



# **Guide to Effective Recruitment and Selection**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This guide sets out the key stages of the recruitment and selection process and details of best practice for all types of recruitment carried out by establishments. A summary of good practice in recruitment and selection is contained in [ANNEX A](#).

For some establishments within BBSRC, a number of the administrative activities relating to recruitment and selection will be carried out by RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd (SSC). In addition some recruitment activities undertaken by line managers or retained HR will be done on the Oracle iRecruitment system. These are noted in the guide. If an establishment is not using SSC, use of existing templates (e.g. job descriptions) and local processes (e.g. job evaluation) will continue.

The aim of any recruitment exercise is to appoint the best person for the job. This guide emphasises the importance of equality of opportunity as an integral part of the recruitment and selection process, and applies to all internal and external recruitment.

Further details on the principles and processes referred to in this guide, together with practical advice are given on the Effective Recruitment and Selection Training Course. For more information contact your Learning and Development Manager.

If you are unsure about any recruitment and selection issue you should seek advice from your HR Department.

## 2 PRINCIPLES AND THE LEGAL CONTEXT

Appointment to any post should be based on the applicant's ability to successfully carry out the duties of the post as stated in the job description. The person specification details the attainments, knowledge, experience, skills and other qualities needed to meet the requirements described in the job description.

Selection will be on the basis of fair and open competition and involve a selection panel in shortlisting and interviewing. All those involved in the process should have undertaken the Effective Recruitment and Selection Training Course.

All information gathered as part of the recruitment process must be treated as confidential and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

All recruitment decisions must be fully documented.

All vacancies should be considered as suitable for flexible working.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in providing protection against discrimination in the provision of services or in employment, including recruitment and selection. Therefore, there will be no discrimination in the recruitment and selection process on grounds of:

- sex
- marriage or civil partnership
- maternity or pregnancy
- race
- ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief

- age
- sexual orientation
- disability
- gender reassignment

These are known as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

All applicants are asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our policies. Only personnel in retained HR and the SSC HR team will see the form; it is not given to those involved in the shortlisting/interview process. This ensures that applications are considered on their individual merits and the risk of discrimination is minimised.

## 2.1 Definitions

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is backed by legislation designed to protect people from unlawful discrimination based on protected characteristics as listed above.

Diversity is about recognising and valuing difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of members of staff, stakeholders and members of the public.

**Direct discrimination** means treating someone less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic, and which cannot be justified. See also associative and perceptive discrimination below.

**Indirect discrimination** applies to all protected characteristics and occurs when a condition, rule, policy or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic without any justifiable reason. For example, all employees are required to work a shift pattern over 7 days but one employee refuses to on religious grounds - the employee is dismissed but claims indirect discrimination on the basis that whilst the policy applied to all, it disadvantaged people who share a certain religion (a protected characteristic).

**Associative discrimination** is direct discrimination and occurs against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, an employee's promotion is declined because their partner has a disability and this is considered to prevent them from being fully committed to their new role.

**Perceptive discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a protected characteristic. It applies even if that person does not actually possess that characteristic. For example, an employee is age 45 but looks very much younger and is prevented from representing the organisation at an important international conference because the line manager believes that the individual looks too young.

**Victimisation** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because they have previously made or supported a complaint or because they are suspected of doing so. Protection against victimisation is not provided if the complaint is made maliciously or those supporting the complaint know it to be untrue or malicious.

**Positive action.** The Equality Act 2010 allows positive action if employees or applicants who share a protected characteristic suffer disadvantage connected to that characteristic, or if their participation in an activity is disproportionately low. For example, applications for jobs may be encouraged from specific sections of the community that are under-represented in the workforce as a whole or at particular levels, or a specific training course may be targeted at employees who share a protected characteristic in order to help them to develop skills to the required level to compete for jobs and promotion opportunities. In addition, if candidates for a vacancy, promotion or training course are equally qualified, positive action allows the selection of an individual with a protected characteristic over other candidates. Positive discrimination on the other hand is **unlawful** i.e. recruiting or promoting people solely on the basis of their protected characteristic.

Individuals who feel that they may have been discriminated against in the recruitment and selection process can complain to an Employment Tribunal.

Other legislation that is relevant in recruitment and selection is:

**Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Orders 1975 and 1986**

Individuals who have been convicted of certain criminal offences, and who have served a sentence or equivalent, are not obliged to disclose convictions which have become 'spent' following a designated rehabilitation period. Certain posts are exempt from this requirement (e.g. those which involve working with children). If a post is not exempt from the Act it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of a 'spent' conviction.

**Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**

All employers are required to make basic document checks on every person they intend to employ. In respect of Asylum and Immigration, the sight of all relevant original documentation is required. It is a criminal offence to employ someone who has no right to work in the UK. Employers are also obliged to ensure that recruitment practices do not discriminate against individuals on racial grounds.

**Burden of Proof**

The legislation allows an unsuccessful job applicant to take an employer to an Employment Tribunal if he/she believes that discrimination has occurred during the recruitment process. In recent years, the burden of proof has shifted from the employee to the employer. It is no longer up to the individual to prove they were discriminated against but up to the employer to prove that they did not discriminate, either directly or indirectly.

This makes it essential for those involved in the recruitment process that the selection decisions made at each stage of the process are fair, objective and result in the best person being appointed and full and accurate records to back up their selection decisions are maintained.

Further information on discrimination and the burden of proof in the recruitment process is available at [ANNEX B](#).

**2.2 Disability Discrimination**

Disabled people have the right not to be unjustifiably discriminated against for a reason relating to their disability. We are legally required to make reasonable

adjustments to the duties, working environment or terms and conditions of employment for any potential or current employees.

Panel Chairs need to be aware whether their establishment is covered by the Two Ticks disability symbol, as this guarantees an interview to those candidates who have declared a disability and who meet the minimum criteria for the post, as set out in the person specification. All BBSRC establishments have attained the Two Ticks symbol but continued status is subject to annual review. Guidance on the Two Ticks disability symbol is at [ANNEX C](#).

However, when considering candidates for selection (i.e. up to appointing the candidate), pre-employment health checks are limited under the Equality Act and can **only** be asked to help you:

- decide whether you need to make reasonable adjustments for the person in the selection process
- decide whether the person can carry out a function that is 'intrinsic' to the job
- monitor the diversity of applicants
- take positive action to assist disabled applicants.

