Guidelines

Title: HOW TO WRITE A RECRUITMENT ADVERT

Ref: HR/Comms

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1. INTRODUCTION

Writing a recruitment advert:

- Should always be about more than just getting someone in the post, it needs to be the right person
- It needs to appeal to a specific person
- It needs to provide an insight into your organisation and culture
- It needs to inform, excite and inspire

2. PREPARATION

Before writing copy, answer the following questions:

Q1. What are you advertising?

- What role are you recruiting for?
- Sense check the job title
- Will it be understood externally?
- What are the most important elements of the role/department to communicate?

Q2. Why is it being advertised – what is the unique selling point?

- We need to tell people what it is that makes this opportunity special
- Is it a new role/department?
- Change any negatives into positives – they’ll be attractive to someone!
- Always, always tell the truth and be able to prove what you say

Q3. Who are we targeting?

- Skills and competencies
- Attitudes and behaviours
- Picture the person you want to recruit and write copy that will be attractive to them

3. TONE OF VOICE

What is it and why is it so important?

- It represents the University’s position as a world-class higher education institution
- It reflects the University’s values
- It encapsulates what the University stands for
- It’s not just what is written, but how it is written that leaves a lasting impression on the reader
4. **VOCABULARY**
   - Say ‘You’ and rather than ‘the applicant’ or ‘the successful candidate’
   - Say ‘We’ and as well as the University, where appropriate
   - Talk about the sense of ‘team’ and ‘community’
   - You can start sentences with ‘And’, ‘So’, ‘After all’ and ‘Because’ if you wish as this helps the flow of copy. And, it reflects how we all naturally talk.
   - Try and avoid impersonal ‘recruitment speak’ like ‘applications are invited’ or ‘postholder’
   - Avoid ‘proven experience’ as all experience is proven
   - The use of bullets is recommend where you need to communicate lots of information, but it’s even better to be concise

Search engine optimised copy for online
   - Is the job title ‘searchable’? Does it make sense to an external audience – will they search for it?
   - Keywords – identify what other terms people will search for
   - Ideally insert these words at least five times in the first two paragraphs

**WRITING JOB COPY**

A good structure to follow:
1. Introduction
2. About the University
3. About the faculty/department
4. The job
5. The skills and experience needed
6. Application process
7. Equal opportunities statement

**1. Introduction**

Open with:
   - Job title, salary and location (University of Southampton, rather than Highfield Campus for online search reasons)
   - State the job title and main purpose of the role in the opening paragraph, as this is where the attention needs to be grabbed
   - Most job sites won’t allow a headline, so all the main points and ‘sells’ need to be incorporated into the first couple of sentences

*For example:*

We are looking for a Research Fellow to use classical computer simulations and free energy calculations to develop and test methods for locating water molecules and molecular fragments in protein binding sites.

**2. About the University**

   - Summarise who we are and what it is that makes us great
   - Mention any facts or figures that substantiate these claims

*For example:*

Be a part of the University of Southampton, an institution in the top one per cent of world universities and one of the UK’s top 15 research-intensive universities. We have an international reputation for research, teaching and enterprise activities.

**3. About the faculty or department**

   - Summarise the faculty or area of the University that the successful candidate will be working in
   - Mention any facts or figures that substantiate these claims
   - Capture the essence of what the environment is like and why people should want to be part of it
For example:

You will work in the Faculty of Engineering and the Environment, a world-class centre for education, research and enterprise. It represents the largest and most diverse engineering and environmental science grouping in the UK. Our expertise looks deep below the Earth’s crust, reaches into space and encompasses everything in between.

4. The job

• What will the candidate be doing in this role on a daily basis?
• What are the nuts and bolts of it?
• Are there any exciting projects or particular areas of responsibility
• Are there any unusual challenges or development opportunities you can talk about?

5. The skills and experience you need

• What qualifications do you need in order to do this role?
• What experience should you have gained?
• Are there any skills that are transferable and if so from what role or sector?
• What characteristics, attitude and behaviours make a good fit for this role or department?

6. Application process

• How to submit application forms
• Contact details, vacancy reference and closing date

For example:

You should submit completed application forms online at www.jobs.southampton.ac.uk or alternatively telephone 023 8059 2421 for an application form. Please quote vacancy reference number 248013LH on all correspondence.

The closing date for this post is 18 June 2013. Informal enquiries can be made in the first instance to the Associate Dean Enterprise, Professor John Smith: j.smith@southampton.ac.uk

Please note that applications from agencies will not be accepted unless indicated in the job advert.

7. Equal opportunities statement

• All adverts should conclude with this

For example:

At the University of Southampton, we value diversity and equality.