

Safer Recruitment Policy

Responsible for Implementation: Executive Head of People Services

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Scope
4. Policy Objectives
5. Roles & Responsibilities
6. Statutory Responsibilities
7. Pre-recruitment Process
8. Recruitment Process
9. Post Recruitment Process
10. Agency and third party staff
11. Self-employed staff
12. Volunteers
13. Recruitment of Apprentices
14. Single Central Record (SCR)
15. Monitoring and review

About Us

Access Further Education Limited ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Limited. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Creative College ('ACC'), Access Industry ('AI'), and Access Sport.

1. Introduction

Access Creative College (ACC) and brands within the Group (Access Sport, dBs Institute and Access Industry) has at its core a commitment to deliver outstanding education and as such wants to ensure the best people are recruited.

To help achieve our aims and objectives, it is essential that people with the relevant skills, attitude, qualifications and experience, are recruited. The prime focus of the college is teaching and learning. Therefore, it is vital that applicants demonstrate a commitment to the provision of high quality teaching and learning, as well as continuous improvement, to enable students to achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and this commitment is fundamental to the recruitment and selection of applicants.

As such when making recruitment decisions, the college ensures the children, young people and any adults at risk are safeguarded from harm by:

1. Making sure the college's commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable people is strongly promoted in order to deter unsuitable people.
2. Having robust safeguards in place throughout the recruitment process to flag up candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable people and reject them.
3. Take up references and complete all relevant pre-employment checks for candidates to prevent unsuitable people from being appointed;
4. Monitor new employees during the induction period to observe their behaviours and attitudes and following induction, implement an appropriate system of supervision and appraisal.

Relevant legislation and guidance

- Keeping children safe in education
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- DBS Code of Practice
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975) (as amended 2013 & 2020)
- UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) 2018

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Safer Recruitment Policy is to set out the recruitment process in which we aim to:

- Recruit and develop outstanding practitioners.
- Ensure that the recruitment of both permanent and fixed-term staff (including voluntary) is conducted in a fair, effective and efficient manner.
- Ensure that all relevant equalities legislation is adhered to.
- Ensure that staff deal professionally with both external and internal candidates at all stages of the process.

The following principles are encompassed in this policy:

- All applicants will receive fair treatment and a high quality service.
- The job description; which includes the person specification with reference to criteria such as knowledge, qualification, experience, skills and values; is an essential tool and will be used throughout the process.
- Employees will be recruited on the knowledge, experience and skills needed for the job.
- Selection will be carried out by a panel with at least two members.

- Appointments will be made following the assessment of a curriculum vitae, shortlisting and interview. Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the successful completion of pre-employment checks which includes; right to work checks, DBS checks and the receipt of satisfactory references.
- Monitoring and Evaluation are essential for assessing the effectiveness of the process.
- Internal opportunities will be advertised with requests for internal expression of interests and all vacancies are made available to internal applicants who will also receive feedback on their application from the Hiring Manager.
- All external opportunities will be advertised for a minimum of 7 calendar days.
- The Equality Act (2010) makes it a requirement to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process if an applicant makes the employer aware that they have a disability. This applies to the entire recruitment process, from advertisement to appointment.

The provisions of this policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and procedures on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy, the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and the use of Disclosure information, Verification of Identity, Rights to Work and Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and any additional Pre-Employment Checks and verification requirement. The College will include, where appropriate, those arrangements required by our partner organisations. Applicants for positions will be asked to provide relevant information, documents and forms linked to the application of processes of candidate assessment in line with our General Privacy notice.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all jobs within the college, regardless of hours or role, excluding applications or CVs received from agency workers or agencies, unless they have been specifically commissioned. This policy is in place to promote good practice and to ensure that the recruitment and selection methods used are fair, consistent and in line with relevant legislation.

This Safer Recruitment Policy applies to all employees of the college who are responsible for and involved in the recruitment and selection of all staff.

The document contains the process for staff to follow in order to comply with legal duties, to ensure the recruitment process is transparent and fair and to ensure that the welfare of children in the College's care are protected. Everyone within the College community has a responsibility to adhere to it.

4. Policy Objectives

We will ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is carried out in a professional, timely and effective manner and the People Services Department will monitor the recruitment process.

All candidates will be assessed in a fair, consistent and robust manner, free from discrimination. that supports the principle of open competition, and will seek to appoint the best person for the job, based on individual merit. Candidates will be assessed in the same way, against the requirements of the role, including internal candidates, or others personally known to the interview panel.

