

Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative: Briefing document

Ensuring diversity and equality of opportunity is at the heart of our values at St George's. The Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative hopes to be a valuable and constructive way in which we can embody these values in our recruitment practices. I encourage our staff to recognise the importance of diversity in decision making, and engage with this pilot scheme.

Professor Jenny Higham (Principal)

What is the Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative?

The Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative has been designed to improve the diversity and representation of our recruitment panels at St George's. Analysis of our recruitment data in 2019 highlighted that the majority of our interview panels were not representative in terms of ethnicity; looking across a four-year period, a significant percentage (around 66%) of interview panels at SGUL consisted of only staff members from white backgrounds. This is despite the fact that approximately 28% of the staff at SGUL are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

We are committed to addressing these issues of disparity and underrepresentation. Research continually shows that unconscious bias and group think can impact on how we make hiring decisions, for example we are likely to hire in our own image due to affinity biases. By including individuals from different backgrounds on interview panels, we reduce this risk by ensuring multiple perspectives are included in the decision-making discussions. Diverse perspectives help to challenge one another, ensuring assumptions are avoided and assessments are evidence based. Furthermore, it is also essential that we demonstrate to candidates the diversity of our staff community as well as our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, including a wider range of staff in decision-making, particularly those from underrepresented groups is essential in fulfilling our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We introduced the Initiative as a one-year pilot in November 2020. The Initiative provides a means to ensure our recruitment panels are representative of individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds by recruiting a pool of Fair Recruitment Specialists. Fair Recruitment Specialists are St George's staff who are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds who have volunteered to join recruitment panels across the University to support us to ensure our panels are representative.

Our approach to this initiative does not assume those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds have a responsibility to solve the issues of underrepresentation of in recruitment and within our workforce.

Since piloting the initiative during November 2020 to November 2021, we have seen significant improvements in the representation on our recruitment panels. In the academic year 2020/21, 54% of our panels included at least one member from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, an increase of 21% from the previous year. We still have improvements to make, both in representation in our recruitment as well as more widely across staff roles, however we can clearly identify that this initiative is having a positive impact. Following the success of the pilot, we have now embedded the

initiative into our organisational recruitment practices. This means that all staff recruiting for roles at St George's will be expected to engage with the Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative.

Guidance for Hiring Managers and panellists

Why should I include a Fair Recruitment Specialist on my interview panel?

St George's aims for all recruitment panels to be representative in terms of ethnicity, as well as gender. SGUL defines diverse panels as having at least 33% Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation for panels of 3 and at least 25% BAME representation for panels of 4 (i.e. at least one panel member). HR expects hiring managers to include a Fair Recruitment Specialist on their panel if it is not already diverse.

Research continually shows that unconscious bias and group think can have a significant impact on recruitment, often causing us to hire in our own image. This is particularly the case where interview panellists are from similar backgrounds and experiences as they are likely to have similar experiences and to think in a similar way and less likely to challenge and question one another's perceptions.

By including individuals from different backgrounds on interview panels, we reduce this risk by ensuring multiple perspectives are included in the decision-making discussions. Diverse perspectives help to challenge one another, ensuring assumptions are avoided and assessments are evidence based. Furthermore, including a wider range of staff in decision-making, particularly those from underrepresented groups is essential in fulfilling our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Including a Fair Recruitment Specialist on an interview panel also carries benefits for candidates being interviewed. It enables them to see the diversity we have in our staff community and demonstrates that we are committed to and value diversity.

How do I include a Specialist on my hiring panel?

The HR Recruitment Request Form (RRF) includes a tick box which asks Hiring Managers to confirm they agree for HR to request for a Fair Recruitment Specialists for their panel if it is not already diverse. Where a Fair Recruitment Specialist is requested, the HR Team will inform the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser will then communicate this request to the Fair Recruitment Specialists who will then be invited to put themselves forwards where they are available.

Once a Fair Recruitment Specialist is identified, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser will put the Specialist in touch with the Hiring Manager. The Hiring Manager is then expected to brief the Fair Recruitment Specialist alongside the other interview panellists, they must also share the interview pack. The Hiring Manager should offer to meet with the Fair Recruitment Specialist prior to the interviews taking place to ensure they have the opportunity to ask any questions relating to the role or recruitment process.

