RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Aims of this Policy

Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC) aims to recruit the best possible candidates for posts and by adhering to this recruitment policy, we ensure that our practices reflect good practice and are free from bias and discrimination.

Cambridge United Football Club is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and volunteers. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

This policy applies to all employees, casual staff, workers, volunteers, interns and contractors engaged by the Club, where relevant to the role.

This policy is to be used by all employees employed at Cambridge United FC involved in recruitment and selection processes. The appointment of all employees will seek to identify the person best suited to the role based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit, measured against a clear job description and person specification for each role, whilst ensuring a diverse pool of candidates, and in accordance with the provisions of Employment Law and our Equality & Diversity Policy.

Cambridge United FC will ensure that this process complies with its Equality & Diversity principles, in line with its Equality Policy, to ensure that all applicants are treated solely based on their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Cambridge United FC are committed to providing a workplace which is fair and equal, and nobody will be disadvantaged, discriminated against or prevented from working at the Club if they are in a close Personal Relationship with another colleague or player. All personal relationships must be declared where a reporting, supervisory or decision-making relationship exists. Appropriate management controls will be implemented.

All candidates will be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when applying for roles. This will enable us to monitor the effectiveness of our recruitment strategy and equal opportunities and complete our annual reporting requirements to the EFL Code of Practice.

This policy applies to **all recruitment** and includes casual staff, volunteers and interns where stated.

Responsibilities also include monitoring contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document and ensuring that a focus is maintained upon ensuring a safe and appropriate workforce in line with the Club's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. See the Club's Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy.

The Club will ensure that the procedures and practises are consistent with Safer Recruitment guidance as outlined in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and EFL regulation 122.

Delegation of appointments and constitution of appointments panels

Cambridge United FC delegates the power to offer employment for all posts below the level of Management, to the Manager of the Department of the Club, in agreement with the Head of HR & People.

The CEO, delegated Managers, in agreement with the Head of HR & People, are responsible for the recruitment of Managers.

All coaching roles (casual) recruitment is the responsibility of the Recruiting Manager and the relevant DSO.

Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people for casual roles and a minimum of three people for all other roles, including the Head of HR & People or an approved member of staff.

Identifying the need

An analysis of the requirements of the role, see below, should be provided, and agreed with the Head of HR & People and the Finance Manager by the Recruiting Manager. Final signing-off shall be required by the CEO for all new roles.

Prior to any recruitment, decisions will be made about the following:

- Staff budget available to support contractual hours required.
- Whether the post can be part time/ full time/ job share
- Permanent or temporary contract
- Timescales and key dates, including closing date for applications and interview dates.
- Advertising media to be used.
- Application format
- Interview panel members and format of interview
- Checks required.

Drawing up a job description and person specification

The job description outlines the general nature of the post including the main duties and responsibilities, essential requirements for the role, and it will identify the Line manager for the post. It also incorporates the person specification (qualifications, attributes and skills required) and it is these criteria that are used as short-listing criteria by the recruiting manager. Other information that is included is a description of the department, background information for the post, further details such as deadline date for applications, etc.

The essential and desirable criteria will then form a checklist against which applications can be objectively judged to draw up a shortlist.

Any criteria must be free from indirect or direct discrimination. (Indirect discrimination is using a requirement which will make it difficult for people of a particular gender, culture, or age to apply)

Advertising

The Club will generally advertise vacant posts to encourage a wide and diverse field of applicants as possible. Normally this entails internal and external advertisement in relevant publications or websites, which may include the Club's own website and social media channels.

The EFL's iRecruit platform should be used to advertise all casual coach roles.

Vacancies may also be advertised on other specialist sites dependent upon the role. Any advertisement will include a clear statement of the Club's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk, as well as the Club's stance on Equality. The Club does not normally use agencies or third parties for recruitment purposes. Where recruitment agencies are used, they must comply with the Club's safeguarding and safer recruitment requirements.

Generally, adverts are circulated internally for an initial short period to give opportunity to existing staff to apply for posts. Once this period ends, if there is either a lack of sufficient interest or a lack of appropriate candidates, the post will be advertised externally.

