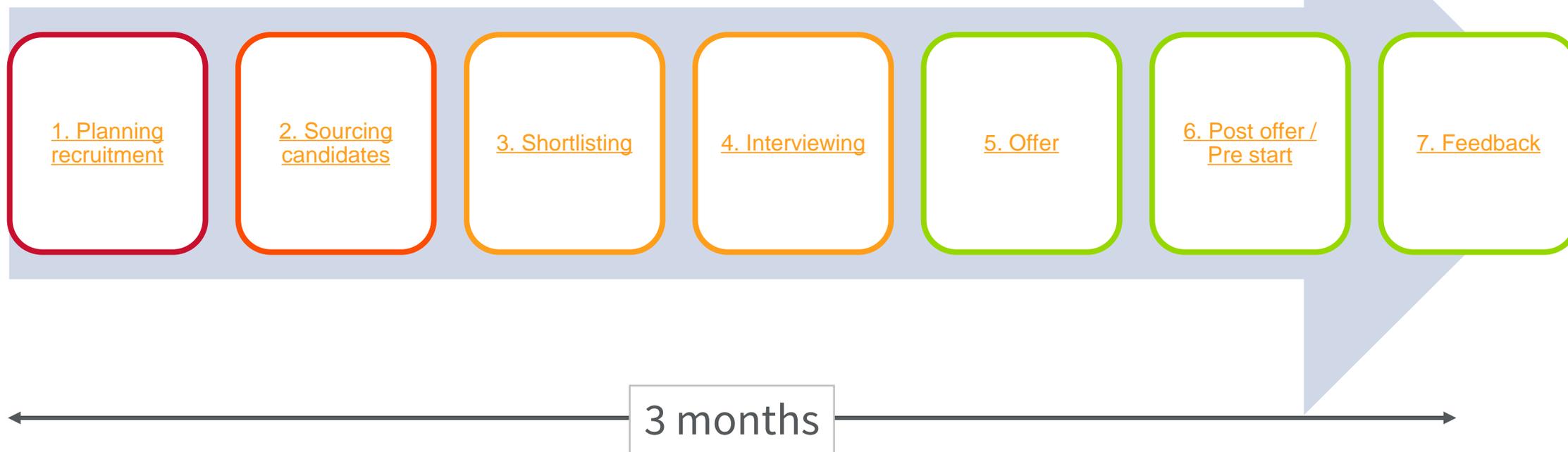




ROYAL SOCIETY
OF CHEMISTRY

Recruiting a Paid Graduate Intern: Guidance for SMEs

Recruiting a Paid Graduate Intern - Recruitment Process



Planning Recruitment

Think about:

Who (confirm the most relevant people to be involved).

Timescales (consider availability, advertising, long-listing, short-listing, interviewing, feedback, notice, leave, contingencies).

Advertising (plan where, when and how you will most effectively generate suitable applications).

Selection criteria (Assessment methods to suitably assess knowledge, skills and competencies required in the role).

Interviews (develop your interview questions and assessment methods to suitably assess candidates in relation to the selection criteria).

Feedback (how you will handle personal data and feedback in line with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act and GDPR).

Sourcing candidates

10 Tips for Writing a Job Description

1. Clearly define the purpose, requirements and accountabilities of the intern's role. For example, scope, responsibility level, accountabilities, knowledge, skills and competencies required.
2. Explain how the role fits within the organisation's purpose, vision, values or culture - ensure that the role is appropriately positioned compared to other roles within the company.
3. Outline a realistic list of essential and desired skills and competencies, and required level of experience or qualifications, for the role - the criteria need to be measurable.
4. Potential candidates may not be familiar with your company, so provide a brief overview of what your company does, needs and what makes working at your company an attractive career development opportunity.
5. Keep it simple, concise and accurate.
6. Avoid internal terminology, jargon and acronyms, as these can exclude applicants from outside the organisation or sector.
7. Avoid overselling or underselling - the candidate needs to get a clear picture of the role and misinformation during recruitment can lead to dissatisfaction if the job turns out to be different from expected.
8. Provide a clear statement on whether there is a realistic possibility of the internship developing into longer-term employment, or if it is a short-term project providing the intern with an opportunity to develop their skills.
9. Check that you have not inadvertently used discriminatory words or phrases. The legal requirements around preventing discrimination in the recruitment process, including a helpline for small businesses, can be found on the Government website [here](#)
10. If you are able to offer flexibility this may widen your pool of applicants - consider including details such as 'would consider part-time hours, job-share and applications from those currently on a career break.'

