Equality Impact Assessment Report for Recruitment and Selection of Staff

1. Background
Newcastle University is one of the largest employers in the city, currently employing approximately 5000 employees in a range of disciplines. There are approximately 700 new appointments made annually across all of its three faculties and the services. Depending upon the job category, recruitment activity can be at local, national and international level. This is reflected in 85 nationalities represented on University staff.

Although recruitment is a major activity for Human Resources and the recruiting functions, there is no recruitment and selection “policy”. The University has, however, developed a Recruitment and Selection Procedure and Guidelines. These guidelines are available on the University website at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruit/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruit/).

In 2008 the University moved to a web-based recruitment package for the vast majority of its recruitment activity, which offered widespread benefits and efficiency gains for the University. This equality impact assessment will review the equality impact of the recruitment process. The equality impact assessment of e-recruitment will be embedded into a wider process review later in the year.

2. Aims of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure/Guidance
The aims of the procedure and guidelines are to ensure that those responsible for any aspect of staff recruitment and selection carry out their duties in a manner which is in line with best practice and adheres to relevant employment and equality legislation. Recruitment also forms one of the major objectives of the HR strategy to improve the profile and performance of the University by recruiting and developing high-calibre employees with appropriate external recognition.

3. Consideration of Available Data & Research
In order to assess the impact of the staff recruitment and selection procedure, the following data was taken into consideration:

Composition of current staff (from SAP HR)
Composition of job applicants and appointees (from I-Grasp e-recruitment)

The data was assessed initially by a small team from Human Resources comprising:
Garry Goupland, Assistant Director of HR (Operations)
Richard Burrow, Assistant Director of HR (Policy)
Claire McCormick, HR Adviser
Julie Bullimore, Equality and Diversity Adviser

The team met several times between October 2009 and March 2010.
4. Assessment of Impacts
The approach taken by the assessment team was initially to compare the applications, invite to interviews, offers and hires by the various equality categories to identify if there were any significant differences. Where differences were identified, further investigations were carried out. Where this was the case, it will be indicated in the sections below.

4.1 Race
1. There appears to be a high proportion of Asian or Asian British Indian applicants at University level (7.5%) when compared to current staff levels (1.2%). Yet the proportion of those who are invited to interview or made an offer are 3.6% and 2.1% respectively. This appears to be a particularly poor success rate.
2. The proportion of applications from Asian or Asian British Indian applicants is highest in Medical Sciences and SAgE.
3. There is evidence that the University receives a very high number of speculative applications from overseas, especially for jobs graded A to E, where certificates of sponsorship would not be granted. This supposition has been supported by a further analysis of applications from the Asian or British Asian – Indian group. This data shows that only 9% of job applicants from this ethnic group have British nationality. 86% of job applicants from this ethnic group are from India and would be very unlikely to be considered a serious candidate and unlikely to qualify for a Certificate of Sponsorship.
4. For jobs in grades F to I (where certificates of sponsorship are more likely to be granted), 90% of Asian or British Asian – Indian applicants have an Indian nationality. However, there is evidence that even for jobs in grades F to I, there are a lot of unsuitable applications from overseas, especially India. For example, of the applications for Professor from people with Indian nationality, a third were under the age of 25.
5. White British applicants are the most successful group and are the largest group within the local population at 93.1% (O'Donnell et al, 2008).
6. 5.4% of applications were from Chinese people. The proportion of those offered a job, whilst slightly lower at 4.1% is still reasonably proportionate to the percentage of Chinese applicants. This could be explained by the University’s strong links with the Far-East. Further analysis shows that for Chinese job applicants, 62% are from China, 11% are British, 10% are Malaysian and 7.5% are Taiwanese.
7. Applicants with “unknown” origin appear be particularly unsuccessful in the recruitment process with the proportion of applicants at 13.4% but the proportion of interviewees dropping to 1.9%. There does not appear to be any clear indication of why this might be the case. One suggestion is that, if ethnic origin has not been completed, then maybe the application itself was of poor quality.
8. When analysed at Faculty Level, Central Services shows a lower proportion of applicants from the White – Any Other category than any other faculty or service.

9. Applicants in the Asian or Asian British – Any Other Background category are 1.6% of the total and this is consistent with the proportion of applicants in this ethnic category who are hired.

10. For HASS, the data shows a very similar pattern of applications by ethnic origin to the pattern of current University staff. Applicants in the White – Any Other Background category appeared quite successful in gaining employment with 14% of job applicants being White – Any Other Background rising to 20% of those hired being this ethnic category.

