Recruitment guide

Guide for an OTM-R (Open, Transparent, Merit) based recruitment and selection procedure

TU Delft

TU Delft is an inclusive university The importance of effective recruitment for attracting talent is obvious. A uniform, open, transparent and value-driven (objective in terms of quality and not subjective which allows room for prejudices) recruitment and selection process is crucial for this.

This recruitment guide, which can be used when recruiting academic and support staff alike, serves this purpose. It offers vacancy holders, managers, and selection committee members references to information, suggestions, the various stages to be gone through, etc. The aim is to make the whole recruitment and selection process objective, consistent, and transparent, thereby excluding unconscious biases from the process as much as possible. This helps promote diversity.

Questions or matters that are not clear should be raised with HR (faculty/department) or the central D&I programme manager.

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1. Selection committee

The composition of selection committees (or AACs) should be broad-based. In other words, their members should represent the complete spectrum of diversity. This involves such aspects as gender, age, stage of academic career, time at the university, breadth of knowledge of the field, and ethnicity. A too narrow-based selection committee will almost always be a hindrance to diversity. The aim is that selection committees should always reflect the TU Delft community.

It is recommended that selection committees be composed of between three and seven people (in exceptional cases), who should possess as much knowledge of the job and the place where the candidate will be working as possible. It is also recommended that at least one woman (that is, where there are more than three members, around a third of the committee) should sit on the committee. In addition, give stakeholders the opportunity to share any specific advice with the selection committee as opposed to sitting on it. This could include advice on a publication list, specific questions about the candidate's CV etc.

It is advisable to take an effective training course that makes us aware of unconscious prejudices and offers methods for reversing them. HR also offers the option of intervention in a selection committee by a coach who can make the committee members aware of implicit bias. Ask HR for the latest developments and the options available.

Selection committee checklist

- In principle, a selection committee has between three and seven members (the aim is always for an odd number).
- For more information about the composition and size and the current appointments procedure of the Advisory Appointment Committee, see, for example:
  Checklist for professor appointment proposals to the EB 28-11-2018
- Assign a member of the selection committee the specific task of looking out for unconscious biases in the recruitment and selection process.
- TU Delft offers scope for faculties to have their own recruitment and selection policy for academic staff and tenure trackers. You should therefore ask the faculty HR what the policy is.

Schedule

Plan the process carefully in order to pass through and complete all the procedural stages in time. It is recommended that every stage, such as meetings, should be set down in the diaries of the selection committee members as early as possible. This will prevent diary clashes.

Additional information on the intranet

The following information forms the basis for the TU Delft recruitment and selection process. Interpretations by faculties or departments may differ in certain areas, but this recruitment guide is the overall basis. Check with the relevant faculty or departmental HR to see if they have any specific interpretation of the procedure.

See also the schedules for appointing professors, published on the intranet. They can be found on the academic staff recruitment and selection procedures intranet page

- External route - Multiple Candidates Procedure (MCP)
- External route - Single Candidate Procedure (SCP)
- Procedure for promoting professors

For more details and a checklist, see:

- Checklist for professor appointment proposals to the EB

For more information, see:

- Recruitment & selection of PhD candidates
- PhD selection guide 2016
- Recruitment & selection of associate and assistant professors, including tenure trackers

Roles and responsibilities of selection committees

Chair

- Make sure the procedure is conducted according to the following:
  a. the NVP recruitment code (drawn up by the Netherlands Association for Personnel Management and Organisation (NVP) with rules of conduct to which every employer and job applicant should adhere when taking on staff; see https://www.nvp-hrnetwerk.nl/sollicitatiecode).
  b. the professor appointments procedure (Single or Multiple Candidate procedure).
  c. the faculty Tenure Track policy.
- Prevents selection committee participation by members who could have a conflict of interest.
- Together with HR, plans the procedure and ensures the presence of relevant documentation.
- Chairs the selection interviews.

Selection committee members

- Help ensure that the selection process properly covers the relevant subject matter and is procedurally correct.
- Attend every selection interview in order to be able to compare candidates on the basis of all the available information.

HR advisor

- Advises and can assist the selection committee during the preparation of the entire recruitment and selection process, once the decision to recruit has been taken.
- If requested, provides HR-related information to applicant (collective labour agreement, other schemes and regulations, and any additional terms and conditions of employment).

