

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1 SOAS University of London ('the School') is committed to attracting the highest calibre staff by ensuring that its recruitment and selection processes are fair, efficient, and comply with legislation and the School's Equality and Diversity Statement and [Respect@SOAS Policy](#).

1.2 The School is committed to equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection, promotion and all other areas of employment. All appointments will be made on merit.

1.3 It is the responsibility of recruiting managers to ensure that this policy and procedure are carefully followed for the duration of their recruitment exercise. Heads of Department/Directorates should make members of their staff aware of the requirement to familiarise themselves with and follow this policy and procedure.

2. Objectives

2.1 To ensure that recruitment and selection exercises meet the School's operational and strategic aims, and the best candidate is successfully recruited to each vacancy.

2.2 To ensure that all appointments are made on the basis of merit through assessment of application evidence against the selection criteria for the post.

2.3 To ensure that all candidates are treated equitably and consistently.

2.4 To ensure that all persons appointed to SOAS are eligible to work in the UK or to support visa applications where possible.

2.5 To outline clearly the processes and division of responsibility for recruitment and selection exercises.

3. Scope

3.1 This Policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff to the School.

3.2 Fixed term teaching or research positions must be designated as 'Teaching and Scholarship' (Teaching) or 'Research' appointments, and not as fixed term Academic appointments, except with the approval of the Chair of Executive Board (or delegate).

4. Definitions

4.1 Recruiting manager: The person responsible for the recruitment process within the recruiting department. This will normally be the Head of Department (or delegate) for Academic Roles.

4.2 Under-represented groups: Where there have been no or few members of protected groups (e.g. race, gender and disability) in a particular type of work for the last year. Positive action provisions in equality legislation allow employers to give special encouragement to such underrepresented groups in certain circumstances.

4.3 Close professional, personal or familial relationship: A close working, friendship or family relationship between two individuals that could amount to a conflict of interest or lead to undue influence or a lack of objectivity in the recruitment process. Shared academic interests or working relationships should not constitute a close personal or familial relationship. However, anyone who has or has had a relationship of this nature, should declare this to the Chair of the Interview Selection Panel and the HR Recruitment Team as appropriate.

5. Pre-Recruitment Approval Process

5.1.1 Recruiting managers are required to fully evaluate the need for new, changed or replacement posts prior to seeking authorisation for the position. Managers should consider if the duties of the post can be eliminated or reallocated to existing post-holders, taking existing workloads into account.

5.1.2 Recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring all vacancies are approved by the appropriate authority in the School.

5.2 External research grant-funded vacancies

- 5.2.1 The Research and Enterprise Office (REO) Finance Manager (or delegated nominee) must approve all external research grant-funded vacancies.
- 5.2.2 Where School funding is required in addition to the grant funding, the vacancy must be approved in line with the budgetary agreements in place at the time.
- 5.2.3 Where there is a named or sponsored researcher attached to the funding, the Research and Enterprise Office Finance Manager (or delegate) will complete the Appointment Form for External Grant-funded Positions (Named or Sponsored Researchers) in conjunction with the employing manager, and send the completed form to the HR Recruitment Team.

5.3 School-funded positions

- 5.3.1 Posts approved in budgets can progress to recruitment. New or additional posts will require approval of the recruitment panel.

5.4 Talent Pool recruitment for Fractional Teaching Staff

- 5.4.1 If a department wishes to recruit to a number of vacancies for fractional teaching positions, they should liaise with the HR Recruitment Team to produce a talent pool advertisement on the Web Recruitment System.
- 5.4.2 Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), positions can be advertised internally only.

6. Recruitment Regulations

6.1 Selection Panels

- 6.1.1 Individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this Policy and associated procedures.
- 6.1.2 All School staff participating in the recruitment and selection of staff should have completed the School's Equality and Diversity overview training.
- 6.1.3 All School staff participating in the selection process are required to attend the School's full Recruitment and Selection training, Parts 1 and 2.
- 6.1.4 Shortlisting panels should be comprised of a minimum of two people, a mixed gender composition and, wherever possible, include individuals of different ethnicities.
- 6.1.5 Selection panels should be comprised of a minimum of three people, a mixed gender composition and, wherever possible, include individuals of different ethnicities. It is acknowledged that balanced panels may not always be achievable

but recruiting managers would be expected to make reasonable effects to achieve this.

