

## Recruitment Strategies in Private Higher Education Institutions in England

**Ifrah Sajjad,**

Visiting Lecturer and HR Data and Systems Analyst,  
Scotia Gas Networks (SGN), UK

**Sheikh Abid Taufique,**

Higher Education Manager,  
City College, Birmingham England

## **Abstract**

### Recruitment Strategies in Private Higher Education Institutions in England

This qualitative research study explores recruitment strategies employed by Private Higher Education Institutions (PrHEIs) in England. The study aims to gain insights into the various recruitment practices and challenges faced by PrHEIs in attracting and selecting suitable candidates for academic and administrative positions. The research methodology involves semi-structured interviews with 12 key stakeholders, including HR managers and academic leaders, from a diverse range of PrHEIs. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies common themes and patterns in recruitment strategies, including advertising channels, selection criteria, and the use of technology in the recruitment process. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of aligning recruitment practices with the unique characteristics and goals of PrHEIs to attract qualified candidates and enhance organisational effectiveness. The findings contribute to the existing literature on recruitment in higher education and provide practical insights for PrHEIs to optimise their recruitment strategies and practices.

**Keywords:** Recruitment Strategies, Advertising Channels, Selection Criteria, Challenges, Private Higher Education Institutions, England

## **Introduction**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are pivotal in shaping the educational landscape, contributing to intellectual development, research advancements, socio-economic growth and positive societal impact (Khuram et al., 2023; Marginson et al., 2023; Păunescu et al.; 2022). HEIs are classified into two main categories: public and private. Public Higher Education Institutions (PuHEIs) are exemplified by prestigious institutions like the University of Oxford, ranked number one, and Cambridge University, ranked fifth in the Times Higher Education's world ranking of 2024 (THE, 2024). Typically, PuHEIs boast larger student populations, often between 40,000 and 50,000 students. For example, the University College London (UCL) has a total enrolment of 46,830 students, and the University of Manchester has 46,410 students (uhomes.com, 2024). These institutions enjoy substantial government funding, extensive research facilities, and diverse academic programmes. Therefore, people prefer to work for public HEIs.

Conversely, Private Higher Education (PrHEIs) in England are comparatively smaller, with only a handful of institutions accommodating just over 10,000 students each and many under one thousand students. The private HE sector often caters to the demographic needs of non-traditional students in England, such as Oxford Business College (OBC), Global Banking School (GBS), and the London School of Science and Technology (LSST) have the majority of non-traditional students. Despite their smaller scale, PuHEIs offer unique benefits such as specialised curricula, flexible learning options, and a more personalised academic experience. OBC is the pioneer in research and sets an example for other PrHEIs in England to consider research an integral part of their institutions.

The disparity in size between public and private HEIs in England has significant implications for the higher education landscape. PuHEIs, with their larger student bodies and extensive resources, have a greater capacity for research endeavours, knowledge dissemination, and community engagement than PrHEIs (Qureshi, 2023). They often attract a diverse pool of students from across the globe, fostering a vibrant academic environment and facilitating cultural exchange.

In contrast, PrHEIs face distinct challenges due to their smaller scale and limited resources. While they may offer innovative programmes and more intimate learning environments, they must navigate financial constraints, competition from larger institutions, and perceptions regarding quality and prestige. Despite these challenges, PrHEIs contribute valuable diversity to higher education, offering alternative academic and professional success pathways.

The evolving landscape of higher education in England underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics between public and private HEIs. As policymakers, educators, and stakeholders seek to enhance the accessibility, quality, and relevance of higher education, it is essential to recognise the contributions and challenges of both public and private institutions. England can continue to thrive as a global leader in academia and research by fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity across the higher education sector.

PrHEIs operate under varying degrees of government control and funding mechanisms, showcasing a spectrum of autonomy levels. Zia (2023) noted that these institutions may be fully autonomous, partially autonomous, or subject to significant government oversight. Furthermore, they encompass diverse organisational structures, from profit-generating enterprises to non-profit society-centred establishments (Shenaz, 2011).