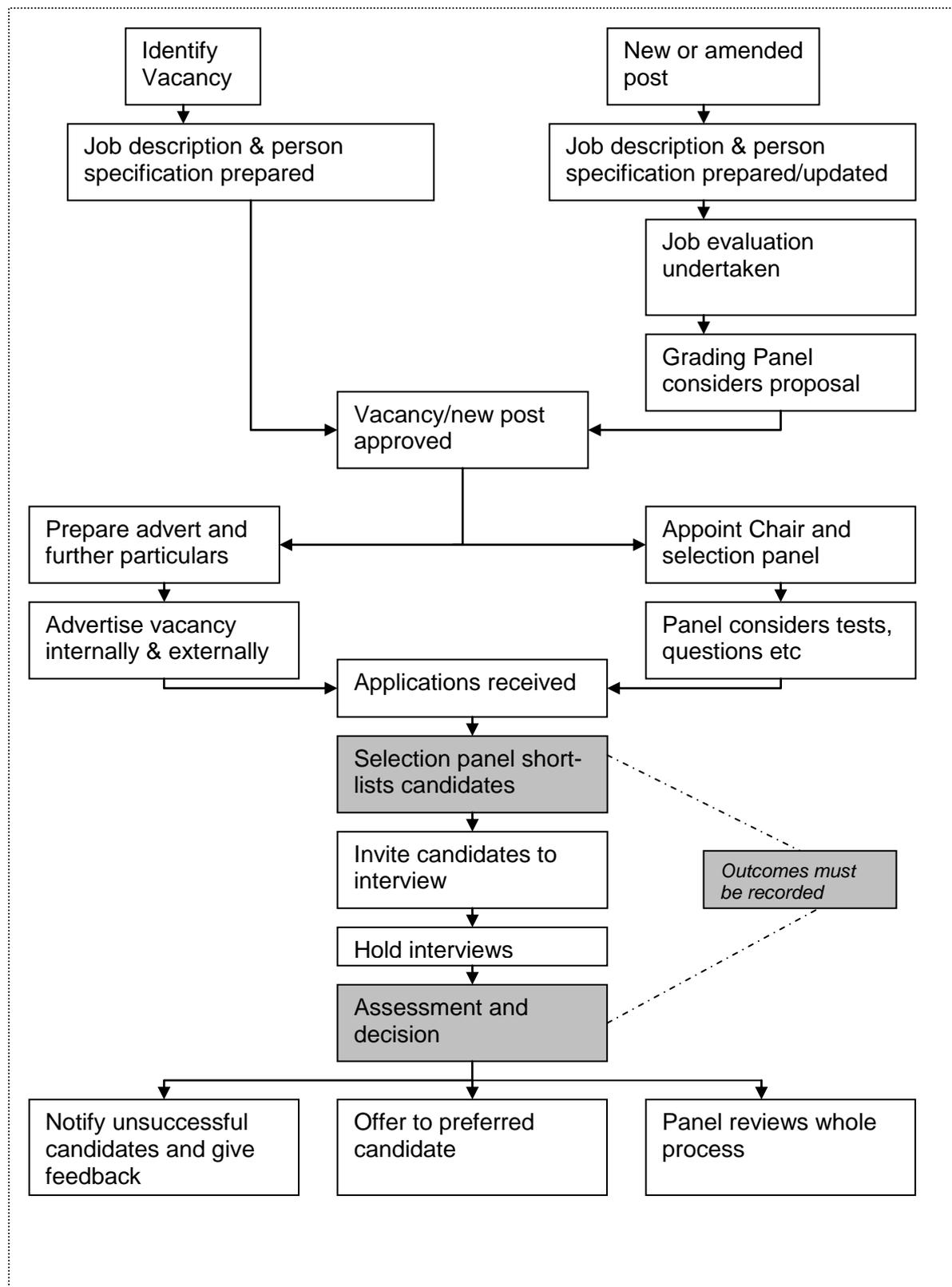
Therefore these questions should be avoided until the appointment is made.

For further information on disability see:

- BBSRC's Policy on Employing people with Disabilities in Appendix A3:9 of the Employment Code
- [ANNEX D](#) - Equality Act 2010: Guidance for Recruitment
- BBSRC Guide to Employing People with a Disability, which is available on the BBSRC website and via section A3 of the Employment Code.

### 3 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

The following flowchart summarises the recruitment procedure:





### 3.1 Identifying a Vacancy

The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review your current needs and consider whether:

- i) there is a need for the work to be completed at the same pay band
- ii) there are alternative ways of covering the work e.g. in another part of the organisation, redistributing it amongst existing staff
- iii) there are any other internal or external factors which might impact on the work (e.g. restructuring)
- iv) there any suitable 'at risk' staff who should be considered. This includes staff who are under threat of redundancy, and staff who are or have become disabled and should be considered for redeployment to another role as a 'reasonable adjustment'.

Discussion regarding these points should be held between the line manager and the head of department. If the post does need recruiting to, establishments have delegated authority to recruit to existing posts up to Band F level. New or re-graded posts must undergo a job evaluation and the results referred to the establishment grading panel for approval. New posts at Band G or above (Band F if non-science) and regradings to these levels must be referred to HRCSG for grading approval.

### 3.2 Job Description

The job description is created or reviewed before the recruitment process begins. It gives a succinct account of the job including:

- context
- purpose
- objectives
- duties
- responsibilities
- position within the organisation.

Job descriptions should be clear and objective and accurately reflect the duties of the post. They should be written in a concise and unambiguous way that ensures they are meaningful to external candidates.

You should also include the following:

- job title
- pay band
- funding source (if appropriate)
- status – indefinite or period
- location and any requirement to travel.

The job description should include the working arrangements for the post; if it is not considered suitable for flexible working, the reasons must be clearly stated.

Job description templates are shown in [ANNEX E](#) & [ANNEX F](#). The job description will be the basis for much of the recruitment process, including the drawing up of a person specification.

### 3.3 Person Specification

A person specification is prepared for each post to be filled. It defines the attainments, knowledge, experience, skills and other qualities needed to meet the requirements set out in the job description.

In order to avoid any discrimination, the requirements in the person specification must be:

- directly related to the job description, clearly defined and able to be assessed during the selection process
- not be set at a level higher than that which is required for the post
- not discriminate (directly or indirectly) against anyone who shares a protected characteristic.

The criteria in the person specification should only relate to the needs of the role and what is necessary for effective performance in the job. 'Reasonable adjustments' should also be considered, as per the requirements of the Equality Act (see [ANNEX D](#)). If the establishment is a holder of the 'Two Ticks' symbol, every disabled candidate who meets the minimum criteria for the post, as set out in the person specification, will be interviewed (see [ANNEX C](#)).

Two categories - 'essential' and 'desirable' - are used to describe the criteria in the person specification. To be recommended for appointment, candidates must meet all of the essential criteria or demonstrate that they will be able to meet them. Where appropriate, weightings or rankings may be allocated to the criteria which are deemed to be most relevant to the role.

An example person specification template is at [ANNEX G](#).

The criteria should take account of the candidate's ability and potential, as well as their achievements and experience. Areas to consider are:

- **Attainments.** Make sure that you do not set standards higher than necessary for the role; remember to consider a person's potential to achieve.
- **Aptitude.** Decide what abilities are required, for example the ability to write reports or to give advice on complex cases.
- **Special skills or knowledge.** Ensure you detail both the skill and the standard/level required.
- **Special requirements.** Detail any job requirements which restrict flexibility e.g. unsociable hours.
- **Physical requirements.** These must only be considered when directly related to effective job performance (e.g. a requirement to move and handle objects up to certain weights), as it could discriminate against particular groups of people.
- **Qualifications.** Are these essential or can candidates demonstrate their suitability for the job by other means e.g. equivalent experience? Consider potential and ability as well as academic attainment.
- **Experience.** Unless justifiable, you should not require a specific length of experience for a role; instead you should detail exactly what aptitude and skills you would expect someone with experience to have attained.
- **Mobility.** Ensure that this obligation does not give rise to any indirect discrimination; some candidates may be discouraged from applying if too much time is required away from home and personal responsibilities.
- **Flexible working practices.** All vacancies can be considered for flexible working. For further details on types of flexible working see Section A3 of the Employment Code. If there are specific reasons why flexible working cannot be accommodated, these should be detailed in the job description.

