

Safer Staff Recruitment Policy

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External reference points	Equality Act 2010 UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024 Sector-Agreed Principles Principle 3 Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider’s strategy and the composition of the student body.		

Contents

1. Background and Purpose.....	3
2. Aims and Objectives.....	3
3. Application	3
4. New Jobs and Job Vacancies	4
5. Job Description	4
6. Publicising the Vacancy.....	5
7. Arrangements for interview	6
8. Selecting the Interview Panel.....	6
9. Criminal Conviction Declaration Forms.....	7
10. Interviewing.....	7
11. Disabled Applicants.....	8
12. Tutors.....	8
13. Making a Decision after Interview.....	8
14. Feedback.....	8
15. Pre-employment Checks.....	9
16. References	9
17. Eligibility to Work in the UK.....	9
18. Criminal Conviction Information.....	10
19. Qualifications.....	10
20. Appointment.....	12
21. Induction and Probation	12
22. Record Keeping.....	12
23. Volunteers and Guest Speakers	12
24. Visitors	13
25. Safe Recruitment Checklist for Line Managers.....	13

1. Background and Purpose

LCK Academy (LCKA) recognises that the achievement of its goals and the securing of its values are dependent on the recruitment and the retention of a skilled and committed workforce. This policy and procedures outline our approach to safe staff recruitment. This document is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

LCK Academy is committed to creating a culture of safe recruitment and, as part of that, adopt robust recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse their role. The Senior Leadership Team and other support involved in the recruitment process will act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of the prospective employee based on checks and evidence including criminal record checks (DBS checks), together with references and interview information.

The Academy is committed to applying its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without discrimination on the ground of the protected characteristics of

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Normally appointments must be made in accordance with this policy and will, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must approve any exceptions in advance of formal appointment.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Safe Recruitment Policy is to inform managers and employees about the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff at the LCKA. It is designed to assist staff in carrying out the staff recruitment process in a fair, effective, efficient and systematic manner.

To achieve these aims the policy has the following objectives:

- Ensure that the best candidate is appointed for the vacant post, based upon objective criteria, which includes qualifications, skills, knowledge and quality and quantity of experience and no other criteria.
- Ensure that vacancies are filled within agreed timescales and in the most cost-effective manner.
- Ensure that our recruitment process does not unlawfully discriminate against anyone or any group of people at any stage of the process.

3. Application

All recruitment and selection activities will be carried out in a fair, consistent, effective and professional manner and will respond appropriately to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process. An effective recruitment process contributes directly to the continuing success of the organisation and in addition, it is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that this policy and procedure comply with all relevant legislative and other related policy requirements.

Financial approval for the establishment of a new post or the filling of a vacancy must be obtained before recruitment commences.

Appointments will be made subject to the receipt of at least 2 written references; proof of eligibility to work in the UK; documentary proof of qualifications and, where appropriate, Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks.

4. New Jobs and Job Vacancies

The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and grade salary. Where the duties of a post have changed significantly the Manager must seek confirmation from the CEO of the appropriate salary for the post. When a vacancy arises, consideration must be given, prior to open advertising, to any staff for whom redeployment is being sought on the grounds of redundancy or disability. When employing temporary or casual staff on a short-term basis the principles of good practice outlined in this policy should be followed.

5. Job Description

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps. It must include:

- The job title
- The location of the job
- Grade or salary scale of the post
- The line manager to whom the post holder is responsible
- Any posts reporting to the post holder
- Main purpose of the job
- Main duties and responsibilities
- Any special working conditions (e.g. evening or weekend work)

Other items that should be included in job descriptions are:

- A note that indicates that, as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder.
- An indication that the post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the broad scope and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager or other authorised person.
- All roles in the Academy will be subject to Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding practices. Applicants will be informed in the job advertisement that a DBS (Basic or Enhanced Disclosure) may be sought. Referees will be asked specifically whether or not they feel the applicant is a suitable person to work with other vulnerable groups; any gaps in employment must be satisfactorily explained; any period of time longer than 3 months spent outside of the UK in the previous 5 years will be subject to overseas checks; Barred List (formally List 99) checks; Prohibition checks.

6. Publicising the Vacancy

Job adverts are written from the Job Description and Person Specification and should contain the following points:

- LCKA name and logo
- Title of vacancy
- Salary (does not need to be in advert but ought to be in details sent out)
- Brief details of the job
- Key details of the person specification, i.e. the skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviours required for the post
- The safeguarding requirements for the post
- Where the role requires it, the necessity of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be stated in the job advert.
- Duration of the appointment if fixed term
- How to access further details of the vacancy
- Closing date for applications
- Method of application and to who applications should be submitted
- Where known the date and location of the interview
- A statement reflecting LCKA's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students, and equality of opportunity

The posts will also be concurrently advertised internally (on the Academy website and externally to maximise the chances of attracting the best candidate. Consideration should also be given to advertising in locations/publications likely to increase diversity in the workforce. It is also recognised that LCKA receives a number of speculative applications. This is particularly the case for teaching positions. These may be used to fill short-term and 'last minute' vacancies.