2. The vacancy text

Once the vacancy has been approved, how can you ensure the most effective response as possible to the vacancy text? That is, how do you compose an effective vacancy text (apart from the factual aspects)? A vacancy text is an invitation and a visiting card. Apart from the fact that the text and the layout should look good, the content should appeal to the reader. The reader needs to be enthused about the position and about TU Delft. It's a pull factor. This is why it is important to explore what motivates the candidates. Why would the best applicant want to work with you, what is he or she looking for in terms of their career, what teaching/research ratio are they aiming for, what terms and conditions of employment do they find important?

Tips

- Avoid formal or official language, abbreviations, and jargon.
- See here for alternative words.
- Avoid passive sentences wherever possible.
- The ideal vacancy text is 600 to 700 words long. This has been shown from analyses carried out by Textio, a tool that analyses more than 10 million vacancies every month.
- Remember too that almost half of all vacancies are nowadays viewed on mobile devices.

Additionally, the text must give a clear description of what the position actually entails.
Use:

- Short paragraphs
- Blank lines
- Sub-headings
- Bullet points

Limit the summary of competencies to requirements (and not wishes) that are really essential - the greater the number of competencies, the more you will rule out potential candidates or discourage them from responding. Be concise, position-oriented, and realistic about what the position entails. During the selection process, actually assess the candidates on the requirements of the position mentioned in the vacancy. Use a tool, such as http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com to ensure the text is gender neutral.

Vacancy text checklist

- Make sure the vacancy text accurately represents the job profile.
- Describe the duties, responsibilities, requirements, and any other additional information in a concise, realistic, and job-oriented way.
- Give a clear picture of the position and the environment in which it operates.
- Encourage members of the selection committee or AAC to provide input for the text. Involve HR and make sure the vacancy holder has approved the text.
- Vacancies for academic positions are always published in English. Vacancies for support positions are published in Dutch and English. If necessary, have English texts checked or written by the translation agency.

3. Recruitment

It can be a real challenge to bring the vacancy to the attention of that one candidate you are looking for. Your HR advisor can certainly help contribute ideas on how to do this and what the best channels are for doing so. HR recruitment advice brings additional expertise - they can also refer you to a suitable job marketeer.

The selection committee members' and other colleagues' networks may also be worth exploring, of course, as can social media and LinkedIn networks. Deploying your own employees as ambassadors (referral recruitment) is effective and therefore very important.
Actively approaching potentially suitable candidates (scouting) is very useful when recruiting from a thinly-populated labour market. Suitable potential employees may not themselves be actively looking to take a new step in their careers, but if the right job were to present itself, they could be interested. If a potential candidate who has been approached is not themselves interested, they may know someone in their network who could be. It is important in this context to observe the OTMR rules.

Recruitment checklist

- Consult with an HR advisor about the most appropriate recruitment channels. A job marketeer may be useful here (identifying the target group based on data).
- As well as on www.tudelft.nl, all vacancies are automatically posted on Academic Transfer and LinkedIn (up to a maximum of 70 a year).The Dutch Network of Women Professors posts vacancies on Academic Transfer on its own website.
- All support position vacancies are simultaneously published internally and externally; however, checks are made beforehand to see whether there are any preferential candidates on the basis of restructuring schemes or supervision on work-to-work schemes (link here).
- Announce the vacancy and the composition of the committee to departmental employees.
- Ask colleagues to share vacancies in their own professional online and offline networks.
- If the group of candidates is insufficient, in terms of number or diversity, then expand the scope of the recruitment. Do not forget to inform the applicants if this alters the timetable or procedure. It is sensible to communicate this before the weekend, to prevent candidates looking elsewhere during that time.
- Ask members of the selection committee and colleagues to also pass on vacancies to female candidates in their networks and invite them to apply.

4. Selection and invitation

Before selecting the candidates, first determine the criteria on which they are to be assessed. What criteria do we consider when determining the suitability (or not) of a candidate, and how much weight should be attached to the criteria. Make sure beforehand that the members of the selection committee are in agreement with this. Set down also how scores for each criteria are to be awarded (measured/determined). This could be by giving each candidate an assignment, such as a trial lecture, or by their giving a presentation about their research, etc.
Do not forget to include the job criteria that are mentioned in the vacancy text. A blank field for candidates to add comments or their motivation can be useful.

