

# Safer Recruitment Policy

## September 2023

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Document Approval		
Job Role	Name	Date approved
Chief Operating Officer	Gemma Beech	01/09/2020
Chief Operating Officer	Gemma Beech	02/07/2021
Managing Director	Gemma Beech	14/09/2022
Managing Director	Gemma Beech	16/09/2023

<b>Date of Next Review</b>	September 2024
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## **1. Purpose**

To ensure UK Skills Academy (UKSA) practice safer recruitment and appoint suitable people to work with our learners:

- Plan a successful recruitment process
- Advertise and communicate the positions consistently
- Plan any recruitment activity
- Provide the right messages to potential applicants
- Follow a consistent and thorough process
- Obtain relevant information about each applicant through short listing and interview
- Have a robust references and DBS checking system in place.

## **2. Policy statement**

Ensuring the safeguarding of learners is a critical responsibility UK Skills Academy ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their main responsibilities, including compliance with safeguarding policies and ground rules for appropriate behaviour, we do this through the development and communication of clear and detailed Job Descriptions/Role Profiles for all staff and volunteers.

All our Job descriptions clearly outline responsibilities, including involvement in safeguarding, by explicitly stating in each job description or role profile that safeguarding is a fundamental aspect of the role.

State the specific duties related to safeguarding, such as recognising signs of abuse, reporting procedures, and maintaining confidentiality.

Provide comprehensive training, for all staff and volunteers on the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures and any annual updates and changes.

Ensure that staff and volunteers understand the ground rules for appropriate behaviour.

Offer regular refresher training to reinforce the importance of safeguarding and ensure staff and volunteers stay up-to-date with any policy changes.

Our designated safeguarding lead provides guidance and support to staff and volunteers.

Encourage open communication and a culture where individuals feel comfortable reporting concerns.

UKSA provide easy access to the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures, and ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy.

Regularly review and update these policies to reflect best practices and legal requirements.

We ensure that everyone knows the process for reporting safeguarding concerns and the contact details of the designated safeguarding lead.

UKSA maintain records of all training sessions, staff safeguarding qualifications within our single central record.

UKSA have created a culture of vigilance and responsibility when it comes to safeguarding learners, ensuring that all staff and volunteers are well-informed and committed to their roles in this critical aspect of our organisation's mission.

### **Features of a Safer Recruitment Process**

- All managers undertaking recruitment must have completed the online Safer Recruitment training.
- Set time aside for planning and structuring the process.
- Have a clear job description and person specification, setting down the

boundaries and expectations of the role including KPIs and a statement of responsibility and requirements for the role

- Clear messages about safeguarding should be sent to applicants from the outset, in advertisements and any application packs
- A statement about commitment to safeguarding should be incorporated in any job advertisement
- As a minimum, the selection process should involve a face-to-face interview and where possible another tool (role play, presentation, micro-teaching a lesson, participating in activities under observation etc)
- At interview, use probing questions into motives, attitudes, and behaviours, not just skills and experience, and questions that cover safeguarding issues as well as other role-related areas
- Seek information about employment and any conviction history and use it appropriately.
- Ensure there is an ongoing culture of vigilance in the organisation
- Obtain 2 employment references including from the current or most recent employer: with specific enquiries about the applicant's background in relation to safeguarding.

### **3. Scope**

This policy covers the UKSA process and procedure for the recruitment and selection of all staff and volunteers. It applies to all permanent and temporary employees and people working at UKSA including agency staff, contractors, consultants, and those working under self-employed arrangements. It also applies to people applying for paid or unpaid permanent or temporary work at UKSA.

### **4. Training and communication**

Training on this policy forms part of the induction process for all new employees. All

existing employees will receive regular, relevant training on how to implement and adhere to this policy.

## **5. Who is responsible for the policy?**

The Advisory Board and Managing Director has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it.

The Managing Director has primary and day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation. Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them are made aware of and understand this policy and are given adequate and regular training on it.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

The impact of this Policy will be monitored through rigorous performance reporting to management and the Directors.

The Managing Director will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **7. Recruitment process overview**

All the following steps must be followed. Rash decisions are nearly always poor decisions and not just on issues of the protection of young people and vulnerable adults.

