

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY: Academic Appointments Ltd**

The safety and well-being of children and young people is paramount. As a recruitment company which provides staff to Schools and Educational establishments Academic Appointments is determined, through comprehensive recruitment and vetting procedures, to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect children and young people from harm.

Academic Appointments is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for Safeguarding and there is also an appointed Safeguarding Lead within the business. The Managing Director ensures that Safeguarding is an integral part of our business processes and practices and that any concerns or allegations are actioned appropriately. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for investigating any safeguarding concerns and referral to the DBS and/or TRA where appropriate.

Academic Appointments LTD's comprehensive recruitment and vetting procedures fully comply with the DfE guidance '*Keeping children safe in Education (September 2020)*', '*Keeping children Safe in Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges (April 2014)*' and '*Keeping children safe in education: childcare disqualification requirements - supplementary advice (Oct 2014)*' this incorporates the duties and responsibilities for an employer in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS merges the services previously provided by the CRB and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Academic Appointments is committed to carrying out the specific recruitment and vetting checks which must be made on all people who wish to work with children and young persons. Processes and procedures are reviewed and updated to incorporate new legislation and guidance on an ongoing basis and compliance is monitored through regular audits.

All staff with interviewing and recruitment responsibility in the company undergoes Local Authority 'Safer Recruitment' Training courses through Leeds City Council or training by other accredited organisation.

### **Single, Central Record**

In line with guidance, Schools and Colleges keep a Single, Central Record of checks made on staff, when they were made and by whom including:

- Date of Birth
- National Insurance Number
- DBS Disclosure (including Children's Barred List/List 99)
- DfE Number and date of issue
- Status update check
- The DfE Prohibited Teachers List (inc 'EEA Member States Sanction Check' or '128 Barring Directions' where applicable)
- Childcare Disqualification Requirement Check
- Child Protection Training
- Prevent Duty Training
- Identity Check
- Qualification Check
- References
- Relevant Overseas Check
- Right to Work

Academic Appointments provides a single document entitled 'Candidate Clearance Checks' to schools before placing a candidate in a school. This document clearly states each check which has been carried out and includes a photo of the candidate. Occasionally a client may request a candidate where all our checks have not been completed, for example, when a DBS

has expired and a new one is in process. Under these circumstances 'Candidate Incomplete Clearance Checks' will be produced clearly identifying those checks done and those in process. Candidates with Incomplete checks will only be placed in schools with the school's full knowledge and prior consent.

### **Vetting: Checks carried out during the Registration Process**

Before supplying a candidate to a school, the following processes are undertaken:

- Face-to-face interview
- Identity check (in line with acceptable documents approved by the DBS/REC)
- Right to work in the United Kingdom (entry clearance certificates, work permits and immigration documents)
- Qualifications check (sight of original, validation of authenticity)
- NQT - induction status (this is monitored until the candidate completes their induction)
- DfE/TRA (Teaching Regulation Agency) Teacher Reference Number\*- check the list of 'Teachers prohibited from the profession' and 'EEA Member States Sanction Check' and '128 Barring Directions' where applicable
- Overseas Trained Teachers – UK NARIC qualification status
- Enhanced DBS Disclosure\* – An Academic Appointments Registered Body DBS or other previously issued Enhanced DBS registered with the DBS Update Service. Where permission has been given by a candidate for Academic Appointments to verify a DBS with the Update Service, this is checked at least every 12 months or more frequently as appropriate. Where the candidate is not registered with the update service an Enhanced DBS check is undertaken every 12 months. Academic Appointments encourage all candidates to register with the DBS Update Service. NB. Up until Jan 2015 where the candidate is not registered with the update service an enhanced DBS check was undertaken every 3 years (unless we had grounds to believe that the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children and young persons). This was reviewed and amended to every 12 months in line with guidance received from the REC during 2014
- Overseas Police Check or appropriate reference (for all candidates from abroad from their country of residence)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders – We request disclosure, using a signed declaration on the written application form, of any details of convictions, cautions, and warnings including any regarded as 'spent'. We operate in line with DBS filtering rules guidance.
- Risk Assessments on applicants with disclosures on their DBS or overseas police clearance. The risk assessment is based on a discussion with the candidate re: the offence, DfE guidelines and considers all other vetting procedures.
- Children's Barred List/List 99 check (on all surnames used). Via DBS/updated every 12 months or sooner if required
- Medical fitness
- References\* (minimum of two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the most recent employment, from persons senior to the candidate)
- Work History gaps\* – explored and verified
- English speaking and communication ability (where appropriate)