Unlike PuHEIs, which are directly owned and managed by the government, PrHEIs are managed and funded by private entities. Funding for these institutions is sourced from various channels, including tuition fees, donations, endowments, research grants, and revenue-generating activities (Šestanović, Qureshi, & Khawaja, 2021). Interestingly, some funding sources mirror those found in PuHEIs, such as tuition fees, donations, and endowments (Šestanović, Qureshi, & Khawaja, 2023).

PrHEIs predominantly rely on private sector funding, including individual philanthropists, corporations, and foundations. Consequently, tuition fees in private institutions are higher than those in their public counterparts. Various factors influence PrHEI autonomy levels, including legal frameworks, accreditation requirements, and contractual agreements with the government. This spectrum of autonomy and funding mechanisms distinguishes PrHEIs as distinct entities within the higher education landscape (Qureshi & Khawaja, 2021; Qureshi, 2023).

Staff recruitment is a pivotal pillar within the Higher Education (HE) framework, wielding profound significance in shaping its trajectory and success (Metcalf et al., 2005). It serves as the foundational cornerstone upon which academic excellence, institutional growth, and the realisation of organisational objectives are built (Noe et al., 2004; Mushemeza, 2016). The recruitment process within an HEI encompasses multifaceted dimensions, encompassing the identification and selection of suitable candidates and the alignment of individuals' skills, expertise, and ethos with the institution's overarching mission and values (Armstrong, 2020, Bryson et al., 2012; Lievens & Chapman, 2019; Yaseen, 2015). Moreover, staff recruitment extends beyond mere personnel acquisition; it embodies the ethos and culture of the HEI, reflecting its commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and innovation. Recruiting staff transcends the transactional realm, emerging as a strategic imperative that underpins the HEI's pursuit of academic excellence and societal impact (Păunescu et al., 2022).

Recruitment strategies in PrHEIs in England are crucial in attracting and retaining talented faculty and staff, influencing the institutions' overall success and competitiveness in the educational landscape. These strategies are pivotal for ensuring a diverse and skilled workforce that aligns with the institution's mission, values, and educational goals (Guest et al., 2017; Qawasmeh et al., 2024). Effective recruitment practices facilitate the selection of qualified candidates, enhance institutional culture, foster innovation, and drive academic excellence.

Research suggests that successful recruitment strategies in PrHEIs encompass a range of elements, including proactive talent sourcing, targeted marketing and branding efforts, streamlined application processes, comprehensive candidate assessment methods, and competitive compensation and benefits packages. All should be aligned with the changing environment (Boxal & Purcell, 2022). Moreover, strategies that emphasise cultural fit,

diversity, equity, and inclusion are increasingly prioritised to create a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Despite the importance of recruitment, PrHEIs face several challenges in effectively implementing their strategies. These challenges may include limited financial resources, workforce preference for the public sector, intense competition for talent, regulatory constraints, and evolving trends such as the growing demand for remote work and flexible arrangements (Kuwamura, 2009; Lam, 2009; Tight, 2022). Additionally, staff turnover, succession planning, and talent retention issues require careful consideration in recruitment strategy development.

### **Research Design**

The research adopted a qualitative approach to explore the recruitment strategies employed by PrHEIs in England. This methodology is chosen to provide in-depth insights into key stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, and practices in the recruitment process to answer the following research questions and achieve objectives.

### **Research Questions**

1. What recruitment strategies are employed by PrHEIs in England?
2. What are the primary sources of recruitment and selection criteria?
3. What challenges do PrHEIs encounter, and how do they address?
4. How do PrHEIs perceive the effectiveness of their recruitment strategies in meeting organisational goals and objectives?

### **Research Objectives**

- To identify and describe the recruitment strategies employed by PrHEIs in England
- To examine the sources of recruitment and their effectiveness in attracting qualified candidates.
- To investigate the challenges faced by PrHEIs in their recruitment processes and the strategies employed to overcome these challenges
- To explore the selection criteria and processes in recruiting academic and non-academic staff
- To assess the perceived effectiveness of recruitment strategies employed by PrHEIs in meeting organisational objectives and addressing talent needs

Purposeful sampling was employed to select participants with relevant expertise and experience in recruitment within PrHEIs. The sample included HR managers, department heads, senior managers, and faculty members directly involved in recruitment. A diverse range of PrHEIs across England were targeted to ensure variability in recruitment practices and perspectives.