A predefined job description is prepared for each job, based upon objectively justifiable criteria in terms of the skills, knowledge and abilities required to do the job. Assessment of each applicant for short-listing and at interview will be undertaken objectively against the pre-defined criteria in the person specification and must be recorded.

All job applicants are required to complete an online application form alongside their CV and/or Cover Letter. The college will not employ anyone of compulsory school age, other than those who are entering into an approved Apprenticeship, or current learners engaged as Student Ambassadors and/or Centre Ambassadors.

All offers of employment are conditional upon the college's recruitment, pre-employment and vetting checks, as outlined in the offer letter.

The sound recording of any meetings or discussions that take place at any stage of this procedure is not permitted, unless there is written consent obtained in advance from all parties.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of People Services to:

- Ensure we have effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with current guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the college's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of staff involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that we operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the College.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

6. Statutory Responsibilities

The college will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and opportunities for selection and promotion. Therefore, the principles of our Equality and Diversity policy and related documents are inherent in this policy.

We are committed to promoting a culture of Diversity and Inclusivity for all our employees and potential employees. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. In recognition of our commitment, we would particularly encourage applications from groups who are currently under-represented, including those from the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, women and those who are neurodiverse.

The Recruitment and Selection process complies with the Groups' Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy, which requires that appropriate action is taken to prevent unsuitable people working with children, young people and adults at risk.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Group complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, the Group is permitted to ask questions about whether an applicant has any unspent conditional cautions or convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and/or whether they have any adult cautions (simple or conditional) or spent convictions that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020.

The Group is required under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 to verify that all new employees are legally entitled to work in the UK. All candidates attending an interview will be required to bring proof of their eligibility to work in the UK so that their entitlement can be checked before any offers of employment are made.

The management of information obtained through the recruitment and selection process will be undertaken in accordance with the Group's Data Protection, Document Retention and Employee Data policies.

On-line checks of candidates or staff on social networking sites or through a third party are not permitted, unless in exceptional circumstances when an authorised member of staff, e.g. a member of the People Services team or an investigating manager, might be required to do so.

7. Pre-recruitment Process

Where a vacancy has arisen as a result of a leaver this role can be submitted to People Services for advertising once appropriate due diligence has been conducted by the Hiring Manager. This includes an assessment as to whether a like for like replacement is required and/or whether there is an opportunity to fulfil the role internally. Should the replacement role have fundamental differences to the position being vacated this will require authorisation from senior leadership.

All new or additional posts will also require senior leadership and budgetary holder authorisation prior to recruiting.

It is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager to ensure that this has been obtained prior to contacting People Services.

8. Recruitment Process

8.1 Advertising Posts

All vacancies are normally advertised via our recruitment platform, and applications received using their applicant tracking system, as a standard this will mean vacancies are advertised on the following platforms Indeed, Adzuna, Googlejobs, LInked In, Glassdoor, Monster, Journal Des Palaces, ZIP Recruiter and College/partner websites. We also may utilise core education jobs boards such as AOC Jobs, FE Week and Edu Jobs as a wider platform for advertisement.

For difficult to fill vacancies, additional advertising platforms maybe considered, including the use of role specific platforms or sites supporting specific under represented groups, in accordance with our policies and strategies for equality, diversity and inclusion, and will need authorisation from the Head of Department/Centre and Director of People Services and the availability of an appropriate recruitment budget.

8.2 Application form

All applicants will complete an electronic application form as part of the candidate application process within the Applicant Tracking System.

This includes details to:

- Fully identify the individual concerned.
- Details of their latest employer and current role.
- Confirmation that the individual has the right to work in the UK.

Additional information will also be collected including the applicant's CV, any Cover Letter provided and any responses to role specific selection criteria questions linked to the position.

8.3 Job Description & Person Specification

Every vacancy advertised will include an accurate job description that includes:

- The Job Title
- Job Title of the post that the role reports to.

- Purpose of the role
- Main duties and responsibilities
- The salary range
- The post holders individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in their care.
- The post holders individual responsibilities in respect of Data Protection and information security.
- The person specification will highlight the knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications relevant to the role.
- The person specification will also highlight any essential requirements relevant to the role.

The job description is an essential feature of the advertising and recruitment process and this will be reviewed by the Hiring Manager to ensure that they are up to date and verified by a member of the People Services Team.

8.4 Shortlisting

To support safer recruitment and to ensure fairness in the process, the recruitment panel should take adequate time to properly scrutinise the applications.