6.1.6 The recruiting manager is required to ensure that any external panel members/advisers or recruitment agencies participating in any recruitment exercise are aware of, and comply with, the School's Equality and Diversity Policy and this Recruitment Policy.

6.2 Panel Composition

6.2.1 Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Reader (Academic) vacancies:

6.2.1.1 Interview panels for Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Reader vacancies will normally be expected to have the following composition:

- Pro-Director as Chair
- Two members of the employing department, including the Head of Department
- One panel member external to the employing Department

6.2.1.2 The panel composition must be approved by the Pro-Director. Panel members will normally be of appropriate seniority for the appointment.

6.2.2 Professorial (Academic) vacancies:

6.2.2.1 Recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that interview panels for Professorial vacancies have the following composition:

- Director or relevant Pro-Director as Chair
- Two members of the department, including the Head of Department
- One professor external to the employing Department
- An external expert from another higher education institution of professorial standing

6.2.2.2 The panel composition must be approved by the Pro-Director. Panel members will normally be of appropriate seniority for the appointment.

6.2.3 Professional Services vacancies

6.2.3.1 Panels should comprise a minimum of three people and would normally include:

- Recruiting manager as Chair
- Another member of the Team/Department at the same grade or, ideally, a more senior grade for the role being recruited to
- A key stakeholder from another Directorate or Academic Department

6.2.3.2 Panels for director-level vacancies will normally include a senior academic and an external member, and be chaired by the appropriate recruiting manager.

6.2.4 Research vacancies

6.2.4.1 Recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that interview panels for Research vacancies have the following composition:

- The Principal Investigator as Chair or, by delegation, an Associate Director of Research or Head of another Department
- Another member of the employing Department
- A member of another Department may also be included where appropriate

6.2.4.2 The panel composition must be approved by the Head of Department.

6.2.5 Teaching and Scholarship vacancies

6.2.5.1 Recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that interview panels for Teaching and Scholarship vacancies have the following composition:

- The Head of the employing Department as Chair or, by delegation, an Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching or Head of another Department
- The Department Learning & Teaching Coordinator
- Another member of the Department
- A member of another Department may also be included where appropriate

6.2.5.2 The panel composition must be approved by the Head of the employing Department.

6.3 Conflicts of interest

6.3.1 If an employee involved in recruitment processes knows a candidate, the employee should declare this to the other members of the selection panel and the HR Recruitment Team as soon as they are aware of the candidate's application.

6.3.2 Where an employee has a close working, personal or familial relationship with a candidate, it would normally be appropriate for the member of staff to have no further involvement in the selection process.

6.3.3 If a candidate has named a member of staff involved in the selection process as a referee, the candidate will be asked to provide details of an alternative referee.

6.4 Advertising and Exemptions

- 6.4.1 Fixed term posts of up to 6 months and casual posts will not normally be advertised externally unless requested by the recruiting manager. Advertised posts need to be authorised via the online Recruitment System and be approved by the budget holder and the Finance Directorate.
- 6.4.2 HR Recruitment and Operations can support and advise recruiting managers on filling posts where an external advert is not placed.
- 6.4.3 Casual posts (such as posts required on an ad-hoc basis), will normally be paid on a timesheet basis.
- 6.4.4 Where any post is required for a period greater than 6 months, the normal recruitment and authorisation process will apply.