\*Indicates the checks which are re-done/reviewed when a candidate has been 'dormant' (i.e. not working via Academic Appointments) for 3 months or more.

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

**Academic Appointments Ltd** is a specialist education recruitment agency operating within the Yorkshire area from offices in Leeds, Bradford, Doncaster and Harrogate. The company provides teachers, senior leaders, 1:1 tutors, cover supervisors, teaching assistants, behaviour support workers, clerical and support staff to educational establishments within Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Special Needs settings, including Pupil Referral Units and Colleges in the Yorkshire area.

Academic Appointments is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its recruitment practices and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, direct or indirect - firstly, to ensure that no registering applicant is less fairly treated in any situation because of age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, gender, marital status, race or any other condition not relevant to the performance of the job and secondly, to ensure that our clients are offered the best candidates available in terms of skills, experience and approach.

Our Company policy aims to provide full confidence to both clients and candidates of our intention to ensure that we recruit and hire quality candidates who will support the needs of all children, confirm our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, and our expectation for all staff and registering candidates to share this commitment.

Academic Appointments is a member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and follows their Code of Practice and all recruitment and selection processes are in line with DfE guidance.

### **Clarification on the basis on which the work seeker is being engaged**

- Vacancy advertisements clearly state whether the assignment is temporary or permanent
- During the 'pre-screen' telephone conversation we discuss the candidates' requirements and level of qualification, if we feel we cannot match what they are looking for we explain what we would be able to offer and allow the candidate to make the decision as to whether our service is relevant
- We also have a similar discussion at interview to ensure that we can tailor our search for work around the basis that they want
- All candidates are provided with an electronic copy of our 'Terms of Engagement'. A signed copy is retained on their individual file
- All candidates are provided with details on our preferred Payroll Providers
- When work is offered to the candidates, they are clearly told the basis of that individual assignment and they choose whether or not to accept
- All stages of the recruitment process are in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2020) and 'Teachers' Standards' (2012)

### **The Registration Process**

During and post-interview the candidate undergoes a series of stringent quality checks including:

- **Identity Check**
- **Qualification check**
- **DfE Teacher Reference Number check for Teachers holding QTS, including checking the Teachers Prohibited from the profession list and EEA Member States Sanction Check and 128 Barring Directions.**
- **DBS Enhanced Disclosure**

- **Children’s Barred List/List 99**
- **Referencing**
- **The candidate’s knowledge of Safeguarding**
- **Previous employment history, with gaps in employment history verified**
- **Permission to work in this country**
- **Medical fitness**

Academic Appointments policy is to only place a teacher when all checks have been fully completed. Where a school wishes to interview a candidate in respect of a future booking and the candidate status is ‘Pending’ the school will be informed and a standard written communication issued clarifying the checks which are still outstanding. This standard written communication is known as the ‘Incomplete Clearance Checks’ document.

Once cleared to work, a ‘Clearance Checks’ document is compiled and, before the candidate commences each booking, their ‘Clearance Checks’ document is emailed to the school. We advise candidates to take their DBS certificate and a form of ID, such as driving licence, on the first day of each booking.

### **Pre-Registration Screening**

Upon initial contact – potential candidates are subject to a vetting process to ascertain whether they meet the company minimum requirements for registration and interview. If successful, they are invited to interview.

All candidates are informed of our Privacy Statement and sent an electronic GDPR consent form authorising Academic Appointments to retain their details. Should GDPR consent not be received, the candidate’s details are deleted.

