



**NUI Galway**  
**OÉ Gaillimh**



**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**  
**RESEARCH FUNDED STAFF**  
**NUI GALWAY**

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## 1. Introduction

Effective recruitment and selection procedures are vital in attracting and retaining high quality research staff. By ensuring the best person for the job is recruited, open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R) improves the effectiveness of national research systems, guarantees equality, especially for under-represented groups, and boosts trans and international co-operation. This in turn promotes optimal circulation of scientific knowledge. At NUI Galway we recruit based on OTM-R principles and have developed a set of competencies to help provide a systematic and objective method of assessing and selecting people. It is the duty of those involved in the recruitment and selection of candidates to ensure that the appropriate competencies are applied and that the University's commitment to selection on merit is seen to be clear and unambiguous.

Commitment to this principle of appointment on merit reflects the University's Policy on Equal Opportunities [Equal Opportunities Policy](#)

Research posts are funded by external funding grants and agencies and are usually on a fixed term contract basis. The University recognises the need for research centres to be in a position to recruit research staff in as expedient manner as possible while adhering to best practice methods of recruitment and selection and in compliance with legislation. HR will assist and advise staff of Research Units/Schools/Colleges in managing the recruitment of research staff. All offers of employment at NUI Galway must be processed by the HR Office.

**It is University policy to advertise all research vacancies except in the case of;**

- **Personal awards such as some Marie Sklodowska-Curie and Government of Ireland Fellowships**
- **Researchers specifically listed in grant applications (restrictions apply)**
- **Once-off new posts with duration of less than six months without prospect for renewal (if renewed/extended the position will be advertised).**

## 1 Recruitment Process



## 2 Getting Started

The recruitment and selection process is initiated once a vacant post is identified. The PI or nominee must submit the following forms to HR for approval:

1. A completed **Post Proposal Form** which must firstly be approved by the office of Research Accounts.
2. A completed **Advertising Request Form**.
3. A copy of the proposed advertisement using the **Advertising Template**. This includes guidelines on setting out the job description and duties of the post and the essential and desirable criteria for the successful candidate.

## 3 Recruitment Advertising

All recruitment advertising is coordinated on behalf of the University by the HR Office and posts will normally be advertised within two weeks of receipt of all completed documentation.

### **Standard closing dates for advertisements are as follows:**

Good practice is to advertise posts for a two month period from publication date. However there are some exceptions in the case of position requiring immediate cover where a shorter lead time is necessary for the effective continuance of research. Posts are advertised for a minimum of two weeks in these instances.

## Advertising media

NUI Galway currently utilises a “signpost” style advertisement for external websites and publications. This style of advertisement contains basic information and directs the candidate to the NUI Galway website for full details of the post [www.NUIGalway.ie](http://www.NUIGalway.ie)

Posts are automatically advertised on the NUI Galway, EURAXESS, Naturejobs (as appropriate to disciplines) and University Vacancies Ireland websites.

In addition there are a number of other forms of advertising available (refer to the Advertising Request Form for more details).

For externally funded research posts the cost of advertisement will be covered from the funding agency/grant fund.

## 4 Selection Process

The primary method of selection in NUI Galway is by means of a Selection Committee. A Selection Committee is established in respect of each post and is required to assess the merit of each applicant and to recommend for appointment the applicant with the greatest merit in relation to the criteria as specified for the post.

For the majority of NUI Galway’s vacancies, submitted applications, shortlisting and interviews will form the basis of the Selection Process. These may be supplemented with a presentation to the Selection Committee as required.

## 5 Selection Committee

The process for nominating and appointing the Selection Committee should be transparent and made public. The Selection Committee should be independent, members should not have any conflict of interest and the decisions must be objective and evidence based rather than based on personal preference.

- The Selection Committee should have a minimum of three members
- With Gender Balance, not less than one third gender on the Committee
  - 3 interviewers = 1 female, 1 male, 1 other
  - 4 interviewers = 2 female, 2 male
  - 5 interviewers = 2 female, 2 male, 1 other
  - 6 interviewers = 3 female, 3 male.
- Inclusion of external (meaning outside of the institution/hiring unit) expert(s) in all committees
- Inclusion of (or contribution from) international experts
- Inclusion of experts from different sectors (public, private, academic and non-academic) where appropriate and feasible

Any derogation from certain positions, types of contract or indeed for specific disciplines should be clearly set out. The deliberations of the Selection Committee should at all times remain confidential.