Examples of completed person specifications are in [ANNEX H](#).

### **3.4 General Information**

It is worth including additional information about the organisation, local facilities, and benefits of working for the establishment (e.g. pension, annual leave, childcare facilities, restaurant etc). Links to sources of additional information and points of contact for queries are also useful.

### **3.5 Job Evaluation**

The pay band of the job is determined by the Job Evaluation and Grading Support (JEGS) system. For new or changed posts, or where a role has not been evaluated for some time, a grading form should be completed for the post to be evaluated. The outcome will be considered and approved by the Establishment Grading Panel (and HRCSG if appropriate – see paragraph 4.1).

### **3.6 Advertising a vacancy**

The principles of fair and open competition mean that vacancies should normally be advertised internally and externally at the same time. This allows a wider pool of candidates to apply, and ensures that you select the best person for the job. Exceptions to this include:

- when there are uncertainties due to restructuring of departments/functions etc
- where there are staff at risk of redundancy; they should be considered for suitable vacancies before the normal recruitment process takes place. For further information on redeployment, see Appendix A14:2 of the Employment Code
- where there are disabled staff who need to be considered for redeployment as a 'reasonable adjustment'.

Staff who are currently on maternity and sabbatical leave should be informed of all vacancies.

### **3.7 External Advertising**

In order to attract the best candidates for your vacancy, you should aim at as wide a target audience as possible. This may include advertising in the local and national press, trade or specialist journals, using specific sites on the internet or media designed specifically to appeal to under-represented groups. All external advertisements should also be placed on the Civil Service gateway and sent to your local Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus can provide specialist assistance in attracting candidates with disabilities, as can local and national disability organisations.

Groups which are particularly under-represented in the organisation/function/area can be particularly encouraged to apply and outreach activities can be used to bring vacancies to the attention of minority groups. Where appropriate, advertising in media designed specifically to reach under-represented groups should be considered. Your HR department/the SSC Starting Work team can provide further information on specialist recruitment agencies and websites that cater for minority groups; some examples of specialist websites and other alternative sources of advertising are set out in [ANNEX I](#).

If you are involving recruitment or advertising agencies (including 'head-hunters'), they should be made aware of BBSRC's Dignity and Diversity at Work Policy (and this guide) and asked to provide a copy of their own statement regarding their commitment to equality and diversity. You should not use an agency which does not have a published statement to this effect.

### **3.8 JNCC Employer Trawling Procedures**

Vacancies should also be advertised through the JNCC employer-wide trawl. Your vacancy will then be displayed on site notice boards, and the internet Job Shop. Copies should also go to your local Trade Union Side. The Redeployment Committee Secretariat at HRCSG manages the Job Shop and it is essential that this is kept up to date.

### **3.9 Advertisements**

The vacancy advertisement is your chance to sell the job to potential candidates in a realistic and clear way. The aim of the advert is to attract interest, but it should not over-sell the job or the organisation. Adverts, and any further details relating to the vacancy should contain the following information:

- a broad indication of the job content
- a summary of the qualification and/or experience requirements (as per the person specification)
- a brief description of the establishment/BBSRC
- details of location, salary range and any relevant allowances, including information about relocation expenses where appropriate
- instructions on how to apply for the vacancy
- whether the job can be considered for flexible working
- our equality statement: BBSRC/establishment welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, maternity and pregnancy, marriage or civil partnership or gender reassignment.
- the closing date for completed applications.

For some roles it may be helpful to specify the interview/assessment date(s), where known.

Where you also provide further particulars, these should contain more information about the job, the establishment, working conditions and pension arrangements. You may wish to specify a named contact point within your establishment for potential applicants to obtain more information about the role. The contact should be knowledgeable about the job, the establishment and all related matters and must have received diversity awareness training.

### **3.10 Informal Visits**

You may wish to give candidates or potential applicants the opportunity to visit your site. These will not form part of the selection process. Ideally, someone unconnected with the shortlisting and interviewing process should show the applicant(s) around. Particular attention should be given to any adjustments required in this regard to applicants who declare a disability.

### **3.11 Appointment Panel Members**

Appointment panels will normally be made up of at least three members, all of whom should be trained in recruitment and selection (your Learning & Development / Training Managers will have details of the relevant training). There are no restrictions on the grading of panel members or the Chair but the panel should comprise those with the most appropriate knowledge and experience to judge applicants against the requirements of the job. Ideally the panel should be of mixed gender, but the key issue is to have the most appropriate panel members who are best placed to judge the suitability of the candidates. At least one member of the panel should represent the line management of the post.

It is advisable that a member of HR is on the panel, particularly where the panel is less experienced and requires additional support and guidance.

In no circumstances should interviews comprise of a single one-to-one session.

For certain posts the appointment panel must include a representative of BBSRC office (not necessarily someone from BBSRC office itself). These posts include:

- all posts at band PC2 and above
- key support posts, e.g. Director of Operations, Institute Engineer, Finance Officer, Head of HR
- posts for which staff under threat of redundancy are being considered, where the case has been brought to the attention of the BBSRC Redeployment Committee.

### **3.12 Shortlisting**

It is BBSRC policy to use a standard application form. Applicants who submit a CV but do not complete the specified parts of the application form should not be shortlisted.

#### Supplementary questionnaire

If you expect to get a large response to the advertisement, you may wish to consider issuing a supplementary questionnaire with the standard application form. This can include some specific questions which are relevant to your selection criteria and which will assist the short-listing process. You should consult your HR department about the wording of any such questionnaire.

At least two people should undertake shortlisting (normally the appointment panel Chair plus one other member of the panel). At least one person undertaking the shortlisting should also be on the interview panel. On no account should shortlisting be conducted by one person (e.g. the line manager responsible for the vacant post).

Shortlisting should be based solely on the information supplied in the application form, which is considered against the criteria set out in the person specification. You should work in a consistent way and treat all applications in the same way.

A weighting or scoring system can be used to distinguish between candidates and the extent to which they meet the essential, and if necessary the desirable criteria.

You should begin shortlisting by assessing each candidate against the essential criteria of the person specification; these are the minimum attributes which a candidate must have in order to carry out the job effectively. You should look at the

application form for evidence of how the candidate has met the essential requirements.

In some instances you may need to make assumptions from the application form as the candidate has not made any specific reference to a criterion. If you are making assumptions these must be consistent for all candidates and recorded on the shortlisting form. For example, if one criteria is 'clear written communication skills and ability to draft short letters or reports' and you decide that an applicant with GCSE English Language at grade C or above meets this criteria, then you should extend this thinking to other candidates in a similar position.