Fair Recruitment Specialists can also volunteer to support the shortlisting for the recruitment of a role however this is optional for the Specialist depending on their capacity. Hiring Managers should agree with the Fair Recruitment Specialist if they will be included in the shortlisting; there may need to be consideration of the Specialist's knowledge of the role and subject area and suitability for shortlisting.

A Fair Recruitment Specialists can volunteer for any recruitment panel they feel willing and able to support; there is no specific requirements relating to grade, role, department, for example. We recognise that enforcing these requirements would limit the number of Specialists able to be allocated for roles, particularly as we have a significant underrepresentation of minority ethnic staff in senior roles. In addition to increasing the number of Specialists available, this flexibility in allocation to recruitment panels also enables the Specialists to gain wider knowledge and experience through participating and building relationships across the University.

For some roles, e.g. senior roles, or specialist academic roles, there may be requirements around those who can volunteer for the slot e.g. only those above a certain grade. This is to ensure volunteers are allocated to panels on which they will be comfortable and that are at the appropriate and suitable level and area. If the Hiring Manager feels there should be specific considerations in terms of including a Fair Recruitment Specialist, they should discuss this with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser.

St George's also expect gender balance on recruitment panels, and this will also be considered in seeking a Specialist. Allocation will also consider previous panel allocations to ensure all Specialists have an equal chance to participate.

Please note, allocation of a Specialists to a panel cannot be guaranteed as it depends on availability and capacity of the Fair recruitment Specialists, who are volunteers.

What is expected of the hiring manager and panel members?

In line with St George's Leadership Attributes, we expect Hiring Managers to demonstrate an inclusive and consultative approach to change and decision making, to value and respect diversity and create an inclusive environment. We expect interviews to be conducted in line with these principles, including embracing the participation on panels from Fair Recruitment Specialists.

Hiring Managers are expected to review their proposed interview panel members to see whether they are diverse in terms of ethnicity (see above on how this is defined). Where a panel is not diverse in terms of ethnicity, Hiring Managers are expected to include a Fair Recruitment Specialist. Please note, gender balance must also be considered; our data indicates St George's recruitment panels are generally balanced in terms of gender however all Hiring Managers have a responsibility to ensure this, also considering intersectionality i.e. ethnicity and gender balance combined.

All staff involved in recruitment at SGUL must have completed the following training courses within the last three years:

- Inclusive Practice at St George's
- HR for Managers: Recruitment and Selection

When put in touch with the Fair Recruitment Specialist who will be joining their panel, the Hiring Manager should offer to meet with the Fair Recruitment Specialist prior to the interviews taking place to ensure they have the opportunity to ask any questions relating to the role or recruitment process.

The Hiring Manager and all panel members are expected to read the [Expectations of Panellists Document](#) which outlines what the Specialists expect and request of those they will be sharing the interview panel with. **It is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager to ensure they and the other panellists have read this document.**

The Fair Recruitment Specialist will be included as an equal member of the interview panel and will take part in asking questions, taking notes and in the post-interview discussions. Hiring managers and panel members must ensure that the Fair Recruitment Specialist's voice is heard, and their perspective listened to.

After the interviews have taken place, the Hiring Manager and panel members will be asked for their feedback by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, a feedback form will be circulated. This feedback is valuable in ensuring the initiative is meeting its aims and that staff have a positive experience engaging with it. Furthermore, this feedback will inform our approach to recruitment, training and diversity and inclusion more generally.

Guidance for Fair Recruitment Specialists

Who can become a Fair Recruitment Specialist and how do I sign up?

Any staff member who identifies as being from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background can sign up to become a Fair Recruitment Specialist. This includes staff at any grade across the university, including Joint Faculty staff.

In this context, Black, Asian and minority ethnic includes individuals who have declared their ethnic background as not white. We recognise that this term has limitations, for example, in viewing individuals as a homogenous group as well as the lack of recognition for white minority ethnic groups. At present we are focusing on this particular group as this is where there is significant underrepresentation.

The Fair Recruitment Specialists are expected to complete the same training that is required of all staff who are involved in recruitment at St George's. You need to have completed this training within the last 3 years.

This includes:

- Inclusive Practice at St George's
- HR for Managers: Recruitment and Selection
- Developing Your Skills as an Effective Recruiter

For Fair Recruitment Specialists who are regularly involved in interviews, completion of the Developing Your Skills as an Effective Recruiter is optional.

