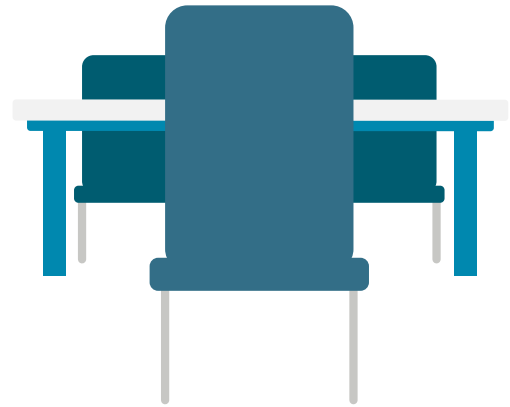




Recruitment & Selection Tutorial



1. Introduction

This tutorial will help you recruit and select the right people to help you achieve your business goals. After watching it, you will:

- appreciate the value of taking time to recruit and select in line with your business needs
- understand the whole process—from creating a job description to starting a new employee
- be aware of the legal aspects of recruitment and selection, and where you can get help

Throughout this tutorial you will be able to download a range of sample templates to use during the process. These include a sample job description, an application form, and a contract of employment.

A sound recruitment and selection process uses the merit principle. Its aim is to appoint the person who best fits the job criteria using an objective method. There are seven steps:

- 1.** Draft a job description that outlines the tasks that the person will do.
- 2.** Write a person specification outlining the knowledge and experience that a candidate must have to do the tasks in the job description.
- 3.** Write a job advertisement, using the details from the job description and person specification.
- 4.** Prepare an application form.
- 5.** Draw up a shortlist of those applicants who meet the criteria.
- 6.** Invite these candidates for an interview, and assess their skills, experience, and suitability.
- 7.** Contact the candidates' references to cross-check their claims.

Let's go through each of these steps individually.



2. Prepare a job description and person specification

Job description

The purpose of a job description is to define the job, both for your reference, and for your applicants'. They will want to assess if it is something they want to do. You need to crystallise the tasks that you want a successful candidate to carry out. The job description should show:

- the purpose of the job
- its objectives
- its position in the organisational structure
- the main tasks and responsibilities
- any associated tasks

A job description template is available in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.

Person specification

A person specification is closely related to a job description, because it outlines the kind of person who could carry out the tasks in the job description. It helps you to form a clear picture of the type of applicant who could fit into the job. It helps applicants understand if they are the right type of person for the job and it will form the basis for your selection process. It's critical that you get it right. A person specification should include:

- the types of qualifications that a successful candidate will be expected to hold
- the kinds of work experience that will have prepared a candidate for the role
- skills and competencies that a successful candidate must have
- any special circumstances that a successful candidate must be prepared to adapt to (eg. travel)

A person specification template is also available in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook, found at the link below this video.

Research

The best way to start the process of writing your job description and person specification is to do your research. The best place to do that is with the people in your organisation who are already doing the job. You might ask them to complete a work diary for a week, and use its contents to guide your specifications.

Take some time to research the market, and reflect on your needs. Check out what other companies are doing, even those in other sectors that are advertising for similar roles. What are they looking for? Your findings will inform your job description.

What about the person specification? Take the list of requirements you've made and look at which skills, knowledge, qualifications or experience are necessary to complete each of these tasks. When you define these qualities, remember that everyone has the potential to develop. You will be able to teach the successful candidate some skills. Innate capabilities, such as a willingness to learn, a positive approach, enthusiasm for work, and integrity, are often more important than qualifications or experience. Work up a list of attributes that you would like the successful candidate to have.



Writing the job description

When you come to write the job description, try to be as specific as possible. Pay attention to the language that you use, it should be plain, free of jargon, and easily understood. Use verbs when describing key responsibilities. Applicants will be most interested in what they will be doing from day to day. Make sure that it is gender neutral, you don't want thoughtless wording to exclude half the talent pool.

Give some thought to the job title. Ensure that it reflects the role and what the reader will find in the body of the description.

Writing the person specification

Once you have outlined all aspects of the job in the job description, you need to describe the person who could fill those requirements. Gather the list of attributes that you developed during your research.

Then, divide the list into 'essential' and 'desirable' attributes. Think carefully about which attributes you class as 'essential'. If you state that a skill is essential, and this can be assessed at the shortlisting stage, you will not be able to interview a person who does not meet this criterion. Making an attribute 'desirable' gives you more flexibility at the shortlisting and interview stages.

