

The Grampian Valuation Joint Board

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCEDURES

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1 **Pre-Selection Stage**

1.1 Vacancy Review

Where appropriate a Notice of Termination form should be passed to Human Resources, Moray Council. The process for the recruitment of replacement staff will commence as agreed between the Assessor & ERO and relevant Depute. This may not always be immediately after Notice of Termination has been issued.

Before advertising a vacant or new post the Assessor & ERO should review the need for the vacancy and identify any existing or forthcoming developments that may affect the post. This should include a review of the Job Description and Person Specification for posts that become vacant and should incorporate consideration of how the post might be re-shaped to accommodate employees who might be displaced through periods of significant change or re-structures. This may take a number of forms e.g. adding hours from several posts together to form a full-time or near full-time post, considering the possibility of re-locating the post, and considering whether technological support and/or additional training would help enhance the role to make it more accessible for a larger number of employees.

Job descriptions describe the main purpose, tasks and responsibilities of a job. The person specification sets out the requirements of the ideal candidate, detailing both the minimum levels of qualification and experience and the main competencies required for safe and effective completion of the job, whilst also being used as a recruitment tool which reflects different and changing employment market conditions.

Recruitment documentation should clearly state that applicants have a responsibility to demonstrate how they fit the job requirements. Recruiting managers are encouraged to include appropriate wording to reflect this on the person specification (e.g. *It is for candidates to submit information in their application to demonstrate their competence at the required level*).

Further guidance is available in How to Write a Job Description.

1.2 Applications

The Assessor's PA (or admin support staff) will record all requests for application forms and will issue application forms and information packs.

Application forms will be returned to the Assessor and a formal acknowledgement of application will be sent to each applicant, except for those received very close to the closing date. Such applicants will be contacted in relation to 5.1.1.

Monitoring slips enclosed with application forms will be retained by the Assessor's PA / admin support staff and the details entered onto the summary spreadsheet passed to Moray Council Human Resources.

1.3 Equalities

The Board is committed to ensuring that no applicant receives less favourable treatment through having a protected characteristic as set out within the Equality Act 2010.

Applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy will be included on the short-list in line with the Disability Confident Committed Scheme.

1.4 Short-listing

1.7.1 General: Short-listing entails comparing what has been written on the application forms with the requirements set out in the person specification. Guidance on the use of competencies in recruitment is contained within a separate How To guide. Under normal circumstances the short-listing process will be completed within 5 – 10 working days of the closing date.

Applications must be compared against the essential factors of the person specification. The short-list may be further refined by reference to the desirable factors. The short-listing process, although structured by establishing whether a candidate meets either the essential or desirable criteria or both, does require an element of judgement and discretion by the short-listers(s). It is important to keep clear notes of why decisions have been made and what information, taken from the application form, has been used in the decision making process. Unsuccessful candidates should be notified that they have been unsuccessful within 2 weeks. Decisions, with justification, should be recorded so that candidates can be given feedback if required.

Wherever reasonably practicable, a short-listing panel member should not participate in the selection process where he/she is aware that a previous complaint, in respect of recruitment and selection, is unresolved or is pending against him/her.

Under no circumstances should any employee of The Board participate in the selection procedure where a relative, partner or close friend has applied for the vacancy, unless they have been ruled out at an earlier stage in the proceedings.

It is recommended that between 6 and 8 candidates are short-listed per vacant post. If no applicants fulfil the essential criteria, or the short-listing panel considers that there has been insufficient response, the vacancy may

be re-advertised., following discussion with the Assessor & ERO and relevant Depute

1.5 References

The purpose of a reference is to obtain factual information about a prospective employee/postholder and opinions about their character and suitability for a job. The factual information is straightforward and essential and includes confirming the nature of the position, length of service and reason for leaving. It is not permissible to ask questions about someone's sickness absence record, and caution should be used if requesting opinions about character and suitability as these are generally subjective judgements and not verifiable.

References must relate to a minimum period of 3 years prior to the closing date for applications for the post in question. The reference must relate to the most recent or current employer. In certain circumstances, where a candidate has not worked in a specific field for some time, it may be necessary to obtain a further reference from the most relevant employer, as well as the most recent or current one.