- For consistency it is recommended to assess each application against the criteria for the role, including any criteria specific to working with children through the use of a checklist
- Consider whether each application is fully completed – if not, it may be returned to the applicant or discarded from the process
- Highlight any gaps (in employment etc.) to be explored further at interview should the candidate be long/shortlisted
- Look for evidence provided against the criteria set out in the person specification and the job description to support their recruitment decision
- Normally only shortlist those applications that meet all the essential criteria set out in the person specification. However, where information is not clear or partial in relation to any applications received, it may be decided by the panel to shortlist and explore the issues further at interview. A note should be added to the record to indicate where this decision has been taken.

If a greater than anticipated number of applicants meet all the essential criteria for the post, it may be decided to use any specified additional desirable criteria to make a selection for the final shortlist.

8.5. Invitation to Interview

Candidates called to interview will receive:

- Written correspondence confirming details of the interview/assessment and any other selection techniques to be used, as well as asking candidates whether the college need's to make any reasonable adjustments in order to facilitate their attendance and participation in the interview and selection process.
- An opportunity for candidates to ask any questions prior to the interview.

8.6 The Selection Process

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the post, but all vacancies will require a minimum of an interview of short-listed candidates. All interview questions asked by college will be recorded. Scoring, assessment and selection will be carried out objectively, with the highest scoring candidate being offered the position in the first instance.

Interviews will always be face-to-face. This can include the use of technologies to facilitate this process when candidates are currently living and/or working abroad or at large distances away from the interview location within the UK and unable to travel (e.g. Google Hangouts, Zoom, Skype).

During the interview, the panel will ask candidates to:

- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel which has not been explained already on their application form.
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure, which has not been disclosed already on their application form.
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people. This will include safeguarding and PREVENT questions asked by the interview panel where applicable to the role.
- All candidates will be subject to a range of standardised role specific interview questions and assessment tasks. In addition, Candidates may also be asked individual questions relating to gaps in their employment history, and/or relevant criminal history disclosed that require clarification.

8.7 Pre-employment Checks

Appointable and successful candidates will receive a conditional offer of employment that is subject to the following conditions and checks:

- **References:** We need at least two references to cover employment, education or activities for the previous 3 years. We prefer that one referee is the current or most recent employer. In cases where this is a first job, we can accept references from Volunteer Managers, College/University Lecturers or School Headteachers.
- **Proof of Qualifications:** Specifically those relevant to the role and where applicable the highest level teaching qualification.
- **Right to Work:** We need to verify identity to ensure you have the Right to Work in the UK. To do this we need to see an original copy of either candidate's passport (and Visa if applicable); Or, a full birth certificate (issued within 1 month of birth) alongside your National Insurance Card, P45 or P60.
- **DBS:** The level of DBS check required will be identified based on the nature of your role, however all staff are required to undergo a DBS check. We will only accept existing DBS where an applicant is registered on the update service and a valid check can be conducted. Should there be situations where staff could be appointed to a role 'pending DBS checks' but given restricted duties this will be subject to a risk assessment and self declaration. If we subsequently receive a DBS back with concerns which would preclude continuation of employment we make that clear in this section.

8.8 References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and preferably from a senior person with appropriate authority, not just a colleague.

References will be requested at the conditional offer stage with candidates being required to complete a google form disclosing referee details. Open references will not be relied upon. References will only be accepted from legitimate email addresses. References will be scrutinised, and any concerns will be resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

Where it is not possible to obtain two employment references, the recruitment team will seek to obtain one employment reference and may seek an additional personal reference.

All Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- The candidate's suitability for working with children and young people.
- Any issues, concerns or allegations, that relate to the safeguarding of children and young people.

References will be checked to ensure all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily and where required, the referee will be contacted to obtain clarification in order to ensure sufficient information is obtained. References will also be compared to information provided by the applicant in their application and during the interview and selection process. Any discrepancies will be discussed with the individual prior to appointments being confirmed.

9. Post Recruitment Process

9.1 Induction

All staff and volunteers who are new to the college will receive information on the relevant child protection policy and procedures, safeguarding policies, whistleblowing policy, data protection and guidance on safe working practices as part of their induction training.

All policies are available via our Policy Portal.

All new staff will complete mandatory training in relation to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Child Protection in Education / Safeguarding Young People. and Adults
- The PREVENT duty.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).
- Equality and Diversity.
- Additional training will also be carried out in respect of our systems, Moodle, HRIS, Guru, and My Concern Safeguarding system as well as a number of mandatory e-learning modules linked to health and safety and safe working.
- An additional induction and mentoring process will also be put in place for new teachers to enable them to understand the broader requirements of the role.

