

HART LEARNING GROUP

RECRUITMENT POLICY

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Date approved by Group CEO	8 th November 2022
Scheduled review date	October 2025
Accountable member of Group SMT	Lizzie Jones
Responsible member of staff	Vicki Ellis
Document author	Vicki Ellis

AUDIENCE

Applicable to students?	No
Accessible to students?	No
Accessible to public?	No

PURPOSE

The policy will help us ensure that:

- Candidates are given the opportunity to show us their skills and how they can improve the learning experience for our students.
- Ensure that managers have the right skills to recruit the right candidate to the role.
- All candidates are treated fairly, consistently and in line with the relevant legislation.

SCOPE

- This policy applies to all new employees within HST, NHC and people who are employed by Harts Employment Service who work within HL&D and Group Corporate Services.
- This procedure applies to all vacancies advertised by the Group, including fixed-term appointments.
- The process for appointing casual staff and consultants is detailed in a separate procedure (Appendix A).
- The recruitment and selection of individuals is a very important part of the Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. The Group aims to provide a fair and consistent approach to recruitment and selection and recognises that a fair recruitment process is essential to good business practice.

- The recruitment and selection procedure will comply with and promote recruitment practices which are in line with legislation and good practice. This includes our commitment to safer recruitment practice, which means we will follow recruitment and selection procedures “that help to deter, reject or identify people who might be unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults”. The Group’s Safeguarding policy provides more guidance on safeguarding issues.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Managers have a responsibility to:
- To attend the recruitment training which is associated with this policy and ensure they understand the stages within this policy.
- Ensure that they recruit individuals in a fair and unbiased way.
- Hart Group HR has a responsibility to:
- Offer advice and guidance to managers. Where appropriate support managers through the recruitment process
- Ensure that adverts and initial selection process is complete in a timely manner. Organise and deliver training as appropriate.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- We are committed to ensuring that our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy (policy) is integral to all stages of recruitment and selection. We always carry out shortlisting, interviewing and selection without regard to an applicant's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, skin colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership.
- We will never exclude any candidate with a disability unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role, having taken into account reasonable adjustments. Line managers must only ask a candidate question about their health where this is directly necessary for a particular role and, in any event, only once they have been shortlisted.
- To prevent any candidate from being disadvantaged because of a disability, the individual responsible for communicating with applicants should ask each candidate whether or not they require reasonable adjustments to be made. These may include ensuring easy access to the premises for an interview and adapting tasks to ensure that have the reasonable adjustments in place to enable them to show us their skills. The HR Team is always available to provide guidance on reasonable adjustments
- When managers are considering the interview panels, they need to ensure that the panel reflects the diversity of the Group. Details of the panel need to be included in the employee requisition.

DEALING WITH VACANCIES

- When a post becomes vacant or a new post has been approved, a recruitment approval must be obtained via the [Employee Requisition](#) form which is on SharePoint.

- Vacancies for new and existing posts must be approved each time they occur. There is no automatic approval for existing posts.
- Each job must have an up to date and approved job description which includes a person specification and role responsibilities prior to advertising. Job description must follow the Group's template format. This can be found on Group SharePoint [Recruitment page](#) 'Planning to recruit' following the attached link [planning to recruit](#).
- Hiring Manager must score each job against priority criteria P1, P2, and P3. Namely:
 - P1 – High priority, vacancy requirement would have to meet following criteria:
 - Business critical circumstances arisen, for example course cannot be delivered due to sudden staff shortage.
 - P2 – Medium priority, vacancy requirement would have to meet following criteria
 - Replacement required to current occupant post holder handing their notice. The role is classified by SMT as a key role within the Group to allow business continuity.
 - P3 – Low priority, vacancy requirement would have to meet following criteria:
 - Replacement required due to natural succession planning.
 - Vacancy is available as a result of budget review where the need was identified.
- Hiring Manager has to specify, closing date of post, final date for submission the list of shortlisted candidates for interviews. Followed by proposed date for first interview which will be included in the advert.
- Hiring managers also need to confirm the interview panel in line with the ED&I section within this policy.