Give some thought as to how you will assess each requirement that you list. Asking for a degree is straightforward, but intangible attributes are harder to assess, and may only come out at the interview stage. Make sure that each requirement is genuinely related to the job. Being able to justify each criterion is not only a legal requirement, but means that you are increasing

your chances of recruiting someone who will perform well in the role.

Setting standards

Equal opportunities guidelines recommend that objective and strictly job-related criteria are established at the beginning of the recruitment process, and adhered to throughout. Be careful not to use a criterion that may discriminate or rule out some applicants. Stating that some qualifications are essential can potentially exclude older workers. Requiring many years of experience may rule out younger workers. Insisting on certain physical requirements may put off women or disabled workers.

The criteria that you establish at this stage will inform the advert, the shortlisting process, and the interview, so it's important to get it right.



3. Advertising the job

A job advertisement reaches out to potential candidates, lets them know that you have a job opening, and persuades them to apply. A good job advertisement:

- provides accurate information about the role and the selection criteria
- attracts the most suitable candidates for the job
- reflects your company's culture and the positive aspect of working there

A job advertisement template can be found in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.

What should you include in your advertisement?

Candidates will want as full a picture as possible, so include as much as you can. That said, space constraints will force you to make some choices.

A job title is one of the most important parts of your advertisement. Make the job title appealing to people with similar jobs. Internally, the role may be known as a Grade 2 Global Communications Support Officer, but few job seekers will be looking out for this. Keep the job title simple and jargon-free.

- Include the salary. Job adverts with visible salaries receive 65% more applications.
- Outline the length and terms of the contract. Is it permanent or temporary, full time or part time?
- Make clear where the job is located. Applicants are more likely to apply for jobs that are close to where they live.
- Include your company name, the nature of your business, and why you are advertising the role.

- Outline the selection criteria.
 - Prioritise those criteria that will be used in shortlisting, the experience and qualifications that can be judged on paper.
 - Make a clear distinction between essential and desirable criteria.
- Make clear how you would like potential candidates to apply.
 - Should they send their CV?
 - Would you like them to fill out an application form?
 - Is the application form online, or should they mail their application to you?
- Set a closing date for applications.

Caution

Take care with the wording of your job advertisement. You might face claims of discrimination if your advertisement unreasonably excludes some candidates. For example, terms such as 'mature' or 'energetic' may exclude younger and older applicants respectively. The advertisement should refer to the real, rather than perceived, requirements of the role. Visit the Equality Commission website, or call their helpline on 028 905 00600, for further advice.

Think about the language you use

When advertising online, use the kind of language that job seekers will use in internet searches. Research similar roles to identify which kinds of advertisements are at the top of the search results. Consider how the advert will be viewed on different devices such as laptops, phones, and tablets.



Company

Sell yourself

Remember to sell the company, and the opportunity, by emphasising the benefits of the position and the positive aspects of working for the company. A compelling company vision can also attract high quality applicants.

Here are some other things to consider when you are writing your advertisement:

- Make applying easy. Put the application form on your website and allow applicants to fill it out there.
- What else can you offer apart from a salary? For example, 80 per cent of applicants are looking for flexible working, yet only 6 per cent of job advertisements offer it.
- What might a prospective applicant find out about you and your company through search engines, social media and news searches? Is it up-to-date, accurate and positive?
- Make sure that you are honest and realistic about what is on offer. Nothing ruins your reputation faster than advertising a work experience that you can't deliver.

Placing your advertisement

Where you advertise is the single biggest factor in determining how many people see your advertisement. The Equality Commission recommends that employers advertise their job vacancies as widely as possible.

It is important to ensure that you reach out to as many kinds of candidates as is practical. Of course, advertising everywhere is neither possible, nor desirable, so you must make some choices about where your advertisement appears.

There are many options, including:

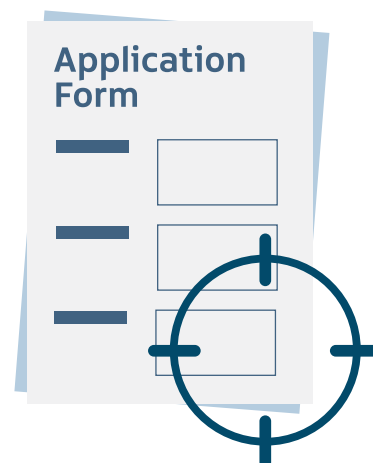
- online
- in newspapers
- at job centres
- through recruitment agencies and search consultants
- in industry journals
- at open days and jobs fairs
- through the careers services of higher education providers
- government employment schemes

Some media will have a local focus while others will have a national or international outlook. The right one will depend on the nature of the job and availability of the relevant skills.

