Staff Appointments SOP

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Deputy Chief Executive

Summary of Contents
Procedures to ensure that staff appointments comply with SERC policies, statutory requirements and codes of practice to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.

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132-04-2014: Internal Trawls SOP

166-10-2014: Recruitment & Selection SOP

130-04-2014: Appointment of Part Time Lecturers SOP

142-04-2014: Emergency Appointment SOP

129-04-2014: Appointment & Management of Temporary Agency Employees SOP

144-04-2014: Internships SOP

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1.0 Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 4 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, you can click here to view the change history.

2.0 Background

2.1 South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection (R&S) procedures are in keeping with its Recruitment and Selection Policy and statutory requirements to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation. R&S procedures will meet the requirements of legislation and codes of practice and so ensure that R&S is fair and that appointments are made on merit.

3.0 Scope

3.1 The following section applies to all SERC staff including those on temporary or fixed term contracts:

Section 4 **Internal Trawl Vacancies**

The following sections apply to Human Resources staff and other staff involved in recruitment procedures.

Section 5 **Recruitment and Selection**

Section 6 **Appointment of Part Time Lecturers**

Section 7 **Emergency Appointment**

Section 8 **Appointment and Management of Temporary Agency Employees**

Section 9 **Internships**

Section 10 **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

4.0 Internal Trawl Vacancies

4.1 This section outlines the process to be followed in the event staff wish to apply for a post which, if successful, would result in a lateral transfer, i.e. a transfer within or to another unit or school at the same grade/salary.

4.2 The College will continue to advertise internal trawls in the normal manner, to which staff will be eligible to apply, subject to meeting the requirements of the post.

4.3 In cases where the appointment would result in the lateral transfer, the prior approval of the line manager must be sought and obtained prior to an application being submitted, using the form shown at Appendix 1. Any application submitted without the approval of line management shall be rejected.

4.4 In granting approval, Line managers will be confirming that the employee's substantive post will not be replaced. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the College Management Team will consideration be given to replacing the substantive post.

4.5 Expressions of Interest

In certain circumstances e.g. short-term absence cover, part of a restructure exercise, additional hours or duties, or acting up, the College may issue an expression of interest to those staff within the eligibility pool for the opportunity. This expression of interest will be used to gauge interest and collect initial information from potential candidates prior to any selection process. College Management Team approval to issue an expression of interest must be sought via the Staff Request App prior to any expression of interest being issued.

5.0 Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Job Analysis

Job analysis is the process of gathering detailed objective information about a post including, the duties of the post, the position in the organisational structure, hours of work and level of pay.

A job analysis should be completed by the line manager prior to seeking approval for recruitment.

5.2 Approving a vacancy

A staff requisition form, accompanied by a job description and personnel specification must be completed and approved for advertisement by the appropriate Director and the College Management Team for permanent, temporary or agency staff requests.

5.3 Advertising the vacancy

Media as appropriate will be used to advertise the vacancy. The advertisement will be prepared by Human Resources taking into consideration the job description and personnel specification.

The vacancy will be uploaded by HR staff to the HR management information system and electronic online application platform prior to advertising.

Where a post is internally trawled, staff will be notified by e-mail and vacancies posted on the Intranet.

Closing dates will normally be at least 10 working days following the latest publication in which the advertisement appears.

5.4 Applications

A standard application form will be adapted to each recruitment campaign so that applicants will be able to answer directly as to how they meet the criteria for the post. CVs will not be accepted.

The onus for ensuring that an application form is received by the College by the closing date and time rests with the applicant. Application forms which arrive after the closing date and time will not be accepted.

Reasonable adjustments, as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, will be considered by the College with regard to applicants with disability.

Where demotion to a lower graded post is in effect following an internal disciplinary hearing in relation to an applicant working with South Eastern Regional College they will not be considered for a higher graded post within two years of the demotion.

5.5 Selection panel

The selection panel will be constituted as set out in Appendix 2. In exceptional circumstances where the panel's membership has to change, this will be noted by the Chairperson of the panel.

5.6 Shortlisting

The short listing panel will meet following the closing date to consider all submitted application forms. Shortlisting will normally take place within 10 working days of the closing date.

Shortlisting paperwork including the shortlisting report form, shortlisting panel member form and shortlisting panel summary form will be provided by the HR unit to panel members prior to shortlisting.

Prior to considering application forms the short listing panel must agree short listing criteria based on the criteria contained in the personnel specification. The panel may increase the level of criteria already contained in the personnel specification if required. Applicants who fail to meet these criteria will be excluded and notified accordingly. Shortlisting will be carried out on the basis of the information contained in the application forms.