Create a format in which you can record the scores. This could also be done when selecting the candidates who are to be invited to an interview. For example, you could give candidates scores on the following range: +++ | ++ | + | +/- | - | -- | ---; with a simple yes or no, or whatever way works best for you. Ultimately, you will want to be able to rank the candidates in order.

If there is a large number of candidates, you can arrange a pre-selection round to be done by HR or part of the selection committee, during which only the basic minimum criteria will be assessed. Candidates who do not satisfy these can be eliminated right away. Then the entire selection committee can carry out the remaining selection process and select the candidates to be invited.

Make sure the response time is as short as possible, especially for support positions. Given the current state of the labour market and the fact that other organisations are responding more quickly, it is vital not to keep candidates waiting longer than necessary.

It is recommended to have interviews with at least three candidates (if possible), but try to limit the total to five. You can inform candidates you have not invited, but who do fulfil the criteria, that you first wish to hold interviews with other candidates but that you are not yet eliminating them from the process (reserve candidates). This means that if no suitable candidates are found, reserve candidates may still be invited.

The rejection of candidates who have been discussed by the selection committee should preferably be by phone (with reasons) and e-mail. Remember that university employees who apply may object to being rejected (they must do so in writing, stating their reasons).

Selection criteria checklist

- Determine the job criteria in advance, and how they are to be measured and assessed. For example during the interview or a presentation or guest lecture.
- Make a format you can use to give scores to candidates, for the initial letter-based selection and for determining which candidates are to be invited to an interview on the basis of their scores.
- For each phase, determine what the consequences will be of meeting or not meeting the criteria. Are candidates to be invited, rejected, or put on a reserve list? Inform the candidates of the result as soon as possible.

Checklist: who do you invite for an interview?

- Once the first response deadline has passed, check (or have part of the selection committee or HR do the checking) which candidates have met the basic requirements. Make arrangements with the HR advisor or other support staff as to who will send the rejections. In the case of internal candidates, rejections must be accompanied with the reasons. If necessary, consult your HR advisor.
- Every member of the selection committee may give a score to and rank the candidates on the basis of the format.
- The formats completed by the members of the selection committee will be distributed among them. They can be used during a joint discussion among the selection committee to decide who is going to be invited. Discuss the sending of rejection letters or e-mails with your HR advisor. Reserve candidates are given an explanation about their status and the following stages of the procedure, including information about GDPR in relation to their personal data.
- Consider diversity when selecting the candidates. Where possible, invite the same number of men as women and aim for diversity in terms of age, phase of academic career, breadth of knowledge of the field, and the like.
  In compliance with the NVP recruitment code, inform candidates as quickly as possible (within two weeks) about their applications. This may take the form of an interim update explaining that a detailed response will follow.
- Use standard invitation letters if available.

5. Reception and selection interview

Reception
The principle should be that every candidate is treated in the same way. Even if a candidate is unsuccessful, you would like them to refer to you and the university in favourable terms.

A job application is always a special event. It is often the person's first introduction to TU Delft, the faculty, and the department. Make the introduction memorable, thereby creating a positive impression of the position and its place in the organisation, for example with a guided tour, a personal chat over coffee or lunch, etc. This also affords an opportunity to talk about TU Delft, the department, facilities, terms and conditions of employment, culture, and the options for living in or around Delft. Here too, each candidate should be informed as similarly as possible, apart from any specific questions they may have.

To ensure a good reception, you may use a host or hostess to guide the process and, for example, ensure the candidates do not meet, unless you decide that you want this to happen. Inform candidates clearly about the procedure in the invitation letter or when confirming receipt of their application.

Selection interview
Make sure the first impression does not determine the subsequent course of the interview. Try to let go of any initial bias, to ensure that you do select the right candidate.

This is why you should prepare the same questions for the candidates based on the selection criteria. Make sure that everything is covered, note during the interviews your thoughts and conclusions from questions, and stick to the timetable. Allow time for questions from the candidates. Every candidate has the same amount of time.

Make sure you are not always the one who is talking - a situation where the candidate is speaking for around 75% of the time is about right. Vice versa, and you will rarely be able to gain a clear impression of the candidate. One way of expressing the results of answers in specific terms is to apply the STAR method when asking the questions. For information about STAR, see here.

You can assign a member of the selection committee to monitor the above aspects and to intervene if necessary. Talk about your thoughts, observations, and conclusion only after all the interviews have concluded, in order to prevent being biased or influenced; you may use a score card for this.

