



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
Careers Service

# Guide to Recruiting Students and Graduates

FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM  
SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)

# Introduction

Recruitment is an important and necessary part of all businesses but it doesn't need to be a difficult one.

If you are new to recruiting this guide will help you navigate the recruitment process from advertising to inducting your new team member. It will also highlight the ways in which the Careers service at the University of Edinburgh can help you recruit students and recent graduates through advice, support, free advertising and our internships programme:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers>

There are also a number of other places where you can find support:

- Business Gateway offers tailored business advice on a range of topics including recruitment

<http://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/employing-people>

- In Edinburgh, Joined up for Business offer bespoke support for recruitment, training and business growth

<http://www.joinedupforjobs.org.uk/employers/>

# Recruitment Process



# Planning and Preparation

Attracting and keeping the right people is a key part of growing a successful business. To help you to do that it is important to plan ahead. Within your organisation divide up responsibilities at the start, so that everyone knows what their role will be. If you are a sole trader, consider asking a friend or contact to support you with the shortlisting or interview stages.

Throughout the recruitment process, you have the opportunity to influence how your organisation is perceived. Dedicate time to making sure that you communicate well with candidates at each stage of the recruitment as unsuccessful candidates could be future employees, business collaborators or customers.

Some questions to think about at the planning stage:

- What is the purpose of the job you want to advertise?
- Do you have the space and resources for a new member of staff?
- Who will be their line manager?
- What level of skill is required for the post?
- Do you need someone on a short-term or permanent basis?
- Do you have a payroll process in place?
- Does your work require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?

The more questions you address at the start, the smoother your recruitment will be. Recruiting people takes time. Allocate time in advance to:

- Read through applications
- Reply to unsuccessful applicants
- Schedule interviews
- Host interviews
- Check references
- Give feedback
- Write a contract
- Give a staff induction

# Writing a Job Advert

Getting your job advert right is the foundation for a successful recruitment process. We have some advice, resources, and top tips below which will get you off to a good start.

Having a clear job description before you start advertising will help you attract the best candidates and will save you time when shortlisting.

Use your advert to show off your organisation - this could be the first time a candidate has heard of you!

## 1. Job Title

To maximise the number of people who view your advert try to make the title appealing and understandable. Bear in mind key words that people might use in a search.

## 2. Information about your organisation

Keep it very brief, just a couple of sentences. What would you say if someone you met asked you what you do?

## 3. Role description and responsibilities

Be clear about what the role will involve.

- What is the main purpose of the job?
- What are the main duties and tasks?

You do not need to include all possible tasks, just include the central ones. Be upfront with candidates so they know what they will be doing if they are successful.

## 4. Person specification

Be explicit about what skills and experience you are looking for. Think about what they must have to do the job (essential) and what would be good to have (desirable). Avoid skills being too broad or too specialised, as both can deter people from applying. Setting out the essential and desirable criteria will help you shortlist; investing time at this stage saves you time later on.

## 5. Practical details

Include contract length, expected hours of work, salary and any benefits, working environment, location(s) and expected interview and start dates.

## 6. Application details

State how applicants should apply and specify a closing date (you can always extend if you're not happy with the volume or quality of applications). You can also offer contact details in case an applicant has specific questions before they apply.

The two most common methods are:

- CV and covering letter or personal statement
- Application form

We recommend asking for contact details of at least two referees and not appointing until you have at least one suitable reference returned. The level of detail you include in your job advert will depend which advertising channel you use. For more guidance on writing a job advert, see the resources page at the end of the guide.

# Advertising

Advertising externally to your organisation allows you to extend your reach and attract fresh talent from a diverse range of candidates.

The type of applicants you are looking to recruit will normally determine where you advertise. There are a number of general recruitment websites you could use such as S1 Jobs, Universal Job Match and LinkedIn.

However, you might want to consider posting your advert on specific job boards relevant to your sector or the kind of role you are advertising for. Hiring a student or a recent graduate can be an excellent way to bring new skills and innovation to your organisation and we can help you recruit them.

The University of Edinburgh and all other Scottish universities offer a free advertising service. To advertise to University of Edinburgh students and graduates register on our jobs board, MyCareerHub. We can also help you target specific groups of students through emails, social media and/or events.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/advertise-your-job>

Remember to make the most of your social media channels as well to promote your position to a wide audience.