Remember that if your establishment is covered by the Two Ticks disability symbol, this guarantees an interview to those disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the post (see [ANNEX C](#)).

You should guard against prejudice and value judgements. Be careful about things like handwriting or spelling, which may, for example, indicate someone with a disability or whose first language is not English.

It is easy to make assumptions about experience or qualifications you are familiar with rather than those you are not. If you have any queries regarding the acceptability of qualifications contact your HR Department for advice.

Once you have shortlisted against the essential criteria, you may want to use the desirable criteria in order to reduce the list of potential candidates to a more manageable number.

Written records must be kept of the reasons for deciding whether or not to shortlist candidates. Stating that someone does or does not meet the criteria is not sufficient. The reasons will be used in the event of a request for feedback or complaint of discrimination (including to an Employment Tribunal).

#### Late applications

It is at the panel's discretion whether or not to consider applications received after the closing date. However, if you do decide to consider a late application you should consider ALL late applications up to the point when shortlisting is carried out.

### **3.13 Pre-interview Preparation**

#### Briefing session

A briefing session for the selection panel should be arranged in advance of the interviews. During this briefing the panel should:

- consider the structure of the interview and decide who will cover what topic during questioning
- prepare questions based on the essential and desirable criteria set out in the person specification
- consider whether relevant tests can aid the selection process in assessing aspects of the person specification e.g. presentation, laboratory or desk related task test (see paragraph 4.14)
- consider how to address any information that is unclear or incomplete on individual application forms

- ascertain whether a tour of the site/work area is necessary and allocate responsibility as appropriate.

The panel Chair should restate the principles of equality and diversity and BBSRC's policies in these respects, which underpin all recruitment and selection.

#### Interviewing candidates with a declared disability

If you have shortlisted a candidate who has a disability, prior to the interview they will be asked what, if any, reasonable adjustments they require in order to have equality of opportunity in the selection / interview process.

Reasonable adjustments in relation to the interview may include:

- changing the venue/room so that it is accessible
- changing the timing of the interview for those who have difficulty travelling at peak times
- ensuring that the candidate is not discriminated against in any tests which are relevant to the job being applied for.

Depending on the circumstances you may need to advise reception and/or the person meeting the candidate that the individual has an impairment, so that their needs can be properly considered beforehand.

#### **3.14 Selection Tests, Presentations etc**

If you plan to make use of tests, presentations, exercises etc, as part of the selection process they must be relevant to the requirements of the job. Candidates must be informed of any tests/presentations etc in their invitation to interview letter.

Tests may be used to support the selection process in assessing each candidate's suitability for the role. For example, setting up and manipulating data in a spreadsheet, where this is an essential requirement for the post. Clear criteria must be established on how the assessment will be marked and contribute to the overall selection decision. Tests must be supervised appropriately.

#### **3.15 The Interview**

The purpose of the interview is to:

- establish how well each candidate meets the selection criteria on the person specification
- ensure that all candidates have a clear picture of the job and the organisation.

#### Responsibilities of the Panel Chair

- oversee domestic arrangements
- deal with introductions
- manage timings and continuity
- ensure that panel members keep to their areas of questioning
- ensure consistency
- make sure that all the areas on the Person Specification are covered
- ensure the panel avoids bias/discrimination
- withdraw inappropriate questions during the interview
- deal with questions from candidates, and any follow up queries
- manage the assessment process ensuring fair and equitable treatment

- ensure decisions are fully documented
- provide feedback to candidates.

### Interview technique

The aim of the interview is to select the best person for the role. The role of panel members is to ensure that candidates are put at ease and given the best opportunity to 'sell' themselves.

Be aware of your own body language, and any possible negative effects it could have, and ensure that you are giving the right impression of the organisation.

If it is essential for adequate performance in the job that domestic issues are explored at interview, care must be taken when asking any related questions. Therefore, someone who has knowledge of discrimination law should be given this responsibility, although such circumstances will be rare. Examples of good questioning techniques and questions to avoid are in [ANNEX J](#).

The same core questions must be asked of all candidates.

If questions are asked by any member of the panel that could be deemed discriminatory, either the Chair or another member of the panel should intervene and redirect the questioning.

### Interview structure

- i) Introduction. Welcome the candidate and introduce panel members. Explain the structure of the interview, note-taking by panel members, questions at the end, etc.
- ii) Presentation by the candidate. For some roles the candidates may be asked to give a presentation on a specific topic. This can give the panel an opportunity to assess the candidate's knowledge of a topic, as well as their presentation skills.
- iii) Gathering information. This is the main body of the interview. The agreed questions should be used to elicit further information from the candidate.
- iv) Giving information about the organisation, role etc. This may include making the candidate aware of BBSRC's involvement with animals used in research.
- v) Ask the candidate if they have any questions they would like to ask.
- vi) Closing. Ask the candidate if there is anything they would like to add to what they have already said or if they have other relevant experience which they have not had a chance to talk about. Inform the candidate about what will happen next and thank them for their interest in the post.

### Questioning

All candidates should be asked broadly the same questions based on the criteria set out in the person specification and designed to test the candidate's suitability, transferable skills, experience etc. However, the interview should also be structured around the individual so supplementary probing questions can also be used. This also demonstrates to the candidate that the panel is listening and interested in what they have to say.

Questions should seek to obtain examples of past behaviour and experience which relate to the selection criteria; you are looking for evidence of what the candidate says they can do.

Examples of good questioning techniques and questions to avoid are given at [ANNEX J](#) and guidance on effective listening skills is in [ANNEX K](#).

### Jobs with special circumstances

Do not ask questions about personal circumstances unless they are relevant to the post e.g. if the post involves unusual working hours or frequent evening work and you need to assess whether this will present a problem to the candidate. Such questions should be discussed and agreed in the pre-interview briefing, and questioning allocated to a panel member who is fully aware of equality considerations.

The following principles should be followed:

- draw attention to the special circumstances of the job which may potentially cause a problem
- ask whether this would cause a problem for the candidate
- accept a candidate's assurances that they will be able to meet the requirements
- ask the same question of all candidates.

### Discriminatory questions

Avoid questions relating to the following areas as they could be deemed discriminatory:

- marital status / civil partnership
- occupation of spouse
- financial status
- number of children, family intentions, domestic arrangements
- ethnic or national background
- disability or health issues
- political beliefs
- age
- religion or belief.

If the candidate has declared that they have a disability, do not ask what their disability is or how it arose, about their level of attendance or what they can or cannot do. The only question that can be asked is whether they can carry out a function that is intrinsic to the job or a follow-up question about any necessary reasonable adjustment needed to carry out that function.

## **3.16 Candidate Selection**

### Assessing the evidence

At the end of the interviews, each member of the panel should make an independent written assessment of how well each candidate met the criteria on the person specification.

All the interview evidence should be reviewed including the application form, notes from the interviews, results of tests and exercises. Candidates should be assessed against the criteria and not compared with one another; panel members should only consider the evidence in front of them and not take prior knowledge of a person into account. The Chair should take the lead and ensure that all relevant information is covered, and that the same standards are applied to all candidates.