### **Interview**

#### **ALL candidates have a face-to-face interview**

Prior to registration, candidates are asked to complete electronically:

- GDPR consent (if not already received)
- Academic Appointments Application form
- Consent to request reference on their behalf (references are requested following registration to ensure the candidate wishes to proceed)

Trained, experienced consultants within Academic Appointments carry out professional interviews with candidates. The interview process takes 45 – 75 minutes and is divided into three parts.

- The first part involves collecting all the requested identification from the candidate ensuring that the interviewer is confident of the person’s identity.
- The second part is designed to ascertain the candidate’s experience, educational knowledge, strengths, personal requirements and availability as well as identifying possible training needs. This is done in line with the Teachers’ Standards (2012). If the candidate is a teacher all eight standards are explored, for non-teaching staff at least two of the Teachers’ Standards are discussed – their experience in motivating students ensuring high expectations and their experience in managing behaviour ensuring safety is always considered. Additional standards are considered depending on the applicant’s experience.
- The third provides candidates with an induction to Academic Appointments and our processes, roles and responsibilities, standards and safeguarding, this is re-affirmed in writing in the candidate brochure which is sent electronically to the candidate along with an ‘After interview’ email.

Notes are made throughout the interview and added to the candidate's individual file.

### Identity Check

As mentioned above every candidate has a face to face interview with a trained consultant where identity is checked thoroughly including name, date of birth, address, right to work in the UK and photographic identity. The consultant checks documentation according to the list of acceptable documents approved by the Disclosure and Barring Service/REC.

All candidates are advised to take photo ID with them to assignments to allow clients to verify their identity as required by the DfE regulations.

### Qualifications

Original qualification certificates are sighted, verified and copied. Copied certificates are saved in the candidate's file.

- **UK trained teachers (including 1:1 tutors)** are required to provide their DfE Teacher Reference number and this is checked and verified with the DfE-TRA website (Employers Access/Secure Access).
- **Newly Qualified Teachers** – QTS letters are sighted, verified, and scanned at interview. They are also required to provide their DfE Teacher Reference Number, and this is checked and verified with the DfE-TRA website. NQTs are also checked in relation to their Induction status, bearing in mind the five years allowed post qualification, for successful completion of Induction. Their induction status is monitored until their 3 term induction is complete.
- **EU trained teachers** seeking registration with the agency are required to provide their DfE Teacher number. EU trained teachers are entitled to QTS via the European Directive.
- **Overseas trained teachers (OTTs)** must hold a teaching qualification equivalent to that of a British PGCE or BEd and candidates are required to provide qualification checks through UK NARIC. OTTs are checked to ensure that they do not breach the "four-year rule" whereby they are able to teach for 4 years as a qualified teacher in the UK, after which time they must obtain their QTS.
- **Instructors** (unqualified teachers) are accepted if they are sufficiently qualified (must be qualified to degree level). Instructor teachers must be able to prove their ability to teach via their experience and through questioning around the Teachers' Standards. Their original certificates are sighted, copied and saved to their file.
- **FE Teachers** Candidates who wish to teach within the FE (Further Education) sector may have a specialist qualification (ie an Adult Education Certificate such as a Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning sector qualification, Certificate in Education, PGCE 14-16, PGCE 16+). Evidence of their qualification is required. These candidates will not have qualified teacher status (QTS) but are eligible to teach in compulsory education if their curriculum knowledge is adequate and they have the relevant skills (they may be classed as Instructor Teacher within compulsory education settings). FE qualified teachers may have QTLS (this is equivalent to QTS- evidence of this is required).
- **Cover Supervisors** must be qualified to degree level and must have sufficient experience in working with students of the relevant age range. Cover supervisor training is offered by Academic Appointments.
- **Support Staff** being placed into positions where a qualification is required are required to present the relevant qualification ie Teaching Assistant and Nursery Nurse candidates will have childcare specific qualifications such as NNEB, BTEC, Cache, NVQ. All support staff candidates must be able to detail sufficient experience and knowledge of the role type they will be considered for.