6.5 Internal and External Advertising

- 6.5.1 All vacancies will normally be advertised internally and externally concurrently.
- 6.5.2 With the approval of the Director of Human Resources (or delegate) a post may be advertised internally only. Posts may only be advertised internally only where a potentially suitable pool of applicants can be identified.
- 6.5.3 Opportunities for Secondment or Acting-up may be advertised internally within a Department or advertised across the School on the Internal Vacancy page on MySOAS.
- 6.5.4 Recruitment may exceptionally be waived at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources (or delegate) where it can be demonstrated that an individual has already been selected through a recruitment process.
- 6.5.5 The use of external agencies and/or head-hunters is subject to approval by the Director of Human Resources (or delegate). Recruiting managers should not contact recruitment agencies without prior authorisation and should contact the HR Recruitment Team for advice and support on negotiating rates with agencies and to source the most suitable agency for their requirements.
- 6.5.6 The HR Recruitment Team will support recruiting managers in selecting the most effective methods for publicising vacancies.
- 6.5.7 All advertisements will include a statement that the School aims to be an equal opportunities employer.
- 6.5.8 All externally advertised posts will normally be advertised with a minimum of two weeks between the publication of the advertisement and the closing date.
- 6.5.9 In the following circumstances, advertising may be waived:
- Fixed term post of less than 6 months where financial approval is received in advance

- Casual ad-hoc vacancies.
- Named researchers on externally funded grants where one of the factors in the award of the grant was the strength of the research team or the individual's experience/expertise as a researcher.
- Where the post has already been unsuccessfully appointed to by external advert and that further advertising is unlikely to be effective.
- Where an employee's duties have changed to a degree which necessitates re-evaluation of the position in line with the School's Grading Review Procedure.

7. Pre-Recruitment Preparation

7.1 Preparing the advertisement

- 7.1.1 The recruiting manager is responsible for drafting the advertisement for the vacancy and providing an electronic draft to the HR Recruitment Team for review and approval. Adverts for Academic appointments must also be approved by the Pro-Director.
- 7.1.2 All posts are advertised via the Web Recruitment System. Advice on placement of advertisements should be obtained from the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.
- 7.1.3 The cost of advertising on jobs.ac.uk will be covered by the Human Resources Directorate. Other external advertising costs will be met by the employing Department/Directorate including Agency Introduction Fees, this must be agreed in advance with HR.

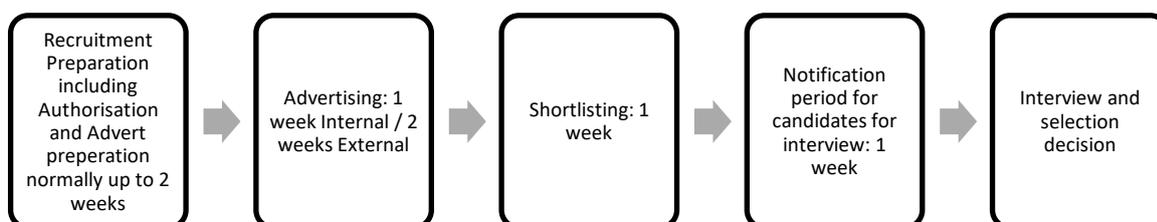
7.2 Preparing the job description and person specification

- 7.2.1 The recruiting manager is responsible for drafting the job description and person specification for the vacancy and providing an electronic draft to the HR Recruitment Team for review and approval. Job descriptions for academic appointments must also be approved by the Pro-Director.
- 7.2.2 Template and generic job descriptions at different grades are available from the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.
- 7.2.3 Person Specifications should clearly mark Essential and Desirable Criteria.
- 7.2.4 Person specifications should only include the skills, qualifications, experience and competencies required to carry out the duties of the post.

7.2.5 All new and significantly revised job descriptions are subject to HERA evaluation in accordance with the Grading Review Procedure prior to seeking approval for recruitment.

7.3 Recruitment schedule

7.3.1 Standard non-academic indicative recruitment timeline:



7.3.2 Standard academic indicative recruitment timeline:



7.3.3 Before recruitment commences, the recruiting manager should meet with and agree a recruitment schedule with their nominated member of the HR Recruitment Team.

7.3.4 The panel composition and expected interview date should be agreed before the recruitment commences; this will inform the key dates of the recruitment schedule. In addition to the responsibilities relating to panel composition, recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that all interview selection panel members are available on the agreed interview date.

7.4 Administrative arrangements

7.4.1 Room Bookings and Interview Arrangements

7.4.1.1 Recruiting managers are responsible for:

- Booking rooms for any shortlisting meetings, interviews, presentations and/or selection tests.
- Arranging any audio-visual or IT equipment required for the interviews or presentations.