In the event of more than one candidate being appointable, you may wish to identify a reserve candidate, should the successful candidate decline the offer.

### Reasons for rejecting

The panel will need to explain why some candidates were not considered suitable. For example they:

- a) did not meet one or more of the essential criteria, or
- b) met fewer of the desirable criteria than other candidates, or
- c) they met all of the criteria but to a lesser degree than others.

### Documentation

After the interviews, the panel Chair must write up the panel's decision, including reasons for selection/rejection. The notes need to be sufficiently detailed to allow panel members to recall their reasons for a decision if feedback is requested, or if the selection decision is challenged.

Remember that the candidate can ask to see their interview selection/assessment form.

### Conveying the decision

If the panel has the authority to verbally offer a conditional appointment, it should be made as soon as possible; this is so that the first choice candidate can accept before the others are informed. All offers are conditional on satisfactory pre-employment checks being carried out and this must be made clear to the successful candidate.

If the panel does not have the authority to offer, a recommendation should be made to the Establishment Director or Director of Operations (or equivalent) as appropriate.

The successful candidate should be asked to confirm their acceptance of a post in writing. Where the candidate decides not to accept the offer, a plan of action should be agreed with the panel Chair e.g. offer the role to a reserve candidate, repeat some or all of the recruitment stages.

Letters will be sent to those candidates who were unsuccessful at the interview.

On appointment, copies of recruitment and interview documents should be placed on the individual's personal file.

## **3.17 Feedback to Candidates**

Internal candidates should always be given feedback on their performance; feedback should be given to external candidates where requested.

Feedback should be accurate, relevant and constructive. It must be based on the notes made at interview, be specific and related to the candidate's ability to meet the selection criteria as set out in the person specification.

To ensure consistency, all feedback should be given by one member of the panel, ideally the Chair.

## **3.18 Pre-employment Checks**

Certain pre-employment checks must be carried out on the successful applicant before they take up employment. However, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. where the urgency to fill a post far outweighs the need for prior completion of checks, or where particular expertise is required such that any delay would have a detrimental effect on the organisation's business) conditional appointments may be made where they have been risk assessed and the outcome recorded. The candidate must be advised in writing that their offer of employment is conditional on satisfactory checks and that if the outcome is not satisfactory, their conditional offer of employment will be withdrawn.

### References

References will normally be taken up after the interview. Although they cannot guarantee a candidate's suitability for the job, they will generally confirm that their work record is as stated.

In respect of internal candidates PPDRs should not be sought; this is because PPDRs are not written for the purpose of recruitment and selection and will contain information not directly relevant to the selection process, but which might influence the recruiters. This could place the internal applicant at an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on the circumstances.

Referees should be asked to restrict their comments to factual information about the candidate's previous employment, attendance or education. Character references and opinions about suitability for the role can be unreliable.

Further information on providing or requesting references is set out in BBSRC Best Practice Guidance - Giving and Obtaining Employment References. This is available on the BBSRC website and via section A3 of the Employment Code.

### Baseline security checks

The following information provided during the recruitment process must be verified for the successful candidate:

- identity
- employment history (last 3 years)
- nationality and immigration status - in asylum and immigration cases, the sight of all relevant original documentation is required.
- criminal record (unspent convictions). See below for information on Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Agency and contract staff should be subject to the same pre-employment checks as permanent staff. Where staff are provided through an agency, the agreement with the agency should clearly specify the latter's responsibility for checking and the notification procedures they need to follow if checking has not been completed or if the results give cause for concern.

### Additional security checks

Some establishments may need to carry out additional security checks due to the nature of the research work undertaken.

### Occupational health

All successful candidates will be asked to complete an occupational health assessment form. In some cases, depending on the nature of the role and any issues identified in the form, referral to an occupational health physician may be made. HR will inform the panel Chair of any health issues identified. If necessary, the line manager, together with HR and the individual, should discuss any reasonable adjustments that could be made to ensure that the successful candidate can perform the job satisfactorily.

#### Criminal Records Bureau checks

For the majority of roles the successful candidate is not required to declare details of any spent convictions. However for some jobs (e.g. those which involve working with children) full declaration of all convictions is required and a check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be carried out.

#### **3.19 Pay on Appointment**

The policy relating to starting pay on appointment is set out in the Employment Code.

### **3.20 New Starter Actions**

The period following appointment is a particularly important time in ensuring that new staff settle in quickly, receive the right encouragement and information, and gain a good impression of the organisation.

#### Induction

It is essential that new staff receive adequate and timely induction training. This should cover important areas such as Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity awareness, pay and key HR policies, together with information about the establishment, site and BBSRC as a whole. See the Employment Code for more information.

#### Probation

New starters must be made aware of the BBSRC Probation Procedure. Line managers needs also to be aware of the importance of this process. See the Employment Code for more information.

#### Forward Job Planning

Objective setting is an integral part of the PPDR process. Line managers need to set objectives for new staff as soon as they take up post; managers should not wait until the beginning of the new reporting year to do this. More information is contained within the PPDR Guidance, which is available on the BBSRC Staff Extranet.

#### Training needs

Training must be considered for all new starters, covering the following areas:

- job related
- vocational/further education
- technical (e.g. computing, specialist equipment)
- career development and management (if applicable)
- self development (e.g. presentation skills, communication).

Training is an integral part of personal development and all staff must have an equal opportunity to undergo suitable training so as to learn skills required in the job, to improve performance and to develop potential. For more information see Section A5 of the Employment Code.

## GOOD PRACTICE IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION – A SUMMARY

### Job Description and Personal Specification

- A clear and concise account of job related tasks and responsibilities.
- Person Specification should include a defined list of the relevant essential and desirable attainments, skills, knowledge and experience required by the applicant to do the job.

### Advertising

- Place adverts in good time (to meet publication deadlines and allow for due consideration of applications).
- Ensure advertising is cost-effective and monitor effectiveness in attracting candidates.
- Ensure language used is non-discriminatory and will attract a pool of applicants from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Use media that will reach applicants throughout the local, national or international community e.g. Asian Times, Caribbean Times, WorkingMums.co.uk, ethnicjobsite.co.uk, Job Centre Plus. Liaise with specialist organisations that can provide advice on attracting applicants from under-represented groups (e.g. opportunities.org.uk).
- Include BBSRC equality statement .
- Refer to location, flexible working arrangements, other benefits and facilities.
- Include a point of contact to enable applicants to find out more details about the job.
- Allow for a variety of application responses e.g. paper applications, tape.
- Remember 'Keeping in Touch' for those on maternity leave etc.

### Shortlisting

- Shortlisting should be conducted in panels against the Person Specification with representation from HR or under-represented groups where possible, but not at the expense of individuals best placed to judge suitability.
- Adopt a simple and fair scoring system.
- Apply Two Ticks as required.
- Record decisions and review shortlisting for fair treatment (scores based on evidence and no other factors taken into account) and provision of feedback.