Sourcing candidates

Advertising your Internship Vacancy

The RSC is offering free advertising on the [Chemistry World Jobs](#) internship page, for internship grant holders. In the last 6 months this webpage has attracted an average of 284 views and 15 applications for each internship vacancy advertised. Vacancies advertised here may also be included in our student newsletter, targeting prospective applicants who are seeking graduate opportunities.

When you're ready to arrange your listing, please send the following details to enterpriseplus@rsc.org:

- Your logo at 360x180.
- The job title you would like advertising.
- A full job description - please send as a Word document, there is no character limit.
- Salary – this can be an accurate figure or displayed as 'competitive'.
- Location and any travel requirements of the role.
- Expected hours of employment e.g. 35 hours per week.
- The closing date for applications.
- Your contact details – e.g. a link to your website or email address.
- An application form, if required.

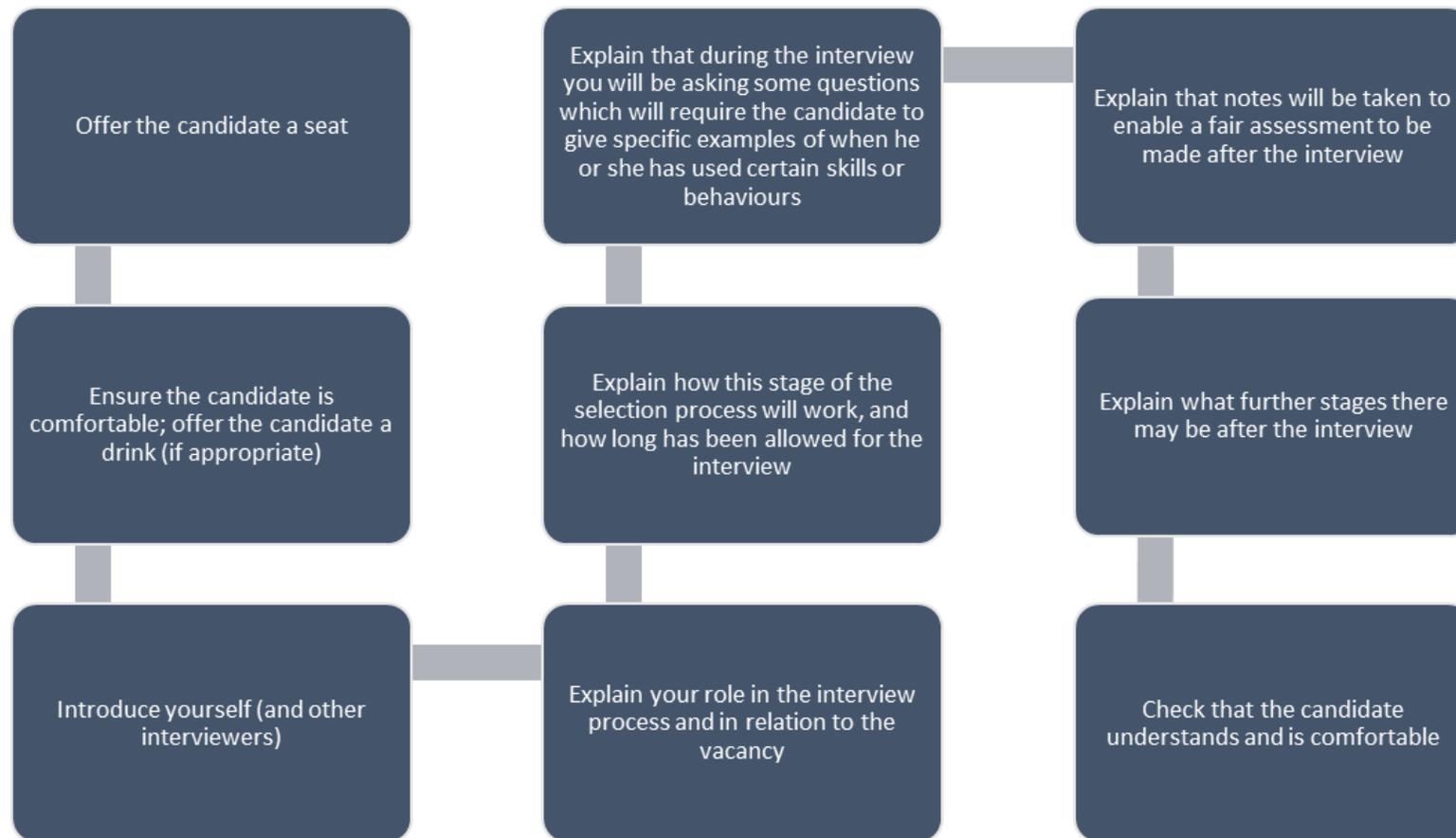
You could also advertise the vacancy on your company website, on relevant external recruitment sites, on social media sites or universities' jobs boards. To provide equal opportunities, and to attract a wide pool of talented candidates, it's important to suitably advertise vacancies rather than relying on personal connections.