- Inviting the presentation audience where they are not members of the selection panel.
- Making any arrangements required for administering a selection test.
- Completing the Interview Arrangements form and returning it to the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.

7.4.1.2 If there are any changes to the interview arrangements, the recruiting manager should notify the HR Recruitment Team immediately in order that any affected candidates can be notified.

7.4.1.3 The HR Recruitment Team will provide electronic copies of interview packs to all selection panel members at least one week prior to interviews taking place.

7.4.2 Panel members must ensure that they treat application materials as confidential, and comply with Data Protection legislation.

7.4.3 Candidate communication

7.4.3.1 The HR Recruitment Team will be responsible for all communication with candidates, and will update the status of applicants on the Web Recruitment System.

7.4.4 Overseas applicants

7.4.4.1 MS Teams interviews are recommended in the first instance, where candidates are based overseas'.

7.4.4.2 The HR Recruitment Team will liaise with candidates regarding any travel or accommodation requirements.

7.4.5 Reasonable adjustments

7.4.5.1 Candidates who disclose a disability will be invited to interview where they have demonstrated they have met the essential criteria.

7.4.5.2 The HR Recruitment Team will manage any requests from applicants for reasonable adjustments. Queries related to reasonable adjustments should be referred to the HR Recruitment Team.

7.4.5.3 Shortlisted candidates will be asked if they require any adjustments to be made in order to attend the interview, selection test and/or presentation.

7.4.5.4 The HR Recruitment Team will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments requested by disabled candidates and will notify the selection panel of any special arrangements made.

7.4.6 Confidentiality and retention of records

7.4.6.1 All applications will be treated as highly confidential by the School.

7.4.6.2 In accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy and legal requirements, candidates are entitled to request any documentation relating to their application within 6 months (e.g. interview and shortlisting records and notes, references).

7.4.6.3 Any data relating to recruitment and selection processes may be legally disclosed and staff involved in the recruitment process must apply due diligence at all times.

7.4.6.4 When the recruitment process has been completed, recruiting managers should ensure that all information and records from the selection process are returned to the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.

7.4.6.5 The Human Resources Directorate will retain recruitment records for one year.

8. Advertising the vacancy

8.1 Publishing the advertisement

8.1.1 The HR Recruitment Team will advertise the vacancy on the SOAS website and any other agreed external media on receipt of the following:

- Approval for the vacancy, (where appropriate);
- An agreed advertisement and job description;
- Confirmation of completed HERA grading, (where appropriate);
- An agreed recruitment schedule and selection panel.

8.1.2 Recruiting managers wishing to alert colleagues or potential applicants to the vacancy through email-lists or notice-boards should direct interested parties to the SOAS vacancies web page.

8.2 Applications

8.2.1 Applicants are normally required to apply online through the Web Recruitment System. Provision will be made for candidates with a disability where necessary.

8.2.2 All advertisements will include contact information for the HR Recruitment and Operations Team. Recruiting managers may also choose to provide their contact details for candidates who would like further information on the post.

8.2.3 Applicants unable to apply using the Web Recruitment System should be directed to the HR Recruitment Team for advice. Applications submitted outside the Web Recruitment System will be manually logged onto the system by a member of the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.

9. Shortlisting

- 9.1.1 At least two members of the selection panel must participate in shortlisting applicants. Panel members involved in shortlisting should be of mixed gender composition and, wherever possible, include individuals of different ethnicities. The same panel members must review and shortlist all applications, and the shortlist must be signed off by the panel chair.
- 9.1.2 A shortlisting deadline will be agreed when confirming the recruitment schedule with the HR Recruitment and Operations Team. Panel members must ensure that they allow themselves sufficient time to review all applications prior to the deadline.
- 9.1.3 Panel members must shortlist applicants by assessing the evidence provided in their applications (and any supporting documents) against the essential criteria outlined in the person specification. Shortlisted applicants should meet all of the essential criteria for the post.
- 9.1.4 Where a high number of applicants meet the essential criteria, the panel may use the desirable criteria, where available, to determine which candidates to shortlist.
- 9.1.5 Applicants who declare a disability and who meet the essential criteria on the person specification for the post must be offered an interview.
- 9.1.6 Applications for shortlisting are available via the Web Recruitment System, and can be viewed on screen, or downloaded as a PDF document. The Recruitment and Selection Team will provide electronic copies of shortlisting application packs on request.
- 9.1.7 Panel members must ensure that they treat application materials as confidential, and comply with Data Protection legislation.
- 9.1.8 Panel members may start shortlisting before the vacancy closure date, but must ensure that all applications are reviewed and that decision making is consistent across all the applicants.
- 9.1.9 The number of shortlisted candidates should be reasonable and proportionate to the number of vacancies being recruited to. The panel may wish to indicate some reserve candidates, in the event that a shortlisted applicant is unable to attend interview.