Some positions may only attract a few applications.

It may be helpful to target specific people using personal contacts, employee referral schemes, social media sites, or professional search organisations.

No matter how you advertise, make sure that you collect feedback from each channel. Online sites should allow you to see information on the number of people viewing your advertisement. You can compare these figures with how many people applied through that channel. This will give you some idea about how each advertisement is performing in each channel.



4. Prepare an application form

Application forms make the process of shortlisting and interviewing candidates easy, especially if you follow the simple guidelines that we'll outline in this video.

Application forms vs CVs

Many of us are familiar with sending a CV to a prospective employer. Why is an application form preferable to a CV?

CVs typically summarise every aspect of a candidate's career from their first job to their hobbies. A lot of this information, while interesting, is often irrelevant to the position you are trying to fill. Application forms allow you to focus on the specific skills and qualifications that are needed for the job. These aspects, which can easily be assessed on paper, are the most important ones at this stage in the selection process. Candidates' characters and interests are also important, but they are easier, and fairer, to judge at the interview stage.

Application forms

A good job-specific application form should:

- ask specific questions that relate to the job
- exclude any questions that are not relevant, such as a person's age or marital status.

A job application template can be found in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.

Each job opening that you advertise should have its own application form. Tailored application forms make the selection process so much easier. Stick to questions about things that you can assess on paper, such as experience and qualifications, a driving licence or a bachelor's degree, for example.

Make sure that you do your housekeeping. Request the details of two referees. Ask applicants about any special requirements they might need if asked for an interview. Get them to verify all their answers by signing a short declaration at the end.

Take care

There are a few things that you must not do.

It is unlawful to ask for their:

- age or date of birth
- medical information
- marital status
- school's name
- nationality
- hobbies

If you have 11 employees or more, you must register with the Equality Commission. Failure to do so is a criminal offence. When you are registered, you must monitor the community background and sex of your job applicants, and your staff. Make sure that you provide a monitoring form along with the application form for applicants to complete.

Appoint a person in your organisation as the monitoring officer. This person should have nothing to do with the selection process, and those involved in the selection process should not have access to monitoring information. For more information, visit www.equalityni.org.

Set a closing date

Remember to set a clear closing date and time, and do not accept any applications after it. Also, don't consider applications for one job with the intent of filling another one. Make sure that your applicants are addressing the specific criteria for each job.



5. Carry out shortlisting

Every effort that you make to ensure that your shortlisting process is fair and unbiased will mean a better pool of candidates to interview.

The shortlisting panel

Choosing the right people to do the shortlisting is important. Assemble a panel of at least two people from different communities and of different genders. Ask the panel to review the criteria from the person specification. The panel must ensure that they are clear on exactly what is required for a candidate to be shortlisted. Do not include new criteria.

To ensure consistency, prepare a **shortlisting record** for your panel to score during their work. A shortlisting record template can be found in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook. Make sure that the panel focuses only on the criteria section on the application form. Those applicants who meet the criteria can progress to an interview.

Overseas qualifications

Don't reject an applicant because their qualifications are from overseas, or their certificates are in another language. You can get advice on equivalent qualifications from the Qualifications Comparison Services available through the Jobs and Benefits Office.

Fairness

Be consistent in your decisions. A close decision for one candidate should serve as a precedent for other close cases. You may have to consider desirable criteria if there are many candidates with similar, essential qualifications.

The shortlisting record helps to keep track of your decisions. It is important to record why an applicant was not shortlisted. Arrange to interview all the applicants who meet the criteria. If you don't have enough shortlisted applicants to conduct interviews, advertise the job again. Don't let weaker candidates through just to make up numbers.

Don't make assumptions about the candidates, even if they are earning more than you're willing to pay, or live a long way from your workplace. Let them make their own decision.

It is important to respond to all the applicants, regardless of whether they were shortlisted. Those who were not shortlisted will appreciate being told, and your company's reputation will be enhanced. You can find sample letter templates in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.



6. Interviewing

Job interviews play a key role in determining whether your company and the candidate make a good match. They offer insights into the candidate's character that an application form cannot capture.

Templates for recording and summarising interview responses, and some handy dos and don'ts, are available in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.

Preparation

You'll get the most out of your interview process if you prepare properly.

First, prepare a timetable for interviews. Send a letter or email to all the shortlisted candidates, informing them of the date, time and venue. This should provide contact details for candidates who need special assistance.

Select a panel of interviewers. Try to include the people who assembled the shortlist to ensure a consistent approach. Make sure that your interviewers are fully briefed and prepared on the day.