11. Chinese applicants in HASS were less successful than in other faculties.

12. Chinese applicants in Medical Sciences were at 5.8% and seemed to be proportionately successful throughout the process.

13. There were a higher proportion of Chinese applicants in Sage than any other faculty, and a higher proportion of Chinese staff hired.

4.2 Gender

1. At University level, there are more applications from women than men. The same pattern exists at each stage in the recruitment process.

2. Over Grade F, the proportion of applications from males increases with grade, whereas the proportion of applications from women decreases.

3. The proportion of women invited to interview is higher than the proportion of applications from women in all grades except Grade I. Conversely the proportion of men invited to interview is lower than the proportion of applications from men in all grades except Grade I.

4. The SAge Faculty shows a different pattern to the rest of the University. It has more applications from men than women and this continues throughout the recruitment process.
process. This pattern may not be unexpected because this faculty is mainly involved in science and engineering, where traditionally, there are more males than females employed.

5. Overall 13.24% of applicants did not provide their gender during the application process. For the purposes of data analysis, applicants with “unknown gender” were excluded. Consideration should be given as to whether the University wishes to make gender a mandatory field.

4.3 Disability
   1. 2.5% of all job applicants declare themselves as having a disability. There have been 10 disabled job applicants who have been hired since the introduction of e-recruitment (0.75% of staff hired). We believe there is significant non-declaration of disability.
   2. This pattern is similar within HASS and SAgE. However, in Medical Sciences, there have been no disabled applicants who have been hired.
   3. Central Services have had both a higher number and percentage of job applicants with a disability. 1.5% of the staff hired in Central Services have a disability – however the actual number is still very small (7).
   4. It appears that it is harder for disabled applicants to make it through the recruitment process with a drop in the proportion of disabled applicants after the interview stage.

4.4. Age
   1. The University staff age profile shows that most employees are, not perhaps surprisingly, between the ages of 25 and 54. Within these age ranges, the spread is fairly even.

   ![Age Profile - Current Staff and Job Applicants by Stage](chart)

   2. In contrast, the age profile of job applicants is much younger with more job applicants being in the 15 – 24 and 25 -34 age ranges.
3. The profile of job applicants also shows a much lower proportion of applicants in the 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 age ranges than currently employed at the University. This is perhaps not surprising because over 30% of University staff have over 10 years service.

4. The proportions of applicants, those interviewed, offered and hired remains fairly consistent within each age grouping.

5. Central Services has more applicants who are successful within the 15-24 than in the faculties. This is most likely due to applicants for clerical and operational roles.

6. 13.43% of job applicants have not given their age band during the recruitment process perhaps for fear of age discrimination.

4.5 Sexual Orientation
The University does not currently monitor sexual orientation of current staff or job applicants. There is therefore no statistical data relating to this.

4.6 Religion or Belief
The University does not currently monitor Religion or Belief of current staff or job applications. There is therefore not statistical data relating to this.

5. Summary of Impacts
Upon consideration of statistical data and verbal evidence, the recruitment and selection process appears to fulfil its aims without causing a detrimental impact on any particular equality groups. This assumption has been tested through consultation (see section 7). There are, however, a few issues that have been raised as a result of this exercise, which must be addressed.

The low proportion of disabled candidates is a great concern. 2.5% of job applicants declaring a disability appears to be quite low when the national figures show that 19% of the working age population have a disability (ONS Labour Force Survey, Jan-Mar 2009). The percentage of applicants who have "not stated" whether or not they have a disability is 14% at University level. We must consider if the University is an attractive employer to disabled people. Recognising that the University has invested considerable resources into improving the working life of disabled staff, what measures can be taken to maximise the impact of these initiatives to improve the reputation of the University as an employer of choice?

To a lesser extent, the way the University monitors data in the recruitment process itself should also be considered. Decisions need to be made about whether gender, along with other equality categories, should be a mandatory field. Age, for example, is not mandatory and 13% of applicants chose not to provide this information. Yet, personal information of this type is not provided to the recruiting managers in any case, so could it (and should it) therefore be made mandatory? With the Equality Bill set to come into force in 2010, the University may wish to consider if or when it may want to commence monitoring for Sexual
Orientation and Religion/Belief. This may not necessarily be done through the recruitment or HR databases, but through other mediums such as the Employee Opinion Survey.