When requesting references, the 'Request for References' form should be accompanied by the relevant job description, person specification and covering letter or email. Additional information may be requested particularly for more senior or specialist posts.

Verbal reference must be followed up in writing.

1.6 Qualifications

Where the post requires possession of academic qualifications, a particular professional qualification, or registration with a particular body, this should be indicated on the invitation to interview letter or email and original paper worked checked and recorded on the Interview Assessment form at the interview stage. Recruiting managers should ensure that any recruitment documentation allows for consideration of equivalent levels of qualification to minimise the likelihood of inadvertent discrimination.

1.7 Illegal Working

Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires all employers in the United Kingdom to make basic document checks on every person they intend to employ. By making these checks, employers can be sure they will not break the law by employing illegal workers. When making checks to prevent illegal working, racial discrimination must be avoided. The best way to do this is by treating all candidates in the same way so, in the invitation to interview letter candidates should be advised to bring their passport with them to the interview to be checked and copied. Candidates without a passport should bring their National Insurance Card and their original birth certificate.

1.8 Salary Placing

In normal circumstances an offer of employment to a successful interview candidate will be to the first point of the grade for the post. The Assessor & ERO has the discretion, in consultation with Moray Council Human Resources to agree a placing higher up the grade.

In considering requests for placements above the first point, regard will be given to:

- the placing of existing staff with comparable experience and qualifications
- the experience the candidate will bring
- the need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances
- equal opportunities implications

For posts with a career progression scheme in place, salary placing will be in accordance with the criteria for qualifications and experience within that scheme.

1.9 Quick Start

Quick start is an adapted process that condenses the standard recruitment and selection procedures and is suitable for use in the following circumstances:

- (a) Secondment (available to internal candidates only)
- (b) Additional Hours – greater than or equivalent to 20% of post holder's current hours per week
- (c) Change of contract type from:
 - Relief to Permanent
 - Relief to Fixed Term
 - Fixed Term to Permanent where the post holder has less than 12 months service

Features of Quick Start:

- (a) No application form is required, although it is recommended that managers request from prospective candidates a brief outline of their main skills, experience, competencies and reasons why they should be considered;
- (b) Verbal references are sufficient as long as one is from the post holder's current line manager and a record is kept that satisfactory references have been obtained;

- (c) Sight of qualifications is only required where they have not been previously scrutinised (e.g. where they have been acquired since being employed with The Board);
- (d) The selection process may proceed with small numbers (or one) candidate dependent on the recruiting manager being able to evidence suitable communications to relevant groups of employees regarding the opportunity;
- (e) The process can be restricted to a limited number or group of staff and should be fair and equitable;
- (f) Proof of eligibility and Disclosure checks (where appropriate) are still required.

Please note: the use of Quick Start must be authorised by the Assessor & ERO and HR advice sought prior to being advertised.

1.10 Targeted Recruitment

The Board's workforce is made up from the Grampian community and surrounding area. Although ideally the workforce demographics would aim to reflect the local community this is not always possible in practice. At times, the Board may therefore operate a policy of targeted recruitment aimed at boosting the workforce in a particular area, generally undertaken for defined periods of time to address specific issues that may otherwise impact on the Board's ability to sustain service delivery in certain areas.

1.11 Solution-focused Recruitment

From time to time and for a number of reasons, there may be difficulties in recruiting to specific staff groups. During such periods, managers are encouraged to consider a variety of ways to fill posts, avoiding the temptation of a short-term 'quick fix'.

- (a) Look at the job and candidate specifications and check they are reasonable and realistic. Make sure you are not setting unnecessarily high criteria. Check that all of the aptitudes and competencies being sought are really necessary for the job. Can these be prioritised and some even dropped as non-essential?
- (b) Decide whether the job advert profile on myjobscotland has been written to achieve maximum impact. Does it excite the applicants? Will it get readers recommending the job to their contacts?
- (c) Explore all markets for candidates. Have you considered females who are returning to work or even former employees? Have you considered advertising in local shops and community areas?