Prepare your **interview questions** based on the criteria, and agree your approach with the other panel members. The best questions are behavioural questions that ask about how candidates handled different situations in the past. You can get past the practised answers of a well-rehearsed candidate by asking them to recall specific examples from their past.

Prepare an **interview record** form and an **interview summary** form for each candidate. They should be tailored to the criteria on the person specification. Decide which criteria are the more important ones. This will help you to weight the questions, and assist you to decide between similar candidates later.

Be thorough

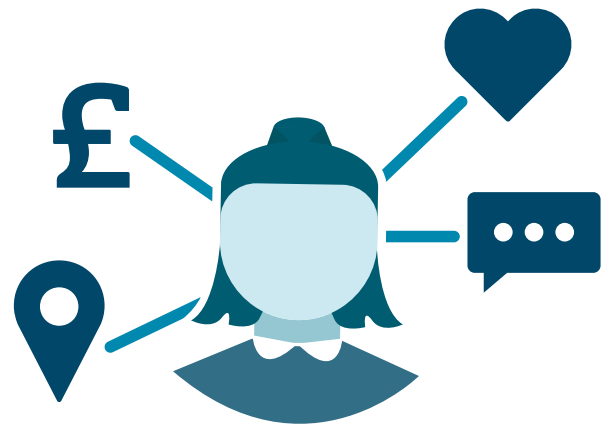
Ensure that the interview follows a structure that covers all the criteria. Decide early which panel member will ask which question to avoid mix-ups on the day. Include an explanation of how the interview will progress and a summary of how it went at the beginning and end of your interview structure.

Your candidates will ask questions of the panel during the interview. Make sure that you have some answers prepared. They are likely to ask about:

- pay and benefits
- working hours
- holidays
- how often they might be asked to travel
- training and development opportunities.

Make sure that you reach out to any disabled applicants who may need adjustments when they attend the interview. Make any reasonable adjustments to your work place to ensure a smooth interview.

Determine in advance whether you will create a reserve list of candidates who are suitable for the job. Don't keep the reserve list for longer than 12 months.



On the day

Hold your interviews in a quiet room, free from interruptions. Make sure that the panel members can give the interviewees their full attention.

Allow the conversation to flow as naturally as possible. Let your candidates expand on their answers with follow-up questions, especially if you don't understand a response. While answering one question, the candidate may provide answers to others. This is a sign that the interview is going well. Just make sure that they give you all the information you need, and that they cover all the criteria.

Avoiding discrimination

It's important to avoid asking potentially discriminatory questions. In general, avoid asking about the candidate's private life, such as plans to have children, or about their physical abilities.

Don't try to reach a decision while the candidate is talking—you might not listen properly. Take notes on what they say and the examples they give, rather than any evaluations. Leave your evaluation until after the candidate has left.

You can do this using a scoring system, with a defined marking scheme. Score immediately after the interview, while the candidate's responses are fresh in your mind. Remember to score each person against the criteria, not against each other.

It's good practice to remember that an interview is a two-way street. The candidate is assessing your company, just as much as you are assessing their suitability for the job. They will be deciding whether your business is the sort of place they would like to work. Make sure you put your best foot forward.

Practical tasks

It may be useful to ask candidates to carry out a practical task as part of the interview. You might ask an applicant for a sales role to make a presentation, an accounts clerk to set up a spreadsheet, or a tradesperson to solve a routine problem.

Only consider using a practical test if the skill is essential to the job as unnecessary tests may be discriminatory. Design the test to measure the skills and abilities outlined in the person specification. Make sure that the test is the same for each applicant, and that you make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates.

You might also consider psychometric testing to evaluate a candidate's personality. Only do so if it is necessary as it could be an invasion of privacy if not. Give some thought to how you will give feedback, and how the data is stored. Use only reliable and properly validated tests.



7. Selecting a new hire

This is where all your hard work pays off—selecting a new employee. There are some things that you're obliged to do at this point so make sure you cover them all. Some guidance for what you must do, and templates for the letters you must send, are available in Invest NI's Employers' Handbook.

Consistency is key

You have spent a lot of time drawing up criteria and carefully assessing each candidate against that criteria. Now you must make your selection based on merit, both for the good of your company, and to comply with employment legislation.

Your decision can only be based on the criteria that you established at the beginning of the process. Draw together the forms that you completed during the interview. These should have been marked and evaluated at the time. Make sure that any stereotypical assumptions are excluded from your decision-making. Ensure that the same evaluation method has been applied to each of the candidates. Rank the candidates by how well they meet the criteria.

