

'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' Isaiah 40:31

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Guidance for the appointment of Senior Leaders to Academies Within Aquila, the Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust Ltd

1. Definitions

'Senior Leader' - the Principal, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Head of School or Deputy of an Academy
'the MAT' – Aquila, the Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust

2. Introduction

The appointment of Senior Leaders are the most important decisions that an Academy will make. The Trust recognises that strong leadership provides the best foundation for a strong community as the right person will have a profound impact on the character of the academy and its continued development. The Board takes its responsibility for the appointment of Senior Leaders very seriously, and this guidance provides an outline of the process in which appointments will follow.

3. The Trust

The Trust Board of Directors is the employer of all staff within its academies. Senior Leaders are no exception, but this is the only appointment which the Trust Board must be fully and formally engaged with as other appointments are delegated to the Principal/Headteacher/Executive Head.

The MAT also recognises that every academy is different and wishes to secure full engagement in the decision-making process by those who will ultimately be working in partnership with the leadership team. Therefore, the appointment decision will be delegated to a panel wherever possible. The panel will represent different groups, with the majority from the Local Governing Body. Each representative will understand the context, values and strategic direction that the Academy is developing and therefore who is best to steer the Academy with its improvements.

4. Basic process

The exact steps taken for the appointment will be dictated by the circumstances of the Academy at the time. Wherever possible the process should follow these basic steps:

1. Initial planning – context, requirements, recruitment strategy
2. Advertisements or other strategies using press and other sources
3. Shortlisting - Decision around those with the most appropriate skills for the school's context
4. Selection process including formal interview
5. Deliberation and proposal – Consider the evidence and reach a conclusion as to the most suitable candidate
6. Agreement – The panel agrees that there is one suitable candidate and notify the Trust of the decision

5. The Panel

The panel will play an integral role in the process and will be involved at all stages. Panels will comprise of representatives from the following:

In the case of Academies with a Religious Character

- a) Trust Representative – the Trust Chief Operations Officer or his/her representative
- b) Diocesan Board of Education – the Director of Education or his/her representative
- c) The Chair of the Local Governing Body
- d) 2x Governors selected by the Local Governing Body

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In the case of other Academies:

- a) Trust Representative – the Trust Chief Operations Officer or his/her representative
- b) The Chair of the Local Governing Body
- c) 3x Governors selected by the Local Governing Body

The panel provides an even representation of the parties interested in ensuring an appropriate appointment can be made.

In appointing members to the panel, Local Governing Bodies must ensure that they are confident that those representing them are candidates with the skills who can represent the views of the Body.

For schools with a religious character, the way in which the candidate can develop the Christian character, ethos and values within the school, will play a key part in the deliberations. As a result, guidance will be offered by the Board of Education representative. For schools without a religious character, a representative from the Board of Education will attend in an advisory capacity with no voting rights.

The purpose of the panel is to deliberate and ultimately agree on which candidate met the appointment criteria previously agreed and therefore is the best for the future of the Academy. Although the final decision lies with the Trust, the panel is delegated the power to make the decision, and this will be accepted unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.

6. Decision making

The decision should be unanimous wherever possible (i.e. all 5 members in favour of one candidate).

If a unanimous agreement is not possible, a decision of four members to one member (i.e. 80% of the panel) could be accepted.

- For an academy with a religious character, both the Trust Representative and the Board of Education representative must be in agreement
- For other academies, the Trust representative will have the casting vote

Where a decision cannot be reached, governors should request a consideration of alternative methods of leadership or a review of the recruitment strategy.

7. Agreement

If a unanimous decision of the panel is reached, this must be shared with the Local Governing Body at the earliest opportunity. The Trust representative will be responsible for reporting the decision to the Board at the earliest possible opportunity. Where a panel is delegated the responsibility for making the decision, **No ratification** is required by either the Trust Board or the Local Governing Body as the decision has been delegated to the panel. However, both must be notified at the earliest possible opportunity and so the LGB may wish to arrange to meet confidentially so the panel can share the details of any appointment and consider future arrangements such as when the decision can be made public.