

Top Tips For Employers

Recruitment and Selection

1 Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

Develop a recruitment strategy designed to achieve a more balanced and diverse workforce.

Job descriptions and person specifications can be a useful tool, both for informing potential applicants about the requirements of the job and for helping employers to select the right person. However, it is important that the information does not unnecessarily exclude people who could do a good job.

- Only include requirements that are essential to do the job effectively
- Rank criteria in order of importance and make a clear distinction between requirements that are essential aspects of the job and those which are less important
- When identifying the skills needed for the job, a distinction should be made between those which are prerequisites and those that can be developed once someone is in post
- Consider adjustments that would enable people to work more effectively, for example, flexible or part-time working hours, additional training, or reassigning tasks that could easily be done by other people
- Specify what needs to be done rather than how it is done

2 Advertising

A large number of organisations rely on informal methods (such as word of mouth) to advertise vacancies. This means that the information is less likely to reach a wider range of potential applicants.

- Use a range of sources to place advertising material
- Use clearly worded adverts and provide a variety of means of responding to adverts
- Give a clear message about encouraging a wide range of applicants
- Use your own website as you can display a greater range of messages and to a wide field of potential applicants
- Offer work trials
- Visit schools and create links
- Obtain the Positive about Disability symbol
- Consider whether the post could be part-time or job share to increase your talent pool
- Develop links with employability agencies who are working with priority groups. Jobcentre Plus, besides providing information to prospective employees about vacancies, also provides a range of support and advice to employers.
- Employers should try to use a range of positive action measures for example:

- Advertising on notice boards in community centres, shop windows, websites, talking newspapers, newsletters specific to under-represented groups and local schools, colleges or universities or with those who run specialist courses.
- Making links with groups, websites and networking organisations such as the Network for Black professionals, Deaf, UK jobs, etc.
- Avoid the use of 'experience' (e.g. '5 year's office experience') in job adverts unless you can legally justify it. Also, avoid wording such as young, mature, experienced, dynamic etc, as these could put off people within certain age groups.
- Adverts should be clearly worded and avoid the use of jargon
- Provide a variety of ways of responding to adverts (e.g. phone, letter, in person, email)
- Adverts should give a clear message about welcoming applications from all sections of the community, such as "We welcome enquiries from everyone and value diversity in our workplace"
- Use positive images in your literature

3 Application Forms

Employers need to ensure that the application forms they use do not create unnecessary barriers for people who want to apply for vacancies. There are a variety of measures you should carry out, including:

- Ensuring that application forms are clearly laid out and provide simple guidance notes.
- Allow references from a range of sources. Some people may not have worked for a long time. Organisations could, therefore, encourage applicants to provide references from other sources such as support workers, training providers, managers of voluntary groups and organisations and personal character references.
- Provide opportunities for applicants to tell you about experience gained from a range of activities
- Provide application information in a variety of formats such as large print, audio tape or CD, e-mail and Braille. Some people may find it easier to be able to complete an application form over the phone.
- Make sure applicants are able to tell you about any adjustments needed for interview
- Remove age and date of birth questions from application forms and put them on a separate equal opportunities monitoring form
- Application forms should only ask for information that is really needed to select the right person for the job
- Ensure you ask for equivalent qualifications to enable a wider inclusive pool and comply with equality legislation
- Applicants should be given the opportunity to describe experience gained from activities other than paid employment, such as voluntary or unpaid work, work placements and life experience. This will provide a more complete picture of the applicant's skills and experience.

4 Shortlisting & Interviews

It is important that the processes used to shortlist and interview prospective employees are designed in a way that does not discriminate against people.

- Treat all applications fairly, i.e. in a way which ensures equality of opportunity
- Evaluate applicants on their ability to do the job
- Don't make assumptions about an applicant's ability or ask for irrelevant information
- Develop a Reasonable Adjustments Policy

5 Shortlisting

- Ensure the person who is receiving the application forms is not involved in the interview process
- Monitoring forms should be removed on receipt of the application to ensure these are not seen by the sifting and interview panels
- Applications that are submitted in alternative formats should be treated in exactly the same way as those in a standard format
- When shortlisting, all applicants should be evaluated against their ability to meet the requirements of the job description and person specification, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that could be made
- Where the business permits, there should be more than one person sifting and at least two people interviewing (and try, where possible to ensure the interview panel is diverse and at the very least has both men and women represented)
- Use an objective scoring system which relates to the job description and person specification. Look at each application form in turn and work through your requirements in order of importance, awarding marks for each. Review your results and ensure they have been awarded on the evidence of the application form rather than personal or second hand knowledge of the candidate.

6 Interviews

- Invite those with the best scores for interview. The number of people shortlisted will vary depending on the job and resources allocated to the interview process.
- The job description, person specification and shortlisting results should provide the framework for the interview
- A list of questions should be drawn up and agreed for each candidate before the interviews
- Ensure that the same topics are used for all candidates
- Evidence from outside the candidates workplace may prove useful, however, don't ask:
 - Questions about marital status
 - Questions about sexual orientation
 - Do you intend to have a baby?

- Will you be able to manage at your age?
- Do you think you will fit in?
- Will your religion/belief be a problem?
- If you need to take up references send the referee your job description and person specification and ask for evidence of the candidate's ability to meet these specific requirements.
- Interviewers should not make assumptions about an applicant's ability to do the job. Applicants should not be asked for information about health problems or disabilities. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for an employer (or any recruitment agency or consultant) to "ask about the health" of a job applicant before offering work to, or shortlisting, the applicant. Both written and oral questions are outlawed by the provision, so those conducting job interviews will have to be careful to avoid the subject of health or fitness. The provision is not limited to questions directed at the job applicant. A request for a reference sent before a job offer is made must also avoid asking questions that contravene the provision.
- Be prepared to allow more time for the interview as some applicants may need more time to be able to answer all the questions. If appropriate, allow applicants to bring a support person to the interview. (**NB.** their role would not be to answer the questions on behalf of the applicant but rather to help them be able to communicate effectively and ensure that they are able to present themselves to the best of their ability.)

7 Post Interview

- Before appointing a person you will need to check their eligibility to work in this country under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. Ask all candidates who are successful and explain why you are required to ask for this information.
- Unsuccessful applicants should all be informed about the result of their application and provided with brief feedback about it. Those who attended interview and were unsuccessful should receive feedback about their application and interview if they ask for it.