### **The Candidate's Knowledge of Safeguarding:**

It is made clear to candidates from the moment they are invited to interview that they are expected to actively participate in safeguarding children. All candidates are asked to bring evidence of safeguarding training to the interview. If they do not have a safeguarding training certificate dated within the last 2 years, they are asked to complete an online 'Basic Awareness in Child Protection' course. Academic Appointments provide free, online training via <https://www.onlineexambuilder.com/academic-appointments-general-child-protection-awareness/exam-153279>. The certificate and training date is logged on the IT system and candidates are asked to renew their safeguarding training every 2 years.

Candidates are also required to evidence 'Prevent Duty' training. If they have not done this training they are advised of a free online course via <http://www.lscb.org.uk/channel-general-awareness-e-learning/>. An electronic copy of their certificate is saved in their individual file.

Post registration all candidates receive electronic copies of our safeguarding procedures and a copy of the latest DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1) document which they must confirm they have received and read. Candidates are also reminded of their safeguarding responsibilities when they are 'cleared' and 're-cleared' for work via email.

Candidates are updated via email with news on changes to policy and procedure ie information was sent to all candidates re: The April 2014 renewed DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

### **DfE Check**

We require all Qualified Teachers to provide a Teacher Reference Number. This number is then checked with the Teaching Regulation Agency via the DfE Employers check service website. The Teacher Reference Number and the date that the teacher gained QTS is logged on our recruitment software (once the teacher is cleared this information is also logged in the individuals' clearance check document). A teacher cannot be 'cleared' to work in a teaching post without a satisfactory DfE/TRA check, this entails:

- Ensuring (via the DfE employers check service) that the teacher is listed with the TRA
- Ensuring (via the DfE employers check service) that they are not subject to any restrictions/sanctions
- Ensuring that they are not listed as a Teacher prohibited from the profession (including EEA Member States Sanction Check as appropriate)
- Not listed on the Section 128 Barring list (if appropriate)
- Ensuring that they have not lapsed the '5-year rule' (as per the DfE guidance on the induction for Newly Qualified Teachers:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/362423/Induction\\_for\\_newly\\_qualified\\_teachers\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362423/Induction_for_newly_qualified_teachers_guidance.pdf) )

If a teacher is found to have sanctions/restrictions on their record a discussion with the teacher will take place to understand the context and a referral will be made to the DfE/TRA. Advice on how to proceed may also be sought via the Local Authority Safeguarding department. The Safeguarding Lead would oversee this procedure.

Candidates with a Further Education Teaching Qualification may be registered with the IFL (Institute for learning), in order to obtain QTLS they must be registered with the IFL. QTLS verification can be obtained via the IFL using the candidates IFL registration number.

### **Right to work in the United Kingdom**

All candidates must prove that they have the right to work in the United Kingdom, in line with the document requirements outlined in the Border Agency's "Comprehensive Guidance for Employers on Preventing Illegal Working" (February 2008).

Academic Appointments requests sight of a valid, current, working visa or worker registrations scheme certificate at the interview stage.

Visa expiry dates are tracked through our IT based recruitment system.

### **Disclosure & Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure including List 99- Children's Barred List Checks**

Academic Appointments is a Registered Body with the DBS and complies with the Code of Practice. Every candidate is advised of the Company DBS Policy when they are invited for interview.

All candidates who are placed into a school environment by Academic Appointments are required to have an Enhanced DBS check. If a candidate does not have a previously issued enhanced DBS dated within the last 12 months, OR an enhanced DBS registered with the Update Service we process an enhanced DBS for the candidate.

The Enhanced Disclosure ensures that candidates are checked against local police records, the Police National Computer (PNC) and the lists formerly held by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

- **The Update Service**  
Academic Appointments accepts DBS Disclosures which are registered with the Update Service if the candidate signs a consent form giving approval for Academic Appointments to perform online status checks. DBS Status Checks are undertaken every 12 months (or as frequently as necessary in individual cases).
- **Academic Appointments DBS**  
If the candidate is not registered with the update service then Academic Appointments require a new DBS to be processed. The candidate can complete an online DBS application via Personnel Checks.  
We request that candidates pay for their DBS check. Academic Appointments do not charge any form of Admin cost for this service.  
We recommend to all candidates that they subscribe to the DBS Update Service.