Following shortlisting all completed paperwork including the panel report form, signed panel member forms and sign panel summary form will be returned to the HR unit to facilitate the issuing of outcomes to candidates.

Applicants short listed for interview will be given appropriate advance notice of the date, time and location of interview which should not normally be less than 10 working days.

The selection panel must agree the questions to be asked at interview and where applicable the assessment methods to be used to determine how candidates meet the job description and personnel specification. Criteria may be weighted to reflect their relative importance. A minimum score must also be set prior to interviews. Each candidate should be asked the same core questions during interview but supplementary questions may be asked for clarification purposes.

5.7 Assessors / Consultants

Where appropriate, specialist independent assessors or recruitment consultants may be required to participate in the R&S process.

5.8 Job Testing / Assessment Centers

Job testing or the use of assessment centers may be used to complement the application form and selection interview. Tests will be job related and non-discriminatory. Human Resources (HR) may undertake the role of administering tests where applicable.

5.9 Interviews

Interview paperwork including the interview schedule, interview panel report form, interview ranking form and interview record form will be issued to the panel prior to interviews.

The interview panel should normally meet 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the first interview.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable a disabled person to attend and take part in the interview.

Each voting member of the panel shall be responsible for arriving at an independent assessment of each candidate, awarding appropriate marks, ranking and making a decision on the most suitable candidate. The assessment form in respect of each applicant must be completed immediately following the interview.

Where the assistance of an Assessor has been sought he/she must be given the opportunity to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant and if appropriate those applicants he/she considers to be suitable.

At the conclusion of the interviews each voting member of the panel will have a single vote based on their individual ranking. Following accumulative ranking the candidate with the lowest score will be appointed to the post. If there is a tie the Chair of the Panel shall assist panel

members to reach a consensus on the most suitable applicant for the post. Where this is not possible the decision will be made by majority vote.

Panels may if they so choose, appoint suitable applicants to a reserve list provided they have reached a satisfactory standard at interview. Such reserve lists may then be used to fill any subsequent, similar vacancies that arise up to a maximum of 12 months following the date of interviews.

5.10 Conditional Offers of Appointment

Following interviews, the Chair of the Interview Panel must return to the HR unit all paperwork associated with the interview. The HR unit will request Director approval to issue a conditional offer of appointment to the successful candidate(s).

HR will normally contact the successful candidate in the first instance to make a conditional offer of appointment subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. This will be followed up in writing normally within 3 working days following the verbal offer. Pre-employment checks will only be sought for those candidates being considered for employment and may include the following:

- Completion of a pre-employment health questionnaire, and, if necessary, attendance at occupational health for assessment.
- Submission of original qualification certificates for verification
- Satisfactory completion of an enhanced Access NI check (and a barred list check for those posts deemed to be regulated activity)
- Working legally check. Documentary evidence of eligibility to work and reside in the UK will be required.
- Reference check. Please note that references will not be taken up unless candidates are being considered for appointment.

The successful candidate's progress through the pre-employment clearance checks should be monitored and tracked by HR staff using the conditional offer clearance checklist.

The successful candidate should be advised not to give notice to any existing employer and must not be allowed to start work in advance of all pre-employment checks being met.

Following interviews, all candidates will be informed of the outcome by letter issued by HR normally within 3 working days.

5.11 Formal Offer of Appointment

When all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed, HR will make the firm offer of appointment.

For recruitment to registers, upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks, the successful candidate will be issued with an added to register letter.

5.12 Induction

It is a pre-requisite for employment at SERC for staff to complete a comprehensive induction programme including a college wide induction, a departmental induction and completion of associated mandatory learning modules. Teaching staff will receive additional learning and teaching induction training to prepare them for classroom delivery. Non completion of induction, including mandatory learning modules, will be monitored through the Integrated Monthly Performance Management System.

6.0 Appointment of Part Time Lecturers

6.1 This section outlines the process the College will follow when appointing part-time lecturers from the College's register.

6.2 Only staff on the College's part-time lecturer register, who have successfully completed all pre-employment checks, may be awarded a contract.