Applicants will be made aware that:

- Any gaps in employment will be explored at interview
- Contact details for at least 2 referees must be provided.
- This role meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All applicants who are offered employment may be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions

7. Arrangements for interview

Invitations to interview should include:

- Date, time and place of interview
- Directions to the interview venue
- A request that the candidate make it known if they have any requirements related to access to the venue or any other need related to a disability
- Details of any presentation or task that form part of the selection process
- A request that the candidate bring with them permission to work in the UK documents and qualification certificates – this must be requested of ALL candidates
- Pre-interview guidance notes
- The job description and person specification

The pack may also include, depending on the role guidance notes, a criminal convictions declaration form. Further information relevant to the particular post may also be included – e.g. annual report, organisational structure chart as appropriate. It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted but, if this is not possible due to limited resources, the application pack should make clear that if not notified after a certain date or period, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

8. Selecting the Interview Panel

In the normal course of events, shortlisting and interviews should be conducted by a minimum of two, including at least one member of staff with appropriate Safe Recruitment Training. The immediate line manager and senior manager will select interview panel members prior to the closing date. This allows panel members to carry out the shortlisting process.

Panels should:

- Consist of a minimum of two people including the immediate line manager of the vacant post
- Reflect a gender and ethnicity balance wherever possible
- Declare if they already know a candidate, clearly noting the connection on the interview notes
- Be willing and able to attend shortlisting and all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates
- At least one member of the panel needs to have undergone Safer Recruitment Training

However, in certain circumstances, shortlisting may be carried out by the appointing line manager alone. This will be the case with urgent 'last-minute' hires where it is unreasonable and impractical to convene a panel. That person must have undergone Safe Recruitment Training.

After the closing date has passed the interview panel should individually assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. The panel should then meet to discuss and agree the shortlist. Where the panel has an external member, that person should take part in the shortlisting wherever practicable. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the job description.

The original applications for all applicants, together with a written note of reasons for shortlisting or rejection, must be retained for a minimum of 6 months from the date that an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal. All photocopies of application forms must be shredded.

9. Criminal Conviction Declaration Forms

Criminal declaration forms belonging to candidates who have not been shortlisted for interview will remain sealed and will be shredded. Short-listed candidates' forms will be opened and checked for relevant convictions. If it is deemed that a conviction is relevant to the post, the candidate may be withdrawn from the list of interviewees.

The Criminal Convictions Declaration Form template is saved in the 'application pack'. It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted but if this is not possible due to limited resources, the application pack should make clear that if not notified after a certain date or period, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

10. Interviewing

Interviews should be scheduled as soon after the application closing date as reasonably possible. The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all the elements of the person specification. The same areas of questioning should be covered with all candidates. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate and should be designed to seek evidence of how the interviewee meets the criteria on the person specification. Supplementary questions should be used to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g. questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job).

Interview panels act for the organisation in making selection decisions and are accountable for them. Interview notes must be taken to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint. Obviously any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.

11. Disabled Applicants

Where the candidate being interviewed has a disability for which adjustments may need to be considered, the candidate's requirements should be discussed with him/her once the planned questioning is complete. The outcome of these discussions must not influence the consideration of the candidate's application. If the disabled candidate best meets the person specification, consideration must be made regarding what would be 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate the needs of the person in question. On considering these, if it is considered that the adaptations needed would not be deemed to be 'reasonable' under the Disability Discrimination Act, the Manager will draft a letter to the applicant explaining why the adaptations cannot be made.

12. Tutors

Before recruiting Tutors/lecturers the applicant must provide a micro-lesson (15-30 minutes) to a group of willing students that is observed by a qualified member of the academic team such as the Head of Programme/The Executive Dean and Head of HR. The observer will consult students after the micro-lesson and pass their feedback and the observer's own feedback on the micro-lesson to the interview panel.

13. Making a Decision after Interview

The information obtained in the application, the interview, and in any selection tests such as the micro-lesson observation will allow candidates to be assessed by the interview panel against the person specification and a selection decision to be made.

The Chair of the panel must ensure that a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others is made and placed on the recruitment file, together with the original applications and notes of all panel members, for a minimum of 6 months after the appointment decision has been notified to the candidates.