### **Step 1 - Plan to Recruit**

#### **Job Description Review**

- Start by defining your recruitment needs and write or update the job description (JD). If the job description has changed or is new, you may need to take advice from HR.
- The relevant JD must be included in any advertisement or application pack sent out to applicants. Check that this includes details of:
  - the job content and purpose
  - how the job fits into the organisation
  - the skills and attributes needed to perform the role effectively
  - the key responsibilities applicable to the role and include a point about Safeguarding and Prevent.
  - the KPIs and Person Specification skills, experience, and knowledge for the role. Ideally, these will be split into “essential” and “desirable”. Applicants will be selected who meet the “essential” requirements. Consideration should be given as to how these will be tested.

## **Recruitment Authorisation**

- You will also need to get approval to fill the post before proceeding, which you must do by completing a Recruitment Requisition Form (RRF).
- A current JD outlining the role responsibilities, KPIs and Person Specification must be attached
- Both the RRF and the JD should then be sent to your line manager for approval.
- Finally, you should also start to consider a realistic timescale for the recruitment process and agree the composition of the selection panel.

## **Step 2 - Advertise Position**

- When the RRF form has been approved the vacancy will be advertised
- The HR Team will arrange advertising of all positions, internally and externally
- The following statement will appear on the website, adverts, job pages, JDs, with agencies and in the offer letter.

*'At UK Skills Academy we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults, and we expect all our employees to share this commitment. This post is subject to the satisfactory completion of an appropriate DBS check, Barred List check (where required), the receipt of satisfactory references and any other statutory checks that are required for the post.'*

## **Step 3 - Shortlist Suitable Applicants**

- The hiring manager should review all applications received and shortlist, ensuring that the same criteria is used for all applicants
- A useful tip for this is to allocate a date for this and arrange for at least two people to be involved in the process. This will help eliminate bias. The applications should be reviewed against the person specification – i.e. the “skills, experience and knowledge” section of the relevant job description.
- The applications should be sorted into two piles – those that match the “essential” requirements of the job description and those that do not. Where there are many applicants, reduce the number further by considering who possesses “desirable” requirements
- If there is a preliminary stage (e.g. telephone interview), then the company template must be used, which includes a mandatory statement about the DBS check that the company will undertake and asks the candidate whether they have any convictions to declare
- Those applicants that are unsuitable should be sent a “regret” email. A polite email to thank the applicant for their time and advising their application is unsuccessful on this occasion is a very good PR exercise.

## **Step 4 - Invite for Interview**

- Use the UK Skills Academy Invitation to Interview email template.
- Ensure that this is edited to give the candidate the correct information for the interview.

- Attach a copy of the UKSA Application Form. This must be completed by the applicant and sent to the hiring manager, prior to interview.

### **Step 5 - Organise who will be Involved**

Brief everyone involved in the selection process – interviewers, job-trial observers, people who may meet and greet. There should be a minimum of two interviewers, to reduce bias and have evidence on what was asked.

### **Step 6 – Select Interview activity and questions**

UKSA have set interview questions that they use for individual roles within the business – ask HR for support. There is an Interview Questions Template, which is available on request.

### **Selection Methods**

Selection methods can include as many of the following as is appropriate:

- Panel interview
- Micro-teach session (this is compulsory for all trainer and assessor teaching vacancies)
- Written exercise
- Presentation to an audience
- Meeting learner's session
- Meeting staff session
- Meeting senior manager's session
- Testing for specific skills (for example, MS Office packages)
- Assessment centre exercises
- Basic skills testing for Maths and English
- Group discussion on a set topic.

### **Step 7 – Prepare Paperwork**

Prior to the interview day all paperwork should be copied (if necessary) and made available. All interviewers should have:

- A copy of the CV and application form for each interviewee
- The Safer Recruitment Interview Pre-Screen Template (this must be completed at interview stage). This includes a mandatory statement about the DBS check that the company will undertake and asks the candidate whether they have any convictions to declare.
- Set of questions – with a note as to who will ask which question.
- Once the interview process is complete one set of forms and notes (from both interviewers) should be sent to HR to be kept on file.

### **Step 8 – Prepare Venue**

To ensure a smooth interview process, the venue should be prepared. This involves letting everyone know that interviews are taking place to prevent disturbances. Arrange for someone to meet and greet applicants as they arrive. Organise the interview space

– if using an office, tidy up and divert phones. Remember the applicant is interviewing UKSA too. They are more likely to accept a position if a good impression is given!

## **Step 9 – Conducting the Interviews**

Conduct the interviews per the agenda. It is important that all applicants are treated equally. This is to prevent any bias or discrimination and enable comparison of applicants effectively against the criteria. Whilst different questions may be asked of each applicant to clear up any ambiguities on employment history, safeguarding or knowledge, these must be relevant to the role, must be in keeping with the information required to decide and must only be in addition to the set questions asked of all applicants.