# Shortlisting

Use this stage to narrow down your candidates and decide who to invite for an interview. There is a shortlisting matrix in the resources below which will help you to evaluate candidates based on the criteria you set out in your job advert.

During the shortlisting stage, treat candidates you already know, including current employees, in the same way as external candidates.

Removing names from applications can help avoid any unconscious bias.

# Interviews and feedback

Interviews are your chance to evaluate a candidate's suitability for the job and to give them an opportunity to find out more about the job and your organisation.

Set up your interview in a way that helps demonstrate the skills that are needed for the job. Consider your criteria. Make sure you know exactly what you are looking for and use this to shape the interview.

In addition to a face-to-face interview, consider using an exercise to mimic a real work situation. For example, if staff will be using spreadsheets regularly ask them to complete a short task on Excel. Or if they need to be a confident communicator then ask them to deliver a short presentation.

## Interview Top Tips:

- Find a calm space – avoid noisy and busy areas.
- Be friendly and welcoming. Make the candidate feel comfortable. It is not an interrogation.
- Take notes so you can remember who said what.
- Maintain eye contact. Don't write everything down.
- Ask open ended questions (don't limit the answer to yes or no)
- Be patient. Give space for thought as they answer. Don't be tempted to finish off their answers.
- Do your homework. Know who you are speaking to. Bring their application for reference.
- Don't package several questions into one.
- Be specific. Rambling questions result in rambling answers.
- Don't rush. Give yourself plenty of time between interviews to process, take notes, and have a break
- During the interview stage, check all job applicants' 'right to work' documents. More details are in the Employment Basics section below

It is not all about skills and experience. Think about how candidates will fit in with your current team and design your recruitment process to give others a chance to assess this.

We recommend offering feedback to all unsuccessful candidates after interview. Some might not contact you for feedback, but for those that do it is a chance to help them improve for the future.

# Appointment and Contracts

When you have decided who you want to hire and you have checked their right to work in the UK (see Employment Basics section), then the next stage is to obtain references and offer them the position.

A contract exists between an employee and employer as soon as a job offer is accepted.

An employment contract is an agreement that sets out an employee's:

- Employment conditions
- Rights
- Responsibilities
- Duties

Examples of what should be included:

- Start date
- Remuneration and when it will be paid
- Hours of work
- Holiday entitlement
- Conditions for sick leave
- Pension and pension scheme information
- Notice of termination
- Place of work

Don't worry if this is your first time hiring – Business Gateway has an employee contract template that can be accessed on their website: <https://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/employing-people/templates-for-employers>

### Reference Top Tips:

1. Job offers can be made subject to satisfactory references being received
2. Only approach a referee if you have permission from your candidate (they might not want you to get in touch until they are successful)
3. Ask for the dates of employment, the duties undertaken, and the skills they used
4. Include relevant questions about the candidate's ability to carry out their new role (you could include a job description). Do not ask for personal information or conjecture
5. Remember – there is no legal obligation to give a reference and some employers have a policy to only give a factual reference e.g. the dates of employment, job title and salary

## Induction and Support

To help your new member of staff integrate quickly and 'hit the ground running' you should spend time planning an induction that will introduce them to their colleagues and the values of your organisation. We have tips below and an induction checklist in the resources to assist you.

Before they start ensure:

- Colleagues are aware of their arrival and their role and responsibilities
- They have access to your building and know where they are going
- They have an area to work and their computer is ready to go, if relevant
- You have all the documentation they need
- Training has been considered – identify if this will be in-house or external

The first day should include:

- A tour of the facilities (work areas, break areas, where to get food/drink, fire exits, toilets)

- A brief introduction to the organisation, the team structures and history
- An explanation of health and safety guidelines, access arrangements, absence reporting, time keeping and your expectations from them as a member of staff

Try not to overwhelm your new member of staff on their first day! Give them time to ask questions and absorb their new environment and information.

You should also consider arranging a 'buddy', if possible, for your new staff member. This role would be for someone who is not their line manager, and who can be approached about general queries or 'silly' questions.

