

Search Plan

General Information:

A Search Plan provides the opportunity for managers and supervisors to develop a tailored attraction and search strategy to broaden the reach and diversity of a targeted pool of applicants.

Useful questions to ask from which to develop a tailored search plan includes:

- Who is my target group? Is there more than one target group?
- Where can they be found?
- How can I best reach the target group?
- Who among my staff or University can network with the target group?
- What is the best advertising medium to use for the target group?
- Is an underwhelming response to advertising expected?
- Is an overwhelming response to advertising expected?

Statistics:

Review the effectiveness of your search plan by tracking the number of –

- contacts made to potential applicants
- applications received
- short listed applicants
- establishing how applicants were made aware of the vacancy and which search mechanisms were effective

Underwhelming response:

If you expect an underwhelming response to advertising then consider a best “fit” approach to widen your applicant pool. This means thinking more about a person’s capacity to do the work and having the general capabilities that enable them to develop into a role. They may not meet all the technical requirements or have the degree of experience you were hoping for and therefore you would need to review the selection criteria. You could then support the successful applicant on appointment by reviewing their probationary objectives and supporting their development needs.

Overwhelming response:

If you expect an overwhelming response to your recruitment advertisement then revise the selection criteria to narrow the field of a potential applicants and then consider a stepped approach. A realistic preview of the work can entail a presentation from staff about their work experiences and/or a visit to the work area to provide potential applicants with realistic information. Potential applicants can gauge if their expectations about the work or University are met. Potential applicants are then informed and can make choices about continuing or exiting the selection process.

Consider using preliminary screening processes to prune an overwhelming pool of applicants.

Search Mediums:

Advertising in print or on the web are two common strategies but these practices alone are becoming less effective due to the tight labour market. Advertising on the web attracts active career seekers and is highly accessible to many but may not reach applicants from some communities. The most effective method is peer or professional networking by word of mouth. Circulating information about the vacancy as widely as possible is necessary to develop a large and diverse pool of applicants. In some instances targeting individuals and inviting them to apply may be useful.

The following avenues may be useful.

Peer Networks:

- Contact colleagues locally, interstate and overseas with information about the position and ask them to disseminate it within their work areas.
- send information directly to appropriate individuals and encourage them to apply.
- Send copies of the advert and position information to qualified applicants in the field who are known to staff members.
- Likely recipients can include current staff, alumni staff, alumni graduates, ex-work colleagues from other organisations.

Professional Networks:

- Professional membership organisations and conferences can be useful talent spotting opportunities where all staff in a work area can play a role.
- Recent journals in the relevant field can be used to identify potential applicants. Professional associations may have free website, newsletters or mailing lists.
- In some instances there may also be special interest groups such as a women's section or caucuses of relevant discipline associations.

Internet:

- Computer discussion lists on the Internet can be used to disseminate information about vacancies.
- Ensure an e-mail address for a response is clearly identified.
- Advertised vacancies are placed on the UWA careers site, jobs.uwa.edu.au and externally to seek.com.au and UniJobs.com.au

Targeting Institutions:

- Consider professional membership organisations as they will have newsletters (and possibly free) website and professional networking events.
- It may be useful to email key staff in universities with highly regarded reputations in the advertised discipline area, asking them to disseminate the vacancy information among staff and students.
- Secondment opportunities can be offered in the same way.
- Consider targeting interest groups to appeal to applicants within a discipline or professional field. For example, consider bushwalking groups, cycling clubs, conservation groups, gyms or sports clubs to target applicants for active outdoor work.

Targeting Individuals:

- Use advertising that is personable and engaging. Use a personal statement or question to appeal directly to people who may not have considered working in a University or who may have a private sector background. Focus more on generating the interest of the potential applicants.
- When using recruitment agencies, consider using "no-brand" advertisements for "hard to fill" positions (those positions that have a poor yield of applicants from using conventional advertising approaches) when applicants may initially be unlikely to consider working at UWA.
- Consider advising applicants in the advertisement for "hard to fill" positions that late applications will be accepted.
- Conversely, the prestige of the University, the work area, the work or working with peers may appeal to credentialed applicants.
- Checking the references in well-regarded journals can identify active researchers in the school's area of interest and these individuals can be contacted directly. This strategy is particularly useful in seeking senior level staff.
- In order to increase the interest of women applicants and applicants from diverse backgrounds consider:
 - Becoming familiar with the work of women in the discipline by inviting them to visit the school as part of a visiting scholars scheme, or giving papers at seminars or conferences.