In general, advertisements for posts at CUFC will contain information on the following:

- Post Title
- Location (s) of post
- Type of contract
- Number of hours
- Salary & Benefits
- A job description (The length and content of this may vary with each individual position)
- Contact name & details to request further information.
- Closing date for applications
- Reference to the Club's Equality & Diversity Policy, Safeguarding Policy, DBS and other pre-employment requirements, including two satisfactory references.
- Information on what a candidate must provide to be considered for the job (e.g. CV/Cover Letter/completed application form)

Advertisements will provide relevant links where the Application form, self-declaration form and Equal opportunities monitoring forms are available. Incomplete applications, applications from third party agencies, and applications by CV only, will not be considered, and this is made clear on all advertisements.

Applicants are advised to put as much information as they wish into the application form itself which is seen by the shortlisting panel for consideration.

On occasions, a post may not be advertised externally, due to an internal promotion or restructure of roles within the Club.

Receiving applications

Recruitment diverse data for applications, interviews, offers and hires will be collated and reviewed to support understanding of talent pools and the reach of advertising.

Criminal Record Checking

The Club undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure based on a conviction.

A DBS disclosure is requested only after consideration has been given to the roles and responsibilities included in the Job description. Any decision to request a disclosure will be relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where an enhanced disclosure is required, the recruitment documents used will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position as follows:

"This post requires an Enhanced Criminal Records Check and checks against the Barred Lists and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). Therefore, all convictions including spent convictions that have not been subject to filtering by the DBS should be declared".

Where a disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record, if any, at an early stage of the application process. A self-disclosure form is included in the application pack to support this process.

We recognise the importance of confidentiality in relation to this sensitive information and therefore this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an individual from working with the Club. An informed risk assessment of all the information gathered through the recruitment process, including any offending history, will be undertaken in relation to the role and responsibilities applied for before any decision is made about suitability.

Applications

- Applications submitted directly to staff members, incomplete applications sent by CV only, received via third parties, agents, or agencies, or received after the deadline stated, will not be considered.
- All those involved in the short-listing process have a responsibility to scrutinise the application forms and letters of application carefully. In addition to judging the application against the criteria for the post, anyone noticing an anomaly should make a written note to that effect.
- An appropriate member of the recruitment team will have specific responsibility for ensuring that thorough scrutiny of the application has taken place, as per safer recruitment guidelines, prior to the interview. This should include a month-by-month record of employment since leaving education/school to the present date. Any gaps should be noted and followed up at interview; this will form part of the specific questions regarding safeguarding during the formal interview process.

Shortlisting and notifying candidates

The selection panel will use the job description and person specification for the shortlisting, to come to a decision about which candidates are most suitable for the post. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants. Shortlisted Candidates will then be notified that they have been shortlisted for the role, and informed of the date, time, location, and format of the interview. The Club will make every effort to ensure that all applicants are able to access the interview.

All eligible internal candidates who meet the essential criteria for the role will be guaranteed an interview.

Where possible blind recruitment practices will be adopted.

CUFC embraces the inclusion of all individuals throughout the game, regardless of gender or race and believes that all appointments should be made on merit alone. CUFC will, in line with English Football League regulations, interview at least one applicant that is male and female, Black, Asian or Mixed-Heritage, if their application meets the requirements set out in the job specification.

As a Disability Confident employer, CUFC is committed to offering an interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job. During peak recruitment periods or if there are many applicants, there may need to be a limit to the number of interviews offered.

Applicants will be invited to inform the Club of any reasonable adjustments required during the recruitment and selection process.

Online Searches

Online searches will be limited to publicly available information and will be conducted consistently for all shortlisted candidates. Information relating to protected characteristics will not be used in decision-making. Candidates will be informed that such searches may take place.

The interview

In deciding the interview format, the Club will consider the most appropriate way of testing the suitability of the candidate. Decisions about successful candidates will be made through consensus by the interview panel on consideration of the responses to tasks and questions set and will be based on the best person for the job.

All interview stages must be completed within three weeks of the closing date, unless an exception is agreed by the CEO due to operational requirements or exceptional circumstances.