6. Measures to address or mitigate adverse impact

In its initial report on the impact assessment, the team strongly recommended that the University considered taking part in the “Two Ticks” programme. The Two Ticks disability symbol is awarded by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have made commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled people. The commitments include guaranteed interviews for disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.

In signing up to the Two Ticks programme, the University would be visible as a fair employer through a nationally recognised symbol. Our neighbouring employers Northumbria University and Newcastle City Council are already part of the scheme. If prospective and existing employees know that we have such a commitment they may be more inclined to disclose that they have a disability when they currently may be unwilling to do so.

The advantages of signing up to the Two Ticks scheme needed to be balanced with the practicalities of administering the scheme. The main area for concern was the “guaranteed interview” for all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy. Whilst most parties supported this principle, there were practical issues to be considered. Currently recruiters do not have access to disability information and therefore are unable to unfairly discriminate against disabled applicants. Signing up to this scheme would mean that recruiters either had to be given the disability status of every job applicant, or HR would have to sift and “filter in” disabled candidates (who meet the minimum criteria) on behalf of the recruiters. Neither of these options seemed suitable, the first because it goes against our current principles of short-listing based upon merit only. The second, because this will involve additional workload for a team which does not have additional capacity.

Some consultation on the proposal to sign up to the Two Ticks Symbol had previously taken place with disabled staff and stakeholders to discuss disclosure and recording of disability. During this meeting the option of signing up to the Two Ticks Symbol was widely encouraged by attendees. The main reason for this was about the need to change the organisational culture so that employees know and feel that it is safe to disclose their disability. It was thought that joining the two tick scheme could be a quick win to get recognition for some of the excellent support available internally and as recognition externally that we are a good employer. We have consulted with other Universities to find out if joining the Two Ticks scheme has resulted in an increased in the proportion of disabled people appointed to the organisation. No organisation we spoke to could provide any evidence that the Two Ticks had led to the increase in disabled staffing numbers.

Taking into account all arguments and after consultation with Human Resources, Trade Unions, other Russell Group Universities and Job Centre Plus, it was decided the University should not apply for the Two Ticks Symbol at this time, but instead focus its resources in other areas. The main reason for this is that signing up to the Two Ticks will not change the
organisational culture over night and it is felt that resources should be put into more tangible actions to ensure that potential and existing staff understand:

a) What we mean by disability
b) What will happen if they tell the organisation they are disabled
c) What support the organisation can give to disabled staff

Suggested actions to increase the proportion of applicants and staff who declare a disability include:

- Strengthening the e-recruitment portal and recruitment web pages to show the University as a disability-friendly employer.
- Providing information to new employees so that they know where to find existing resources such as the Disabled Employees Toolkit.
- Disability Awareness training provision should be reviewed and promoted more widely.
- Promotion of Disability Toolkits for staff and managers.
- Positive action statements on job adverts.

7. Consultation
Consultation about staff and applicant declaration rates for disability took place in December 2009 with a range of stakeholders including disabled staff, support services and the Students with Disabilities Officer from the Union Society. Human Resources were consulted on the initial report in February 2010. Joint Negotiation Committees have also been consulted. The Diversity Consultative Group was consulted in April 2010. This report was presented to Staff Committee for information purposes on 10th May 2010 and was presented to Diversity Committee on 17th May 2010.

Julie Bullimore, Richard Burrow, Garry Coupland, Claire McCormick
7 June 2010
### 8. Action Plan

**Policy Name:** Recruitment and Selection Procedure  
**Policy Owner:** Garry Coupland, Assistant Director of HR (Operations)  
**Date Agreed:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Area of Activity</th>
<th>Verifiable Targets</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the e-recruitment portal and recruitment web pages to show the University as a disability-friendly employer.</td>
<td>To increase the proportion of job applicants who declare a disability to 5%.</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>GC</td>
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<tr>
<td>To establish small working party to review application process and data capture.</td>
<td>To decrease the proportion of job applicants who select “not stated” for equality related personal information.</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>GC/RJCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing information to new employees so that they know where to find existing resources such as the Disabled Employees Toolkit.</td>
<td>To increase the proportion of staff who declare a disability to 3.5%.</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>GC/RJCB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Awareness training provision should be reviewed and promoted more widely</td>
<td>Number of attendees on Disability Awareness Training to increase by 20%.</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>PG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive action statements on job adverts.</td>
<td>To increase the proportion of job applicants who declare a disability to 5%.</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>GC</td>
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