ADVERTISING VACANCIES

- Once a vacancy has been approved through the Employee Requisition process the most appropriate recruitment methods will be used (Table 1. Recruitment priority table). It is anticipated that sometimes a post will be advertised and filled internally in order to encourage staff internal progression and development opportunities.
- To source appropriate candidates for vacancies with score P2 and P3 the services of in-house recruitment team will be utilised.
- To source appropriate candidates for vacancies with score P1 the services of a recruitment agency may be utilised as well as in-house recruitment team.
- Regular advertisements will be posted on various job boards both sector specific and general platforms.
- All externally advertised posts will be advertised on the [Group website](#).

- All applicants must complete declaration for fair recruitment forms the equality and diversity declaration and rehabilitation of offenders declaration if they are selected for interview.

Table 1. Recruitment priority table

	P1	P2	P3
Week 1	Group websites and Twitter Job boards: Indeed, FE Week, LinkedIn and hiring managers are encouraged to re-share posts within their professional groups.	Group websites and Twitter Job boards: Indeed, FE Week, LinkedIn and hiring managers are encouraged to re-share posts within their professional groups.	Group websites and Twitter Job boards: Indeed, FE Week, LinkedIn and hiring managers are encouraged to re-share posts within their professional groups.
Week 2	As above	As above	As above
Week 3	Review *	As above	As above
Week 4	Action as per review.	Review *	As above
Week 5	Review *	Action as per review	As above
Week 6	Action as per review	Review *	Review *

* *In the absence of suitable candidates review and revaluation of advertised vacancy will be conducted by Hiring Manager, Head of HR and SMT. At this point recruitment agencies on the PSL may be considered.*

SHORTLISTING

Shortlisting criteria

- First sift – HR will conduct initial candidate screening according to the criteria set out in the job description and present them to Hiring Manager. This screening is based on the HR’s opinion and managers still have the responsibility to review all applications.
- HR will indicate if a candidate is disabled **and** meets the essential criteria on the person specification. This is in accordance with the Group’s commitment to the Jobcentre Plus Disability Confident scheme.
- Second sift – Hiring Manager will shortlist candidates for the first interview and submit the [shortlisting matrix](#) to HR by date confirmed in the Recruitment Requisition form.
- Shortlisting criteria will be objectively applied using the information provided in Job Description.

APPLICANTS

- The Group encourages applicants from all sectors of the community to apply for our advertised jobs.

- All applicants are asked to complete an equal opportunity form which will be treated as confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes. This information will not be treated as part of the applicant's application.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

- To ensure the most suited person is recruited to each role. The Group solely recruits on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the predetermined criteria for the role. Qualifications, experience and skills are assessed at the level that is relevant to the role.
- All managers involved in recruitment will be trained in the appropriate recruitment techniques. The interview training will include Equality, Diversity & Inclusion legislation and best practice to ensure that direct or indirect discrimination does not occur. Safer recruitment refresher training will be provided on a regular basis for safer recruitment (approximately every three years).
- Interviews will be arranged accordingly, in line with dates proposed on Recruitment Requisition form.
- HR will ensure that all candidates are notified of the interview date and time. HR will also send out a criminal record self-declaration form which is required to be completed before the interview. If the candidate declares a conviction, this information will be shared with the hiring manager so it can be discussed at the interview.
- To ensure fair interview process Hiring Manager has to follow Interview Guidance and complete [Interview Assessment Sheet](#) for each interviewed candidate.
- In some circumstances it is necessary for technical specialists to attend the interview to assess the technical competencies of the applicant. In these events the technical specialist is not part of the selection panel but is present to offer a technical opinion on the competency of the applicant. Whilst they may be present, they will not take part in the actual interview.
- The interview process may be varied depending on the job requirements and the volume of applicants. The interview questions will vary depending on the job but will include a range of questions designed to test attitudes to safeguarding. The Group will use a range of questioning techniques and competencies to probe the candidate to get a better and deeper understanding of the individual's situation and experience.
- Hiring Manager cannot make a salary offer during the interview, but you are able to discuss salary expectations. This will be communicated to candidate after receiving final approval from CEO at the offer stage.