Academic Appointments must have sight of the original DBS certificate in order for it to be utilised and a copy retained as per the DBS guidelines.

Disclosures not registered with the Update Service (processed by Academic Appointments) are renewed every 12 months unless within those 12 months we have grounds to believe that the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children and young persons.

Academic Appointments shares Disclosure information with clients as required by the DfE. Before placing a candidate, we will confirm with the client that an Enhanced Disclosure has been received, and whether it includes any disclosure information. In cases where there is Disclosure information, we undertake an internal Risk Assessment in order to make a recruitment decision on the candidate.

The risk assessment is carried out by the interviewer with the guidance of the Safeguarding Lead and is based upon:

- A detailed discussion with the candidate re: the circumstances of their offence
- The outcome of references
- The outcome of all other vetting checks (Children's Barred List/List 99, DfE check, prohibited teachers list)
- DBS guidance
- Advice from the Local Authority if necessary

The risk assessment form is saved in the individual's file.

All candidates are advised to take their DBS check document with them to all assignments to allow clients to record the details as required by the DfE.

Academic Appointments follow the DBS guidance on storage and handling of DBS disclosures.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/143669/handling-dbs-cert.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/143669/handling-dbs-cert.pdf)

As of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013 the DBS has only issued the Disclosure certificate to the *applicant*. As per DBS guidance we gain permission from the candidate to take a photocopy of the certificate and agree with the applicant that we can retain a copy of the DBS for up to 1 year after their placement/last assignment as per REC guidance on record keeping.

#### **Rehabilitation of Offenders:**

Anyone applying to work with children is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the supporting regulations. Every applicant must give written details of all criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands, final warnings or pending prosecutions including those that would normally be regarded as "spent". This information is requested at the beginning of the registration process via the Application Form.

Written Risk Assessments are conducted on candidates with disclosures. Candidates are given three opportunities to declare any convictions (1) at the pre-screening stage before an interview is confirmed (2) on the Rehabilitation of Offenders statement on the application form (3) during the course of their registration interview.

Our Application Form states: Failure to declare a conviction may require us to exclude you from our register or terminate an assignment if the offence is not declared but later comes to light.

The DBS filtering rules (which will remove certain old and minor convictions and cautions, reprimands and warnings from a DBS Certificate) were developed by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice and introduced with new legislation. The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Academic Appointments follows the DfE & DBS Guidance and Criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions as well as convictions which result in automatic rejection from working with children. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-filtering-guidance>

The candidate has access to information on the filtering rules to establish whether they must disclose their conviction or caution in the DBS application form.

In cases where the candidate discloses details of a criminal conviction, caution, reprimand, final warning or pending prosecution we discuss the context of the offence with the candidate

and undertake an internal Risk Assessment in order to make a recruitment decision on the candidate. The DBS check, Children's Barred List/List 99 check, DfE check (if applicable) and references are all also taken into account. The Risk assessment form is linked to the candidate's record on the system. If the outcome is to proceed with the registration and the candidate becomes 'clear' the clearance checks will reflect that there is an entry on the DBS via the 'Clearance Check' document ('Information Disclosed on DBS: YES')

The clearance checks state: Disclosure "Yes" indicates that the candidate's DBS contains information held by the police including convictions, cautions and any other relevant information supplied at the discretion of the Chief Constable. Academic Appointments conduct a thorough risk assessment on all DBSs containing a disclosure. Please contact us for further information.

If the outcome of the risk assessment is that we feel the candidate poses risk the candidate will be logged on the system as 'DO NOT USE' and the reporting and referral procedure is followed, the Safeguarding Lead will oversee this.

### **Overseas or EU candidates**

All candidates need to provide a relevant police check/letter of good conduct for their country of origin, and a written Risk Assessment is conducted if applicable.

Where a police check/letter of good conduct is not available, or cannot be validated, the consultant must rely heavily on a thorough face to face interview and references: at least one more character reference, obtained from a person in authority, must be sought to gain reassurance that the candidate has no convictions that would preclude working with children or vulnerable adults to the best of the referee's knowledge.