10. Interviews and Selection Methods

10.1 Presentations and selection tests

- 10.1.1 Presentations should be assessed in relation to the content, style and time management of the presentation and the candidate's response to questions.

- 10.1.2 Time should be allotted at the end of the presentations for audience discussion and feedback. Where students are attending presentations, they should not be in attendance while staff are providing feedback.
- 10.1.3 At least one member of the interview selection panel (normally the panel Chair or Head of Department for Academic vacancies should ensure they are available to chair the presentations and provide feedback to the interview panel.
- 10.1.4 Recruiting managers may decide that candidates should undergo a test (e.g. a presentation, a work-sample test, written or numerical test) as part of the selection process.
- 10.1.5 Selection tests must relate to the person specification, and are valid and a fair method of supporting the selection process. Reasonable adjustments should be made if a person has a disability which impacts on their ability to undertake the test.

10.2 Interviews

- 10.2.1 The recruiting manager should nominate a member of staff to meet candidates when they arrive, and take copies of proof of the passport and visa, (if required) and qualifications (where appropriate).
- 10.2.2 It is recommended that an interview pre-meeting is held to give the panel time to approve the questions and allocate broad areas of questioning to each panel member.
- 10.2.3 The Chair of the interview panel should ensure that the interviews are conducted in line with this Recruitment Policy, and the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 10.2.4 Interview questions must relate to the selection criteria outlined in the person specification and should be prepared before the interview.
- 10.2.5 Panel members must ensure that they treat application materials as confidential, and comply with Data Protection legislation.
- 10.2.6 Selection decisions, including decisions not to appoint applicants, should be made by majority decision of the interview panel.
- 10.2.7 Following all the interviews, selection decisions (including the decision not to appoint) made by the majority of the panel should be recorded and provided to the HR Recruitment and Operations Team.
- 10.2.8 The panel may wish to identify one or more reserve candidates, in the event that the successful candidate does not accept the job offer. The panel may base a decision to recruit on the basis of a protected characteristic where a tie break exists, if both applicants are equally scored.

10.3 Non-appointment

10.3.1 If the interview panel is unable to come to an agreement on appointing a candidate, the panel should refer the issue to the appropriate Pro-Director for Academic vacancies or to the HR Recruitment Team (for all other vacancies) for advice.

10.3.2 Following consultation, the Chair or the Recruiting Manager will decide whether:

- to re-advertise the vacancy;
- to reconsider those candidates who were interviewed but not identified as appointable.

10.4 Offers of employment

10.4.1 All offers of employment will be subject to eligibility to work in the UK (including a successful application for a certificate of sponsorship under the Points Based System for Immigration and a successful application to enter or remain in the UK if applicable).

10.4.2 Offers of employment will also be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, confirmation of teaching qualifications and proof of other qualification (where applicable).

10.4.3 The recruiting manager may make an informal, conditional offer of employment as soon as possible following interview, but not before the HR Recruitment Team has reviewed the Interview Record forms and confirmed the decision. The informal offer made by the recruiting manager should not include salary details or negotiated changes to contractual terms and conditions.

10.4.4 Formal offers of employment will be made by the HR Recruitment Team on receipt of the Appointment Recommendation form from the recruiting manager.

10.4.5 Salary offers will be made by the HR Recruitment Team in consultation with recruiting managers.

10.4.6 Salary offers will be made in light of internal salary comparators and the candidate's skills, qualifications or experience. Appropriate salary comparators will normally be identified by the recruiting manager ahead of the interview and discussed and agreed by the HoD and the Pro Director in confidence at the end of the interview.