Presentations or micro-teaching

- All candidates who have applied for a teaching/tutor role will be expected to complete a micro-teaching assessment. Some roles may require a short presentation to be completed by the candidate, these are appropriate for other roles such as senior posts or technical roles. The presentation or micro-teaching assessment will form part of the selection process.

- All interviewees for the appointment of academic staff, other roles such as senior posts or technical roles where presentation or micro-teaching assessment will be required, will be notified prior to the interview.

Selection Tests

For some jobs an appropriate test may be used in the selection process. The selection test may test IT skills, admin skills or other practical skills. The test will form part of the selection criteria.

Interview Questions

- The panel should agree the questions to be asked of all candidates in advance of the interview date and these questions should clearly link to the criteria for scoring.
- The interview panel should agree the criteria for scoring applicants prior to the interview date in line with Job Description.
- The panel should agree in advance of the interview who will ask which questions

Interview Panels

- The interview panel should remain the same as a shortlisting panel.
- At least one of the managers on the interview panel should have undertaken the Group's Interview Skills training
- The interview panel should include interviewer whose role is senior to the interviewed post

Interview feedback

- Following interview the [Interview outcome form](#) needs to be submitted to HR Coordinator.
- Interview outcome form will be sent to CEO for final approval.
- Once this has been received HR will inform Hiring Manager and the offer can be made.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AT INTERVIEW

APPOINTMENTS

- Once the CEO has given final approval, the Hiring Manager will formally offer the post to the successful candidate by telephone to check that they are prepared to accept the post and indicate their start date
- The verbal offer, if accepted, will subsequently be confirmed in writing by the HR team

All offers of employment are made subject to the following:

- Satisfactory clearance from the DBS
- Satisfactory employment references
- Copies of qualification certificates
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- A prohibition check will be completed for all individuals in a teaching role. A candidate's job offer will be withdrawn if the check indicates they are barred from teaching.

UNSUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWED CANDIDATES

- HR will inform candidates who were unsuccessful by email.
- Unsuccessful candidates will be given feedback on request.
- Unsuccessful internal candidates will be given verbal feedback by the manager to explain why they had not been shortlisted or were unsuccessful at interview.
- Any complaints will be sent to HR who will investigate and feedback to unsuccessful candidate.

NEW STARTERS

- All employment paperwork must be returned as soon as possible. A new starter cannot start work at the Group unless the HR department has received a completed DBS and have carried out all identification document checks to ensure the applicant has the Right to Work in the UK.
- The employment contract needs to be signed and returned before work commences. All other appropriate documents including satisfactory references have to be returned before the new employee can start work.
- If qualifications and/or references are found to be unsatisfactory an offer of employment will be withdrawn.
- All new employees will be on a probationary period as stated in their contracts of employment.

DOCUMENTATION

- All relevant documentation will be collated on every applicant at the end of the process and retained by the HR department for a minimum of six months.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

- All recruitment activity is undertaken in line with the statutory guidance for Keeping Children Safe in Education. As part of our Safer Recruitment process, all individuals will need have an appropriate DBS check, this could include an overseas check.
- All individuals work history will be checked for any gaps. If there any gaps the hiring manager will need to explore these at the interview.
- 2 references are requested, and HR will follow these up. The first reference needs to be the current or previous employer. HR will chase for references and may asked for a third referee.
- Individuals who are part of the management of the Group will have a Section 128 check, which prohibits a person to take part in the management of an education establishment.
- Individuals who are working with children aged 5 and under, including reception classes and it also applies to children up to the age of 8 in wraparound care are subjected to a further check to see if they not disqualified under the [Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2018](#).
- The Group's safeguarding policy provides more detail of the checks that are, or may be, required for any individual working in any capacity at, or visiting, the Group. Such checks include criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