## 5.1 Conflict of Interest

- To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest NUI Galway staff involved in recruitment and selection should avoid interviewing and/or making hiring decisions on immediate family. If these circumstances arise then it is expected that the Selection Committee member will resign from the Committee and the Chairperson will identify a replacement.
- Selection Committee members may also have a friendship or other form of relationship, positive or negative, with one or more of the applicants for a position. In these circumstances, they should inform the Chairperson and other Selection Committee members prior to commencement of the short listing and interview processes.
- If the member of the Selection Committee feels that the relationship may make it difficult for her/him to apply the merit principle, or feels that her/his participation may compromise application of the merit principle, then the Selection Committee should decide whether it is appropriate for the Selection Committee member to be part of the selection process.
- The Selection Committee may seek advice on this matter from HR. If the Selection Committee member continues in the selection process, then her/his opinion should be canvassed last in any discussion to avoid any perception of them influencing the outcome.

## 5.2 Changes to Selection Committee membership

It is recommended that the same selection committee is involved in all steps, although it is recognised that this may not always be feasible and that, for example, one committee may do the initial screening and another may conduct the interviews. Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the process itself is transparent and made known to the applicants, including the various steps.

## 5.3 Interview training for selection committee members

Interview Training is a requirement for all members of the Board of Assessors.

NUI Galway is committed to ensuring that all recruitment and selection processes are managed professionally in a fair, open and transparent manner. All interviewers are trained on the importance of fair and competence-based questioning of interviewee and that interviews should always be considered as at two-way conversation. Guidelines on styles of interview, role-plays, use of competencies, etc. form part of this training.

Unconscious Bias Training is a prerequisite for all board members to complete prior to participation on interview panels. This training forms part of the fundamental elements of transparent and bias free selection process. The purpose of this training is to raise awareness of Unconscious Biases that the individual may not recognise they possess. Post- training it is expected that interviewers are more aware of the issue of bias and therefore cognisant not to let these unconscious biases influence the selection process.

The LEAD (Living Equality and Diversity) eLearning programme - [Equality and Diversity training](#) is also recommended to staff who are involved in recruitment.

## 6 Shortlisting Process & Procedure

The individual Research Centre or PI will receive the applications directly, either via post or e-mail. The shortlisting form can also be used to record applications as they are received.

All members of the Selection Committee should attend a shortlisting meeting arranged by the PI (or nominee). Each member of the Selection Committee must read each application and rate applicants according to the essential and desirable selection criteria only, those satisfying the essential criteria must be shortlisted and for those not shortlisted a brief note must be included

- Shortlist all applicants who possess the essential criteria stated in the advertisement.
- Note briefly the reasons for not short listing each unsuccessful applicant.

### **When shortlisting, members should not:**

- Make negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived over-qualification.
- Make negative assumptions or decisions about overseas qualifications with which they are unfamiliar.
- Recommend for interview any applicant, whether internal or external, who does not meet the essential criteria.
- Predetermine the number of applicants to be interviewed.

If it is not possible for all of the Selection Committee to meet, the PI (or nominee) is responsible for contacting all members about their individual shortlists, drawing up a final shortlist acceptable to all Selection Committee members.

### **The Selection Committee will:**

- Agree on and record a final shortlist if unanimous based on the essential and desirable criteria as set out in the advertisement
- Include in the shortlist all applicants about whom there is dispute if unanimity cannot be achieved.
- Consider re-advertising the position if no applicants meet all the essential criteria.
- Shortlist further, where a substantial number of applicants possess all the essential criteria, to either remove those applicants who do not possess the desirable criteria, and/or rank those candidates who best meet the essential criteria.
- **N.B.** Agree on the suitable range of questions, presentation title if required, suitable date and location for the interviews.

### 6.1 Shortlisting Documentation

- The Chairperson must complete the Shortlisting Form in order to verify and record the Committee's decisions. This report will facilitate any subsequent feedback requests from candidates and should provide clear and comprehensive reasoning as to why candidates were excluded. Individual scoring comments are only necessary should an applicant fail to demonstrate a clear correlation between their skills, knowledge and abilities and the pre-defined selection criteria for the position.

- Once the Committee has agreed a shortlist, the PI (or nominee) should contact shortlisted candidates and arrange the interviews for the position using the HR approved invitation letters, containing details of the interview venue, time of interview, expense claim information (if applicable) and any other information.
- Those candidates not shortlisted **must** receive a letter outlining the decision of the board from the PI (or nominee) within one week of the shortlisting meeting.
- **NOTE: Changes cannot be made to the official NUI GALWAY template letters or Forms**

## 6.2 Interview Scheduling

The Principal Investigator (PI) or nominee is responsible for identifying and booking a suitable location for the interviews to take place and scheduling all interviews.

- The PI will contact short-listed candidates and invite them to attend for interview in accordance with previously proposed interview dates.
- It is essential that candidates receive sufficient notice of an approaching interview so as to allow them ample time to prepare for interview. In many cases candidates will often have the added requirement of co-ordinating travel arrangements. It is recommended that candidates receive notice of at least **10 working days** prior to the interview.
- Should the candidate not be able to attend on the allotted date, the Committee will decide whether or not an alternative interview date can be facilitated.