Interview proceedings are confidential, and interviewers are free to divulge to others the decision reached only once the appointee has accepted the post. The line manager will make a provisional offer to the preferred candidate subject to satisfactory references and Disclosures (if appropriate) being received.

14. Feedback

It is good practice to offer applicants feedback after interviews and it is our policy to respond if requested with brief comments by e-mail. Feedback should be specific and honest. Panel members giving feedback must ensure that any feedback they give relates to the selection criteria for the post and that the words that they use could not be taken to infer unlawful discrimination.

15. Pre-employment Checks

A number of employment checks are required to be undertaken before a formal offer of employment can be made. It must be ensured that any offer of employment given, is a 'provisional' one, subject to receipt of documentation as shown below.

15.1. All new appointments

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary preemployment checks.

When appointing new staff, the Academy must:

- Verify a candidate's identity
- Where required obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check which will include barred list information, for those who will be working directly with adults at risk
- Automatically obtain a separate barred list check in case an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role
- Verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then LCKA will follow the advice on the gov.uk website
- Verify professional qualifications
- Ensure that a candidate to be employed as a Tutor is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the secretary of state, using the employer access online service.

Where a role requires it, an enhanced/basic DBS certificate will be obtained after the candidate has accepted an offer and their appointment has been confirmed

16. References

References should only be used after interview to confirm, but not influence, a decision. Candidates' permission must be sought prior to seeking references. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training, preferably in a supervisory capacity and a reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer.

References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'. Panel members must return all copies of any references with the application forms and their interview notes to the relevant line manager on completion of the recruitment process. References must only be kept in the personal file. Following receipt of a reference by (post or email) the referee will be contacted by phone, where possible, or email to provide verification of the reference provided. Applicants have right to request information held about them including interview notes & references.

17. Eligibility to Work in the UK

The Immigration, Asylum and Immigration Act 2006 makes it an offence to employ anyone who does not have permission to be in, or work in, the UK. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, it is the hiring manager's responsibility to ask all appointees for evidence of eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British. It is therefore a requirement to ask all candidates attending interview to bring with them evidence of their right to work in the UK. For every new employee we must (a) see, (b) check; and (c) copy either one or two documents to prove entitlement to work in the UK. The documents must be originals, not copies.

The Home Office requires that we must:

- Check that photographs appear to be of the prospective employee
- Check that dates of birth are consistent with the apparent age of the person
- Check that expiry dates have not been passed
- Check that UK Government stamps or endorsements do allow the type of work you are offering; and
- Obtain a third document (such as a marriage certificate) to explain the reason if the two documents produced are in different names.

LCKA will make a copy of the relevant parts of the documents including:

- The front cover and all the pages which give the prospective employee's personal details, especially the photograph and signature
- Any page containing a UK Government stamp or endorsement which allows the person to do the work we are offering.

18. Criminal Conviction Information

The organisation will seek a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all posts that are exempt under the Exemption Order of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A Disclosure request will only be undertaken for the successful candidate, and all candidates will be informed of this process in the invitation to interview. It should be noted that this may delay the offer a position until the disclosure process is complete.

19. Qualifications

All original documents provided as evidence of qualifications or right to work will be checked at the time of recruitment to confirm they are genuine and relate to the candidate. LCK Academy reserves the right to verify the authenticity of documents.

19.1. Initial Check (Standard for All):

- Original documents are reviewed in person (or via secure digital verification if remote) to confirm:
 - Name matches the candidate's ID.

- Document is in good condition, with no signs of alteration.
- Issuing authority appears legitimate.

19.2. Verification Trigger (When Applied):

- Verification will be carried out if any of the following apply:
- The document is from an overseas institution not well-known to LCKA.
- There is a mismatch between the candidate's stated qualification and the document provided.
- There are visible concerns about authenticity (e.g., quality, formatting, spelling errors).
- The qualification is essential to the role and regulatory compliance (e.g., teaching credentials).

19.3. Verification Methods:

- **UK Qualifications:** Cross-check with Ofqual register or issuing body.
- **International Qualifications:** Use Ecctis or equivalent verification service.
- **Right-to-Work:** Check via the UK Home Office online service.

19.4. Record Keeping:

- All checks and verifications are logged in the recruitment file for audit and compliance purposes.

20. Appointment

Only the CEO, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or appointing line manager may issue letters of appointment and arrange for individuals to go on to the payroll. Conditional offers will be made subject to the checks described above.

21. Induction and Probation

All new staff will undergo a probationary period during which they will be introduced to the main duties and responsibilities of their post. An induction programme will be set out which covers information about the organisation and their post and include safeguarding and child protection.

