



# Inclusive Recruitment at the IoPPN

**“A diverse workforce is a reflection of a changing world and marketplace” –  
(Green, et al. 2015)**

**Inclusive recruitment is a source of competitive advantage; it increases  
creativity and productivity - (The Recruitment & Employment Confederation,  
2012).**

King's and IoPPN strive to be global leaders in research, innovation and education. We must therefore recruit a diverse range of people. This toolkit provides useful tips to recruitment and selection guidance and aims to ensure:

- A consistent and inclusive approach to recruitment and selection;
- Adherence to King's College London's Recruitment and Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Policies, particularly in relation to the Equality Act 2010;
- Managers can attract and recruit high quality diverse staff and
- Members of staff are recruited based on their ability.

## **All hiring managers should aim to:**

- Write inclusive Job Descriptions with clear and objective criteria focusing on what is considered crucial to the role and minimising emphasis on time served/qualifications
- Use Inclusive Advertising practices to attract a diverse recruitment pool ensuring you are hiring the best candidate for the role
- Actively think about the Inclusive selection and interview process to minimise impacts of unconscious and implicit bias and ensure candidates can perform at their best
- Ensure fairness in appointment & contract where negotiation process is transparent and standardised

All members of the shortlisting and interview panels should have completed the EDI e-learning module and attended King's Diversity Matters Managers training in the last three years. Every member involved in the recruitment and appointment process should also be aware of their own implicit biases as well as the ways in which bias could be embedded within the recruitment and selection process.

To find out more about King's commitment to diversity and inclusion, visit [www.kcl.ac.uk/diversity](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/diversity)

## **Inclusive Job Descriptions and Advertisement**

The language we use to describe and advertise roles communicates our expectations and shapes others' views. Whilst the way we use and understand language varies, there are patterns and trends in language use that may appeal to or dissuade specific groups. There is significant research showing that men and women relate to different words in job advertisements (e.g. Gaucher, et. al, 2011). Consider reading the following research article: ["Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality"](#)

The first step of the recruitment process is to keep in mind is who will be attracted by the job description and advertisement. Of course we want to attract the best candidates, but it is important that the language used is inclusive and is not off putting for a subsection of the population (e.g. women or men depending on the role, those from racialised backgrounds, those with disabilities or caring responsibilities).

Consider using welcoming and positive action statements, here are some examples:

- At King's, we are deeply committed to embedding good equality and diversity practice into all of our activities so that the university is an inclusive, welcoming and inspiring place to work and study, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.
- We encourage and welcome applications from across the global community and all appointments are made solely on merit.

#### **Targeted positive action messages for relevant jobs:**

- **For PS Grades 1-5, Research Assistant, Postdoc and Teacher roles:** We particularly welcome male candidates as they are under-represented at this level
- **For PS Grades 6-7, Lecturer roles:** We particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates as they are under-represented within the university at this level.
- **For Professional Services at 8 and above and Academic & Research at Senior Lecturer and above:** We particularly welcome applications from female and black and minority ethnic candidates as they are under-represented within the university at this level.

#### **Top Tips for Writing Job Descriptions and Adverts**

- Use the second person 'you' while referring to the reader in the description of the requirements and expectations of the candidate. This will help people to visualise themselves in the role, creates a sense of belonging and avoids unnecessarily gendered language.
- Unnecessary jargon/acronyms in job descriptions and adverts can be a barrier to credible candidates. It is best to assume the candidate doesn't know the ins-and-outs of the institution. Whilst experienced candidates in a similar role may understand jargon, these word choices can make other candidates feel unqualified. Insider language is a quick way to make someone feel like an outsider.
- Gender-neutral language, avoiding she/he, and words should be used as far as possible in job adverts, unless there is an occupational requirement, or it is part of a positive action statement. A [Gender Decoder](#) website can help determine stereotypical words prior to publishing

- Avoid any wording that could present barriers and are unnecessary, (e.g., young, mature, active), placing less emphasis on time served (e.g. “7 years in a similar position”), to take into consideration people who have taken career breaks.
- Emphasise work flexibility and other family friendly policies
- Limit the list of skills and qualifications on the job advert to those that are crucial to perform the role, making it more appealing to a wider pool of candidates and consider softening the message with language like “familiarity with,” or “if you have any combination of these skills”.
- Include diversity and inclusion statements (if relevant) that proactively encourage underrepresented groups to apply.