All successful candidates will undergo a period of monitoring as part of a probationary period (new staff) and will

- Meet regularly with their induction manager.
- Meet regularly with their line manager.
- Attend any appropriate training.

9.2 Initial Teacher Training

We pride ourselves on employing teachers with relevant and current industry knowledge and experience therefore where teaching staff are employed who are unqualified we are committed to ensuring they receive suitable mentoring and are enrolled in Teacher Training through our internal Access Forward scheme. This is an internally delivered course in which we offer a BTEC Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training.

Wherever possible we will seek to ensure that teaching staff hold relevant teaching qualifications on appointment, particularly in senior roles, but reserve the right to appoint appropriately skilled vocational practitioners subject to their commitment to undergo relevant Initial Teacher training.

10. Agency & Third Party Staff

We will ensure agencies adopt the same robust recruitment and vetting procedures that minimise the risk of employment to people who may abuse their position of trust or who are otherwise unsuited to such work. We must obtain written confirmation from any agency, third party organisation or contractor that all relevant safeguarding and pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. Any information disclosed as part of the DBS checks will be treated confidentially. In relation to an enhanced DBS certificate, the written confirmation must confirm a certificate has been obtained by the employer (e.g., the agency, the contractor firm). Where a position requires a

barred list check (where an individual will be engaged in regulated activity), this must also be included in the confirmation from the agency, third party organisation or contractor. All of the above checks must be confirmed in writing to the college prior to the individual arriving at the relevant site for work. We will carry out identity checks when the individual arrives at the college in order to ensure the person presenting to them is the same person that the checks have been confirmed for. This will involve checking the individual's identification by seeing a driving licence (photo card) or passport or company photo ID card. Colleges must notify their People Services Manager immediately if there are any safeguarding issues with agency staff.

11. Self-Employed Staff

Where an individual is required to work at the college and has self-employed status, it will be necessary for relevant checks to be completed prior to them providing their services. This includes identity checks and ensuring they have the right to work in the UK.

If they are going to be engaged in regulated activity, working unsupervised or could fall within the categories of frequent or intensive, consideration should be given to obtaining a DBS certificate for the individual as self-employed individuals are not able to make an application directly to DBS. However, the college recognises that this process will provide an individual with a DBS certificate in the name of college/employer which potentially could be taken elsewhere.

12. Volunteers

We will require that all necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for voluntary staff. A volunteer is usually eligible for a DBS certificate where the fee is waived. In order for this to be possible, the volunteer must not benefit from the position, receive any payment for the role (except for approved expenses), be on a work placement, be on a course requiring the role to be fulfilled or be in a trainee position that will lead to a full time role/qualification.

A volunteer must still provide the standard identity documents as per other employees. A volunteer who teaches unsupervised or looks after children without supervision on a regular basis or provides personal care on a one-off basis in a college will be in regulated activity. They must therefore have an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information completed prior to commencing this role.

Where volunteers are not engaged in regulated activity, risk assessments should be completed to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate or a basic DBS certificate. A volunteer who is not engaging in regulated activity but has the opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis (e.g., a supervised volunteer) must have an enhanced DBS certificate but there is no requirement for this to include barred list information.

The college is not legally permitted to request barred list information on a volunteer who, because they are supervised, is not in regulated activity. Volunteers that have not been checked against the relevant DBS barred list will not be permitted to undertake regulated activity. More information on volunteer DBS checks can be found on the Gov.uk website.

13. Recruitment Of Apprentices

The appointment of Apprentices will be carried out in the same way as that for other employees in respect of conducting appropriate pre-employment checks and verifications. The majority of Apprentices are normally engaged in non-regulated activity and therefore such checks as are appropriate will be implemented. Where Apprentices are engaged in regulated activity they will undergo the same full checks as all other employees in this regard.

14. Single Central Register (Scr)

The college utilises a google sheet template extracted from our Select HR System which details the necessary information required in line with latest legislation and guidance. Each employee's record within the Select HR System holds the relevant details and documentary proof that has been obtained throughout the recruitment process.

15. Monitoring & Review

Through monitoring and review, we are committed to:

- Ensuring consistency of our recruitment practices and adherence to legislation.
- Maintaining individual records in line with UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) 2018 and treating them as confidential.
- The development and improvement in practises therefore this policy will be reviewed regularly.