

## PERSONNEL SERVICES

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 Director of Human Resources



To: heads of division, divisional secretaries, Dr Gambles, Mr Shaw

Ref. EMS/6

cc. heads of departments and institutions, faculty board chairs,  
 departmental administrators and faculty board secretaries, Director of  
 Conference of Colleges Secretariat

28 May 2014

### **The Senior Appointments Panel of the Personnel Committee (SAP)**

*This circular reminds divisions and departments of the arrangements in place for the consideration of cases by the Senior Appointments Panel.*

*The Senior Appointments Panel has agreed a number of changes to the processes by which divisions can apply for the creation of RSIV posts, for appointment without advertising to those posts and for approval for the postholder's salary. This circular details those changes.*

## **1. Background**

### *The role of the Senior Appointments Panel*

The SAP consists of the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Personnel and Equality). It advises the Vice-Chancellor on:

- the *ad hoc* conferment of titles of distinction;
- super-scale payments to Associate Professors for recruitment and retention purposes;
- additional payments to substantive readers and professors for retention purposes;
- the creation, grading and salaries for senior administrative posts (ALC6) and senior research posts (RSIV and E82) and the appointment of individuals to such posts without advertisement.

All cases come through the relevant divisional office under cover of a letter from the Head of Division, and are considered at meetings, normally fortnightly in term-time. Very pressing cases, especially those arising outside term, may be considered by correspondence or by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the panel.

### *Changes to the processes for the submission of cases to the SAP*

Following a review of the SAP's activity during the 2013-14 academic year, the Personnel Committee and the SAP have agreed some amendments to the processes for the creation of RSIV posts, for appointment without advertisement to those posts, and for the approval of the postholder's salary. These revised processes are designed to ensure that the process is rigorous and fair and can give the University confidence that only the best researchers globally are appointed to RSIV posts. They have also been designed to ensure that they satisfy the need for agility in response to external opportunities and acute internal retention cases and that they minimise the administrative load placed upon departments and divisions.



## 2. Senior Appointments Panel Procedures

### *General considerations*

All cases should be sent to the secretary to the SAP ([sarah.kilgour@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.kilgour@admin.ox.ac.uk)) by the relevant divisional office, under cover of a signed letter from the relevant Head of Division. Any incomplete cases will be returned by the Secretary for completion. If departments or divisions will not be able to provide any required item of information in a timely fashion, they should contact the Secretary in the first instance to discuss their options.

Cases for the conferment of full professorial title or which include a request for the conferment of title, either on recruitment or on grounds of retention, should specify the exact title requested e.g. 'Professor of French Literature' and the date of effect. The case should confirm that conferment of title would be consistent with decisions previously made in the subject-area by the Recognition of Distinction Committee or the SAP. **Three** references from full professors at prestigious universities, explicitly comparing the individual to the University's distinctions criteria, must be included. The referees should not be nominated by the individual.

Awards of title or salary supplements will only be made on the grounds of retention where the need is acute i.e. a firm offer has been made and it is thought likely that the individual will accept it, or there is clear evidence of momentum towards such an offer. Wherever possible, a copy of the offer should be supplied. The SAP does not make awards on the grounds of equity.

Dates of effect of proposed salary arrangements should be specified. All cases should include formal confirmation that the costs are fully funded. If the proposal relates to a fixed-term contract or arrangement, this should be made clear.

Confirmation of the views of the college of association should be included whenever relevant.

A CV for the current or proposed postholder should be included, whenever possible.

### *Requests for a salary supplement for academic staff on appointment*

The divisional covering letter should explain the rationale for the proposal, in terms of the academic importance of recruiting that particular individual. It must be made clear why it is thought that the normal salary would not be sufficient to recruit the proposed postholder.

The proposed salary package, including college income, must be specified, as well as any variation from the standard set of terms and conditions.

Proposed super-scale salaries should take account of internal comparabilities, and evidence should be provided to show that they would not lead to unacceptable salary anomalies.

The proposed postholder's application should be circulated with the references received.