Reception and selection interview checklist
Logistics

- Plan all the interviews in plenty of time and decide how long each will take, depending on the questions.
- Assign a host or hostess.
- Make sure the surroundings are pleasant (temperature, fresh air, well lit).

Reception

- Make the introduction to TU Delft one where the candidate will talk in future in favourable terms about you and the university, even if they are unsuccessful this time around.
- Give extra information about the university, faculty, and department, about the facilities, terms and conditions of employment, culture, and the options for living in or around Delft.

Selection interview

- Be aware of the possibility of becoming biased. Assign a member of the selection committee to pay particular attention to bias, agreements, and pitfalls.
- Conduct the interview on the basis of the format that you are using. This enables you to make comparisons.
- Questions about past behaviour, using the STAR method for example, give a better indication than using a case study in a selection interview. Read about the STAR method for expressing answers in more concrete terms.
- Give candidates the chance to ask questions.
- If you wish, ask the candidates if you can request references if you have not done so during the course of the application process.
- Note down your thoughts about each interview and your conclusions.

6. Selection

At the selection stage, it is decision time, as the name suggests. You now face the task of selecting a suitable candidate. The selection committee member assigned to monitor pitfalls and any agreements continues to do so, even after the interviews. Ensure they pay close attention to similarities of findings on which conclusions have been based (assumptions), and such.

Discuss the candidates on the basis of the format, the job requirements, and the questions and answers. Compare and rank each question and answer. Talk explicitly about any biases that could exist. This way, you score each question on its own merits. Don't be tempted to cut corners and give scores only to the candidates (rather than the individual questions). Otherwise, prejudice and impressions will suppress the scores for the actual quality of the answers.

The total scores for the individual questions/job requirements of every selection committee member then lead to a scoring list.

Selection checklist

- The selection committee member assigned to monitor pitfalls (bias, assumptions, questions) and any agreements made should continue to do so.
- Start by comparing candidates’ scores for each question or job requirement before comparing the overall scores of the candidates.
- Where suitability levels are similar, select on the basis of diversity.
- Seek references only after the candidate has given their permission.

7. Rejection

The higher the expectations of the candidate, the more important the reasons for their rejection become. A candidate who is unsuccessful after having attended an interview deserves a proper, clear, and well-reasoned explanation. If possible, this should be accompanied by tips for future interviews.

Make sure that applications from unsuccessful candidates are destroyed. This takes place automatically in Lumesse Recruit, but is also compulsory under the terms of the GDPR. Candidate data may only be retained with the written consent of the candidate in question.

Rejection checklist

- The chairman of the selection committee informs each of the invited candidates individually of the outcome of the procedure. This should preferably be done by telephone or face-to-face, immediately after the deliberations. Take no more than about two days to do so, and inform the candidates in advance of this. If a candidate cannot be reached by phone (after several attempts) and does not call back, sending an e-mail may be considered, stating that numerous attempts at calling have been made and that they should contact you.
- Candidates who are unsuccessful have the right to a detailed explanation and, if necessary, useful tips for the future. Make sure the tips you give are genuinely useful and worthwhile. This will help unsuccessful candidates retain a positive memory of their application and of TU Delft. Well-reasoned explanations for a rejection with tips for future job applications are rarely taken in a negative way.
- Inform the reserve candidates too that the procedure has ended with a confirmed candidate and that they will no longer be invited.
- Files in Lumesse Recruit are automatically destroyed. Ensure that any files held by the members of the selection committee and advisors are also destroyed. Remember e-mails, SharePoint, SURFdrive etc.
- TU Delft will respond to any complaints concerning the procedure within a month, in writing. Discuss with your HR advisor how such complaints may be resolved.
- Internal candidates who are rejected always receive a written and reasoned explanation. Rejections may be appealed against and objected to. Stick to the conclusions from the format and the deliberations on this matter. If necessary, consult your HR advisor.

8. Appointment

Consult the procedures on the intranet and discuss the process leading up to the appointment stage with your HR advisor. Apply the process diligently and inform the candidate about the procedure leading up to their appointment. Keep in touch, even if the appointment has not yet taken effect - for example, if there is a later starting date. HR will organise the appointment and will add the application to the employee's file.

Appointment checklist

- Keep in touch with the candidate.
- Adapt the process to the start of the appointment, in consultation with the candidate and your HR advisor.
- Decide on a realistic starting date (bear in mind that work permits may need to be arranged).
- Make sure the application is added to the employee's file.