- Safeguarding policy
- Probation policy
- Remuneration policy
- Risk assessment form - appointing subject to satisfactory DBS check
- Disclosure risk assessment form

APPENDIX A

PTS CASUAL STAFF

Please note that the following processes must be followed for casuals (this process doesn't apply to agency workers) working for the Group:

New Casuals

- All casuals are employed via the PTS Ozola portal.
- Line managers will need to provide PTS with the worker's contact details and basic assignment details
 - Full name
 - Email address
 - Job Title
 - Line Manager
- PTS will send the casual worker a registration link and online DBS application.
- The casual worker will need to provide HR with their right to work documents and two proofs of address.
- Once all documentation has been verified and the casual worker has submitted their DBS and registered with the PTS system, PTS will upload this information onto their profile along with a list 99, qualifications and references.
- The hiring manager will then arrange for an assignment to be raised which will contain their start & end date, pay rate, job title etc.
- PTS will release this assignment to the corresponding worker, which will generate their timesheet.
- Timesheets will generate on the 1st of each month for dates worked in the previous month as workers are paid one month in arrears. Workers then have until the 5th to submit their timesheet for managers to approve by the 10th. Anything submitted or approved after this time will result in payment being made the following month. Workers are paid on the 28th of each month.
- Timesheets will continue to generate until the end date of the assignment. Once the assignment has ended, the hiring manager will need to create a new one for the process to carry on.

Existing Casuals

- The hiring manager will arrange for an assignment to be raised.
- As long as the worker has not had a break in service for more than three months, they will be able to use their existing DBS. If this is the case, an email will need to be sent to the Head of HR to confirm using the existing DBS is ok as this email will need to be

uploaded onto the worker's profile. This will allow PTS to release the assignment to the corresponding worker.

- Timesheets will then generate on the 1st of each month as per the procedure above.

Pay Claims

- Must be submitted to the department by 8th of the month
- Department to authorise and submit to Payroll to arrive no later than the 10th of the month
- Payments will be made a month in arrears

EXTERNAL AGENCY STAFF

- Managers should contact HR if they require temporary staff to ensure that all the safeguarding checks are completed.
- Once a temporary appointment has been made HR will make contact with the agency to confirm all checks have been completed and a copy is sent to HR
- Once HR is satisfied, they will contact the manager and the placement can begin.

CONSULTANTS

New Consultants

- The request for a new consultant has to be approved by relevant cost centre budget holder followed by the approval from Finance Director to allow use New Consultant
- Hire Manager to email the Consultant requesting the following documents be completed;
 - New supplier form. [New Supplier Set up Form](#)
 - HMRC Employment Status Check – to be returned in PDF format including all questions and answers. [HMRC Employment Status check for tax](#)
 - DBS will be completed and documents related to the consultant working Terms and Conditions will be sent.
- On the return of completed documents,
 - Hiring Manager should forward those documents to HR and copying in Finance,
 - HR confirm the employment status of the consultant.
 - If consultant is to be considered employed, then standard recruitment process to be followed;
 - If is to be considered self-employed then:
 - HR will conduct all checks required for a new starter; DBS, right to work in UK, where appropriate to the job candidates must not be barred by the Institute of Learning (IfL); list 99.