## 7 Interviews

A wide range of evaluation criteria should be used and balanced, according to the position being advertised and all recruitment paperwork has been designed to include the approved list of competencies for each level of research role. Depending on the specific profile of the post, this may include (in alphabetical and not hierarchical order):

- acquisition of funding;
- generation of societal impact;
- international portfolio (including mobility);
- knowledge transfer and exchange;
- management of research and innovation;
- motivation;
- organisational skills/experience;
- outreach/public awareness activities;
- research performance;
- supervision and mentoring;
- teaching and teamwork

### 7.1 Video Conference

- Many of NUI Galway's vacancies attract international applicants. For some of these candidates an interview via video conference can prove to be a suitable alternative to international travel.

- Candidates may be interviewed for positions by using either video conferencing or via Skype. It is essential that the links are tested prior to the scheduled interview time. The PI must ensure that the location being used for interviews is suitable and is quiet and bright so that the candidate may hear and see the interview Committee properly. All members of the interview Committee must be present in the interview room.

## 7.2 Interview Preparation

At the shortlisting stage, the Selection Committee (under the direction of the PI) should draft an Interview Plan with specific areas of questioning identified for each Committee Member based on the competencies guidelines.

The Selection Committee should:

- Agree a set of core questions which will form the basis of the interview and will be asked of all applicants. Supplementary or clarifying questions can be used in addition to the agreed core questions
- Base their questions on selection criteria as specified in the Advertisement and criteria.
- Focus on the skills, experience and knowledge required for the job
- Agree in advance rating and scoring system to be used, to ensure consistency and transparency.

The PI (or nominee) must ensure that the questions asked are relevant to the position and based on the agreed criteria. The PI (or nominee) must also ensure that questions could not be construed as discriminatory under any of the nine areas covered by the Employment Equality Act, 1998 (Gender, Sexual orientation, Disability, Civil status, Religion, Race, Family status, Age or Membership of the Travelling Community).

## 7.3 Interview Documentation (All interview documentation is subject to FOI- [see link](#))

Each Committee member must be furnished with the following documentation (usually via email from the PI (Or nominee) for printing):

- Interview schedule
- Job advertisement /Job description
- Copies of all candidates applications
- [Guidelines for non-discriminatory interview](#)

### Documentation for completing while conducting the interviews

- Research Assessment Form – Each member of the Selection Committee must complete an individual Research Interview Assessment Form for each candidate during each interview.

### The PI (or nominee) must also complete:

- Interview Report Form - outlining the agreed committee score and comments on how the decision was made. The report must be signed by all members of the Selection Committee.

Required documentation from the Interview process to be collated by the PI (or Nominee) of the Selection Committee and submitted to the Human Resources Office in advance of the post being offered to the successful candidate.

#### **7.4 Conducting the Interview – on the day**

Prior to the commencement of interviews the Chairperson should:

- Allow time to discuss, and decide the order in which the questions will be asked and allocate specific areas of questioning to each member;
- Advise Selection Committee members of the procedures for documenting the assessment of each candidate and final decision.

At the start of each interview, the Chairperson should:

- Introduce each applicant to the Selection Committee
- Explain the purpose and structure of the interview to the applicant
- Indicate to the Applicant that Selection Committee members may take notes.

#### **7.5 Determining the recommended candidate**

- Merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on result with a diversified career path, taking into account career breaks, lifelong professional development and the added value of non-research experience while also accessing competencies.
- The best person for the job will not necessarily be the person who performed best in the interview.
- If the Selection Committee cannot reach agreement on the nominated candidate, the final decision rests with the Chairperson.
- If the Selection Committee determines that no candidate is deemed to fulfil the criteria for appointment, no appointment will be made and the post will need to be re-advertised.

#### **7.6 Documentation to be returned to the HR Office to appoint successful candidate**

Score sheets should comment on the relative merit of recommended applicant(s) on the basis of the selection criteria only. Clear and detailed documentation will assist if post-interview feedback is requested and/or if an appeal is lodged.

On completion of the interview process, the following documentation must be completed and signed by all members of the Selection Committee and returned by the PI to HR Manager – Research, along with any other relevant documentation including notes taken during interviews.

1. Completed and signed Shortlisting form.
2. Completed and signed individual Research Assessment forms.
3. Completed and signed Interview Report.
4. CV and contact details of successful candidate

5. Other notes taken during interviews – ideally should be recorded in the above forms.
6. Confirmation of proposed salary and start date
7. References – of the successful candidate are required by HR. This can be sought using the official HR template available from HR.