Interviewing

Top tips for interviewing graduate candidates for a position with your SME

- Shortlist the most suitable applicants to invite for interview in order of merit.
- Provide interviewees with an idea of the type of environment and facilities they could expect, as this may differ from their previous experience of a university laboratory environment. If possible conduct face-to-face interviews on-site, so that the applicant can see the environment they would be working in.
- As well as technical skills, look for someone who shares your business values and is passionate about the aims of your business. This is particularly important for SMEs where each person can have a large impact on the organisational culture.
- Recent graduates may have little work experience, so you could focus interview questions on strengths and relevant transferable employability skills such as problem solving or teamwork, rather than strictly technical experience. Look for a willingness to learn and grow.

Welcoming a candidate at interview



Example Interview Questions

Ask the candidate about their practical and technical skills, as relevant to the requirements of the role that you are interviewing them for.

Opening and closing questions <i>These questions can be used to find out about the interviewee's knowledge of your company and their motivation for applying for the role.</i>	Strength-based questions <i>Strength-based questions are more informal than competency questions.</i> <i>They allow recruiters to gain an insight into the personalities and attitudes of candidate and to see if they'd be a good 'fit' for the company.</i>	Competency-based questions <i>Also known as structured, behavioral or situational interviews, competency-based questions are designed to test one or more skills.</i> <i>Competency interviews work on the principle that past behavior is the best indicator of future performance. The interviewer asks a list of set questions and scores the interviewees answers against pre-determined criteria.</i>
Please provide an overview of what you've been doing in the last year/ Could you tell us about yourself/ could you run us through your CV?	What is your biggest strength / development area?	Tell me about a successful team that you've worked in. What made it successful and what role did you play?
What interests you about or attracted you to this position/ organisation?	Do you prefer the big picture or the small details?	Tell me about a big decision you've made recently. How did you go about it?
Where do you see yourself in five years?	Do you most like starting tasks or finishing them?	Tell me about a time when you've used your communication skills effectively?
What challenges do you think the role might pose? How might you overcome those challenges?	When did you achieve something you're really proud of?	How do you plan and manage your workload on a daily, weekly and monthly basis?
Why should we hire you/ what do you think sets you apart from other candidates?	Have you ever learnt from a mistake or done something differently the second time around?	Tell me about a time when you've had to think creatively about resolving a problem?