### How the Careers Service can support you:

Advertise for free:

<https://mycareerhub.ed.ac.uk/employers/>

Hire an intern through a supported internship programme:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/advertise-your-job/employ-edinternshipsprogramme>

Build your profile:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/build-your-profile>

# Employment Basics - The Law

## Employing staff for the first time?

Find out what you need to do before becoming an employer: <https://www.gov.uk/employing-staff>

## Who has the right to work in the UK?

Before you employ anyone, you must check that they have permission to work in the UK. During the interview stage, check all job applicants' 'right to work' documents. Keep copies for your records.

Read the Government's guide on document checking: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>

Remember that at no point in recruitment should you discriminate against anyone because of nationality.

## Can international students and graduates work in the UK?

International students and graduates have a lot to offer. They can bring a fresh perspective, experience of other cultures and often advanced language skills. Their ability to work in the UK will depend on their nationality and their visa. Always check most recent Government immigration information.

- Students within the EU, EEA and Switzerland should not require any permission to work in the UK. (Some restrictions apply to students from Croatia).
- Students on a Tier 4 visa can work part-time during their studies. Hours of work per week are restricted.
- Students on a Tier 4 student visa can usually work full-time for a period of around 3 to 4 months after their studies have ended. It must be a temporary role.
- If you are on the UKBA Register of Sponsors you can allocate unrestricted certificates of sponsorship to international graduates who are switching from a Tier 4 student visa to a Tier 2 General visa from within the UK. A minimum salary is required.

UK visa sponsorship for employers: <https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers>

Tier 2 Visa information:

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general>

More information on hiring international students: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/advertise-your-job/hiring-international-students/permission-to-work-in-the-uk>

## How much should I pay?

Workers must receive at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW). The rate depends on their age and if they are an apprentice.

The Government's National Living Wage (NLW) applies to workers over the age of 25. NMW and NLW rates are reviewed annually. Current rates: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

The Living Wage Foundation annually calculate the Living Wage based on the amount employees and their families need to live in the UK. This optional, slightly higher, rate of pay has been adopted by many businesses as their minimum pay rate. Current Living Wage rates: <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-living-wage>

Research similar positions in your area before advertising to find out what rate of pay is offered by similar organisations. Speak to the Careers Service for advice.

Calculate paid holiday entitlement: <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-holiday-entitlement>

## What about volunteering?

Voluntary workers are those who carry out unpaid work for a charity, voluntary organisation or fundraising body. They do not have a contract of employment but instead might have a volunteer agreement.

### Placements

Interns who undertake regular paid work for an employer and have a contract of employment should receive at least the National Minimum Wage. An exception to this are students required to do a placement, for less than one year, as part of a further or higher education course.

### Work shadowing

If work experience involves only work shadowing (i.e. the intern carries out no work) then you are not required to pay the National Minimum Wage. Read more about volunteers, work experience and internships: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3603>

# Useful Links

- Employment rights for interns <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>
- Managing and retaining volunteers <https://knowhownonprofit.org/your-team/volunteers/keeping>
- Contracts of employment and working hours: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people/contracts>
- Statutory Sick Pay <https://www.gov.uk/employers-sick-pay/entitlement>
- Recruiting International Graduates – AGCAS guide for Employers: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/recruiters/promotion/AGCAS-RECRUITING-INTERNATIONAL-GRADUATES>

# Resources

## How to write a great job advert

To encourage the right candidates to apply for your job, and hopefully make the shortlisting process easier, you need to take some time to make sure you produce a great job advert. [https://mycareerhub.ed.ac.uk/Employers/How\\_to\\_write\\_a\\_great\\_job\\_advert.chpx](https://mycareerhub.ed.ac.uk/Employers/How_to_write_a_great_job_advert.chpx)

## Shortlisting template

A shortlisting matrix will help you to evaluate candidates based on the criteria you set out in your job advert. [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/shortlisting\\_template.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/shortlisting_template.pdf)

## Pre-employment checklist

This checklist gives a brief overview of basic pre-employment checks. It is divided into checks framed by law, and checks which are optional. <https://beta.acas.org.uk/job-offer-templates>

## Employee contract

Business Gateway has an employee contract template that can be accessed on their website: <https://www.bgateway.com/resources/template-for-employers>

## Induction Checklist

This induction checklist is to assist your new member of staff in getting started in their new job and covers introductions to colleagues, your work and essential administrative procedures. [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/induction\\_checklist.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/induction_checklist.pdf)

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