## **Positive action vs. positive discrimination**

Positive action allows employers to encourage job applications from under-represented groups. Positive Action seeks to make opportunities more transparent, accessible, and inclusive of candidates based on evidence of disadvantage, it does not remove the need for candidates to demonstrate they are the most qualified for the job. Examples of permitted positive action include positive action statements, or placing advertisements where they are more likely to be seen by the members of a disadvantage group.

In addition, if two candidates are equally suited for a vacancy, an organisation is allowed to select the candidate who is under-represented in that organisation based on their diversity profile (Equality Act 2010). However, employers must ensure that they have evidence from equality monitoring data to justify their positive action.

On the contrary, positive discrimination (or positive affirmation), which means an automatic selection of under-represented groups without a justification, is not legal in the UK. Positive discrimination refers to treating one person more favourably than another on the ground of that individual’s sex, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation. In the recruitment context, positive discrimination is where an employer recruits a candidate because they have a relevant protected characteristic, rather than because they are the best candidate. A selection on merit must be the overriding principle. (Times Higher Education, 2008).

### **Examples of lawful Positive Action**

- Encouraging more applicants from under-represented groups by advertising vacancies to a specified audience/network or conducting outreach to these groups.
- Making a public statement in recruitment adverts, ensuring prospective applicants are aware that your organisation welcomes applications from the target group, based on evidence of under-representation.

### **Examples of unlawful Positive Discrimination**

- Moving someone through the recruitment process on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Favouring people from under-represented groups at any stage of the application process, such as removing the need for a certain stage for any group of people.

## **Advertising**

All King's job adverts will be put on the Hirewire website. Other frequently used publications and job boards can be found. If you are looking to attract a wider pool of candidates to your post, you may want to consider advertising on diverse job boards, social media platforms such as LinkedIn and also through internal staff networks. We encourage you to speak to your HR advisor about these when advertising a job.

- [Diversityjobboard.co.uk](https://diversityjobboard.co.uk) Candidates from diverse backgrounds
- [Disabilityjobboard.com](https://disabilityjobboard.com) Disabled jobseekers
- [Dayjob.com](https://dayjob.com) Public sector and voluntary sector
- [Wisecampaign.org.uk/jobs](https://wisecampaign.org.uk/jobs) STEM qualified women
- [Proudemployers.org.uk](https://proudemployers.org.uk) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans + inclusive
- [Womenintech.co.uk](https://womenintech.co.uk) STEM qualified women
- [Workingmums.co.uk](https://workingmums.co.uk) Working mums

## Selection & Interview

When you start the shortlisting process, you should first ensure that you have a group of people who are diverse and where possible include different genders, ages, ethnicities or other protected characteristics. [Research has shown that by only interviewing one female candidate, they are statistically unlikely to be selected.](#) But this improves when there are more than one woman on the shortlist panel. To avoid one individual's bias, more than one person should be involved in shortlisting.

All interview panels should consist of at least two people where **at least one being a woman**, and where possible **at least one individual who identifies as coming from a racialised minority background**. For senior appointments, panels should aim to have a 50/50 gender balance and at least two individuals from a racialised minority background.

Where there are very few women or limited racial and ethnicity diversity you should seek to establish a relationship with other departments at the faculty, university or suitable partner organisations, whereby individuals could be seconded to participate in the recruitment process. You should also be considerate of staff members' time and refrain from continually asking the same individual to sit on panels.

Additionally, consider enabling more junior women and staff from racialised backgrounds to participate on the panel, with suitable coaching and support. This could be having an equal decision-making role or shadowing the panel and providing observations. This would help to increase diversity and to provide junior staff with development opportunities.

Shortlisted candidates should be made aware of the interview format and details of any assessments. Reasonable adjustments should be made if a candidate has a condition that would significantly hamper on their ability to perform in a particular aspect of the recruitment process. For more information, please refer to [Reasonable Adjustment Guide from The Office for National Statistics](#).