The study conducted twelve semi-structured interviews to achieve saturation and depth of data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants to gather rich and nuanced data on recruitment strategies. The interviews were conducted in person and through video conferencing based on participant preference and feasibility. Interview questions were designed to explore various aspects of recruitment strategies, including but not limited to sources of recruitment, selection criteria, challenges faced, innovations implemented, and perceived effectiveness of strategies.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. This iterative process involves identifying patterns, themes, and codes within the data to understand PrHEIs' recruitment strategies comprehensively.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting interviews, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. The participants were assured of anonymity, and all collected data were stored securely and used only for research purposes.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Interview Focus Sources of recruitment**

#### **Interviewee 1**

*“At our institution, we employ a variety of recruitment sources to attract top talent. Our primary approach involves leveraging digital platforms such as online job portals and social media networks to advertise vacancies”.*

#### **Interviewee 2**

*“We use our own website and social media to advertise job vacancies These platforms allow us to reach a broader audience and target individuals with specific skill sets or qualifications”.*

#### **Interviewee 3**

*“We use both internal and external sources such as noticeboard, website, social media sites and we also actively engage in networking activities, including participation in job fairs and campus recruitment drives.”*

#### **Interviewee 4**

*“Employee referrals also play a significant role in our recruitment efforts, as our current staff members often refer qualified candidates from their professional networks.”*

#### **Interviewee 5**

*“Our institution focuses on building a strong employer brand to attract top talent. We utilise social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, to showcase our institution's culture and values..... Linked is a good source.....cost effective”.*

#### **Interviewee 6**

*“Linked is an effective source”.*

**Interviewees 7**

*“We also host recruitment events, such as career fairs and information sessions, to engage with potential candidates and provide them with insight into our institution”.*

**Interviewees 8**

*“Indeed is a very good source”.*

**Interviewee 9**

*“Jobs.ac.uk is better”.*

**Interviewee 10**

*“We have established partnerships with recruitment agencies and headhunters to help us identify and attract top talent”.*

**Interviewee 11**

*“We also leverage our alumni network and employee referrals to source potential candidates”.*

**Interview Focus Selection Criteria**

**Interviewee 1**

*“We prioritise candidates with strong academic qualifications and expertise in their respective fields”.*

**Interviewee 2**

*“First qualification and experience and then we consider other aspects”.*

**Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 9,12**

*“Candidates must meet the mandatory criteria..... A relevant educational background, such as a master's degree, is typically a key criterion in the recruitment and selection process”.*

**Interviewee 5**

*“Our college value candidates who prioritise continuous learning and professional development. The ability to engage in ongoing learning opportunities, pursue professional growth, and stay current with developments in their field is often a key criterion for staff recruitment.”*

**Interviewee 6**

*“Candidates who align with our institutional mission and values are often preferred in the recruitment and selection process. A shared commitment to the institution's goals, principles, and educational philosophy is typically considered important.”*

**Interviewee 7**

*“The ability to effectively convey complex concepts, engage students, and facilitate active learning is often a significant factor in the selection process.”*



**Interviewee 8**

*"A strong commitment to student success is a fundamental criterion for staff recruitment".*

**Interviewee 9**

*"Candidates who prioritise student learning, provide academic support, and actively contribute to student development are highly valued."*

**Interviewee 10**

*"We look for staff members who are innovative and adaptable. The ability to embrace new technologies, pedagogical approaches, and educational trends, as well as adapt to changing institutional needs, is often considered essential."*

**Interviewee 11**

*"We include a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidates who promote diversity, foster inclusive environments, and advocate for equity in education are typically preferred."*

**Interviewee 12**

*"We seek candidates with strong leadership and collaboration skills. The ability to lead teams, work collaboratively with colleagues, and contribute to institutional initiatives is often an important criterion for staff selection. We have academic leadership roles such as Module leader, Programme Leaders".*

**Interview Focus Challenges**

**Interviewee 1**

*"One of the main challenges we face is budget constraints. While we strive to utilise digital platforms and other recruitment tools effectively, limited resources often hinder our ability to invest in comprehensive marketing and advertising campaigns".*