**Note: All Shortlist and interview documentation:**

- **Must be retained securely by the PI/Unit for a minimum of two years, including all CVs and notes**
- **Must be completed in line with FOI legislation and feedback requests by candidates.**

(see [http://www.NUI\\_Galwayalway.ie/foi/intro\\_foi.html](http://www.NUI_Galwayalway.ie/foi/intro_foi.html) for further details). All duplicated documentation (including copies of applications) must be safely disposed of.

## **8 Appointment and Background Checks**

### **8.1 Garda Vetting**

Garda Vetting: Garda vetting is required for all posts in line with the university Child Care Protection Policy [http://www.NUI\\_Galwayalway.ie/child-protection/childprotectionpolicy](http://www.NUI_Galwayalway.ie/child-protection/childprotectionpolicy) (where the person is in contact with a child (under 18) and / or vulnerable adults).

### **8.2 Qualifications**

All new recruits must provide original certification of qualifications in English to HR (Irish is also acceptable). No other form of verification will be accepted and if not received will cause a delay in the recruitment process. The cost of requesting an original certification will not be covered by NUI Galway.

No appointment will be made unless the NUI Galway HR Manager is satisfied that a candidate's academic qualifications are bona fide and Garda Vetting (as appropriate) has been obtained.

## **9 Hiring post doctorates who have not yet been awarded their PhD**

In order to carry the Postdoctoral title individuals will be required to have submitted their thesis and provide evidence of having successfully completed their viva examination. Where a PI wishes to recruit someone who has submitted their thesis but is still awaiting examination, they will be offered a post as a Research Associate until the achievement of the required criteria. Upon receiving qualification showing PhD, title will be changed on the HR system.

## **10 Appointment Offer**

Selection Committee members are not to commit the University to an appointment or to a specified salary. Candidates may be told only that salary will be within the advertised range, although notation may be made on the report of any comment an applicant wishes to make in regard to salary. The salary offer with contract and offer letter will be made to the candidate

by HR, including work authorisation (if applicable), pre-employment health assessment forms, Garda Vetting (if required) and any other required paperwork.

With agreement from HR the PI or nominee may contact the successful candidate to gather information about start date and to request permission to follow up on references.

**ONLY** HR can make the formal offer of Employment.

## 11 Advising unsuccessful candidates

The PI (or nominee) will advise unsuccessful applicants within 3 weeks of receipt of the Selection Committee's Report using the approved template letters.

Selection Committee Members should not contact the unsuccessful applicants after the interview process unless requested to do so as part of feedback requested by the HR Office.

## 12 Reserve Candidates

Where the Selection Committee recommends a reserve candidate, that person will be offered the position in the event the first candidate declines the post. Reserve candidates should be notified once the successful candidate has confirmed their acceptance of the post.

## 13 Complaints/Appeals Process

Candidates will receive formal feedback post the shortlisting stage when requested, for those not invited to interview, and post interview stage. Candidates may request further information and feedback, pertaining to their own application only, from the HR Office.

Complaints may be made to the NUI Galway Director of Human Resources, who may delegate the complaint to a senior HR Manager to review and determine the issue. However, the scope of the complaints procedure is solely in relation to the failure of NUI Galway or appointed selection committee to follow the terms of the recruitment procedures.

## 14 Post-Shortlisting or Interview feedback

A personal file will be kept of the new employee in HR. **Information and Records on each recruitment campaign must be kept by the PI (or nominee) for 2 years. (HR archives certain documents).** These records are essential to support the likelihood that candidate(s) will often request feedback at either the post Shortlisting or Interview stages of recruitment.

- List of applicants
- Copies of application/Curriculum Vitae received for the post
- Completed shortlisting form
- Research Assessment Forms
- Interview Report

Formal feedback must be provided in either instance when requested, and in the majority of cases, this feedback will be provided by the PI; unless a suitable alternative is nominated on the basis of their specialist knowledge.

The purpose of feedback is to provide factual and accurate information on the selection and decision making process, however, feedback on areas where a candidate(s) may improve on interview skills and interview preparation might also be discussed; of course, it is important to confirm if this level of supplementary feedback is desirable before offering constructive advice.

Feedback can be given verbally or in writing. The conversation or email/letter must be confined to feedback which centres on a candidate(s) performance against clearly advertised selection criteria. In addition to the feedback above, a candidate may also be given a copy of his or her shortlisting / interview scoring form.

Advice and assistance on preparing and delivering candidate feedback is available from HR.

## **15 Hosting Agreements**

In compliance with the recruitment of researchers the EU issued COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research and Employments Permit Act 2003. NUI Galway is an accredited research organisation and as such can form hosting agreements with third country nationals (non-EEA nationals) for the purpose of conducting research within the University.

The hosting agreement replaces the need for researchers and the University applying for annual work permits as the agreement is valid for the duration of the employment contract. The hosting agreement has the same benefits as the Green Card, for example, immediate family re-unification and application for residency after two years. All Hosting Agreements are processed through HR as per policy.