



- 1 This code of practice is intended to provide a shared professional framework within which secondary school and college leaders can recruit staff.
- 2 The aim of the code is to ensure that through a shared professional commitment to common routines and standards, there should be an approach to recruitment which acknowledges a responsibility to secure the best interests both of the individual institution and of the wider system. SHA believes that the code is applicable both to the maintained and to the independent sectors, and encourages its members in both sectors to operate within this framework. All schools and colleges should have clearly-stated recruitment and pay policies into which the principles of this code can be incorporated. SHA recognises and endorses the equal opportunities framework within which the selection, interviewing and appointment of staff takes place. SHA recommends that all appointments procedures should follow good equal opportunities practice.

ADVERTISING

- 3 SHA recommends that a school's or college's recruitment policy should make clear the usual means through which the advertising of new posts will take place.
- 4 It is good practice for all new or replacement posts to be advertised externally as an initial step, except when it is necessary to recruit from existing staff. Possible candidates should not be asked to apply until the advertisement, setting out the nature of the post and the salary available, has appeared publicly.
- 5 SHA supports a culture of professional openness, where maximum information about the post and the institution is made available to all potential applicants.

INFORMAL CONTACTS

- 6 SHA does not consider it professionally appropriate for a prospective employer to solicit applications from individuals before the public advertisement of the post.
- 7 SHA considers it is not good professional practice for a school or college leader to seek to entice a person to leave their post and take up another on the basis of private, informal contact.

REFERENCES

- 8 SHA believes that high standards of honesty and openness in the writing of references are imperative, both in relation to professional integrity and to the need for professional trust between educational leaders.
- 9 Although there is a need for a personal perspective in references, SHA encourages maximum objectivity in relation to clear criteria.
- 10 SHA encourages open references, available to the candidate as well as to the potential employer. However, SHA considers that a reference given in confidence to a prospective employer should be treated as confidential, and should not become a subject of discussion with the candidate. The writer of the reference should indicate whether it is confidential or open.
- 11 SHA considers that an oral reference given on request should accurately reflect the written reference, and elaborate on, rather than detract from, that reference.
- 12 SHA considers that open testimonials, where requested and given, should meet the criteria of honesty and objectivity set out above for references.

INTERVIEWING

- 13 All candidates invited for interview for a post should be entitled to full professional information. This should include information about: the nature of the post, the job-description and salary; the interview schedule and who will undertake the interview; and the timescale for decisions about the post and for communicating them. Ideally, a full pack of information should be sent to the candidate before interview.
- 14 Where the interview process for a teaching post is to include observed teaching by the candidate, SHA believes it is good practice for full and clear details of the teaching task(s) and the evaluation process to be given to the candidate as far in advance of the time as possible.
- 15 Where a process of short-listing may take place during an interview process, SHA believes it is important for all candidates to be aware of this from the outset. It is good practice for any candidate not being considered further to be given the opportunity of professional feedback at a suitable time.
- 16 SHA considers that in the interests of open professionalism, all unsuccessful candidates for posts should be entitled to feedback on the reasons why they were not selected for the post and on their performance during the interview process.

ALTERNATIVE OFFERS OF POSTS OR SALARIES

- 17 SHA urges all secondary school leaders to be fully aware of the national regulations governing the award of salary, and to operate legally and professionally within that framework.
- 18 SHA recognises that in a context of recruitment difficulty candidates may become accustomed to negotiating with more than one prospective employer about the nature of a post and the salary concerned. SHA considers that it is important to maintain a climate of professional trust, and urges secondary school leaders not to negotiate against one another for candidates.
- 19 Where a candidate has already verbally accepted a post in one institution, SHA considers it wrong to attempt to persuade him or her to renege on that verbal contract and accept a post elsewhere.
- 20 Equally, where a post has been offered to a candidate at a particular salary level, SHA considers it wrong for another institution to seek to attract the candidate by making a higher counter-offer.
- 21 Candidates should be encouraged to make a clear and final acceptance or rejection of an offer within a set time. SHA believes it to be important for the maintenance of a climate of trust that the word of both an institution and of a candidate can be acted upon.

CONCLUSION

- 22 SHA recognises that in a context of recruitment difficulty there are increasing pressures to ensure that institutions are fully staffed. However, SHA believes that abandoning shared professionalism and moving to an institution-based ethic, where whatever served the interests of the individual school or college was for that reason acceptable, would be disastrous for the professional culture of education.
- 23 SHA therefore urges all its members, in collaboration with other professional associations where appropriate, to work towards the maintenance of a professional culture which accepts the common routines and standards set out in this code. This is in the interests, ultimately if not immediately, of all those who work in education, and therefore in the interests of the students education exists to serve. SHA commends this code to all its members, and asks that it be formally adopted in all local areas.