**Interviewee 2**

*"Attracting qualified candidates for specialised roles can be challenging, as there is often a limited pool of candidates with the required skills and experience".*

**Interviewee 3**

*"Competition for qualified candidates can be intense, particularly in specialised fields where demand outweighs supply".*

**Interviewee 4**

*"Another challenge is the lengthy recruitment process, which can result in delays in filling vacancies and increases the risk of losing potential candidates to other opportunities".*



**Interviewee 5**

*“Attracting candidates with the right combination of skills, qualifications and experience for specialised roles can be challenging”.*

**Interviewee 6**

*“Sometimes, selected candidate does not accept the job offer and we do not have the other best candidate to offer the job and, in this situation, we have to start the process again”.*

**Interviewee 7**

*“We easily recruit part-time academic staff for evening and weekend classes, but difficult to recruit for full-time positions.....For the full-time positions they prefer public HE sector..... we do not have professorship and different level of professorships such as associate or assistant.....we have only two titles to offer to full-time academic staff which are lecturer and senior lecturer”.*

**Interviewee 8**

*“One of the main challenges we face is competition from other higher education institutions, particularly those with larger budgets and more extensive resources”.*

**Interviewee 9**

*“Most of the applicants only prefer to work as part time faculty as they think there is no job security in the private sector.....In recent past a few private institutions closed. One of the largest private higher college GSM also closed”.*

**Interviewee 10**

*“Ensuring diversity and inclusion in our recruitment processes is also a priority, but it can be challenging to reach underrepresented groups”.*

*“Our goal is to continuously refine our recruitment strategies to ensure they align with the institution's goals and objectives”.*

**Interviewee 11**

*“We evaluate the effectiveness of our recruitment strategies through various metrics, including the number of qualified applicants, the diversity of the applicant pool, and the time-to-fill for vacant positions”.*

*“Diversity and inclusion are core values of our institution, and we have implemented several initiatives to promote diversity in our recruitment practices. For example, we actively engage in targeted outreach efforts to underrepresented groups, including minority communities and individuals with disabilities”.*

**Interviewee 12**

*“We solicit feedback from hiring managers and candidates to identify areas for improvement”.*

*“We also conduct unconscious bias training for our hiring managers to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all candidates throughout the recruitment process”.*

## **Interview Focus Future Needs**

### **Interviewee 1**

*"In the future, I believe recruitment in private higher education institutions will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of both institutions and candidates".*

### **Interviewee 2**

*"With the increasing integration of technology in education, future recruitment and selection for staff in private higher education institutions will prioritize candidates with strong digital literacy skills and technological proficiency".*

### **Interviewee 3**

*"Staff members who can leverage digital tools for teaching, learning, and administrative purposes will be in high demand."*

### **Interviewee 4**

*"Staff members who can work collaboratively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, integrate knowledge from different fields, and foster interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and research will be highly valued. We are first private college in the UK established fully functioning research department".*

### **Interviewee 5**

*"We can expect to see a greater emphasis on digital recruitment strategies, including the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics to identify and attract top talent"*

### **Interviewee 6**

*"There will likely be increased focus on employer branding and creating a positive candidate experience to remain competitive in the recruitment market".*

### **Interviewee 7**

*"Overall, I am optimistic about the future of recruitment in private higher education and the opportunities it presents for Innovation and growth".*

### **Interviewee 8**

*"Future recruitment and selection processes will focus on candidates who demonstrate adaptability and flexibility. As higher education continues to evolve rapidly, staff members who can adapt to changing circumstances, embrace new pedagogical approaches, new technology and navigate uncertain environments will be essential."*

### **Interviewee 9**

*"Staff members who have experience working with diverse student populations, engaging in international collaborations, and addressing global challenges will be sought after."*

### **Interviewee 10**

*“Our college will place a greater emphasis on candidates who are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staff members who actively advocate for underrepresented groups, foster inclusive environments, and address systemic inequalities will be in high demand.”*

### **Interviewee 11**

*“We will increasingly emphasise candidates who prioritise sustainability and social responsibility. Staff members who integrate sustainability principles into curriculum and operations, engage in community service initiatives, and promote environmental stewardship will be in high demand.”*

### **Interviewee 12**

*“As the focus on student well-being increases, future recruitment and selection for staff in private higher education institutions will prioritise candidates with high emotional intelligence and a commitment to student support. Staff members who can foster positive relationships, provide mental health resources, and promote student well-being will be crucial.”*

## **Findings and Discussion**

The following analysis presents insights gathered from interviews conducted with 12 key stakeholders involved in recruitment and selection practices within PrHEIs). The aim was to explore the recruitment strategies, challenges, and perceived effectiveness of recruitment practices in PrHEIs.