- (d) You could consider checking for shortlisted but unsuccessful candidates from other similar positions? Having been unsuccessful once, they might be reluctant to apply again but could be ideal for the job.
- (e) Look at the selection process. It may be possible to set up a recruitment event in the local community that will attract more candidates. Recruitment events can be organised so that the application form is completed and people are interviewed on the same day and the process is less protracted.
- (f) Review the structure of the team/section that is seeking to fill the vacancy. Would a change allow the role to be shaped in a different way to perhaps make it more attractive to internal candidates? Think about possibly re-training current staff so that they can absorb some of the vacant job responsibilities. It may also be possible to split some of the responsibilities. Involve the team and the line manager in these discussions, however sensitive. When you really think about it, you may not need to fill this position permanently. There may even be a headcount saving to be had.
- (g) Is it possible that the job could be filled on an assignment basis? Consider “interims”, a job share or two part time workers rather than one full time appointment or as a fixed-term contract?

2 **Selection Stage**

2.1. Selection Methods

There are a number of selection techniques which may be considered for the assessment and selection of candidates:

2.1.1 Interviews:

General: the panel interview is one of the most frequently used selection techniques and may be undertaken in combination with other methods or used as the sole selection method.

Competency based interviewing uses different techniques than traditional interviewing. Where a recruiting manager is not familiar with and/or has not had experience of competency based interviewing, they are responsible for ensuring they read the How to Use Competencies in Recruitment guidance.

Further guidance for interviewers is provided in How to Conduct a Selection Interview and How to Use Competencies in Recruitment.

2.1.2 Practical Tasks/Tests:

Practical tasks and/or tests are generally acceptable for manual and word processing skills. Any practical task or test used as part of the selection process should measure the skills or attributes identified as necessary to do

the job. Skills not required of the job should not be a necessary requirement in order to complete a particular test. For example, a test should not require understanding of complex vocabulary or performance at speed, unless these are relevant to the job.

Consideration must also be given to the context in which the skill is to be measured. This should, as far as possible, reflect the type of content found in the job. Care must be taken not to include material that might put external applicants at an unfair disadvantage.

The level of difficulty at which the skill is to be measured also needs to be considered. A test that is too easy will not differentiate between applicants. One that is too difficult could lead to greater disparate impact.

Care must be taken with people whose first language is not English, to ensure that they have understood any instructions properly.

2.1.3 Presentations:

Candidates may be asked to give a short presentation to the panel based on information supplied to them or on an issue relevant to the post. This is a particularly useful way of evaluating their ability to draw out the crucial points from complex information and communicate them effectively. When developing this form of assessment consider the following:

- This type of assessment should only be used where presentation skills have been identified as required criteria within the Person Specification
- Will the candidates be asked to prepare a presentation in advance of the interview date or be required to make a presentation based on information provided on the day? Each approach has relevance for the assessment of different skills, so agree in advance which you are seeking to assess.
- Ensure that all candidates are informed in advance of the facilities which will be available to them including equipment, preparation time, time available to present, whether there will be a questions and answers within the allocated time etc as relevant.
- Assess all elements of the task and the facilities to ensure that this assessment will not directly or indirectly disadvantage any group of potential candidates.

2.1.4 Written assignments

Written assignments are useful for assessing a candidate's written communication skills as well as critical thinking, appraisal and synthesis skills. They can be as simple or complex as required for different posts but care must be taken that they are not based so closely on organisational situations that they exclude external candidates from being able to complete them as fully as internal candidates might do.

2.1.5 In-tray exercises

In-tray exercises enable employers to test a wide range of skills and aptitudes in situations that closely resemble those candidates might face in a real workplace: as a result, how candidates behave during an in-tray exercise can offer an accurate and reliable indication of their characteristics and behaviours. They are very good at seeing how candidates will cope with the real-world stresses of diary management and prioritisation.

Most in-tray exercises are designed to test a particular set of key competencies. In general terms, in-tray exercises test ability to (a) demonstrate the level of knowledge appropriate to the job (b) display the skills necessary for the job; and (c) show that attitudes are a good fit for those specified for the role.

The basic idea of in-tray exercises is to place candidates in a realistic although simulated work situation, and to assess their workplace behaviour and attitudes in that context. Whatever the topics covered, and whatever the nature of the fictional job, all in-tray exercises assess ability to sort through, take in and analyse complex information efficiently even under pressure of time; ability to explore and identify key issues and prioritise work accordingly; and ability to communicate effectively about the decisions made and to identify any special problems or issues that arise from the set of tasks and documents given. Candidates are also assessed on how clearly and effectively they can explain their decisions and actions.