You must record all questions and answers. Once the interview process is complete these must be kept with other decision documentation and sent to HR.

A useful agenda for an interview:

- Welcome and introductions. Clearly say name, position, and role in the interview
- Briefly state the agenda of the interview and how long it is likely to take (and try to keep to time)
- Ask the applicant your set of questions – recording answers
- Tell the applicant about the nature of the job and about UKSA. Do not tell them earlier in the interview– the applicant may copy your words and their views may not be clearly determined
- Tell the applicant about the terms and conditions, including discussing possible start dates
- The Safer Recruitment Interview Pre-Screen Template must be completed at interview stage. This includes a mandatory statement about the DBS check that the company will undertake and asks the candidate whether they have any convictions to declare
- Please note it is important to identify and record all gaps in the candidates employment history during the interview process. The application form completed in advance by the candidate will assist you to do this
- Ensure that the candidate has any essential qualifications required for the role
- Answer any applicant questions
- Tell the applicant what will happen next – regret, job trial, offer
- Thank the applicant for their time and close the interview (on time!).

### **Interview Question Response Form**

- Use the interview form to record all questions and answers given. After each interview, you should assess the applicant against the competencies listed
- This process ensures assessment of all applicants is fair, equal, and individually measured against a set benchmark
- The interview questions response form must be completed by the hiring manager at the conclusion of the interviews
- Ensure you have signed and dated the interview questions response form and the Safer Recruitment Screening Questions.

## **Step 10 – Unsuccessful Candidates**

On completion of the interview all completed interview questions response forms, Safer Recruitment screening questions, application forms and CVs for all unsuccessful candidates should be sent to the HR Team. The HR Team will be responsible for contacting the unsuccessful candidates in writing to confirm that the candidate has been unsuccessful and to retain for our records.

## **Step 11 – Conditional Offer**

- Identify the successful candidate and ensure you have all the information you require. Do not make an offer until this process has been completed
- Complete in full part B of the RRF.
- The RRF, interview questions response form, Safer Recruitment Screening Question, application form and CV, must then be sent to your line manager for approval.
- An offer must not be made to the candidate until this has been approved.
- Once approval has been confirmed, HR will arrange to issue an offer letter and contract.

This offer will be subject to:

- A Children's Barred List check being carried out and a clean record
- DBS check at the appropriate level being acceptable
- Receipt of at least 2 satisfactory employment references, including the current or most recent employer
- The hiring manager must ensure that they work with the candidate to provide the HR Team with the following information for the successful candidate, to ensure that the necessary pre-employment checks can be undertaken as quickly as possible:
  - A current JD
  - CV and application form
  - Interview questions response form and Safer Recruitment screening question
  - Details of 2 employment referees, including the current or most recent employer
  - Proof of ID and address documents
  - Copies of certificates for any essential qualifications
  - Completed employee verification document
- HR will take up the DBS and reference checks as quickly as possible and wherever reasonably possible, confirm that these have been received before the employee's start date
- If these checks are not complete before the employee's start date, then if the role is likely to come into regular contact with young people or vulnerable adults, the hiring manager must ensure that the employee is not allowed to work with or be with learners, unsupervised. The hiring manager must ensure that they work with the employee to provide HR with any additional or missing information.
- The hiring manager should ask whether the new employee has a pre-existing DBS that they can share.



## **Step 12 – Enhanced DBS Check and Children’s Barred List Check**

- Collect all the relevant documents for the DBS check and check they are eligible to work in the UK
- A Children’s Barred List check will take place

UKSA complies fully with the DBS regulations and Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage retention and disposal of disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation covering the safe handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of disclosure information.

All applicants are treated equally during the recruitment process and that only those factors related to the vacancy to be filled will be used to make selection decisions. UKSA will take no account of gender, marital status, carer commitment, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, age, colour, race, or socio-economic background. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure based on a conviction or other information revealed.

Application forms will contain a statement that a DBS check (including a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service) will be requested if the applicant is offered a post at the company that is in regulated activity. Other posts may be subject to a DBS check that does not require a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service. A disclosure is a document provided by the Home Office containing information held by the Police and Government departments, which is used by organisations to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures provide details of a person’s criminal record, including convictions, cautions, reprimands, and warnings.