All overseas candidates will be asked to complete an online DBS Disclosure application form. Further guidance on overseas police checks can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/262730/2-12-13\\_Application- A PART 1.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262730/2-12-13_Application- A PART 1.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/262733/2-12-13\\_Application- G PART 2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262733/2-12-13_Application- G PART 2.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/262734/2-12-13\\_Application- Q PART 3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262734/2-12-13_Application- Q PART 3.pdf)

### **Candidates who have been working abroad**

Candidates who have worked abroad for a period and wishing to register with Academic Appointments must provide a police check or certificate of good conduct from that country to ensure the period spent working out of the UK is covered. Passport stamps are evidence of their absence from the UK and should be copied for this purpose. A DBS check must also be completed in addition to any overseas police check and references in order to complete the criminal record history of the candidate. The police checks and references must cover all the countries worked in before arrival in the UK wherever possible. If a police check/certificate of good conduct is unattainable we must rely heavily on references and all other vetting checks.

### **Reporting & Referral**

Academic Appointments is fully committed to our duty of referral to the DBS where there is behaviour which displays significant risk or harm, or if dismissal has occurred, or on resignation before dismissal has occurred.

Academic Appointments staff are familiar with the process of referral as outlined in the DBS referral guidelines

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/143692/dbs-referral-faq.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/143692/dbs-referral-faq.pdf) and the DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' -Statutory guidance for schools and colleges April 2014

Academic Appointments have an appointed Safeguarding Lead within the team. This reflects the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education April 2014' statutory guidance to schools. The Safeguarding Lead is fully trained on safeguarding and understands the reporting and referral procedure thoroughly. All members of the Academic Appointments team know that the safeguarding lead is available at any time to deal with cases some of which may result in referral.

The Safeguarding Lead works closely with the candidate, the relevant school, LADOs and police, to ensure that child protection issues are handled fairly and appropriately.

### **Complaints/Negative Feedback**

If concerns are raised by a client about a candidate, these are discussed in detail with both the client and candidate in order that we gain sufficient information to take appropriate action. This information is recorded on both the candidate and client records on our IT based recruitment system.

If necessary, candidates may be excluded from a particular school if the client requests this. Our IT based recruitment system will prevent the candidate from being placed into that school again.

Candidates are given constructive advice from experienced personnel within the Academic Appointments team to support their development with issues which have been raised by clients and may be referred to further training (within Academic Appointments or external courses), or directed to other information, learning resources etc. as appropriate.

Candidates who are excluded from 4 schools are invited for a formal discussion at our office. The outcome could be that they will be advised that Academic Appointments will not offer them further work.

Candidates are also encouraged to feedback to us on their experience in school. They may choose to exclude themselves from working with a particular client. All feedback is logged on our recruitment software.

### **Allegations:**

If Academic Appointments receives information about a candidate which relates to an allegation or is of a child protection concern our process for 'Allegations Management' is immediately followed. The candidate is immediately removed from our 'available' and 'cleared' candidate list which means they will be prevented from undertaking further placements. They will remain suspended until the issue has been satisfactorily resolved. The safeguarding lead will investigate further in accordance with the reporting and referral procedure.

### **Reference Summary**

It is Academic Appointments absolute responsibility to not only take up professional references and weigh them thoroughly, but to also ascertain the validity of their provenance by ensuring that referees themselves are reliable professionals who can genuinely and objectively vouch for candidates' abilities and good character.

At least 2 detailed references are obtained for each candidate covering the last five years. One of the references must be from the most recent employer.

Reference requests seek not only to find out work performance and skills but also identify if the employer would re-employ, why they left, if there were any issues relating to safeguarding and child protection and if there were any disciplinary issues whilst the candidate was in their employment.

Upon receipt, references are checked for omissions. Vague comments or omissions are followed up and the referee is contacted for further information and amplification.

Open references/testimonials are not accepted on their own and must be validated.

Verbal references are invariably followed up within 15 working days; a written confirmation of the essence of the opinion provided in the verbal reference must be substantiated.