2.1.6 On the job assessment

On occasion it may be that an 'on the job' assessment is the best way to assess candidates for a job. It is unlikely that this approach would be suitable for vacancies with a large number of applicants.

2.2 Administrative arrangements:

- (a) Candidates who have been short-listed should be invited to interview within 10 working days (two weeks) of the closing date. Any delay in the process requires a written acknowledgement of the applications to the candidates to keep them informed;
- (b) A reception facility and a waiting area should be organised for candidates;
- (c) The interview panel will normally consist of a designated officer and at least one other appropriate manager/supervisor (i.e. normally an officer who is not graded at the same or lower grade than the vacancy itself);

- (d) Managers should not normally conduct an interview alone and no officer should be involved in making an appointment where a relative, partner or close friend is involved;
- (e) Preparation is crucial for the success of the interview process and a prior meeting of the interview panel should be held to discuss key areas relating to job descriptions, person specifications, questions to be asked, in which order and by whom, post interview arrangements, etc;

Prior to the start of the interviews, the interview panel members should ensure they have:

- application forms
- job description
- person specification (including competencies)
- interview assessment forms
- references (if Safer Recruitment)
- prepared questions or areas for discussion
- terms and conditions of the job

3.0 Post-Selection Stage

3.1 Successful Candidate

3.1.1 General: Once a decision has been reached, the successful candidate will be offered the appointment by the recruiting manager either verbally in person or by telephone, or in writing using a standard Offer of Position letter as soon as is practicable following consultation with the Assessor & ERO.

Upon confirmation of acceptance of the offer, a Notification of Appointment form should be completed and signed by the Assessor or Depute and forwarded to the Moray Council Human Resources where a Contract of Employment outlining the main terms and conditions of the appointment will be prepared and issued. The contract should ideally be issued before the commencement of employment.

3.2 Unsuccessful Candidates

3.2.1 General: Unsuccessful candidates should be informed by email via myjobscotland (or by telephone call or in writing by the administrative support of the recruiting manager for paper-based applicants) as soon as practicable after the interview. Notification should take place no later than 5 days from the date of interview. Whenever possible, unsuccessful candidates should be notified on the same day as the successful candidate but may be held until

after the successful candidate accepts the position, provided this does not cause undue delay.

3.2.2 In a redundancy situation every effort will be made to find alternative employment for employees identified as “at risk”. This may mean a vacancy is not released for general advertisement until “at risk” employees have been considered. Please refer to the Internal Recruitment Policy.

Redeployment may also be relevant on health grounds and vacancies may also be prioritised for this purpose.

3.3 Records

3.3.1 General: All documentation relating to the recruitment must be retained for a minimum of 6 months within the department as it may be required for any subsequent complaint. Records include all application forms and all correspondence relating to the vacancy (e.g. advertisement, job description, person specification, questions asked at interview, responses from candidates, interview assessments, references and notes taken by the interviewing panel).

3.3.2 Applications for the successful candidate are held by the Assessor & ERO in the employee’s personal file.

3.4 Expenses

Candidates called for interview will be reimbursed travel expenses on the basis of second class travel to the location of the interview. Where it is impractical for rail travel, applicants should be paid at the public transport mileage rate. Details of current allowances are in the Relocation Scheme.

3.5 Relocation

Assistance with relocation may be offered where appropriate in accordance with the provisions of the Board’s Relocation Scheme. It is the recruiting manager’s responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the Relocation Scheme and when it applies. Where the situation is unclear, advice may be sought from the Moray Council Human Resources.

4 General

4.1 Medical checks

For appointments requiring medical clearance, departments must seek the advice of the Occupational Health Service in ascertaining the health of prospective employees, using the Health Questionnaire

4.2 Disclosure Scotland

All appointments will be subject to a Basic Disclosure check and it will be made clear in all relevant documentation, e.g. person specification and will be requested in the event that an individual is made a conditional offer of employment.

4.3 Complaints

Applicants are advised of the Complaints Procedure in the Information for Applicants booklet.

Candidates are informed that, in the event of a complaint, they can refer the matter to the Head of Moray Council HR & ICT or the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

Relevant Documentation

Recruitment and Selection Policy