



UiO : **Faculty of Educational Sciences**
University of Oslo

How to succeed in the recruitment process

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Main knowledge perspective: “Changing relationship Higher Education – Society”

Research Study “1

- Commissioned by University Leaders
- GUC initiative of the University of Hamburg
- Conducted by researchers
- Term ‘universities’



Society”:

ation for 2019 Global

the Körber Foundation , and

lo, Norway

cation institutions

“Successful staff recruitment in HE?”

Starting-points:

1. Dramatic global growth and expansion of two traditional HE missions:

- Education: knowledge transfer to society “on two feet” more skills focused
- Research: production of knowledge driven by curiosity, application, contracts, innovation, etc. Traditional distinctions (e.g. basic-applied) no longer functional.

2. Key developments in society

- Knowledge society: from natural to human resources
- Accelerated technological, economic and social change
- Grand societal challenges (‘wicked problems’): traditional responses no longer suffice
 - Climate change
 - Inequality
 - Security
- Intensifying global science competition
- Growing need for life-long learning
- Intensifying competition for knowledge workers



Changing recruitment practices

Digitalization

- Announcement
- Application
- Assessment

Artificial intelligence

- Chatbots
- Online/database search for matching candidates
- Candidate relationship management tools
- Quizzes/tests
- “When companies use a new tool they tend to overuse it. New technology makes it easy to add extra tests.... It’s really important to get the balance with the human technology. At the end of the day HR is a personal department that can’t be too automated.” (Financial Times, 25-02-2019)



Changing conditions in Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs)



Traditionally:

- HEIs weakly integrated, loosely coupled organizations
- Human resources taken for granted (uniform labour conditions)
- Tenured academic staff highly autonomous (academically)
- Staff recruitment practices in general biased, closed and non-transparent

Recently:

- HEIs try to become more integrated, more tightly coupled organizations
- Academic staff capacity (all positions) in the process of becoming a more strategic institutional asset
- Efforts to make staff recruitment practices more open, transparent and free of (human) prejudices

Recruitment strategies in HEIs: The University of California



“The University of California is committed to hiring a talented workforce through recruitment practices that are fair and consistent and that comply with all applicable laws and regulations. We recognize that a diverse workforce is essential to serving the needs of our communities and to ensuring that our institution continues to demonstrate excellence.... Conducting competitive recruitments for staff positions is the normal and expected method for identifying and hiring staff personnel at the University. As such, competitive recruitment is required unless otherwise stated in this policy. Hiring authorities are accountable for complying with federal and state laws and regulations and University policies and are responsible for contributing to the University’s equal employment opportunity and affirmative action efforts.”

The goals of competitive recruitment are to:

- Identify and attract qualified applicants;
- Create a broad and diverse pool of qualified candidates based on the relevant labor market;
- Allow candidates to fairly compete for position openings;
- Meet our equal employment opportunity and affirmative action commitments;
- Demonstrate a fair and unbiased selection process.

Importance of Recruitment Practices at HEIs

For strategic development of HEIs Recruitment Practices more important than Strategic Plans!

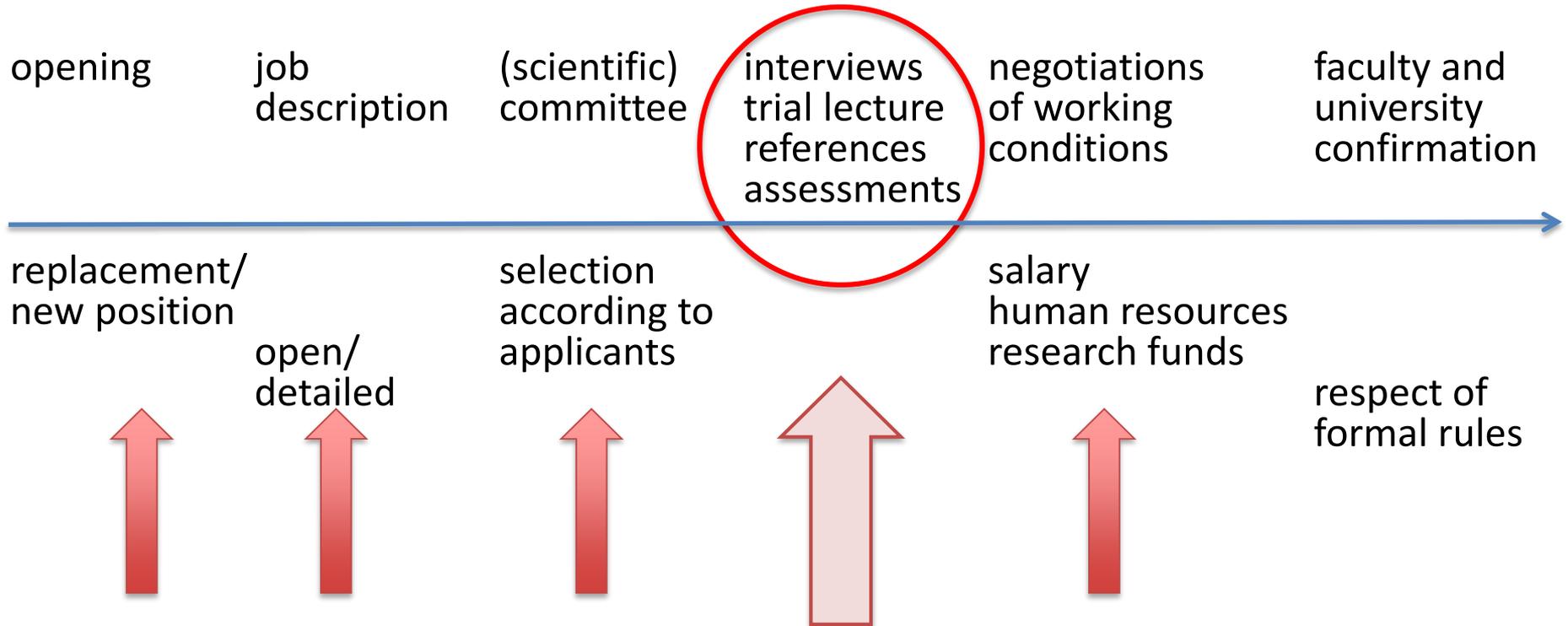
In Recruitment Practices:

- decisions are made with long-term consequences and impacts;
- excellence- and relevance-criteria are interpreted;
- the roads to excellent / 'groundbraking' academic groups & environments are staked out;
- various interests and considerations are emphasized and balanced;
- the tensions are handled between various logics.

Coexistence of different logics

1. **Reproduction logic:** replacing vacant positions
2. **Strategic logic:** following organizational objectives
3. **Competitiveness logic:** searching for and attracting talents
4. **Academic logic:** balancing academic tasks, academic self-understanding, and institutional missions
5. **Fairness logic:** rewarding seniority, gender, other fairness issues
6. **Power logic:** bargaining positions among various actors and bodies/units, such as research groups
7. **Societal logic:** strengthening relationship with society

Sequencing of academic recruitment and strategic room to maneuver



area of ambiguity:
subjectivity vs. objectivity

- variable criteria
- variable actors
- variable sub stages

Key current issues with respect to recruitment practices and outcomes in HEIs

Including:

- How to use recruitment practices for strengthening HEIs' role in innovation and the (further) development of General Purpose Technologies?
- How to make sure that recruitment practices contribute to the continuous central role of HEIs as societies' central knowledge institutions?
- How to combine and integrate technological changes in recruitment practices with needs for changes in preferred skills and competences in tenured academic staff?

Innovation, technologies, higher education

General purpose technologies (GPTs):

1. Are pervasive in that they spread into many sectors.
2. Improve over time and should keep lowering the cost to their users.
3. Make it easier to spawn innovation and production of new products or processes (Helpman 1998; Mazzucato 2013)

General purpose technologies (GPTs):

- 1. 'Mass production' technologies**
- 2. Aviation technologies**
- 3. Space technologies**
- 4. Information and communication technologies**
- 5. Internet technologies**
- 6. Biotechnology**
- 7. Nanotechnology (?)**
- 8. Green technologies (?)**

NHO (The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise) /SINTEF

Project:

- *Veikart for fremtidens næringsliv* (Roadmap for future business)

Report:

- New possibilities for wealth creation in Norway; technology for a better society

Six high potential areas for strengthening future Norwegian economic competitiveness:

1. Health, demography and welfare (incl. Health care technology)
2. Food safety, sustainable agriculture and forestry, fishery, aquaculture, and bio-economics (incl. Sustainable seafood)
3. Renewable energy, secure energy supply
4. Smart, green and integrated transportation
5. Climate, environment and circular production systems
6. Infrastructure and civil protection (incl. surface water management)

Connect and integrate socio-economic development with HEIs' recruitment practices: 'Third Mission' of universities

- Broad acknowledgement of importance of 'Third Mission', and need to (further) strengthen relationships with society; BUT, most HEIs struggle with:
 - How to rebalance their three missions
 - How to use the 'transfer achievements' more strategically and structurally, moving from project-based 'transfer' activities to more sustainable, long term mutually beneficial **partnerships**



- Fundamental difference in practice between **knowledge (or technology) transfer (KT)** by and **social (or community) engagement** of HEIs.
 - **Knowledge Transfer (KT)** refers to the knowledge-based relationships between HEIs and industry/the private sector companies with direct or indirect commercial purposes.
 - **Social engagement** refers to the civil society partnerships of HEIs without commercial purposes.

Key dimensions of relevance for effective future recruitment practices of HEIs



- Technology orientation and Digital literacy
- Institutional profiling / Concentration of resources and staff
- Sustainable development & environmental consciousness
- Inter-disciplinarity & grand challenges
- Strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships (with business and public bodies & organisations)
- Etc.

Implications for academic leadership & management

- **Striking a balance** among on the one hand managerial/bureaucratic and on the other hand academic norms, interests, and pressures as both leaders/managers and scientists.
- **Moderated by:**
 - Discipline/field
 - Structural constraints, such as number of students/staff, financial situation
 - Governance arrangements and traditions, incl. integration of different actors in the process
 - Role of unions
 - Nature of 'co-determination'
- **Proactive approach:** resolve ambiguity and legitimize new criteria to enhance strategic leeway
- **Culture/identity dimension:** variation in how academic leaders & managers make sense of their own role.

Conclusion

Strategic choices in improving HEIs' recruitment practices:

- Path dependency versus development of institutional profile areas (Use of relevant data!)
- Academic concentration (and closing down) versus breadth/comprehensiveness
- Young, future-oriented academics versus academic „stars“
- Assessing previous versus future performance
- Recruitment for the sake of building and further developing „groups“ versus recruitment of individual „builders“ and developers of old and new areas
- Assessing traditional academic skills and competencies (in research and education) versus the skills and competencies in „Third Mission“ activities
- Developing an effective balance between human and digital technology



Thank you very much for your attention!

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Research Group:

Knowledge, Learning and Governance: Studies in
higher education and work (HEDWORK)

(<https://www.uv.uio.no/english/research/groups/hedwork/index.html>)