If you are interested in signing up to be a Fair Recruitment Specialist, or have any questions regarding the role, email Katie Stringer, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser kstringe@sgul.ac.uk

What do the Fair Recruitment Specialists get out of the initiative?

The experience and development opportunities for the volunteer Fair Recruitment Specialists is an essential element of this initiative. Where BAME staff are volunteering their time and efforts they

will receive support and recognition. This initiative has been designed to work collaboratively with BAME staff to achieve better representation in our recruitment.

Managers are expected to support their staff if they are involved in this initiative, recognising that they are volunteering their time and efforts to support the university in addressing the issues outlined above.

Fair Recruitment Specialists should highlight their involvement in the scheme in their Personal Development Review (PDR), where it will be recognised by managers. There is a specific section within the PDR document which lists Fair Recruitment Specialists as an example of “Additional roles and responsibilities”.

Fair Recruitment Specialists also receive comprehensive training on recruitment and selection procedures and practices, in unconscious bias and in taking part in an interview panel. This training provides the opportunity to develop valuable, transferable skills which will aid career progression and facilitate networking across the university.

Taking part in interview panels also provides the Specialists with hands on, direct experience of interviewing as well as giving an opportunity to meet new colleagues and develop professional relationships.

The Fair Recruitment Specialists are supported by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser throughout their participation in the initiative.

What are the Fair Recruitment Specialists expected to do?

The Fair Recruitment Specialists are expected to complete the same training that is required of all staff who are involved in recruitment at St George’s.

This includes:

- Inclusive Practice at St George’s
- HR for Managers: Recruitment and Selection
- Developing Your Skills as an Effective Recruiter

Fair Recruitment Specialists are also required to attend the Fair Recruitment Specialist Initiative Briefing Session, run by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser. This session outlines the role in practice and provides the opportunity to ask any questions.

Once they have completed this training, the Specialists are able to take part in recruitment panels. Opportunities to join a panel will be communicated to all Specialists as they become available asking the group to put themselves forward.

Fair Recruitment Specialists can also join the shortlisting panel for the recruitment of a role, however this is optional for the Specialist depending on their capacity, as they are volunteering their time for this initiative.

Specialists are expected to volunteer for at least one panel each year. Specialists should only volunteer for a panel where they are available to take part. Once a panel slot has been allocated to a Specialist, they are expected to attend. If unexpected circumstances arise and a Specialist who has been allocated can no longer participate in the interview (& shortlisting), they should inform the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser as soon as possible.

The Specialists are expected to participate on the interview panel alongside the other panel members which includes asking interview questions and participating in post-interview discussions

and hiring decisions. The Hiring Manager will provide instructions for the Specialists to follow. If there are any problems regarding this, the Specialist should contact Katie Stringer, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, kstringe@sgul.ac.uk.

After each interview takes place, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser will check in with both the Specialist and the Hiring Manager and will share a feedback form with all panel members for them to complete. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser will also offer the opportunity of a -1-2-1 follow up meeting if either the Specialist or Hiring Manager wishes to share further feedback or raise concerns.

Where can Fair Recruitment Specialists go to for support?

Fair Recruitment Specialists may have questions or want to discuss their experience during their participation in this scheme. Further to this, Specialists might welcome support before, during or after taking part in an interview panel. Specialists can contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, kstringe@sgul.ac.uk, at any time to request this.

After each interview takes place, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser will check in with the Specialist and will offer the opportunity of a -1-2-1 follow up meeting. The feedback shared in this meeting can remain confidential if requested. Furthermore, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser can also relay feedback to the HR Director and is also available to support the Specialist if they wish to raise or report a concern to HR.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser runs a Fair Recruitment Specialist Peer Group which meets every 3 months, attendance is optional. These sessions provide Specialists with the opportunity to share experience, raise questions and to explore particular scenarios relating to the initiative. This Group also acts as an informal network enabling Specialists to build relationships with one another.

Feedback gathered by the feedback forms and through any follow up discussions or via the Peer Group sessions will be recorded anonymously and used to understand trends, experiences and any issues. This information will directly inform how we develop this initiative and enhance our approaches to recruitment, training and diversity and inclusion more generally.