- Highlighting the University's flexible work policies and generous leave provisions and referring to other available [staff benefits](#) and the [careers opportunities brochure](#).
- Monitoring the gender and diversity of applicants short listed for positions and surveying how successful applicants heard about the vacancy.

Search Plan Examples are provided for illustrative purposes only in order to demonstrate the thinking behind the development of searching and advertising strategies.

Example A

LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER IN _____
 SCHOOL OF _____

	Female	Male
Number of contacts made		
Number of job applications received		
Number applicants short listed		

The School of _____ has been aware of the need to fill the current vacancy for some time and members of the school have given serious consideration to what is needed to meet our longer term objectives. We have identified an important change in the nature of our student body over the last few years. Over 25% of the undergraduate students in the school are now women and there are increasing numbers of female post-graduate students. We are also attracting significant numbers of overseas students.

At present, however, there are few women academics in this school and in the past we have had few applications from women. Our school discussions have identified meeting this emerging need as a priority. Therefore we are particularly keen to attract a range of highly qualified women applicants to this position.

During the past year members of staff have been using opportunities at professional conferences to meet academics working in this area, especially women, and to note their areas of interest. We have kept a file on these and added to this file the names of those women who have previously completed their doctorates. All members of staff have also been asked to review contacts within their professional networks in order to identify potential applicants or institutions with strong graduate programs in the advertised area.

In order to attract high quality applications from a more diverse range of people, as well as more applications from women, we intend to apply the following strategies:

Search Strategies:

1. The selection criteria will reflect our keenness to attract staff with a commitment to encourage female doctoral students and who can work successfully with students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.
2. The position will be advertised with the possibility of filling it with two fractional appointments.
3. The advertisement will encourage applications from women, for example: 'women are particularly encouraged to apply'.
4. We are searching the Candidate Register (under development) for potential applicants from which we can invite them to apply for the position.
5. We have engaged a post graduate student to analyse some of the recent literature in this area and to identify institutions and individuals whose research interests appear relevant so that they can be individually targeted.
6. We are contacting professional associations and, where they exist, women's sections of those associations. To encourage women to apply we will ask for the names of women working in the field in which selection is to take place and will send them the advertisement and selection criteria. We will also ask for an advertisement to be inserted in any women's newsletters of these bodies.
7. We are using our own professional network of contacts from which to invite applicants and encourage contacts to disseminate the advertisement to others who may be interested.

Example B

LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER IN _____
SCHOOL OF _____

	NESB	ESB
Number of contacts made		
Number of job applications received		
Number applicants short listed		

The School of _____ has been aware of the need to fill the current vacancy for some time and members of the school have given serious consideration to what is needed to meet our longer term objectives. We have identified an important change in the nature of our student body over the last few years. Over 50% of the undergraduate students in the school are now from overseas or non-English speaking backgrounds in Australia. Increasing numbers of these students are now also entering post-graduate work. We have recognised a need to provide some additional support for this group within the school.

At present, however, there are no academics in this school who have special skills in working with a culturally diverse student group and in the past we have had few applications from such people. Our school discussions have identified meeting this emerging need as a priority. Therefore we are particularly keen to attract a range of highly qualified applicants with relevant experience to this role.

Search strategies include:

1. During the past year members of staff have been using opportunities at professional conferences to meet academics working in this area and to note their areas of interest. We have kept a file on these and added to the file the names of those students who have previously completed their doctorates in this University.
2. All members of staff have also been asked to review contacts within their professional networks in order to identify potential applicants or institutions with strong graduate programs in the advertised area.

In order to attract high quality applications from a more diverse range of people, as well as more applications from people with particular skills in teaching students from a range of cultural backgrounds, we intend to act as follows:

1. The advertisement will include the words: 'academics with an interest and capacity to advance the interests of students from a range of cultural and language backgrounds are particularly encouraged to apply'.
2. The position will be advertised in two overseas journals with significant circulation in countries from which we draw large numbers of students.
3. We are using our professional network of contacts to disseminate the advertisement to others who may be interested, inviting them to apply.
4. We have engaged a post graduate student to analyse some of the recent literature in this area and to identify institutions and individuals whose research interests appear relevant so that they can be individually targeted.
5. We are contacting professional associations and, where they exist, specific sections of those associations in countries from which we draw large numbers of students.
6. To encourage applicants from these countries we will ask for the names of individuals working in the field in which selection is to take place and send them the advertisement and selection criteria.
7. We are keen to attract staff with a commitment to support doctoral students with culturally diverse backgrounds and this is specified in the selection criteria.