### *Requests for a salary supplement for academic staff on retention grounds*

The divisional covering paper should explain the rationale for the proposal, in terms of the academic importance of retaining a key and distinguished member of the academic staff.

The proposed supplement and the proposed salary package, including college income, must be specified, as well as any variation from the standard set of terms and conditions. Proposed super-scale salaries should take account of internal comparabilities, and evidence should be provided to show that they would not lead to unacceptable salary anomalies.

Any details known of the offer and a copy of it, wherever possible, should be included. The case should explain why it is thought that the proposed supplement will be sufficient to achieve retention.

### *Proposed new RSIV (and ALC6 and E82) positions*

Different process will apply depending upon the reason for establishing the post.

In all cases, a graded job description for the proposed post and the individual's CV should be included.

#### *Situation 1: Creating RSIV posts for advertising*

The case should set out the academic rationale for the post, with a graded job description, details of the funding, and the proposed salary. Evidence must be provided to show that the proposed salary would not lead to unacceptable, internal salary anomalies.

#### *Situation 2: Creating RSIV posts for the purpose of retention of an existing staff member in the face of an offer of alternative employment*

The case should set out the academic rationale for the retention proposal, outlining the individual's academic standing and contribution to the University. An assessment of the difficulty anticipated in replacing the individual with a researcher of equivalent global standing should be supplied.

In addition, the following information should be provided:

- 1) Contextual data: the number of staff and the proportion of women in senior academic and research roles in the department and (as far as is known) in the subject nationally;
- 2) If the proposed salary is to be different from the individual's current salary, the salaries of other staff at the same level in the department, and their gender; and
- 3) The individual's standing in the subject globally.

Any details of the offer known and a copy of it, when possible, should be included. It should be explained why it is thought that the proposed arrangements will be sufficient to achieve retention.



Larger departments who apply to the SAP more regularly might wish to have the data required in 1) and 2) above pre-prepared in order to expedite the preparation of urgent cases. The Secretary to the SAP will provide further contextual data at a divisional and University level.

*Situation 3: Creating RSIV posts for the purposes of managed moves*

When a proposal to create an RSIV post is driven by a need to provide research leadership in a particular area, the case should set out the academic rationale for the arrangements proposed, along with a graded job description for the post. The case should include:

- 1) a narrative on how the individual was identified and which other potential candidates were considered;
- 2) the grounds on which the proposed postholder was selected; and,
- 3) a list of any potential female candidates identified with an explanation of why they are not being offered this opportunity.

Details of the proposed salary should be supported by data on the individual's current salary, and the salaries of any comparable posts, at departmental or divisional level, as appropriate, with the gender of the postholders.

If the move is from the Associate Professor grade to an RSIV post clarification should be given as to what will happen to the underlying teaching, and the position of the college should be provided.

*Situation 4: Creating RSIV posts for external candidates without advertisement*

The SAP considers that, following the REF census date, there will be less need to create RSIV posts for external candidates to be appointed without advertising. It is thought that in the vast majority of cases, it will be preferable to create an RSIV post for advertisement and invite individuals to apply, rather than to appoint them without advertising. For those exceptional cases in which appointment to an RSIV without advertising is the only way to achieve an objective that is vital to the University's continued growth and good reputation, a more stringent process, supported by more robust data than has been the case, is thought to be required.

The following process will apply with immediate effect. [If you already have cases in the pipeline which do not adhere to this process, please discuss this with Sarah Kilgour].

**Stage 1: Application by division for the creation of an RSIV post to be filled without advertising**

The division should include in the case any information they believe to be relevant and potentially helpful to the SAP in reaching a decision, to include as a minimum:

- 1) a narrative outlining:
  - a) how the opportunity to recruit this individual came to light i.e. did the individual approach the department or has it come to light through other means that an individual is interested in moving between institutions\*; and,
  - b) any discussions with the individual that relate to the possibility of a move\*.