Gaps in employment must be identified and questioned. Consultants are trained to identify gaps in candidates' employment history on the CV or application form. They ask probing questions to satisfy themselves of the reasons for the gaps and seek evidence for the period of unemployment. Gaps in employment history, and the reasons for the gaps, are noted on the candidate file.

We recognise that adequate references and/or testimonials must be provided by suitably qualified and experienced people, who can make objective comment on potential workers, in what is a high risk sector. The table of reference types provides detailed information on the type of referee we would expect to approach.

References for all working candidates are updated frequently through verbal feedback and written placement reviews we ask schools to complete after each long-term placement.

Academic Appointments operates what we consider to be a thorough and seamless system, reliant on a computer system which is fully integrated with our paperwork and administration, to ensure that every reasonable professional care is taken to filter out unsuitable applicants. In the event of any employee subsequently proving to be unsuitable, we re-examine our procedures to ensure the same event will not recur.

### **Referencing Procedure**

- We request candidates to provide referee contact details covering 5 years of employment history wherever possible. This information is requested via the application form and referees are discussed and clarified during the interview.
- In order for a candidate to be 'cleared' for work we must receive a minimum of 2 references, one of which must be the latest employer unless there is a very good reason for this not being practicable.
- We ensure that the nominated referees are themselves qualified and suitable professionals, usually by contacting them at their own place of work (in the case of retired teachers, or for any other bona fide reason, we use our discretion whilst being mindful of safeguarding standards).
- We ensure that referees can comment with authority on the candidate's professional abilities and have recent knowledge of their performance. These 3<sup>rd</sup> parties may include other agencies and local authorities. See Table of Reference Types.
- When referencing teachers, the reference refers to the DfE Teachers' Standards. These are the same standards that teachers are appraised on in school observations.
- Where an institute will only provide one reference then a suitable alternative, such as a trainer or a character reference from a colleague, will be used.

- Verbal references may be taken over the telephone and a positive response can drive a candidate forward quickly, but we will ensure the verbal references are always followed up in writing.
- Ordinarily a referee is expected to be senior to the candidate, but consultants will use their discretion in unusual circumstances (eg a semi-retired headmaster may call on his deputy head rather than asking the incoming head teacher who doesn't know the candidate).
- In the instance of a 'nil return' from a referee, where a 'nil return' is contact failure rather than a poor reference, the candidate is contacted for an alternative referee.
- Ordinarily testimonials/character references will be acceptable, but the same vetting process applies. Provenance and validity as a gauge of candidate suitability must be established.
- When an applicant is genuinely unable to provide two or more professional referees then we will accept other professional referees supported by character referees and/or verifiable testimonials.
- Open references can only be accepted once the author of the open reference has been contacted to confirm that they wrote the reference and agree with the content. They are usually only used in addition to the receipt of 2 references.
- The information revealed by the referees is used in conjunction with other pre-employment checks in deciding whether or not the candidate can be cleared/which sort of work to offer the candidate.
- We investigate any shortfall in reference provision.
- Ordinarily references are, of course, subject to data protection legislation. So they are not usually shared directly. But this may be necessary (if, for example, it is in public interest)
- Those supplying references must be made aware that references may be shown to hirers.
- Hirers are made aware that they are entitled to view references supplied to the agency at any time if such inspection is desired.
- Academic Appointments request hirers to complete a 'Candidate Review Form' for all candidates in a placement lasting over 6 weeks in length. We will then use these reviews as guide to the candidate's performance. We also frequently obtain verbal feedback from hirers, this is logged on our recruitment software.
- If Academic Appointments receive a non-satisfactory reference, or other concern regarding the candidate's suitability to work with children after the candidate has been placed, (or within 3 months for Permanent Placement) we would notify the school immediately and agree next steps. This could result in the immediate suspension of the placement dependent on the information received.

#### **Reviewing references and acting upon anomalies:**

References are logged on the IT system and are linked to the relevant candidate. A summary of each reference can be seen at a glance and the full reference is then accessible through looking further into the candidate file.