### Top tips for conducting the interview

- Consider when it is held (i.e. during standard hours-10.00-16.00), where it is held (i.e. disability access and impact of any imagery in the room) and the shortlisted candidates require any reasonable adjustments to be arranged.
- Determine a list of standard questions which relate to the person specification essential and desirable criteria that will be asked to every candidate. Consider sharing the interview questions in advance this not only supports individuals who identify as neurodiverse but also increases the depth and quality of responses from all candidates.
- Any assessments need to be relevant to the job, well designed and properly administered.
- Make sure you introduce all members of the panel and, if appropriate, clarify the role each member has on the panel.
- Ensure you are addressing the person correctly. If you are unsure of the pronunciation of a name, research it in advance and take some time to practice. You may wish to write it phonetically in your notes and be sure to make any adjustments once the person has introduced themselves. Do not give the person a nickname or amend their name unless they explicitly ask you to do so.
- Remember that an interview is not just about you assessing the candidate against the criteria of the role, but also highlighting the environment and culture they might be working in if appointed.
- Highlight any of the positive features of the work environment that are likely to appeal to women and other under-represented groups and any features of the role which allow for flexible working (and mention those that will definitely not).
- Avoid asking questions relating to applicants' protected characteristics.
- Remember that any successful candidates will become a member of our IoPPN and King's community, it is therefore ok to explore how candidates will positively contribute to that environment (such as their commitment to EDI, collaboration, outreach and skill development).
- Do not be afraid of addressing any comments that are counter to creating a culture of inclusion, diversity and equity which may be made during the interview, by either candidates or panel members. All panel members should feel comfortable in exploring and addressing these comments. There are a number of ways which these comments can be respectfully explored.

#### **Potential questions to assess a candidates commitment to EDI**

- What was the most recent EDI training you attended and what blew your mind from this training? (i.e. trying to work out where they are in their journey and if simple/basics in EDI are still blowing their mind or if it's a deeper understanding/experience)
- What CD&I activities/initiatives have you recently facilitated?
- Ask about a time their institution got something wrong and what their part in getting it wrong was and what they learned from it
- What would you do if you were made aware that a research staff was bullying/behaving inappropriately?
- How would you address a specific issue i.e. probation process, large proportion of fixed term contracts?
- How do you define "diversity" from a professional perspective?

- Please give an example of your ethnicity and/or cultural identity impacting your work. Reminder – everyone has an ethnicity and cultural identity.
- Explain how EDI has played a role in your career.
- King's/loPPN has a diverse workforce (in terms of ethnicity, class, culture, language, sexual orientation, and disabilities). Can you tell us about your experience working with and serving such a diverse population?
- What do you see as the fundamental characteristics of organizations that create an inclusive environment?
- What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?
- Please share an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences; and how you've worked to understand perspectives of others?
- Provide an example of a time you communicated a complex concept to an individual who spoke English as a second language.
- In what ways have you demonstrated commitment and sensitivity to the importance of diversity in your previous experience?
- What tools/techniques do you bring for promoting collaboration among underrepresented groups?
- Please tell us about an instance when you have demonstrated leadership or commitment to inclusion in your work.
- Describe your experiences in incorporating equality, diversity and inclusion into strategic planning.
- What is your experience of training or teaching diverse [student] groups?
- The College is involved in ongoing work to decrease the attainment gap and make learning equitable for all students across King's. What is your understanding of the attainment gap and how have you incorporated what you know about attainment gaps, into your teaching methods?
- 

### **Appointment & Contract**

As a potential *or current* employee, it is important to remember that negotiation should occur at the time of appointment *or promotion*. For many reasons, women and those from racialised minority backgrounds are less likely to negotiate salary and benefits than white men are, which contributes to the gender pay gap.

Practical advice on how to negotiate can be found on our [Negotiation webpages](#).

### **Activation of Employment**

Inclusive recruitment does not stop when a candidate is formally appointed. It is important to consider how that individual will be inducted into the new role, team, department, faculty and college.

Within 5 working days of employment, a HR system profile will be created, an ID card and email will be provided, and the terms of probation will be discussed. Additionally, line managers should consider an informal induction to the department. This may include a tour of the campus and office, and introductions to other team members including a senior

female member of staff. The new employee should also meet with HR on the first day to discuss benefits and policies.

### **Top Seven Tips to Make a New Hire Feel Welcome**

- Prepare the workstation for the new team member's arrival. It is a caring gesture that create a positive first impression.
- Provide some King's merchandise! A coffee mug or lanyard can make an employee feel at home in the new organisation.
- Have a bulletin board or document that describes team members' job descriptions, reporting structure, personal facts (e.g. hobbies, family life) and pictures to help remembering new names and faces.
- Notify all team members ahead of the employee's first day, to stop by and meet them.
- Use a mentoring or buddy system to provide additional support and advice from a more experienced employee with no reporting relationship to the new employee. This mentor should take the new employee to lunch on the first day.
- Provide plenty of on-the-job training to minimise any uncertainties involved with starting a new role. It is also advisable to have a conversation about employee's development needs, in order to avoid roadblock in career journey.
- Ask the new member for their feedback and views on relevant matters. It would make them feel valued. It would also create an opportunity for the line manager to learn about any problems, or concerns.