6.3 In awarding contracts the following procedure must be followed in all cases, without exception**.**

- Contracts must not be awarded, either verbally or in writing until adequate student numbers have been verified and the Head/Deputy Head of School is satisfied that the class is viable.
- Once this has been done, the approval to appoint should be sought from the Deputy Principal Curriculum. The Head/Deputy Head of School will be notified of the outcome and if approved, will contact the part- time lecturer to confirm the awarding of a contract.
- A formal contract will only be produced by the HR Advisor when the initial timetables have settled after the Halloween break in Semester 1 and after the Mid-term break in February for Semester 2. Contracts should be produced using the Staff Request App-PTL Register. The HR Advisor should make any necessary adjustments, where notified, to the contract to ensure it is accurate.

7.0 Emergency Appointment

7.1 This section outlines the process the College will follow in making emergency staff appointments. The College policy is that no one shall be employed unless an Access NI Check has been completed, the only exception to this is where approval is given for supervision to be provided by a person in regulated activity due to the impact on curriculum delivery. A breach of this policy will be deemed gross misconduct, resulting in summary dismissal.

A flow chart depicting the various stages of the procedure is shown at Appendix 3

Head of School/Unit will ensure that prior to initiating the process, if applicable, there is no one available from the register, e.g. part-time lecturer/support worker registers.

7.2 Head of School/Unit completes emergency appointment form and submits to the appropriate Director for approval. Where exceptional approval is given to appoint without a completed Access NI, the staff request form will clearly document the person in regulated activity providing the supervision pending completing of the Access Ni check.

7.3 If approved, form is submitted to Human Resources, who will immediately commence pre-employment checks including Access NI. Where supervision has been approved, HR will confirm with name of the individual and confirmation of supervision commencing.

7.4 Heads of School/Unit will be informed by Human Resources once an Access NI check has been completed and employment may commence or supervision, where permitted, ceased.

7.5 Human Resources will place employee on JANE System and schedule induction programme.

7.6 Where approval is given for an emergency appointment this will trigger a recruitment for the emergency post in question under 4.0 and 5.0 above. Within 6 weeks the Head of School/Unit must submit a formal request to CMT seeking approval to extend the emergency appointment, should the recruitment process not be completed. Failure to submit these requests within the time frame will result in the emergency appointment being terminated.

8.0 Appointment and Management of Temporary Agency Employees

8.1 This section outlines the process the College will follow when recruiting and appointing temporary staff from recruitment agencies and the process for monitoring those staff within the College.

8.2 The Head of School/Unit must complete a staff request form seeking approval to appoint a temporary agency worker. This should be forwarded to the appropriate Director for approval accompanied by a job description and personnel specification.

8.3 If approved by the Director the staff request form is forwarded to Human Resources for processing.

8.4 Human Resources will approach approved recruitment agencies from a preferred supplier list and request CVs from suitable candidates. Human Resources will set a suitable closing date for the receipt of CVs.

8.5 On receipt of CVs Human Resources will arrange a short listing panel in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Para 5.6 above.

8.6 Following short listing, Human Resources will contact the recruitment agencies to advise if candidates have been shortlisted and arrange interviews.

8.7 Interviews will be arranged and conducted in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Para 5.9 above.

8.8 Following interviews, Human Resources will contact the recruitment agencies to advise of the outcome. Human Resources will agree the terms for appointment with the agency including a start date.

8.9 Prior to appointment the recruitment agency of the successful applicant must confirm in writing that an Access NI check has been successfully completed. No appointment will be permitted without this confirmation.

8.10 Human Resources will keep and maintain a record of all agency staff placed within the College. If any issues occur with agency staff i.e. poor performance, attendance, these should be directed to Human Resources in the first instance. It is the responsibility of the Line manager to inform HR when the agency staff member leaves SERC. HR will notify the relevant departments of the agency staff member leaving. All communication with recruitment agencies will be through Human resources only.

9.0 Internships

9.1 The College welcomes internships and recognises the valuable contribution they can make to the College through bringing new skills and perspectives and to individuals by providing them with valuable experience which enhances their employability and skills. This procedure outlines how interns will be recruited and engaged by the College.

9.2 This procedure applies to all College Departments which engage interns. For the avoidance of doubt there is no employment relationship between the College and intern and they are not an employee of the College.

9.3 Recruitment

Internships will normally be recruited in one of two ways:

- Following advertisement by the College
- Following direct approach to the College by an individual.

Irrespective of the method of recruitment, the suitability of interns for placement with the College will be assessed by formal interview, normally by the Head of Unit and a member of Human Resources. The focus of the interview will be around employability skills, e.g. problem solving, communication, teamwork, potential for growth, enthusiasm and commitment rather than technical skills and qualifications. In addition, if interns are to undertake a specific project, the interview may be used to assess how they would approach the project.