Example C

ACCOUNTANT

FACULTY/DIVISION _____

	CPA	Non-CPA
Number of contacts made		
Number of job applications received		
Number applicants short listed		

The Faculty/Division of _____ requires to fill a hard-to-fill vacancy and the management team have outlined several considerations to meet our longer term objectives. We have identified a continuing shortfall of qualified and experienced Accountants. Job applicants tend to be from recent graduates from diverse backgrounds with minimal relevant local experience.

At present, there is a shortage of accountants across the University. The pool of accountant assistants that would progress to the position of Accountant, with academic qualifications and on-the-job training has diminished. The lack of career path options for accountant assistants has meant they leave to take up higher positions outside the Faculty/Division. Given that the pool of job applicants that do apply in the past have not been CPA qualified and/or do not have the experience to meet the selection criteria, we are keen to attract a range of highly qualified applicants to this position.

During the past year, members of staff have been using opportunities at professional development sessions and conferences to meet Certified Practising Accountants with corporate and budget management experience. All members of staff have also been asked to review contacts within their professional networks in order to identify potential applicants or organisations that support CPA development.

In order to attract high quality applications from a broad range of people, we intend to apply the following methods in our search and advertising processes.

Search and attraction strategies:

1. Target applicants who have completed or are nearing completion of CPA
2. Target applicants who have at least 5 years corporate experience
3. Review the CPA qualified professional contacts made from professional development programmes and conferences with corporate and budget management experience
4. Staff to review their professional network contacts to identify potential applicants
5. Attract external applicants from corporate, government organisations via the Mobility Programme for secondment opportunities
6. Advertise the position with more than one level to attract a wider field of applicants with variable experience
7. Promote career development opportunities by considering more than recruitment decision such as early career and peak career experience
8. Budget for providing study/CPA assistance for early career applicants
9. Emphasise the employment attractions of UWA such as working on a flexible, part time or job sharing basis, study leave (in limited circumstances), parental leave & bonus, salary packaging, campus service and facilities, relocation assistance if applicable, various allowances to cater for different personal and lifestyle needs
10. Search the Candidate Register database for previous job applicants, interested applicants wishing to join the University and the students enrolled in the Graduate School of Management
11. Search the Alumni database by company, position title and résumé
12. Use the search and recruitment services of a preferred service provider
13. Write advertisements that profile specific attractions and profile current CPA's employed at UWA
14. Use the free-to-advertise CPA website
15. Prepare to and negotiate salary and allowances with the preferred applicant and check on budget

Example D

CLEANER

FACULTY/DIVISION _____

Number of contacts made	
Number of job applications received	
Number applicants short listed	

The Faculty/Division of _____ requires to fill a vacancy. We have identified a high turnover of cleaning staff. Job applicants tend to be inexperienced in dealing with a research environment but may have general employment experience.

At present, there is a shortage of experienced cleaners with maintenance skills due to movement into the construction and mining industries. The usual practice of advertising in the West Australian Newspaper is costly and has resulted in a low number of responses from suitably qualified applicants. Rostered work and the need for highly responsive staff to meet operational requests with little notice are impacting on our ability to provide quality service delivery. As previous applicants have been under qualified and/or do not have the entire range of capabilities required to meet the selection criteria, we are keen to attract a range of more suitable applicants to this position.

In order to attract high quality applications from a broad range of people, we intend to apply the following methods in our search and advertising processes:

1. All members of staff have been asked to consider their contacts to identify potential applicants
2. Target applicants who have at least 2 years relevant experience with additional maintenance skills
3. Offer dual banding to appeal to higher qualified applicants and aspiring applicants
4. Offer varied cleaning and broader maintenance duties as a job attraction
5. Provide attractions such as set peak hours or rosters to provide flexibility in work hours
6. Promote a variety of attractions eg part time work, rosters, job sharing, study leave (limited), parental leave & bonus, salary packaging, campus service and facilities to cater for different lifestyle needs
7. Search the Candidate Register database for previous job applicants and those registered who are interested in joining the University should a position arise
8. Write job advertisements that profile the flexible hours of work that may appeal to target groups and simplify the application process through use of an employment questionnaire
9. Use the community newspaper to attract job applicants residing close to the UWA campus