

Recruitment and Selection - Managers Guidance

Other Selection Methods and how to use them

Although interviews are the most widely used method of assessing candidates, there are other ways of determining whether candidates are suitable for appointment. Using these may give you a better understanding of the candidates than an interview alone and enable them to fully demonstrate their suitability for the role. All methods should be used carefully after proper training.

In house Tests for individuals

You may wish to observe how the applicants carry out in practice the sort of task you will be asking them to do if they are appointed. A practical test can cover any aspect of the job as long as it is relevant and reasonable for all candidates.

Practical demonstrations – e.g. cooking a meal, are particularly useful for jobs for which the emphasis is on hands-on skills. Applicants who may struggle in an interview may do well in a test which can showcase the skills they will be using on a daily basis if appointed. Some jobs may be particularly suitable for people with learning disabilities and in these cases a simple test of how the individual might approach the tasks may be all that is required.

Skills exercises e.g. report writing, in-tray exercise, creating and interpreting excel spreadsheets or other analysis/communication task which is relevant to the post are useful where you need applicants to demonstrate their ability in relation to for example administrative, decision making or analytical skills

Knowledge tests – you may wish to test the depth of the applicant's knowledge in a particular area and therefore include a written exercise/exam/report or a presentation to the recruitment panel. This could be followed by a question and answer session to see how the applicant responds to challenges to their approach and uses their influencing skills.

Using clients or colleagues in the procedure

You may wish to ask candidates to undertake an exercise which uses clients or other colleagues as an audience or participants in a task – for example an interview for a Day Services Worker in an establishment for people with learning disabilities might include asking the candidate to run an activities session for a group of clients. This provides a realistic environment for the candidates to demonstrate their skills and can give valuable information about how a candidate would approach the job in practice, and how they deal with customers or colleagues. You would, as the

observer, need to have clear criteria as to the behaviours and performance that you are looking for from suitable candidates during the exercise to enable you to evaluate the candidates.

You will need to brief the clients or colleagues carefully beforehand, so that they understand the purpose of the exercise and the extent of their involvement in it. They should understand that they themselves are not assessing the candidates' performance or suitability for the job, and they should not be involved in any part of the selection decision, as that is the recruitment panel's responsibility.

Group exercises

When working with other people is an important part of the job and person profile, you might want to consider a group selection method. This would involve asking a group of candidates to carry out a task together and observe the ways in which they interact. You and the other panel members would observe the group and record the evidence about the qualities the job requires – leadership, mediation, engaging with the whole group, support for others etc. To use this technique you would need to ensure that all the members of the recruitment panel are practised in this approach as it requires great skill to work well and they are clear about the behaviours and competencies which are relevant to the role and what these 'look like' in a group setting.

Preparation for Using Tests/Exercises

If you feel that the best way to verify part of the selection criteria is to use a test or exercise, think carefully and well in advance about how to structure it to produce the evidence you need which should be reflected in the Person Profile. Ask your departmental HR team for advice if you are unsure. You will need to devise an evaluation method and ensure all members of the recruitment panel are familiar with what the assessment is to achieve and how to use it.

Make sure that the candidates are given prior knowledge in their invitation to interview communication that there will be a test or exercise and give them enough details and time to prepare sufficiently. You will need to add these details to the notes field for the first candidate to be interviewed so the Shared Services Centre can add this information to the interview notification. Think carefully about whether the tests might discriminate unfairly against any particular group of people e.g. the disabled and think of ways to overcome this if necessary. Make sure that disabled applicants are not disadvantaged in any way because of their impairment in carrying out any tests you devise. You may need to revise the tests or the way in which the results are assessed to overcome any disadvantage.