

**GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETING United Synagogue**

**APPLICATION FORMS**

**About The United Synagogue**

**Vision**

Our vision for the United Synagogue is of a modern and united family of communities with members connected to vibrant Jewish life and Torah values.

## Mission

The mission of the US Executive Office is to serve our communities and to lead the organisation by

1. Initiating, developing and supporting communities and helping them provide relevant and high quality services to their members
2. Providing the infrastructure for Jewish religious life
3. Developing creative programmes, which involve members and potential members in Jewish life and values
4. Recruiting, developing and maintaining outstanding Rabbis and other Professional staff, lay leaders and volunteers

## Values

The values that lie at the heart of the United Synagogue are embodied in the principles of Torah and *Halacha*. These values are:

* The welcoming of every Jew
* Creating a sense of belonging
* Life long Jewish learning
* Spiritual growth and practice
* Mutual responsibility
* The centrality of Israel in Jewish life

The purpose of the United Synagogue is to create communities committed to the principles of Torah and *Halacha* and inclusive of every Jew.

**Recruitment process**

Please indicate on your application form any dates you are unavailable for interview after the closing date in the event you have been shortlisted.

In order for us to consider your application, you will need to send us the following documents:

* Application Form Part 1 should clearly demonstrate why you are applying and how you meet the person specification requirements.
* Application Form Part 2 includes your Eligibility to work in the UK, Rehabilitation of Offender’s Act 1974, Disability and an Equal Opportunities Monitoring segment; these sections must be completed in full**. Please include the names, positions and contact details of two referees, including *your current or most recent employer*. No contact will be made to any referee/s in advance of an offer being made, without your prior approval.**

Completed applications can be emailed to **hrrabbiapplications@theus.org.uk**

Alternatively, you may post it to HR Department, 305 Ballards Lane North London N12 8GB, with the correct postage.

When emailing or posting applications, please ensure that it will arrive no later than 5.00 pm on the closing date.

If the post you are applying involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, you will be required to complete a DBS application (formally a Criminal Record Bureau Check) and for this, you will require additional forms of identification.

**Guidance notes on completing the application forms**

**Please read these notes carefully before completing the Application Forms Part 1 and 2.**

The purpose of completing the application form is to enable you to be short-listed for interview. Completed application forms are matched against the requirements set out in the person specification to create a shortlist.

It is important that you complete the application form fully. Please be advised that we do not normally accept curriculum vitae (CVs) unless specifically requested on our website and advert. **If you submit a CV, we will send you the applications to complete.**

**Completing the application form Part 1**

It is advised that prior to completing the application form you read the job description and person specification carefully as this will help you to understand what the job entails and give you an insight into the skills and experience we are looking for. To be short-listed for interview you must clearly demonstrate how you meet the criteria listed in the person specification.

We will not make assumptions about your achievements and abilities so you must clearly state on the form how exactly you feel you match the listed requirements.

The following tips are designed to help you complete the application form as effectively as possible:

* Read all the information you have been sent about the job and the application form carefully before you begin to complete the form. Ensure that you are clear about what you are being asked to do.
* Make sure that your application is specific to the job you are applying for. A standard application form, which you have prepared before, may not address all of the items in the person specification.
* Think about the extent to which you possess the skills and experience necessary to do the job. You should then provide information about skills and experience which address all of the items in the person specification. If possible, try to do so in the order in which they are listed.
* It may be helpful to do a rough draft of the form first so as to avoid mistakes and repetition.
* Give examples of your skills and experience, and write in a positive way. Remember to write about those things that you have personally been responsible for.
* In giving examples think about what you did, how you did it and what was the outcome or how you added value or made a difference.
* Select those aspects of your experience, skills and interests that are relevant to the job. Remind yourself of your qualities and skills that you may take for granted.
* Remember to consider relevant skills and experience acquired outside of paid work - for example, experience gained from community or volunteer work, or in your leisure interests.
* When listing your previous jobs, ensure that dates are correct and in the right order, stating your most recent employment first.

**Completing the application form Part 2**

We ask all applicants to declare whether they have a disability. The reason for doing this is to ensure we fulfil our commitment to make reasonable adjustments for interviewing disabled applicants. Please inform us if you have any special requirements, should you be selected for interview.

The United Synagogue is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion or belief.

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| **Data Protection Act 1998** |
| Any data that you provide will be held confidentially and will only be used for recruitment to the post you have applied for as well as for employment monitoring purposes. Should you be unsuccessful, your application will be destroyed after 12 Months. However, should you be successful then the relevant information will be kept as part of your employee file. |

**Guidelines for Applicants to Rabbinic Posts**

All applicants must complete both parts 1 & 2 of the US Application Form and return it to the HR department **hrrabbiapplications@theus.org.uk**together with their Semicha Certificates.

**Semicha & Ketubah**

The HR Department will arrange for the Office of the Chief Rabbi/London Beth Din to check the Orthodox Semicha of all candidates. This must be done prior to any application being passed onto the recruiting community.