### **Interviewee Demographics:**

1. HR Managers: 4
2. Department Heads: 4
3. Faculty Members: 4

### **Themes Identified:**

#### **1. Recruitment Sources and Strategies:**

- Utilisation of digital platforms for job advertising.
- Use of the institution's website and social media for recruitment.
- Engagement in networking activities, including job fairs and campus recruitment drives.
- Employee referrals and partnerships with recruitment agencies.
- Building a strong employer brand through social media presence.
- Hosting recruitment events like career fairs and information sessions.
- Utilisation of job portals like Indeed and specialised platforms like Jobs.ac.uk.

#### **2. Selection Criteria:**

- Emphasis on academic qualifications and expertise.
- Consideration of qualifications, experience, and other aspects.
- Mandatory criteria include relevant educational background.
- Prioritisation of continuous learning and professional development.

- Alignment with institutional mission, values, and goals.
- Ability to effectively convey complex concepts and engage students.
- Strong commitment to student success and support.
- Innovation, adaptability, and technological proficiency.
- Leadership, collaboration, and interdisciplinary skills.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and social responsibility.

### **3. Challenges Faced:**

- Budget constraints affecting marketing and advertising.
- Difficulty attracting qualified candidates for specialised roles.
- Intense competition for qualified candidates.
- Lengthy recruitment processes lead to delays.
- Challenges in attracting full-time academic staff.
- Competition from other institutions with larger budgets.
- Perception issues regarding job security in the private sector.
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion in recruitment processes.

### **4. Evaluation and Improvement Strategies:**

- Metrics-based evaluation of recruitment strategies.
- Soliciting feedback from hiring managers and candidates.
- Continuous refinement of recruitment strategies.

### **5. Future Needs in Recruitment:**

- Integration of technology in recruitment processes.
- Focus on digital recruitment strategies, AI, and data analytics.
- Emphasis on employer branding and positive candidate experience.
- Adaptability, flexibility, and readiness for rapid changes.
- Experience with diverse student populations and global collaborations.
- Prioritisation of diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and student well-being in recruitment.

## **Analysis of Themes Identified:**

### **1. Recruitment Sources and Strategies:**

The analysis highlights the diverse recruitment sources and strategies private higher education institutions utilise. These include both traditional methods like networking activities and innovative approaches like leveraging digital platforms and social media presence. The use of multiple channels reflects the institutions' efforts to cast a wide net and reach a broader audience of potential candidates. Collaboration with recruitment agencies and employee referrals indicates a proactive approach to talent acquisition and leveraging existing networks for sourcing candidates. The emphasis on building a strong employer brand through social media presence and hosting recruitment events demonstrates a strategic focus on attracting top talent and creating a positive candidate experience.

**2. Selection Criteria:**

The analysis underscores the importance of various selection criteria in identifying suitable candidates for staff positions in PrHEIs. Academic qualifications and expertise are prioritised, highlighting the significance of educational background in the recruitment process. Other criteria, such as continuous learning, alignment with institutional values, and commitment to student success, emphasise the multifaceted nature of selection decisions. The emphasis on innovation, adaptability, and diversity reflects the evolving needs of higher education institutions and the desire for staff members who can contribute effectively to their mission and goals.

**3. Challenges Faced:**

The identified challenges shed light on PrHEIs' obstacles in their recruitment efforts. Budget constraints emerge as a significant challenge, impacting the institutions' ability to invest in comprehensive marketing and advertising campaigns. Difficulty in attracting qualified candidates, lengthy recruitment processes, and intense competition underscore the competitive landscape of talent acquisition in the higher education sector. Perception issues regarding job security and challenges in attracting full-time academic staff highlight the need for private institutions to address concerns and differentiate themselves as attractive employers.