References are rated under the following categories based on the content of the reference:

- Excellent
- Excellent / Good
- Good / Excellent
- Good
- Good / Satisfactory
- Satisfactory / Good

- Satisfactory
- Satisfactory / Inadequate
- Inadequate
- Employment Confirmed
- University Attendance Confirmed

In the instance of sub-standard references, then further referencing will be carried out. If we are still not satisfied with the result of the references, we may take the decision not to progress with the registration of the candidate. The candidate is informed of this decision.

### **Continued Suitability & CPD**

Regular contact with candidates ensures Academic Appointments keeps pace with availability and candidates who may work elsewhere for a period then return to Academic Appointments. Any candidates who have been dormant (FOJ Temp, FOJ Perm) are moved back to 'pending' and are subject to vetting procedures before they can be re-cleared for work. This process ensures we capture information which may affect a candidate's suitability for work.

Re-starter/ Re-registration Checks include:

- DfE Employers Access Check/Teachers Prohibited from the profession list and EEA Member States Sanction Check
- Ensure the Enhanced DBS check we have on record is dated within 12 months (processed by Academic Appointments) or an update service check has been performed within the last 12 months
- Ensure a Children's Barred List/List 99 check has been performed in the last 12 months
- If a period of 3 months has gone by since the candidate was last referenced/last worked via Academic Appointments, then new references must be requested to cover this period
- Child Protection Training- re-checked every 2 years

If there is a period of 12 months or more since the candidate worked for Academic Appointments the candidate is invited in for a re-registration meeting where all documentation can be updating and a detailed discussion can take place regarding the work/training undertaken by the candidate during this time. This includes obtaining GDPR consent and consent to request references.

All 'cleared' candidates undergo several regular re-checks as a matter of procedure:

- DBS Update Service check including Children's Barred List/List 99 re-checked annually (or sooner if applicable)
- Child Protection Training- re-checked every 2 years
- NQT Induction Monitoring (if applicable)

In addition, we receive regular verbal feedback from the schools in which we place the candidates on their performance. Any issues flagged by a school contact are logged on the candidate's file. In cases of re-occurring negative feedback a discussion takes place between the consultant or the safeguarding lead and the candidate. On a termly basis we ask schools where long term candidates are placed to complete a candidate review form.

Academic Appointments offer CPD to candidates. The CPD offered is based upon feedback received from schools on common areas of weakness/areas for development (ie behaviour management training). We also offer environment specific training such as Team Teach Training & MAPA training.

### **Medical Clearance**

In line with the Equality Act, 2010, Academic Appointments has modified the collection of Health Information. The agency no longer requires candidates to complete a Health Questionnaire prior to registration. Candidates are asked if they require any reasonable adjustments to the working environment as a result of their health or disability via the application form, this is then discussed at interview. This information is not taken into account when deciding suitability for employment.

If the reason for leaving their previous post (if similar to the one, they are applying to) is as a result of being medically unfit to undertake their post we require written confirmation from a doctor or occupational health professional that the candidate is fit to undertake work via Academic Appointments.

In the instance where a candidate becomes unfit to work, prior to their return to work we ask for sight of confirmation from a doctor or occupational health professional that the candidate is fit to return.

### **Fluency of English**

Fluency of English is assessed at the Pre-screening stage initially and further at the Interview stage. It is a pre-requisite for candidates to be able to communicate fluently in order that they can be placed in schools to support student learning. If candidates do not meet our standards in fluency of English, we reserve the right to arrange for a supervised test - using test papers from the British Council - in our offices or with the British Council. If a candidate fails or refuses to take the test, we reject them.

### **Candidate Rejections**

Academic Appointments reserves the right to decline applicants at any stage during the recruitment process if the candidate does not meet our requirements and selection standards.

Academic Appointments Limited

- November 2010
- Updated August 2013
- Updated August 2014
- Updated October 2014
- Updated November 2014
- Updated February 2015
- Updated August 2016
- Updated September 2016
- Updated February 2017
- Updated May 2017
- Updated September 2018
- Updated September 2019
- Updated September 2020