- The consultant should not be engaged in any work for Hart Learning Group* until:
 - They have been set up as an employee, or have a purchase order raised on their supplier account
 - The HR department has received the completed DBS form and have carried out all identification document checks to ensure the applicant has the Right to work in the UK. Where appropriate to the job candidates is not be barred by the Institute of Learning (IfL); list 99
- A requisition needs to be raised so the budget holder can approve the work and an official purchase order is issued.
- To meet the financial regulations requirements following to be met:

CONTRACT VALUE	NUMBER OF QUOTES
Less than £5,000 (including VAT).	1 (normally in writing).
Greater than £5,000 but less than £20,000 or £800 to £1,600 per month (including VAT).	2 (in writing)
Greater than £20,000 but less than £100,000 (including VAT).	3 (in writing)
Greater than £100,000 but less than the value defined by the UK's public procurement thresholds set out below	A public tender process inviting at least six to participate, or a public advertisement unless using a compliant procurement framework (see para 142)
Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and valid from 1 January 2021: Works: £4,733,252; Goods and services: £189,330. 'Light-touch regime': £663,540. Under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016: Works: £4,733,252; Supplies and services: £378,660. Under the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016: £4,733,252.	Requires tendering process compliant with UK regulations (see para 139 et seq) unless using a compliant procurement framework (see para 142)

- Once the purchase order has been issued, the work is completed and an invoice has been received a GRN will need to be completed for the work. This GRN will be match to the invoice so that a payment can be processed for the consultant.

Existing Consultant

- A requisition needs to be raised so the budget holder can approve the work and an official purchase order is issued.
- To meet the financial regulations requirements following to be met:

CONTRACT VALUE	NUMBER OF QUOTES
Less than £5,000 (including VAT).	1 (normally in writing).
Greater than £5,000 but less than £20,000 or £800 to £1,600 per month (including VAT).	2 (in writing)
Greater than £20,000 but less than £100,000 (including VAT).	3 (in writing)
Greater than £100,000 but less than the value defined by the UK's public procurement thresholds set out below	A public tender process inviting at least six to participate, or a public advertisement unless using a compliant procurement framework (see para 142)
<p>Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and valid from 1 January 2021:</p> <p>Works: £4,733,252;</p> <p>Goods and services: £189,330.</p> <p>'Light-touch regime': £663,540.</p> <p>Under the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016:</p> <p>Works: £4,733,252;</p> <p>Supplies and services: £378,660.</p> <p>Under the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016: £4,733,252.</p>	Requires tendering process compliant with regulations (see para 139 et seq) unless using a compliant procurement framework (see para 142)

- Once the purchase order has been issued, the work is completed and an invoice has been received a GRN will need to be completed for the work. This GRN will be match to the invoice so that a payment can be processed for the consultant.

Pay Claims

- The College's payment terms of 'end of the following month from date of invoice' should be conveyed to the consultant. If this considered unfeasible by the consultant the best payment terms that the college can agree to is 30 days, this needs to be agreed in writing with a member of the finance accounts payable team.

*All purchase orders should be raised against North Hertfordshire College Further Education Corporation

APPENDIX B

For the purpose of this document definitions are as follow:

- 'Full time' – means permanent, fixed-term, temporary employment in which a person works a minimum number of 37 hours per week; teaching 32.5 hours per week (schools only).
- 'Part time' – means permanent, fixed-term, temporary employment in which a person works fewer than 37 hours per week.
- 'Permanent' - an indefinite full time or part time contract whereby employee is employed by the company until such time as the employer or the employee no longer wish to work there
- 'Fixed term' – full time or part time contract whereby employee's contract ends on a particular date, or on completion of a specific task, e.g. a project.
- 'Secondment' - The temporary placement of an employee to a different part of the organisation or to another organisation, for a specific purpose and period of time, to the mutual benefit of all parties. This applies equally to full-time and part-time employees on a permanent or fixed-term contract.
- 'Temporary' – applies to employees who are employed by external agency. It is full time or part time employment where an agency employee is expected to remain in a position only for a certain period of time.
- 'Casuals' - employees who do not have regular or systematic hours of work or an expectation of continuing work. A typical casual employee is employed on a daily basis when the need arises. All casuals are employed via PTS Ozola portal
- 'Consultants' - Experienced professional who provides expert knowledge for a fee. He or she works in an advisory capacity only.
- Term time – teaching weeks specified with school or college requirements.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- DBS Policy