Disclosure information will be used only for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant’s full consent has been obtained.

Due to the nature of the work at UKSA, applicants will be asked to disclose details of convictions that would be regarded as ‘spent’ under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Having an ‘unspent’ conviction will not necessarily bar candidates from employment. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the candidate’s offence(s).

When assessing disclosures, the company will:

- Ensure that requesting and handling of criminal records will always be dealt with in appropriate confidence and with discretion
- Comply with Data Protection and Human Rights legislation
- Ensure that access to criminal record information is only released to others on a need to-know basis
- A risk assessment will be completed on the candidate to ascertain the risk associated with the criminal record.

When considering the relevance of a disclosure, a decision on employment will be based on;

- The risk to learners and other members of the company
- The seriousness of the offence(s)
- An examination of circumstances leading up to the offence

- Repeat offences
- The length of time since an offence(s) was committed
- An individual's attempt to rehabilitate themselves
- The capacity to manage risks and provide safeguards
- Level of supervision required and available
- The country and circumstances in which an offence was committed.

If a candidate will not give authorisation for a disclosure to be carried out, then any provisional offer of employment will normally be withdrawn. The final decision on whether a conviction is a barrier to employment will be made by the Managing Director. UKSA will not accept disclosures obtained from other organisations until such portability becomes legally valid.

### **Disclosures Revealing Convictions / Additional Information**

If matters of concern are revealed, the disclosure will be immediately passed to the Managing Director who will ensure that disclosure information is not passed to persons not authorised to receive it. They will assess the form to identify whether the matters revealed are relevant to the position applied for or appointed to and will discuss it with the appropriate senior manager.

- The Managing Director will discuss any matters revealed in the disclosure information with the individual before deciding whether to make an offer of employment or withdraw an offer of employment.
- If an offer of employment has already been made, the employee will be advised of the outcome of this meeting in writing within five working days. Where the decision is to withdraw the offer of employment, full reasons will be detailed.
- If the individual has already begun their employment at UKSA, their employment may be terminated at a dismissal hearing, following the provisions of the Probationary Procedure. They will be suspended from work, in accordance with the provisions of the Disciplinary Policy and will be given five working days' notice of the hearing at which they will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. If they are dismissed, they will be given the appropriate notice of termination of their employment.

### **Step 13 - Request References**

Each applicant should have provided the names of 2 employment referees, including their current or most recent employer. These should be people they have worked with and have knowledge of how they would work with our learners.

HR will take up these references once an offer is confirmed. The reference is an essential tool in safeguarding practice as it provides information as to the suitability of applicants who are working with young people or adults. For this reason, do not accept references which are photocopied or are addressed "To whom it may concern".

We will not accept references from family or friends. Where applicants do not have a previous employer, contact a reference at college or school or obtain a character reference from someone of standing within the community.

## **Step 14 – Eligibility to work in the UK**

As part of UKSA's recruitment procedure, and to ensure that it follows employment and immigration legislation as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, all potential employees are asked to provide specific original documentation to prove nationality during the selection process.

## **Step 15 – Starting Work (Induction)**

All new members of staff should be inducted into UKSA including experienced people. The purpose of an induction is to welcome the new starter and familiarise them with the Company's values, ethics, policies, and procedures.

This is particularly important in Safeguarding and Prevent. Make sure that the induction process makes clear the Safeguarding and Prevent policies and what behaviours are acceptable and what are not.

- The hiring manager must ensure that there is a local induction in place, using the Induction Template to populate information about key contacts and schedule meetings for the first 2 weeks of employment.
- The hiring manager must ensure the following mandatory training is completed within the first month of employment – Safeguarding, Prevent, and Equality & Diversity
- Those appointed to manager roles must also complete: Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding
- The remainder must be completed by the end of Week 1 at the latest.

## **Step 16 – Probationary Period**

All appointments are subject to a probationary period. This is to determine their suitability to work with UKSA in terms of their skills, knowledge, attitude, behaviour. Probationary periods are 6 months. During that time, regular, recorded reviews with the new starter regarding performance will be conducted. A probation period can be extended for up to 3 months.

## **Step 17 – Confirmation Appointment**

Following a successful 6 months' probationary period, the appointment will be confirmed as 'permanent'.

## **Step 18 – 1:1 and Performance & Development Review**

The line manager and employee must have regular (monthly) 1:1 meeting and a PDR at least annually to review performance, set objectives and discuss a Personal Development Plan.



**Managing Director**