**4. Evaluation and Improvement Strategies:**

The evaluation and improvement strategies indicate a commitment to continuous refinement and optimisation of recruitment practices. Metrics-based evaluation provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of recruitment strategies, allowing institutions to make data-driven decisions and identify areas for improvement. Soliciting feedback from hiring managers and candidates fosters a culture of transparency and continuous improvement, enabling institutions to address shortcomings and enhance the recruitment experience. Continuous refinement of recruitment strategies reflects the dynamic nature of talent acquisition and the institutions' proactive approach to staying abreast of emerging trends and best practices.

**5. Future Needs in Recruitment:**

The future needs identified underscore the importance of adapting to technological advancements, embracing digital recruitment strategies, and enhancing the candidate experience. Integration of technology, focus on employer branding, and emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability reflect the evolving priorities and expectations in recruitment. The need for adaptability, flexibility, and readiness for rapid changes highlights the dynamic nature of the higher education landscape and the importance of staying agile in response to emerging challenges and opportunities.

All participants emphasised the importance of using online job portals and social media platforms for advertising vacancies, citing their ability to reach a wider audience. Participants also found indeed and jobs.ac.uk are effective source of recruitment and some prefer Indeed and some jobs.ac.uk.

Some participants highlighted the effectiveness of networking and referrals from existing faculty members and alumni in identifying potential candidates.

One participant shared success stories of being recruited through employee referrals, indicating the effectiveness of internal referral programs

A few interviewees stressed the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion in recruitment efforts, including targeted outreach to underrepresented groups.

Many participants expressed concerns about limited budgets for recruitment marketing and advertising, hindering efforts to effectively promote vacancies.

Some participants noted the challenge of competing with other institutions for qualified candidates, particularly in niche fields.

A few participants highlighted long recruitment cycles and administrative delays in decision-making as significant challenges.

Several participants raised concerns about ensuring transparency and fairness in the selection process, particularly in terms of candidate evaluation and feedback.

Many participants acknowledged the need for continuous improvement in recruitment strategies to adapt to changing market dynamics and attract top talent.

The interviews provided valuable insights into the recruitment practices within PrHEIs. While digital platforms and employee referrals emerged as effective strategies, challenges such as budget constraints and competition for talent remain significant hurdles. The findings underscore the importance of adopting innovative recruitment strategies and fostering a culture of continuous improvement to address recruitment challenges and attract qualified candidates in PrHEIs.

This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of recruitment practices in PrHEIs and can inform the development of more targeted and effective recruitment strategies tailored to the unique needs and challenges of PrHEIs.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, analysing themes identified in recruitment practices within PrHEIs reveals a multifaceted approach to talent acquisition and selection. These institutions employ a variety of recruitment sources and strategies, ranging from traditional methods to innovative approaches leveraging digital platforms and social media presence. Collaboration with recruitment agencies, employee referrals, and building a strong employer brand are also emphasised to attract top talent and create a positive candidate experience.

Moreover, selection criteria focus on academic qualifications, expertise, alignment with institutional values, and commitment to student success, reflecting the multifaceted nature of hiring decisions. Challenges such as budget constraints, competition for qualified candidates, and perception issues regarding job security pose significant obstacles to



recruitment efforts. However, institutions employ evaluation and improvement strategies, including metrics-based evaluation and continuous refinement of recruitment practices, to address these challenges and enhance recruitment effectiveness.

Although smaller in size than their public counterparts, PrHEIs in England face unique challenges and opportunities in recruitment due to their distinct organisational structures, funding models, and market positioning. While PuHEIs often benefit from larger budgets and established reputations, PrHEIs must strategically leverage their resources and branding to attract top talent.