10.4.7 The REO Finance Manager should authorise externally-funded starting salaries to ensure that salary levels are within any grant or funding requirements.

10.4.8 Starting salaries will be regularly reviewed for equality purposes.

11. Appointment of overseas applicants

- 11.1 If you wish to fill a job with a sponsored employee, it is important to consider this at the outset of the recruitment process and before an advertisement for the role is placed. Advice and support should be sought from the HR Recruitment Team.
- 11.2 Where you are seeking to appoint an overseas worker who requires sponsorship, you must be able to evidence your decision through the shortlisting and Interview process.
- 11.3 Skilled Worker Visa is usually the most appropriate route for recruiting overseas employees for roles at the School.
- 11.4 Recruiting an individual under Skilled Worker Visa usually involves the following steps:
- HR Recruitment will support you with
 - retaining records of the advertising and selection and appointment process.
 - Applying to the Home Office for a Certificate of Sponsorship.
 - The individual applying for entry clearance or leave to remain.
 - The School conducting right to work checks.
- 11.5 It is also critical that the appointment decision is consistent with what we have advertised for. For example, if you are seeking to appoint a grade 8 academic with a PhD (but would be willing to appoint an academic at grade 7 who does not yet have a PhD), we must be clear about this in the advertising materials. Again you should seek advice from the Recruitment Team.
- 11.6 European nationals resident in the UK before 31 December 2020 had until 30 June 2021 to apply for Pre-Settled or Settled status. Those who arrived for the first time from 1 January 2021 onwards will need a UK visa in order to undertake work.
- 11.7 When offering employment, it is important that we identify any European nationals who will not be eligible for Pre-Settled or Settled status and will instead require an appropriate visa for example a Skilled Worker or Global Talent visa.

- 11.8 The following wording can be used in correspondence with successful candidates when offering employment: If you are a British or Irish national you automatically have the right to work in the UK.
- 11.9 If you are an EEA or Swiss national, or the family member of an EEA or Swiss national, who was resident in the UK before 31 December 2020 you have the right to work in the UK.. The University Staff Immigration Team provides guidance on applying for Pre-Settled or Settled status, and can help with queries.
- 11.10 If you are an EEA or Swiss national but you did not move to the UK before 31 December 2020, or you are a citizen of any other country, you may need a UK visa before taking up employment. We will discuss which visa route may be appropriate and will then help you through the application process, with advice and guidance from the HR RecruitmentTeam.

12. References

- 12.1 The HR Recruitment Team will request references prior to interview for shortlisted candidates for Academic (Teaching and Research), Research, and Teaching and Scholarship vacancies, unless candidates have not given the School permission to request references prior to interview.
- 12.2 References for Professional Services, appointments will only be requested for the successful candidate following successful interview.
- 12.3 New professional services appointments will be subject to a minimum of two references, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer.
- 12.4 Early career Academic, Teaching and Scholarship, and Research appointments may provide a reference from their first PhD supervisor in lieu of a reference from a current employer, where this is not available.

13. Feedback

- 13.1 The Panel is responsible for agreeing feedback at the end of the interview for all unsuccessful candidates and will provide written feedback to the HR Recruitment Team. The HR Recruitment Team will be responsible for providing feedback to external candidates, where requested in writing, in consultation with the recruiting manager / Chair of the selection panel.

- 13.2 Internal candidates will normally receive feedback in person from the Recruiting Managers or nominated panel member.

14. Review

- 14.1 An annual equality report, including statistics on recruitment and selection, will be made to the School's Equality and Diversity Committee.
- 14.2 To ensure compliance with this Policy and the School's Equality & Diversity Statement and [Respect@SOAS Policy](#), a member of the Human Resources Directorate or the School's Diversity and Inclusion Manager may be invited to or elect to attend any stage of the recruitment process.
- 14.3 This policy and the effectiveness of its operation should be reviewed regularly.

15. Equality & Diversity Statement

- 15.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with the terms of the SOAS Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and its Equality Impact Assessment procedure. This will help ensure that the School meets its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 15.2 An *Equality* Impact Assessment has been conducted on this policy and any identified actions have been completed.