### **Equality Law**

If you are interested in further reading, the Equality and Human Right Commission produced a [Guide on Equality Act 2010 for Employers](#), which is available online.

### **Implicit Bias in Recruitment & Selection**

Ways in which bias could be embedded within your organisation's recruitment and selection processes:

- Bias within the selection process: The selection process can be a useful way of assessing a candidate's skills and abilities. However too often the results of tests from selection centres are being accepted on the basis of 'blind faith'.
- Falling into the 'mini-me' trap: We all know that first impressions count. Interviewers form opinions about candidates within the first few minutes of meeting them leading to bias in decision-making.
- Organisational fit and recruitment filtering: Organisational fit operates when employers, recruitment agencies and head hunters seek individuals who not only have the skills and abilities to undertake the task of the job role, but also consider the extent to which an individual will fit into the culture of the organisation.
- Informal networks and word of mouth recruitment: We know that the old boys' network acts as a way of excluding some social groups from taking advantage of possible recruitment opportunities. The 'it's not what you know, but who you know' practice still operates within the recruitment business today.

- Sector based stereotyping: Excluding individuals from employment opportunities because of sector norms and stereotypical perceptions only exaggerates ingrained bias.

Avoiding discrimination and workplace bias. 5 simple tips on becoming an employer of choice:

- Review your Person Specifications: Ensure that your Person Specification and Job Description is free from bias – remove all unnecessary requirements that simply act as job filters or ways of narrowing your talent pool.
- Review your recruitment images: If you want to attract applicants from a wide range of backgrounds employ images and text that will appeal to a broad range of possible candidates. Research shows that minority groups respond to adverts that reflect their social identity.
- Set diversity targets for recruitment agencies: If you don't ask you don't get. Without direction from their clients, there will be little motivation for recruitment agencies to field a wide range of talented candidates.
- Remove bias within selection tests: Ensure that the types of case studies you use as part of any selection tests do not favour any particular group. Similarly, ensure that you use psychometric tests that are free from bias.
- Be aware of the 'halo affect': The halo effect operates at an unconscious level and allows candidates to pass through a 'favourable filter', by sending unconscious codes about who they are and their relationship to the interviewers.

You may like to watch a short video called '[The process of restricting talent](#)', sponsored by The Law Society. This video was co-produced by [Steps](#), world leaders in drama based training.

## A Checklist - Top 10 Tips for Inclusive Recruitment

- ☐ **1) Standardised your processes.** Ensure you are following the processes and guidance available from the HR Recruitment team.
- ☐ **2) Complete the EDI e-learning module and Diversity Matters.** Ensure that anyone involved in recruitment of the staff member has undertaken Diversity Matters training at the appropriate level. This should include reception or administration staff involved in the process.
- ☐ **3) Use inclusive language.** Inclusive language should be used in your advertisements, descriptions and in your interviews. Ensure you are addressing candidates using the correct name (including pronunciation) and pronouns.
- ☐ **4) Use targeted positive action where you can.** This will encourage more diverse candidates to apply.
- ☐ **5) Think carefully about your advertising.** Branch out beyond the obvious places and consider sharing via Jiscs, student societies and groups and staff networks. Utilising characteristic specific advertisers, such as Proud Employers or BME Jobs.



☐ **6) Build and showcase your inclusive team culture.** Highlighting the environment the successful candidate will be working in

☐ **7) Ask about a candidate's work to support Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in their interview**

☐ **8) Be available to answer questions and give insight into the team.** Think carefully about who has access to additional information and how this impacts their applications.

☐ **9) Check and challenge yourself** and other panellists throughout the process, ask for more evidence or information and avoid making snap decisions.

☐ **10) Reflect on the experiences** after hiring and speak to the appointed staff member about their experience.

#### References:

- Bohnet, I. (2016) 'What Works: Gender Equality by Design', The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, London.
- Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., & Kay, A. C. (2011, March 7) 'Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology', Available at: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/gendered-wording-in-job-ads.pdf>.
- Gilhooley, D. (2008) 'Positive discrimination and positive action', Times Higher Education, Available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/positive-discrimination-and-positive-action/404799.article>.
- Green, K. et. Al (2015) 'Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges and the Required Managerial Tools', University of Florida.
  - Sexton, E. (2012) 'Inclusive recruitment agenda can provide key differentiator for agencies', The Recruitment & Employment Confederation.