Interns will be subject to the normal Access NI Checks which College will fund. Prior to engagement, the formal internship agreement will be signed by both parties.

9.4 Hours & Duration

The College will consider both part-time and full-time internships. The duration of the internship will not normally exceed 12 months and will be agreed in advance with the intern.

9.5 Payment

Interns will be paid a bursary equivalent to Spine Point on Non-Teaching Pay Scale. In addition they will be reimbursed for any business travel expenses in accordance with the College's Travel & Subsistence Policy.

9.6 Induction

Interns will undergo the normal College induction program. In addition a full Departmental induction will be provided by the Head of School/Unit.

9.7 Supervision

Interns will be allocated a supervisor for the duration of the internship. The supervisor will also act as a mentor and will be responsible for:

- Building a supportive relationship with the intern
- Act as a point of contact for any concerns that intern may have
- Supervise day to day tasks of the intern
- Monitor & review performance of the intern, including completion of all review reports

9.8 End of Internship

At the conclusion of the internship, the supervisor will conduct a final review meeting, reflecting on the performance of the intern, objectives achieved, areas for development etc

In addition, all interns will be invited to participate in the College's exit interview procedure to provide feedback to the College on how well the scheme operated.

10.0 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

10.1 It is a requirement of Access NI's Code of Practice that all Registered Bodies must treat Access NI applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed. It also obliges Registered Bodies to have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

10.2 As an organisation using the Access NI service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, South Eastern Regional College (SERC) complies fully with the Access NI Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of an Access NI check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

10.3 SERC is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

10.4 This section sets out how SERC will comply with the Access NI Code of Practice.

10.5 This procedure will be made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. SERC undertakes to make every subject of an Access NI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

10.6 SERC will actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The College will select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

10.7 An Access NI check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where an Access NI check is required, all application forms, job adverts will contain a statement that an Access NI check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

10.8 Where an Access NI check forms part of the recruitment process, SERC encourages all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process and will ensure that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. For those involved in making decisions regarding employment of ex-offenders have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. SERC will also ensure that staff are provided with appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

10.9 Where convictions are declared, SERC will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

11.0 Communication Plan

The procedure will be placed on the SERC intranet and will be available to all staff.

12.0 Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or when the need for change has been identified.

Appendix 1 - Internal Trawl Vacancy Approval

PRO-FORMA

Section 1 To be Completed by Staff Member
Name: _____ **Unit/School:** _____ **Grade:** _____ I wish to seek permission to apply for the following post: **Post Title:** _____ **Grade:** _____ Signed:

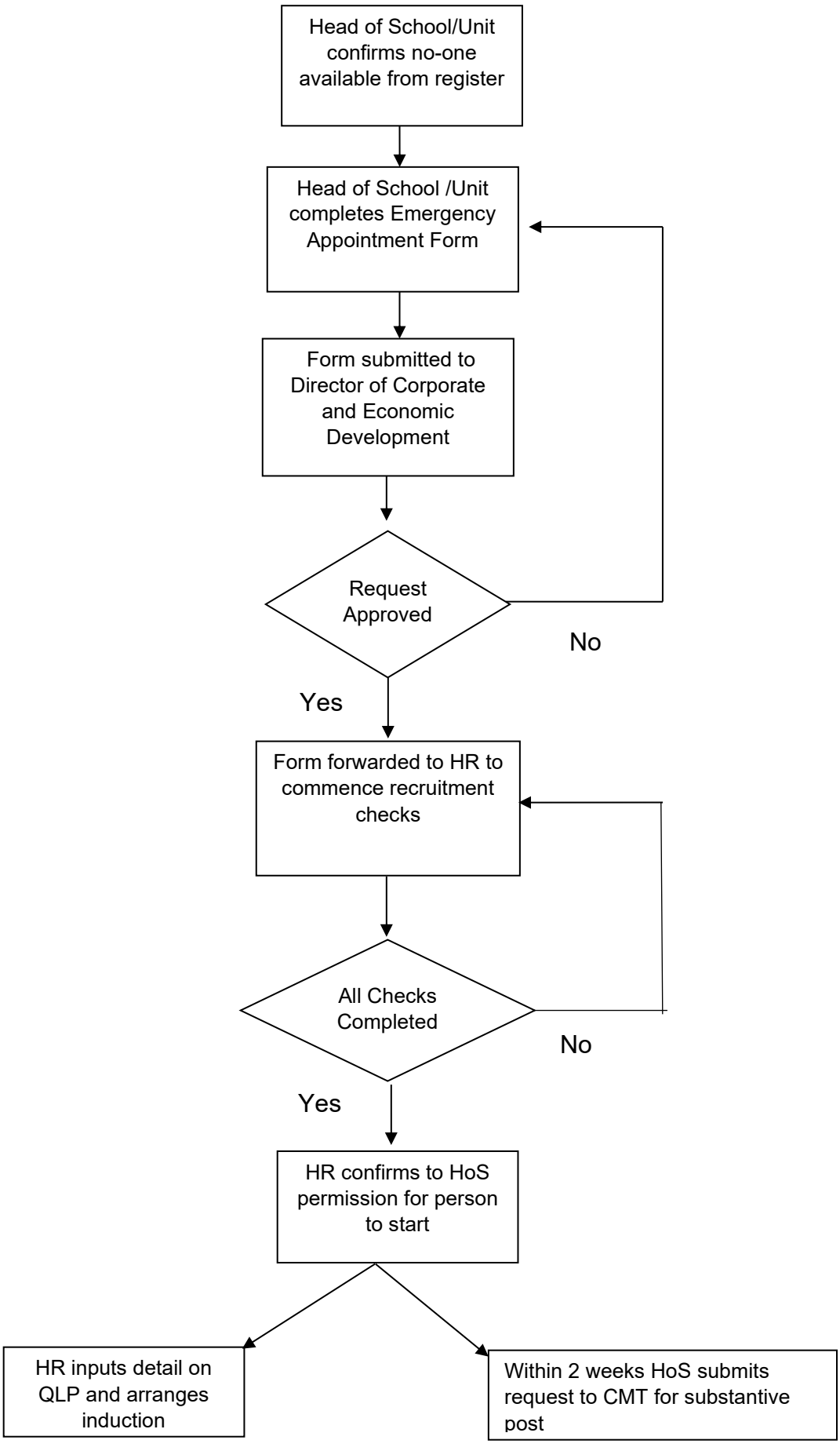
Section 2: To be completed by Head of School/Unit	
I note the above request and confirm that Approval is granted ☐ Approval is not granted ☐ *(Please tick appropriate box)*	
If not approved please give reason(s)	
I understand that by granting approval, the post-holder's substantive post will not be filled. **Signed:** _____ **Date:** _____	

Please ensure you have notified the staff member of your decision and return completed pro-forma to Human Resources, Ballynahinch Campus.

Appendix 2 - Composition of Shortlisting and Interview panels

		Tier 1 i.e. Principal & Chief Executive	**Tier 2** i.e. Director	**Tier 3** i.e. Head of Department	**Tier 4** **i.e PL's**	**Tier 5** i.e. SLs , SCP 38-41	**Tier 6** i.e. Lecturers / SCP 1-37
1	Shortlisting panel	Subcommittee of Governing Body including Chair / Vice Chair of Governing Body (at least 4 members) HR to administer	Subcommittee of Governing Body including Chair / Vice Chair of Governing Body (at least 3 members) Principal & Chief Executive HR to administer	Principal & Chief Executive or nominee Directors x 2 HR to administer	1 x Head of Department 2 x members at least 1 grade higher to vacant post HR to administer	1 x HOS/HOU 2 x members at least 1 grade higher to vacant post HR to administer	HOS/HOU 2 x members at least 1 grade higher to vacant post HR to administer
2	Interviewing panel	As for shortlisting panel (excluding HR)	As for shortlisting panel (excluding HR)	As for shortlisting panel (excluding HR)		As for shortlisting panel (excluding HR)	As for shortlisting panel (excluding HR)
3	Chairperson of panels	Chairperson of Governing Body	Chairperson of Governing Body	Principal & Chief Executive or nominee		Director	HOS/HOU

Appendix 3 - Emergency Appointment Process



Appendix 4: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	September 2023	Reviewed but no changes required – pending wider review of Recruitment & Selection in 2023/24).
1.1	February 2024	Section 7.0 -The section on emergency appointments has been updated in line with recommendations from a recent internal audit. Links to the R&S Policy updated at 8.5 and 8.7
1.2	March 2025	Cover sheet updated to reflect structure changes. Section 6 updated to reflect structure changes and the removal of SSO officers issuing PTL contracts. Section 7.3 updated typo Access NI Section 11 updated to reflect communication channels Section 12 updated to reflect new review schedule
1.3	May 2025	Updated to reflect Recruitment & Selection Audit recommendations
1.4	December 2025	Reviewed and no changes necessary