Interviewing

Making notes

- You can use notes to provide feedback to candidates and to defend a selection decision, should a discrimination claim arise.
- All of a candidate's personal data should be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).
- Be mindful that GDPR allows all candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, the right to view any notes taken during the selection process.

Offer

At the end of the interview

1. Let the candidate know that you have all the information you need.
2. Ask if the candidate has any questions.
3. Answer any questions the candidate may have.
4. Tell the candidate when they can reasonably expect to hear back from you.
5. Thank the candidate for their application and attending interview.
6. Show the candidate out.
7. Be friendly, professional and courteous at all times.

Wait until you have assessed all of the candidates invited to interview, before calling to let them know the results of their interview. Then, respond to the successful candidate as soon as possible, as they may receive offers of employment from multiple organisations.

Post-interview / pre-start

When the intern has been offered the position, you must complete the start form linked in your internship grant offer email.

If you do not provide us with a copy of the intern's contract of employment in this form, you will not be eligible to receive payment of the Internship Grant. See the [Terms and Conditions of the Grant](#) for further details.

When the intern starts

Ensure that you are ready for the intern to start their role. For example, set up their workspace, email address and any other technology or equipment that they will require in their role.

Intern Induction

Schedule induction training for the new-starter to learn about the organisation and their role, such as organisational policies and job requirements, as well as socialisation opportunities for them to meet other staff that they will be working with. This will help them to integrate into the team and provide them with the knowledge and support needed to perform their role.

Provide practical information, for example building opening hours, when fire alarm tests take place, login details for required IT systems.

Give an orientation of the facilities available and health and safety information. You could provide an induction checklist to the intern, so that they can check they have received and understood all of the information that they need.

Feedback and rejecting candidates

It is useful to provide feedback to applicants who you reject, so that they can go away and develop required skills that they are missing, or work on their application or interview skills.

This can help graduates and post graduates gain employment in Chemistry Industry and maintain a positive view of your company, even if you have determined that they are not the most suitable candidate for the role you currently have available.

Equality and diversity

Ensure you have developed clear selection and assessment criteria prior to interviewing and are prepared to challenge your own or others' **unconscious biases**. Find out more about the potential impacts of unconscious bias in recruitment, with this video from the [Royal Society](#) and podcast from the [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#).

Equality Act - it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of protected characteristics:

Age

Being or becoming a transsexual person

Being married or in a civil partnership

Being pregnant or on maternity leave

Disability

Race including color, nationality, ethnic or national origin

Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief

Gender

Sexual orientation

Association with someone who has a protected characteristic (e.g. a family member or friend)

Someone who has complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim

Government recruitment guidance for small businesses, including the equality act can be found [here](#)

Employment rights for interns

Employment Rights for Interns

An intern in a business is entitled to at least the National Minimum Wage and qualifies for employment rights if conducting regular paid work for an employer. See Government advice on employment rights for interns [here](#).

The RSC Internship Grant Terms and Conditions state that to be eligible for the grant the business “Will directly employ the Intern” (not as a contractor) and offer a salary of at least £4,000 for 3 month’s work (the amount covered by the grant). If employing the intern part-time, the work must be spread out over a longer-period and the salary paid on a pro-rata basis.

Check legal right of the intern to be employed in the UK

As stated in the RSC Internship Grant Terms and Conditions and legislation, as the Intern’s employer you will be responsible for correctly checking that the Intern has the legal right to work in the UK, in the intern role, before they commence work.

To ensure that you correctly check all interns’ right to work or if you have any questions, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>.

Employment rights for interns

Writing a Contract of Employment

An employment contract should cover:

- The name of the business and the intern.
- Place of employment.
- Intern salary and how often they will get paid.
- Start and end dates of the internship.
- Terms of employment such as hours of employment and notice period.
- Employment benefits such as holiday and sick-leave entitlement.
- Pensions information.
- Non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements.
- Dispute resolution processes.
- Signature of intern and employer.

Contracts of employment cannot give the employee less rights than they have legally.