### Interviewing

- Consider arrangements for interviewing (location, facilities, reasonable adjustments etc, particularly with disability in mind).
- Consider the composition of the interview panel (see shortlisting).
- Interview pre-meeting to agree questions related to person specification and achieve consistency in interviews.
- Questions should be wholly job related, unbiased and without any reference to personal circumstances.

### Data Collection

- Collect meaningful equality data for all at the application, short-listing, interview / selection stages.
- Use data for local monitoring and reporting, and send to HRCSG BBSRC Office.

- Retain panel reports (for a minimum of 1 year) on all interviewed candidates for feedback (reports should be constructive with use of appropriate language).

## **DISCRIMINATION AND THE BURDEN OF PROOF IN RECRUITMENT - GUIDANCE FOR SELECTION PANELS**

### Background

Legislation has been in place for some time that allows an unsuccessful job applicant to take an employer to an Employment Tribunal if he/she believes that discrimination on grounds of the following protected characteristics: sex, marriage or civil partnership, race, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, maternity or pregnancy has occurred during the recruitment process. In recent years, the burden of proof has shifted from the employee to the employer. It is no longer up to the individual to prove they were discriminated against but up to the employer to prove that they did not discriminate, either directly or indirectly.

This makes it essential for those involved in the recruitment process to maintain full and accurate records to back up their selection decisions. The following information is provided to assist with recruitment and to ensure that the selection decisions made at each stage of the process are fair, objective and result in the best person being appointed regardless of the above protected characteristics.

### Training

All those involved in the recruitment and selection process should have attended the BBSRC Effective Recruitment & Selection course, or an equivalent training event.

### The Selection Panel

The selection panel has a dual role in the recruitment and selection process. Not only are they responsible for the interview of candidates and the selection of the successful person, but they are also the public face of the organisation to those applying. Wherever possible, selection panels should be of mixed gender. However, whilst it is preferable that panels are balanced to allow fair and open competition, tokenism should be avoided; the key is that the panel members are best placed to judge suitability.

### The Job Description and the Person Specification

A comprehensive job description and person specification must be prepared in advance of a job being advertised; this will normally be done by the line manager and include:

- selection criteria that are measurable and relevant to the job
- a carefully thought out distinction between criteria that are essential to carry out the function and criteria that would be desirable. Once agreed, these designations should not be changed during the recruitment process
- numbered selection criteria for ease of reference.

To ensure consistency and fairness, all job applicants must have access to a copy of the job description and person specification.

### Shortlisting

The first actions of the selection panel should be to shortlist candidates for interview using the person specification and application form. At least two people should undertake shortlisting (normally the appointment panel Chair plus one other member of the panel). At least one person undertaking the shortlisting should also be on the interview panel. On no account should shortlisting be conducted by one person (e.g. the line manager responsible for the vacant post).

Shortlisting decisions should be based SOLELY on the agreed selection criteria. Decisions made must be noted on a shortlisting form, including any comments or reasoning. In the case of a rejection, the shortlisting form must indicate which selection criteria were not met or only partially met.

It is BBSRC policy to use an application form as this provides a framework for the collection of consistent information. Applicants who submit a CV but do not complete the specified parts of the application form should not be shortlisted. Where necessary, recruiters should request supplementary information if the standard form does not provide all the information needed.

### Selection Methods

The selection panel should agree on the selection methods (interview, tests, assessment centres) in advance and shortlisted candidates should be advised as to what they might expect. The panel must agree 'success criteria' for each selection method and keep records about the performance of each candidate on a marking sheet.

### Interviews

The interview provides an opportunity for you and your colleagues to confirm, expand and supplement the documentary information provided by the candidate on the application form. To ensure fairness and consistency and protect the organisation and the interviewer, interviews should not be conducted on a one-to-one basis. Interview performance should be scored on a marking sheet (using a BBSRC approved evaluation system), against the agreed selection criteria. Selection panels must agree any weighting factors in advance of the interviews. At the end of the interview the panel should grade the candidates on suitability for the position, having regard to all the information available and present a factual and unbiased report. A note should be made of any divergence in the decision of the panel members.

The interview panel report should contain a clear recommendation as to whether the candidate is suitable for the post or not, with a brief account of the evidence upon which the decision is based.

The interview panel report is a very important document to management both as a basis for giving feedback to the individual and as a tool for career development. It should also be borne in mind that the report will come under considerable scrutiny in the event of an appeal against non-selection or an Employment Tribunal case. The report should therefore be as explicit, factual and constructive as possible.

The panel report, score sheets and any test papers should be passed to the HR Department/SSC Starting Work Team. Score sheets and test papers should be retained for a minimum of 1 year from the appointment of the successful candidate.

## **GUIDANCE ON THE TWO TICKS DISABILITY SYMBOL IN RECRUITMENT**

BBSRC is committed to equality and its Dignity and Diversity at Work Policy supports the rights of all people to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination.

Disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Establishments that have been accredited with the use of the Employment Service 'Two Ticks' symbol have demonstrated that they are positive about and committed to employing people who have a disability. This includes a guarantee to interview all applicants with a declared disability, who meet the minimum criteria for the job (i.e. essential criteria in the person specification), and to consider them on their abilities. For information on what the Two-Ticks symbol means once a person is appointed see the 'Guide to Employing People with Disabilities' which is available on the BBSRC website and via section A3 of the Employment Code.

You should check all job descriptions and person specifications to ensure they do not contain unjustifiable criteria and unreasonably discriminate against disabled candidates. A disabled person can bring a complaint of discrimination in relation to a job description, whether they apply for the post or not.

### Shortlisting

The HR department/SSC Starting Work Team will make those involved in shortlisting aware of any candidates who have declared a disability if this is made known to them. You must assess each applicant in the same way against the criteria in the person specification. Reasons for deciding whether to interview or not must be clearly recorded so that a response can be made to any complaints of unfair treatment or discrimination. It is not sufficient to state only that the candidate 'met the criteria' or 'did not meet the criteria'.

### Interview

During the interview you should only ask a disabled candidate about the effects of his/her disability in order to decide whether the person can carry out a function that is 'intrinsic' to the job. Such questions should, however, be separated from the rest of the interview, for example by raising them at the end and stating that they will not form part of the general selection process.

When interviewing a candidate who has a disability, panel members should:

- be open-minded and positive
- avoid making assumptions about what the person can or cannot do
- not appear to be looking for problems
- ensure that the candidate is given the opportunity to address the issues raised by their disability.

Disabled applicants should have the same opportunities as other applicants to demonstrate their skills and potential, without being given advantages.



## Selection

The reasons for non-selection must be clearly recorded. In all cases the best applicant should be selected. An employer must not discriminate against a disabled applicant but there is no requirement, aside from making reasonable adjustments, to treat a disabled person more favourably. We are required to give equal consideration to disabled candidates and make reasonable adjustments where this would enable them to fulfil the requirements of the post. The applicant's merits are therefore assessed as they would be if any reasonable adjustments had been made. (For further information on reasonable adjustments see the Guide to Employing Disabled People which is available on the BBSRC website). If, after allowing for those adjustments, a disabled candidate is not the best person for the job then there is no requirement to appoint them. For example:

- they have been found unsuitable due to a lack of appropriate ability, skills or experience and this is not related to their disability
- another person has better or more suitable skills and experience and this is not related to the candidate's disability
- the candidate's disability makes him/her substantially less suitable for the post, even if all reasonable adjustments were made to overcome the impact of their disability.