- 2) contextual data as appropriate, to include:
  - a) the number of statutory professors and RSIVs, and the proportion of women in those grades at departmental level (and, when appropriate, the sub-department)\*;
  - b) the proportion of women in academic and senior research posts (as far as is known) in the subject nationally: departments and divisions should decide how to define the 'subject area' e.g. physics, or sub-atomic physics, in the way that will be most helpful to the SAP in understanding the context for the proposal\*.
- 3) a description of how the individual's research will fit with departmental academic priorities;
- 4) if the case seeks a permanent appointment, details of how the post will be supported in the absence, now or in future, of grant funding to support the salary and associate costs;
- 5) confirmation that the individual is and will continue to be below the EJRA for the term of any proposed fixed-term contract (or that EJRA approval for the appointment has been received)\*;
- 6) a list of the 5-6 most eminent scholars globally (below the EJRA) in the subject area (at sub-department level, where appropriate), an overview of how the individual compares to them, and an explanation of why these others are not considered 'targets'. The list should include at least two women and an explanation should be given of why they could not be approached instead (in subject areas where this proves impossible, an explanation of the efforts made to identify suitable women should be provided)\*;
- 7) an assessment of the urgency of the case and the reasons for the perceived urgency (this is to help the Secretary assess the need for consideration by correspondence).

New requirements are marked with a \*.

Larger departments who apply to the SAP more regularly might wish to have the data required in 3) and 6) above pre-prepared in order to expedite the preparation of urgent cases. The Secretary to the SAP will provide further contextual data at a divisional and University level.

Departments should **not** conduct negotiations with an individual about salary or other terms prior to SAP approval for the creation of the post, to avoid reputational damage if approval is not received. If an individual approaches the Department, any discussions should be as brief as possible and clearly based on the understanding that the Department cannot make any guarantees. If the Department wishes to approach an individual they believe to be interested in moving, they should seek SAP approval **before** making an approach.

### **Stage 2: Decision-making in principle**

On receipt of cases, the SAP will consider whether to:

1. approve the creation of the post for appointment without advertising, subject to successful negotiations with the individual on salary and terms;



2. seek more data, where appropriate from external sources, which might include:
  - a) asking the department (via the division) to provide further detail in particular areas of the case;
  - b) asking the Secretary to acquire further contextual information about the gender balance and/or most eminent scholars in the subject area;
  - c) requiring the department to 'sound out' the interest of the list of eminent scholars in the potential post.

The SAP will then reconsider the case at the earliest opportunity.

3. approve the creation of the post but require the department to progress to an advertisement in all normal media and a competitive selection exercise (to be brought to the attention of the department's preferred target and some or all of those on the list).

### ***Stage 3: Finalising the package***

When approval to enter negotiations with an individual is given, departments may open discussions over the details of the package. Before a firm offer is made, the SAP must approve the proposed package including salary, any start-up costs, and any other benefits outside of the normal terms of a senior academic-related post, such as a temporary or partial exemption from the '30-day rule'.

[The expectation is that RSIV staff make a contribution to teaching and administration equivalent to that of a statutory professor, and approval should be sought for any other arrangement. Leave equivalent to sabbatical may be included in the package if the individual will undertake a full teaching and administration load; otherwise, no leave equivalent to sabbatical can be included without the SAP's approval.]

The following details should be provided in support of the case:

- the individual's proposed salary and key terms;
- the individual's current salary (and any relevant terms of their package), if known;
- the current salary and key terms (to include teaching requirements and sabbatical or equivalent leave) of all RSIVs and statutory professors in the department, by gender, with an explanation for any significant differences between those who are to be colleagues.

### **3. Action required of Departments**

Department and Divisions are asked to note the arrangements outlined above and to ensure that any applications to the SAP contain all the information listed.

### **4. Further information**

If you would like to discuss the processes associated with the SAP, please talk to your divisional office or to Sarah Kilgour, Secretary to the SAP (01865 289915, [sarah.kilgour@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.kilgour@admin.ox.ac.uk)).



MR J DUXFIELD

Director of Human Resources.

**This Circular is not for notice-boards.**