Looking ahead, future recruitment needs to emphasise adapting to technological advancements, embracing digital recruitment strategies, and enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability efforts. The dynamic nature of the higher education landscape requires institutions to remain agile, adaptable, and responsive to emerging trends and challenges in talent acquisition. By prioritising innovation, flexibility, and a commitment to excellence, private higher education institutions can navigate the evolving recruitment landscape and secure top talent to drive institutional success.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of themes identified in recruitment practices within PrHEIs, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Diversify Recruitment Sources:** While digital platforms and social media are valuable recruitment channels, institutions should also explore traditional methods such as networking activities, recruitment events, and employee referrals. Diversifying recruitment sources can help reach a broader pool of candidates and tap into untapped talent networks.
2. **Strengthen Employer Branding:** Institutions should continue to invest in building a strong employer brand through a strategic social media presence that showcases institutional culture, values, and opportunities for growth. Hosting recruitment events and fostering positive candidate experiences can further enhance employer attractiveness.
3. **Streamline Selection Criteria:** While academic qualifications remain important, institutions should also consider criteria such as continuous learning, alignment with institutional values, and commitment to student success. Streamlining selection criteria ensures a holistic approach to identifying candidates who can contribute effectively to the institution's mission and goals.
4. **Address Budget Constraints:** Institutions should explore cost-effective recruitment strategies and prioritise investments in areas that yield the highest return on investment. Collaboration with recruitment agencies, leveraging employee referrals, and optimising digital advertising can help maximise recruitment effectiveness within budget constraints.
5. **Mitigate Recruitment Challenges:** To address challenges such as difficulty in attracting qualified candidates and lengthy recruitment processes, institutions should focus on improving internal processes, enhancing candidate engagement, and



implementing targeted outreach efforts. Addressing perception issues regarding job security and differentiation as an attractive employer is also crucial.

6. **Evaluate and Improve Recruitment Practices:** Continuous evaluation of recruitment strategies through metrics-based analysis and soliciting stakeholder feedback is essential for identifying areas of improvement. Institutions should foster a culture of transparency and continuous improvement to enhance the recruitment experience for both candidates and hiring managers.
7. **Adapt to Future Needs:** Institutions should proactively adapt to future recruitment needs by embracing technological advancements, focusing on employer branding, and prioritising diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and student well-being. Staying agile and responsive to emerging trends and challenges will be key to maintaining competitiveness in talent acquisition.

Implementing these recommendations can help PrHEIs optimise their recruitment practices, attract top talent, and position themselves for success in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.

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### **About the Author**

**Ifrah Sajjad,**

MBA (Major HR)

Visiting Lecturer and HR Data and Systems Analyst,  
Scotia Gas Networks (SGN), UK

Ifrah Sajjad is a versatile professional with expertise in both academia and corporate environments. Currently serving as a Visiting Lecturer and HR Data and Systems Analyst at Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) in the United Kingdom, Ifrah brings a unique blend of academic insight and practical experience to her role.

With a background in academia, Ifrah's role as a Visiting Lecturer involves sharing her knowledge and expertise with students in relevant HR fields.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Ifrah has gained valuable experience in the corporate sector. She previously worked for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which provided her with first-hand exposure to corporate HR practices and data analysis, further enhancing her skill set.

As an HR Data and Systems Analyst at SGN, Ifrah leverages her data analysis and HR systems expertise to drive insights and optimise organisational processes. Her analytical prowess and attention to detail enable her to uncover valuable insights that inform strategic decision-making and drive organisational effectiveness.

### **Sheikh Abid Taufique,**

MSc in Information Systems Management, MBA (Marketing), PgD in Strategic Business IT  
Higher Education Manager,  
City College, Birmingham

[abid@city-college.co.uk](mailto:abid@city-college.co.uk)

Sheikh Abid Taufique is an accomplished academic programme manager and senior lecturer/assessor with extensive experience overseeing the academic faculty of a higher education (HE) college. With over 15 years of experience delivering lectures and assessing students across various levels (from Level 3 to Level 7), his expertise spans disciplines including Business Management, Leadership, Information Systems Management, and Research.

As the Higher Education Manager at City College, Abid plays a pivotal role in leading the academic team and ensuring the successful delivery of Higher National programmes in partnership with Loughborough College. His responsibilities encompass monitoring programme delivery, maintaining quality standards, and fostering collaboration among faculty members to optimise the learning experience for students.

Abid is characterised by his dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to excellence. His professional ethos is marked by a strong ambition to excel in his field and a motivation to pursue his personal and professional objectives with confidence and teamwork. He demonstrates a resilient drive to achieve his career goals, backed by perseverance and determination.

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