## EQUALITY ACT 2010: GUIDANCE FOR RECRUITMENT

Selection panel members have a key role in ensuring that the best possible candidate is selected for every position. Panel members must guard against all forms of discrimination, and focus on the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the job on offer.

An unsuccessful job applicant has the right to take a claim to an Employment Tribunal if he/she believes that direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of disability has occurred. It is therefore essential for recruiters to maintain detailed and accurate records to back up their selection (and rejection) decisions. The following best practice guidance is provided to help recruiters to undertake this function and to ensure that job applicants are short-listed, interviewed and selected on a fully objective basis.

### Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as having a 'physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

*Physical impairment* includes sensory impairment (such as visual or hearing) as well as severe disfigurement.

People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS) are covered by the Act from the point of diagnosis, rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A *mental impairment* can be a long-term condition such as Down's syndrome or severe dyslexia. It can also be a mental illness, for example depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. A mental illness does not need to be 'clinically well recognised' before it can count as an impairment for the purposes of the Equality Act.

*Substantial* means 'more than minor or trivial', and *adverse* means 'very unfavourable'.

*Long term* means that the effects of the impairment must have lasted for at least 12 months, or are likely to last for at least 12 months (where likely means 'could well happen'). Conditions that return, or fluctuate, are covered by the definition of disability, as long as the substantial adverse effects are more than likely to come back.

*Normal day-to-day activities* are those that are 'normal' for most people and carried out on a daily or regular basis. Normal day-to-day activities do not include work of any particular form because no particular form of work is 'normal' for most people.

Attention should also be given to potential '*associated or perceived discrimination*'. This occurs when an individual is treated less favourably without any justifiable reason owing to their association with another person on the basis of that person's disability or others perceive that an individual has a disability. For example, a

candidate may have carer responsibilities for a disabled dependant and this may need to be taken into account.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

Under the Act, employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises, or to any provisions, criteria or practice made by, or on behalf of, the employer. 'Provisions, criteria or practice' is a very broad definition, which includes recruitment and selection, training and promotion.

The Act does not define 'reasonable', or give a complete list of what reasonable adjustments may be. However, it does set out four tests of reasonableness:

- The effectiveness in preventing disadvantage - how much will a reasonable adjustment reduce the disadvantage? The more effective an adjustment is in reducing disadvantage, the more reasonable it is likely to be.
- The practicality of the step - it is more likely that an employer will be expected to take a step that is easy than to take a step that is hard. If disadvantage can easily be removed by changing the way things are done, or the equipment that is used, then the adjustment is likely to be considered reasonable.
- The financial and other costs and the extent of any disruption caused - when trying to decide whether an adjustment would be reasonable, the cost of the adjustment and any disruption it might cause should also be considered. Cost is not just about the price of making physical adaptations, for example, but also:
  - how experienced and skilled the employee concerned is;
  - the cost of replacing that employee;
  - how long the employee has been with the organisation, and
  - whether the adjustment may be of benefit to other employees (disabled and non-disabled).
- The extent of an organisation's financial and other resources

Practical examples of reasonable adjustments in employment include:

- Rearranging the furniture in the office e.g. making wider spaces between desks and making sure an individual's workspace is in a specific location.
- Altering working hours to make it easier for a disabled person to travel outside rush hours.
- Providing a text-phone (minicom) for a deaf person and booking a sign language interpreter for particular meetings or occasions.
- Installing voice recognition software on a computer for someone who is blind or partially-sighted, or providing notes on disk, email or audio-cassette.
- Adding a ramp to a building for a wheelchair user.
- Adapting a vehicle or providing taxi transport to and from appointments. The needs of a disabled person who has a personal support assistant or an assistance dog should also be considered.

Any reasonable adjustments should obviously be made in consultation with the disabled person involved. The cost of making reasonable adjustments is not necessarily expensive; the average cost is less than £200.

## Reasonable Adjustments for Mental Health Issues

A World Health Organisation report estimates that one in four people will suffer from a mental health condition at some time in their life. Mental health conditions affect people in many different ways. Individuals face specific challenges and many may need little or no support at work. On the other hand, discrimination against people who declare mental health conditions can still be widespread, even though mental ill-health, including stress related issues, is often commonplace in employment. Workplace attitudes and stigma towards mental ill-health can, therefore, be discriminatory; fewer than 4 in 10 employers say that they would consider employing someone with a history of mental health problems.

BBSRC is committed to removing barriers to the employment of people with mental health issues and recognises that most people with mental health issues can continue to work successfully. Our recruitment and selection process is focused on the ability of the candidates so that the best possible selection is made, and allows, if necessary, for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act to be made to support that individual.

As with physical disabilities, the type of reasonable adjustment required for someone with a mental health problem will vary according to their needs, and you should never make assumptions. However, the following should be taken into account when considering an applicant who has declared a mental health issue:-

- they may apply for a position that they are over-qualified for, in order to regain confidence after recovery;
- their application may have gaps in their work history;
- they may appear to have poor interpersonal skills;
- they may have had difficulties in previous employment because reasonable adjustments were not made.

During the selection process:-

- the candidate may wish to be accompanied by a friend or adviser;
- you may need to allow them extra time during the interview and any exercises, to allow them as much opportunity as possible to demonstrate their suitability;
- consider using individual rather than group exercises;
- give a clear and thorough explanation of the process and what is required of them.

If they are selected for the post, then potential reasonable adjustments at work could include:-

- accepting a higher level of sick absence than would normally be considered acceptable;
- flexibility in allowing annual leave e.g. allowing leave to be taken at short notice;
- flexibility in working hours and arrangements, including working from home;
- adjusting the way in which work is arranged e.g. breaking up a single demanding task with a number of smaller tasks;
- giving permission to contact a support professional by phone during the working day;

- providing written instructions, giving a clear structure for work, and ensuring the volume of work is neither too much or too little;
- allowing time off to attend medical or therapy appointments;
- ensuring that fellow colleagues know, understand and tolerate any unusual behaviour (e.g. humming or talking to themselves);
- limiting the amount of work conducted over the telephone.

This is not an exhaustive list and you should always discuss any requirements with the individual concerned. Further details about mental ill-health and dealing with it in the workplace is available in the Employing People with Disabilities guidance on the BBSRC website and via the Employment Code.

## **Training**

All those involved in the recruitment process should have been on the BBSRC Effective Recruitment & Selection Course, or have received equivalent training. Further guidance can be obtained from your Learning and Development Manager.

## **The Person Specification**

A comprehensive job description and person specification must be prepared in advance of a job being advertised. The person specification determines the selection criteria and must be 100% relevant to the job and measurable.