22. Record Keeping

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations Act, all records relating to the recruitment and selection procedure of unsuccessful candidates will be retained only for as long as is necessary (generally 6 months) and will be securely destroyed thereafter.

23. Volunteers and Guest Speakers

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or guest speaker in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

For the purposes of this policy, “regulated activity” includes any unsupervised teaching, training, instructing, caring for, or supervising of children, as well as providing advice or guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children, carried out on a regular basis.

Volunteers

Volunteers who join the Academy will be supervised in their activities. Where activities are carried out unsupervised, volunteers must comply with the conditions set out in the Academic Freedom Policy.

The Academy will undertake a risk assessment and use professional judgement when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check for any volunteer not engaged in regulated activity. In doing so, we will consider:

- What the Academy knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents, and other volunteers.
- Whether the volunteer has other employment or voluntary activities where referees can advise on suitability.
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check.

Guest speakers

Guest speakers invited to deliver talks, workshops, or presentations will be subject to the requirements of the Academic Freedom Policy.

Recruitment and vetting

All recruitment, vetting, and approval of volunteers and guest speakers will be carried out in a way that reinforces our safeguarding culture, ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and visitors understand their responsibility to protect the welfare of our students.

24. Visitors

The Academy does not have the power to request DBS checks, barred list checks, or to ask to see DBS certificates for visitors. Staff should use their professional judgement about whether visitors need to be escorted or supervised or seek advice from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

25. Safe Recruitment Checklist for Line Managers

Safe Recruitment Step	Initials	Date
Planning • Fill out staff request form. • Define your requirements: what is the post? Is the position full-time/part-time, fixed term or zero hours contract? Discuss and agree salary range with the CEO and agree on the interview panel members. • Person Specification (Essential and Desirable skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications) sent to the Head of HR. • Job description finalised including safeguarding responsibilities.		
Advertising the Vacancy Include: • LCKA name and logo • Title of vacancy • Salary (does not need to be in the advert but ought to be in details sent out to the individual applicants) • Brief details of the job • Key details of the person specification, i.e. the skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviour required for the post • Duration of the appointment if fixed term • Closing date for applications, method of application and to who applications should be submitted • DBS disclosure is required Insert safeguarding message to deter unsuitable applicants: • "(Our organisation) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974."		

Short-listing Applications Devise short-listing criteria based on Essential criteria. • Scrutinise any discrepancies/anomalies/gaps in employment noted in order to later be explored further for short listed candidates. • Reject all applications which do not meet your essential criteria e.g. Qualifications, experience, skills. • Invite to interview. Invitation to Interview • Includes all relevant information and instructions (who will be present, whether there'll be tests or tasks, location of interview, date & time).		
Interviews and assessment At least 2 interviewers: panel members have authority to appoint: have met and agreed issues and questions/assessment criteria/standards. Interview Plan a range of assessment methods including: • Interview questions which probe attitude towards safeguarding, and motivation to work with children, young people and/or families • Question any gaps exposed on application form, any live disciplinary action and/or criminal offences, police investigations or disqualifications/sanctions imposed. • The Head of HR will request sight of original documents and take copies • Tutors will be observed delivery a micro-lesson (15-30 minutes)		
Recruitment decision made This is subject to references and a satisfactory DBS and ID check. • Issue a verbal offer of employment to the candidate who is most suitable for the role. Inform candidate that the offer is subject to thorough checks and further references (where applicable). • Inform the CEO of the appointment and salary offered. If approved, the Head of HR will issue formal offer of employment together with relevant documentation for completion and seek references.		
Pre-employment checks Identity checks and qualification checks plus a DBS application if required, is carried out as soon as possible once a conditional offer has been made (usually within days and occasionally at the second interview). The applicant gives permission for referees to be contacted. The Head of HR will confirm: • Identity using photo ID - where available		

• Name, address, date of birth • Details and evidence of a change of name • Validity of qualification certificates • Completion of the Health Declaration form • Right to work in the UK using Gov.UK website • All references including current employer taken up, received and followed up by telephone (where possible) or email verification • An overseas or EEA check, where applicable. The Head of HR will submit: • Completed DBS form (if relevant) <i>Under no circumstances should a member of the onboarding team start work until ALL pre-employment checks, including having sight of the DBS, has been completed.</i>		
Plan Induction Period • Highlight safeguarding responsibilities and process for reporting concerns about colleagues within the setting. • Ensure appropriate Safeguarding training is taken up by the new worker, if not already achieved. • Ensure appropriate PREVENT training is taken up by the new worker, if not already achieved. • All new members of staff will complete Health and Safety and Fire Safety and Evacuation training.		