with our next Athena SWAN application. If you have something to share please email Lindsay

Personal contacts

Don't underestimate the power of personal contact. Sending a personal message to an individual to encourage them to view the advert and consider applying can be very effective and may be particularly useful for academic posts. Consider potential candidates within as well as outside Imperial.

Be proactive about building up your network of potential candidates by meeting new people at conferences, seminars and events and talking to/getting contact details of those who you think would be good candidates for future roles at NHLI.

Unconscious bias and recruitment

We categorise incoming information in order to help us to process and understand the breadth and depth of information that we encounter in social interactions. For example we may categorise people due to their accent, gender, race, body weight, social background etc. This process of social categorisation helps us to deal efficiently and quickly with information from our surroundings but can mean that we make assumptions that may lead us to behave in biased ways. For a brief introduction please watch one or both of the following:

The Royal Society – Understanding Unconscious Bias (video 2:59 mins)
Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion – What is Unconscious Bias? (video 3:20 mins)

It is important to be aware of unconscious bias at all stages of the recruitment process and to put steps in place to ensure that the panel can make sound decisions:
- Create clear criteria that relate to the vacancy that you have
- Ensure the interviews are structured so that each candidate is assessed against the criteria
- Score candidates individually before aggregating the scores and discussing the evidence available
- Ensure the panel has regular breaks with refreshments

Please see the article Why Diversity Matters or the full report on which it is based for the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Training

We recommend that all staff members involved in recruitment attend the College's Recruitment and Selection training. It is also valuable to refresh and update your knowledge and skills and re-attend the training if it has been a while since you attended.

You are also encouraged to undertake the College's online Equality and Diversity course and the Unconscious Bias course.

Additional resources and links

- How to avoid unconscious bias in job ads
- Can science help you write a better job description?
- Here are the words that may keep women from applying for jobs
- How to take gender bias out of your job ads

Online gender decoder:
Companies have now been set up to review recruitment documentation and to advise on the use of words and phrases (at a cost!) but there is also a free tool available that searches for the words used in the Gaucher et al study outlined above (the words used in the study are given below):

http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/

How it works: copy and paste in the content of your job advert. The website provides a summary of all the masculine and feminine words used and compares the proportion of each to determine if the text is neutral, feminine-coded or masculine-coded. If your document is masculine-coded review the words you have used and consider whether replacing them for more inclusive words

Caution: you may want to use this as a guide but note that some of the words may have context or role specific relevance. If you have a masculine-coded document you may also want to consider the frequency

with which you use particular words and whether some of them can be replaced with more inclusive or feminine words.

Gaucher, Friesen and Kay (2011)
Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality

Masculine and feminine words used in the study

Masculine words	Feminine words
Active	Affectionate
Adventurous	Child*
Aggress*	Cheer*
Ambitio*	Commit*
Analy*	Communal
Assert*	Compassion*
Athlet*	Connect*
Autonom*	Considerate
Boast*	Cooperat*
Challeng*	Depend*
Compet*	Emotiona*
Confident	Empath*
Courag*	Feminine
Decide	Flatterable
Decisive	Gentle
Decision*	Honest
Determin*	Interpersonal
Domina*	Interdependen*
Force*	Interpersona*
Greedy	Kind
Headstrong	Kinship
Hierarch*	Loyal*
Hostil*	Modesty
Impulsive	Nag
Independen*	Natur*
Individual*	Pleasant*
Intellect*	Polite
Lead*	Quiet*
Logic	Respon*
Masculine	Sensitiv*
Objective	Submissive
Opinion	Support*
Outspoken	Sympath*
Persist	Tender*
Principle*	Together*
Reckless	Trust*
Stubborn	Understand*
Superior	Warm*
Self-confiden*	Whin*
Self-sufficien*	Yield*
Self-relian*	

denotes acceptance of all letters, hypends or numbers following its appearance