A final year semicha student at an approved Orthodox institution may be considered for an Assistant Rabbinic role or in extremis a Senior Rabbinic role, but any job offer will be conditional on their obtaining approved Orthodox Semicha prior to or within a short time period of them taking up employment.

If you are selected for potential interview the HR Department will arrange for the Office of the Chief Rabbi/London Beth Din to check your Ketubah (Jewish Marriage Certificate), if applicable, prior to your application going forward.

If you are single including divorced/widowed we may ask you to provide certain documents to verify your Jewish status.

**Relocation**

The United Synagogue has general principles for relocation. If you apply for a position and you will need to relocate to the London area either from another part of the UK or from an international location it is important that prior to you making a formal application you contact the HR Department who will discuss this with you.

Any relocation costs are charged to the community recruiting and will be agreed between the Financial Representative of that community and the US HR Department.

If you will be relocating from within the UK and outside of the London area, up to £1,500 will be paid towards removal costs incurred in moving to the community recruiting subject to the production of valid receipts.

If you will be moving from Europe or Israel, up to £3,000 will be paid towards removal costs and flights for you and your family incurred in moving to the community recruiting subject to the production of valid receipts.

If you will be moving from the USA or other international locations, up to £7,500 will be paid towards removal costs and flights for you and your family incurred in moving to the community recruiting subject to the production of valid receipts.

These costs must be agreed prior to you attending your first interview for the vacancy.

**Remuneration**

Please note that we are an ethical employer and we abide by HMRC tax rules.

**Selection Process**

**Senior Rabbi Recruitment Process**

The Board of Management of the recruiting community will have already consulted with their members to formally appoint a Selection Committee. All members of this Selection Committee should have signed a confidentiality agreement meaning that your application should remain confidential.

A Selection Committee is usually made up of between 6-12 people dependent on the size of the community. The people on the Selection Committee normally will have been selected to be representative of a cross section of the Synagogue membership.

**Interviewing**

The normal recruitment process is as follows:

 **First stage Interviews**

* A first stage interview will take place with a small group from the selection committee often also together with representatives from HR or the Community Division of our Central offices.
* First interviews may be carried out on Skype for those living a distance away.
* If the vacancy is for a Rabbinic couple, the Rebbetzen will also be interviewed.

**Second stage of Interviews**

* Only one or two of the candidates generally move to second stage interviews, often lasting up to half a day (not on Shabbat) replicating some of the activities a Rabbi and Rebbetzen carry out in the normal working week, for example giving a Shabbat sermon, leining, giving a shiur, running a youth workshop and a presentation on the Rabbi’s vision for the Community. The attendees at the second interview sessions are from a wider spectrum of the Community often comprising the entire Selection Committee, the Board of Management and approximately 10-30 others from the Community.
* This may be followed by a second interview by the selection panel.
* Travel costs for the first and second interviews are paid by the recruiting Synagogue.

**Appointing the Selected Candidate(s)**

* Following the 2nd interviews the Selection Committee reconvenes to decide if any candidate will be recommended as the final approved candidate to the Board of Management.
* The Selection Committee’s role is to recommend a preferred candidate or none to the Board of Management who vote, as per the US bye-laws, to accept or reject the recommendation.
* The Rabbi who is the preferred final candidate will be informed verbally by the US that his name is going forward to the community.
* Contract negotiations then will open between the Rabbi and the HR Director in consultation with the respective shul FR. It should be noted that Synagogue Honorary Officers have no authority to make offers or negotiate terms of employment.
* A job offer is made subject to a community vote being in line with United Synagogue policy.
* Once the contract has been signed by both parties a Shabbat weekend may be agreed for the Rabbi to spend Shabbat with the community as the final stage of the interview process and the Community are ideally given 10 days’ notice of the date of the weekend and of the vote in accordance with US bye-laws.
* At the weekend the successful candidate will ideally participate in and deliver a series of activities prepared by the Selection Committee.
* At the end of the weekend/middle of the following week the Community will ideally vote on the selected candidate. The United Synagogue Byelaws state that the final decision for appointment of Rabbis is only valid if 75% of those members who vote agree to the appointment.
* In the event that a candidate does not reach the 75% threshold, the matter shall be referred to the US Trustees for decision.
* No press or media announcement must be formally made on the appointment of the Rabbi until the vote has been completed.
* If the vote is successful the US HR Director will then write to the Rabbi to formally confirm the offer of the job under the contracts already signed.
* The United Synagogue sponsorship licence for work permits is valid for Rabbis only (N.B. The US cannot currently obtain work permits for Rebbetzen’s). It should be noted that work permits if required by a Rabbi are only applied for after the Rabbi has been approved by the community vote and that work permits can take 2-3 months to obtain and there is no guarantee of success.

**Assistant/Associate Rabbi Recruitment Process**

* A similar process is followed for Assistant and Associate Rabbis in terms of a selection panel being appointed and confidentiality agreements being signed, Semichas & Ketubahs checked and the full involvement of the HR team &US Community Division.
* In some cases where there is a clearly preferred candidate following the first interviews then second interviews may not be required.
* As this is not for a community Senior Rabbi no community vote is required.

**Delia Goldring Consultant HR Director**