If you are in doubt about a candidate's ability to do the job, do not appoint them. Instead, keep looking. Selecting the wrong person will damage team morale, and cost you time and money managing a poor performer.

Conditional offers

Once you've decided on who to employ, make sure all the candidates are informed of the outcome. The successful candidate should be contacted verbally and given a conditional offer. Once you've spoken to them on the

phone, you can send them a formal conditional offer. You can find a sample template in the Employers Handbook.

Contract of employment

You can send a contract of employment once the successful candidate has accepted your offer. The contract should include:

- the job title
- the job details
- the main terms of employment such as pay and hours

Certain information must be provided in writing within eight weeks of the start date. Consult the Employers' Handbook for more details. Make any job offer conditional on the outcome of the pre-employment checks that you must make.

Keep records

Remember to store all the records that you have created during the recruitment process. Handwritten notes must be kept for 12 months, and equal opportunities monitoring information must be kept for three years.

Feedback

You may receive requests for feedback from unsuccessful candidates. There is no legal requirement to do so, but it is good practice. You can do this verbally, or you can put it in writing. Just be sure that you base your feedback on the criteria. Don't make any personal, subjective, or "off the cuff" remarks. Give positive comments first, before moving on to pointers about where they could improve their experience, skills, or interview technique. Remember, candidates are entitled to request and receive a copy of all notes and documentation.



8. Pre-employment checks

Any job offer you make should be conditional on a few pre-employment checks such as the candidate's identity, references, and right to work in the UK. You can find additional information and a reference check form in the Employers Handbook.

It is important that you only rely on factual and verifiable information when making a hiring decision.

Identity

The first thing you must check is the candidate's identity. You can do so by asking for original copies of their birth certificate, passport, or driving licence.

References

Next, check the candidate's references. You may have already done so, during the selection process, but must do so before you appoint someone to the position. Make offers of employment conditional on successful reference checks.

The most efficient way to collect references is to phone directly. Make sure that you're speaking to the right person and accept that they may not be willing to tell you everything, especially if it relates to sensitive aspects of their business. Base your questions on the criteria, don't ask personal questions.

Qualifications and licences

Once you are satisfied that the candidate's references check out, you may want to verify their academic qualifications. The UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre can help you compare international qualifications and skills.

Make sure any licences that the candidate must have are valid.

Restrictive covenants

Check for restrictive covenants. This is a contract the candidate may have entered with their previous employer, designed to prevent employees from disclosing or using confidential information or trade secrets. They may not be allowed to deal with certain customers during a specified period after leaving the business.

Physical requirements

A pre-employment medical check may be appropriate for those jobs that have genuine physical requirements. These checks should only be made after a conditional offer of employment. Take care when considering any previous absence related to pregnancy or disability. Employers have a duty make reasonable adjustments to the role or to the workplace to ensure that anyone with a disability is not at a disadvantage. Contact the Equality Commission for further advice and guidance.

Criminal convictions

You may also wish to check for any criminal convictions. You can get more information from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.

Eligibility to work in the UK

Finally, you must check that the candidate is eligible to work in the UK. Employers who fail to do so may face a fine of up to £20,000 per employee. Go to www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk for more information.



9. Induction and managing performance

You've taken a lot of time and effort to find the right person for the job, so you want to make sure that their experiences at work keep them engaged and happy. A thorough induction and performance management programme will ensure that they stay on. As Richard Branson says, "Train people well enough so they can leave. Treat them well enough so they don't want to."

You can find information on planning your induction programme and performance management tasks in the Employers Handbook.

Induction plans

Starting a new job, learning new systems, and meeting new people are all stressful things to do. Your new recruit will appreciate an induction to help them settle in and become effective as quickly as possible.

A properly structured plan will help to give the right impression from the outset by setting your rules, standards and expectations early. Assign a 'buddy' to the new recruit, who can answer any queries they might have.

You can find a sample induction plan in Appendix 2Q of the Employers' Handbook, and a plan for the new employee in Appendix 2R.

Job plans

Establishing clear expectations is critical to a happy and productive workplace. It's important that you monitor performance against these expectations regularly.

Set up a job plan for the new recruit that includes the key objectives of their role, clear expectations for everyday behaviour, and opportunities for fair and accurate feedback.

You should set a probationary period at the beginning of each new contract, so you can assess just how well your new recruit is getting on. Don't put off dealing with problems. Refer to section 14 of the Employers' Handbook for more information.

Unsuccessful recruitment

If you don't recruit a new employee there are plenty of ways you can enhance your recruitment process. Visit www.investni.com to find out more.