Interview preparation by the Club to ensure that candidate suitability is measured as accurately as possible will include:

- Selection and briefing of interview panel and agreeing upon roles
- Deciding upon the format of interviews to provide the most appropriate ways of testing the candidates (including interview, practical test, discussion group, presentation)
- Deciding upon interview questions
- Conducting interviews equitably
- Deciding upon the format for briefing candidates about the Club
- Giving opportunities for candidates to ask questions
- Informing candidates of timescales for making decisions
- Clarification of information in the candidate's application
    - explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment or significant periods of time working or living abroad
    - explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the interviewers
    - declare any information that is likely to appear on a criminal record disclosure
    - demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk
    - explain any issues that have arisen during the online search

A record will be made of responses and of any questions asked by the interviewee.
Interviewers should bring any notes they have made with them, these will then be collected and put with the application file at the end of the process. All notes are stored for a minimum of 6 months.

Interview panel members will be diverse wherever feasible and selected based on suitability and collectively, should be representative of the wider community so that gender and racial bias is reduced.

Interviewers will treat each candidate equally by interviewing them based on the person's specification and prepared questions. The candidates will be asked the same questions, and only those that are relevant to the job.

In reaching the decision for the successful candidate, it should be the best person for the job. The interview panel should be clear about how the decision was reached and ensure that this is documented.

Making the job offer

The successful candidate will be verbally offered the post by one of the interview panel, but this offer will be subject to a minimum of two satisfactory references, of which the candidate will be made aware of. A start date will then be agreed, and the offer will be confirmed in writing. The candidate will be asked to sign a copy as acceptance of the post and return.

Interviewed candidates will normally be informed of the outcome within five working days of the final interview stage or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. Feedback will be offered on request.

References and checks

References will be requested immediately after the successful candidate has been offered the post and verbally accepts this offer. The conditional offer of employment by the selection panel and the acceptance of the candidate is binding on both parties' subject to the verification of Right to work in the UK, Qualification requirements, satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure, and a minimum of two satisfactory references. The successful candidate will be informed, normally by offer letter, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

References will be requested and managed in strict confidentiality. Employer testimonials or 'bearer references' i.e. those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied.

References should be from

- present/last employer – from a manager or senior member of staff
- one from a previous football club – if applicable

All references should be returned on our pro-forma form.

If there are any concerns about the references/checks that are received, they should be discussed with the Head of HR & People and the CEO as necessary.

All references should be checked with the Head of HR & People prior to accepting them as part of the safer recruitment checks.

In addition, a DBS check will be conducted by the Club. For any staff that will be working directly with children they must also have their Safeguarding Children qualification and Emergency First Aid

qualification. The Club will request the appropriate certificates which verify the candidate has these qualifications, with copies being made and kept in a secure file.

All line managers should be aware that satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosures must be received for all new staff who are taking up Regulated positions. The CEO or Head of HR & People may authorise a new member of staff to commence work in exceptional circumstances prior to receiving a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure providing that:

- Arrangements are in place to ensure that the individual is always supervised, and
- The enhanced DBS disclosure has been applied before the start date, and
- A completed Application Form and Self-Declaration form has been received, and
- All other checks (including receiving satisfactory written references) have been completed
- A risk assessment has been completed.

Self-Declaration forms for staff required to have a DBS check, will be completed and checked by the Safeguarding Officer ahead of starting in the role. They will be re-certified by all relevant staff by completing the self-declaration form, on an annual basis by no later than 1st July each year. The date of the self-declaration form will be included on the single central register. Completion of this will be overseen by the Safeguarding Officer.

Retention of paperwork

All documentation relating to the recruitment process will be retained for a minimum period of six months, unless required for the purpose of legal proceedings, safeguarding investigations or regulatory requirements, in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The documentation will then be confidentially disposed of.

Personnel file

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of their employment with the Club including:

A new appointee should not commence employment until all criteria have been met as set out in this policy. All the checks must be logged carefully on the Club's Single Central Register (SCR).

The Single Central Register

A single Central Register of recruitment and vetting checks, including.

- Identity check
- Right to work
- DBS Certificate number and date
- Barred list check (where applicable)
- Qualifications
- Self-declaration dates
- Record of references received from and the date

is kept in accordance with EFL requirements on Sentry. This is overseen by the Head of HR & People and managed by the Safeguarding Officer.

Start of employment & induction

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken.

All new Club employees will be provided with an Induction programme.

Use of Contractors

Contractors that are used within the Club should comply with the Club's safeguarding and safer recruitment requirements. They should also ensure that they have read and understood the Club's Equality policy.

Volunteers and Interns

Volunteers and Interns who are working within the Club will be subject to the same employment and vetting checks as paid staff, subject to assessment of their role and responsibilities and whether they will be working in an unsupervised capacity.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

This policy and the practices of the Club will be formally reviewed every year to ensure it remains up to date and compliant with the law and best practice.

Appendix 1: Recruitment & Selection Process Timeline

Cambridge United Football Club is committed to providing a fair, efficient and positive candidate experience. Candidates will be kept informed of progress throughout the recruitment process and notified promptly of any significant delays. Whilst the Club aims to adhere to the timescales below, they may be varied where operational requirements, safeguarding considerations, senior appointments, or exceptional circumstances require a different approach.

Standard Recruitment Timeline

Stage	Activity	Standard Timescale	Indicative Timing
1	Recruitment approval, job description and advertisement agreed	Prior to advertising	Week 0
2	Internal advertisement period	Minimum 5 calendar days	Week 1
3	External advertisement period (where applicable)	Minimum 10-14 calendar days	Weeks 1-2
4	Application closing date	As stated in the advertisement	End of Week 2
5	Shortlisting completed	Within 5 working days of the closing date	Week 3
6	Interview invitations issued	Within 3 working days of shortlisting	Week 3
7	First-stage interviews conducted	Within 10 working days of the closing date	Week 4
8	All interview stages completed	Within 3 weeks of the closing date	Week 4-5
9	Preferred candidate identified and verbal offer made	Within 2 working days of the final interview	Week 5
10	Written offer issued	Within 2 working days of verbal acceptance	Week 5
11	References and pre-employment checks commenced	Immediately following verbal acceptance	Week 5
12	Receipt and verification of references, right to work, qualifications and DBS checks (where applicable)	Within 10 working days	Weeks 5-7
13	Written contract documentation issued	Within 5 working days of satisfactory checks being completed	Week 7
14	Induction arrangements confirmed	Prior to commencement	Week 7-8
15	Employment commences	On agreed start date	Week 8+

Note: Whilst the Club aims to complete recruitment processes within approximately 6-8 weeks, timelines may vary depending on the role, notice periods, safeguarding requirements, DBS processing times, and the availability of candidates and interview panel members.

Candidate Communications

The Club recognises the importance of timely communication throughout the recruitment process and will endeavour to communicate as follows:

Candidate Group	Communication Commitment	Indicative Timing
Internal Candidate	Internal applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role will be guaranteed an interview.	Following shortlisting, within 5 working days of the closing date
Applicants not shortlisted	Notified of the outcome of their application	Within 10 working days of the closing date
Candidates invited to interview	Provided with reasonable notice of interview arrangements and any assessment requirements	Within 3 working days of shortlisting
Candidates attending interview	Informed of the recruitment outcome	Within 5 working days of the final interview stage
Unsuccessful interviewed candidates	Offered feedback on request where practicable	Within 10 working days of the outcome being communicated
All candidates	Kept informed of significant delays or changes to the recruitment timetable	Throughout the recruitment process as required

Target End-to-End Recruitment Timescale

The Club aims to complete recruitment activity within the following overall timeframe:

Stage	Target Completion
Advertisement to closing date	2 weeks
Closing date to completion of interviews	Up to 3 weeks
Final interview to verbal offer	2 working days
Offer to completion of pre-employment checks	Up to 2 weeks
Contract issue and induction preparation	Up to 1 week
Overall recruitment process	Approximately 6-8 weeks

Exceptions

There may be occasions where these timescales require adjustment, including but not limited to:

- Senior or specialist appointments.
- Roles requiring enhanced safeguarding or DBS checks.
- Vacancies that attract a high volume of applicants.
- Delays in receipt of references or statutory pre-employment checks.

Any significant departure from the standard recruitment timeline should be agreed with the Head of HR & People and, where appropriate, the CEO.

The Club will always seek to balance operational requirements with the need to provide a professional, fair and respectful recruitment experience for all candidates.

Effective Date	June 2024
Policy Author	Head of HR & People and Safeguarding Officer
CEO/Board Approver	Board
Board Director Signature	
Review Date	October 2027

Review History

Version	Date	Review details	Authorised by Board/CEO
1	June 2024		Board
2	May 2025	Board review 2nd May	Board
3	May 2026	Annual review	Board
4	July 2026	Addition of internal interviews, and interview timescales	CEO
5	October 2026	Addition of further detail to timescales & Processes	CEO