Recruiters must think carefully about 'essential' and 'desirable' selection criteria. Once agreed, these designations should not be changed during the recruitment process. However, full consideration must be given to how reasonable adjustments could be made in order to ensure that disabled candidates are treated fairly. For example, for candidates who possess the aptitude/ability/experience sought but have missed out on schooling due to medical care unjustifiable academic selection criteria should be avoided and other alternative assessment measures considered.

Questions to ask when preparing the person specification include:-

- Why are the qualifications requested?
- Are they 'essential' or 'desirable'?
- Can ability/aptitude be assessed another way?
- What reasonable adjustments in this requirement can be made?

All applicants should have access to a copy of the job description and person specification, with a clear statement that 'due consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments to the role as per the Equality Act 2010.'

The person specification selection criteria should be numbered for ease of reference.

## **Advertising Externally**

A copy of any external advertisement should be sent to the local Job Centre Plus in order to advertise the vacancy to as many potential candidates as possible, and demonstrate the organisation's commitment to diversity.

## **The Selection Panel**

At least two people should undertake shortlisting (normally the appointment panel Chair plus one other member of the panel). At least one person undertaking the shortlisting should also be on the interview panel. On no account should shortlisting be conducted by one person (e.g. the line manager responsible for the vacant post).

Wherever possible, selection panels should be of mixed gender, but the key issue is to have the most appropriate people on the panel.

Interviews should not be conducted on a one-to-one basis. The only exception is where the candidate has an impairment that increases under pressure, in which case you should be prepared to offer the candidate the alternative of a single interviewer (with another member of the panel present as an observer).

### **Priority Candidates**

All BBSRC establishments have achieved disability Two Ticks accreditation. This demonstrates our commitment to encouraging disabled people to apply for jobs by guaranteeing them an interview, provided that they meet the minimum requirements of the role. Guidance on the Two Ticks disability symbol is at [ANNEX C](#).

### **Short-Listing**

The selection panel should draw up a list of all applications, stating the decision (e.g. interview, reject, reserve) and reasons. Short-listing decisions, based only on the agreed selection criteria must be noted on the accompanying short-listing form.

Panel Chairs need to be aware whether their establishment is covered by the Two Ticks disability symbol, as this guarantees an interview to those disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the post, as set out in the person specification.

In cases where there have been large numbers of applications and it is not possible to short-list on the basis of agreed selection criteria, the following options are available:

- using desirable criteria
- prioritising and/or weighting criteria
- using secondary criteria (take care to ensure these are non-discriminatory).

### **Applications for the Role**

Application forms should be used in preference to CVs in order to keep information standardised and comprehensive. However, in some cases it may be necessary to consider alternative application methods for candidates who would find completing an application form difficult (e.g. on tape or disc).

### **Interview Location**

To ensure fairness, all candidates should be asked in writing to provide details of any adjustments they require in the event that they are selected for interview/testing. Panel members should be happy to discuss alternative arrangements, irrespective of whether the candidate discloses a disability or not.

If a shortlisted candidate requests that adjustments are made to the interview process, every effort should be made to accommodate the suitable arrangements

they have detailed. When choosing the venue, the selection panel should ensure as far as is reasonably practical, that the room suits the requirements of the candidate.

Examples of adjustments include:

- If a candidate uses a wheelchair, the room will need to be accessible (e.g. on the ground floor, or accessible via a lift) and the furniture in the room should be arranged for ease of navigation.
- Allowing a signer or support worker to accompany the candidate; be prepared to pay for the service regardless of who organises it.

## **Interview and Tests**

The selection panel should agree any tests or assessments in advance. Ensure that these tests do not penalize a candidate who has requested an adjustment or who has declared a disability, unless the test is 100% justified and no other reasonable adjustments can be made. Pre-employment questions related to health may only be asked to determine whether any reasonable adjustments in the selection process are required. Further guidance is available from your HR department or HRCSG at BBSRC Office if required.

Shortlisted candidates should be advised what to expect. The panel must agree the success criteria for each test and keep records about the performance of each candidate, and any reasonable adjustments made to equalize the process for any disabled candidates.

Where a candidate has declared a disability, they may only be asked whether they can carry out a function that is 'intrinsic' to the job. This may be followed up with the question 'what adjustments could be made to enable you to perform the job?' Only questions related to 'reasonable adjustments' should be asked regarding the person's disability – not how the disability came about, etc. This will protect the employer from claims of discriminatory behaviour, and will enable the panel to focus on what changes to the role may be required if the disabled person is the best person for the job.

Interview performance should be scored (using a BBSRC-approved evaluation system) against the agreed selection criteria with any reasonable adjustments made for disabled candidates; selection panels must agree any weighting factors in advance of the interviews.

Selection panel members should score a candidate independently, immediately after the interview of that candidate has finished; this may be followed by a discussion about suitability, but the panel Chair must ensure that pressure is not put on individual panel members to amend their scores against their better judgement.

When the interviews are completed, the panel should review the scores of each candidate and offer the job to the candidate with the highest overall score.

If the best candidate for the job is a person with a disability, and it is only their disability which is the issue, it is critical that all possible reasonable adjustments, which would enable the person to take up the role, are explored with the HR Department. These may include varying the hours/pattern of work, reallocation of specific job duties (e.g. occasional lifting) etc. There is help and funding available from external organisations to try to remove such barriers, and employers are legally required to demonstrate that reasonable adjustments have been considered.

In the case of a rejection, the list must indicate which selection criteria were not met or only partially met. In the case of an unsuccessful candidate with a disability, it must be noted why reasonable adjustment could not be made to the job, if this is the only reason why they were not successful.

## **Report**

The Chair should write a report, commenting on each candidate against the selection criteria, cross-referenced to the scores and any test results, and clearly setting out the panel's decision.

The panel report, score sheets and any test papers should be passed to the HR department/SSC Starting Work Team; score sheets and test papers should be retained for a minimum of 1 year from date of appointment of the successful candidate.

### **Feedback**

Applicants who are not short-listed should be given feedback on request, making it clear in objective comment only why they were unsuccessful. This should be noted and dated.

Internal candidates should always be given feedback on their performance by the Panel Chair; feedback should be given to external candidates where requested.

**EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE– EXTERNAL** (for establishments not using Oracle iRecruitment). N.B. some headings may be deleted for internal candidates

**Group (if required)**

**Job title:**

**Location:**

**Pay Band:**

## **FURTHER PARTICULARS**

### **1. GENERAL**

*About BBSRC (and / or Institute)*

*What BBSRC (and / or Institute) does*

### **2. BACKGROUND**

*Please give a short summary of the role of the department/team, where the post holder will fit in and what their main role is.*

### **3. ORGANISATION POSITION**

*Please enter an organogram of the position in relation to other team members. Please clearly indicate clearly management lines.*

### **4. MAIN JOB ACTIVITIES**

The prime purpose of the post is to:

The main activities are *(with percentages)*:

### **5. PERSON SPECIFICATION (KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND SKILL PROFILE)**

### **6. STATUS**

*State whether post is indefinite.*

Subject to key operational and supervisory requirements being met, this post would be suitable for part-time or flexible hours, term-time working or job share.

### **7. LOCATION AND MOBILITY**

The postholder will be based at <<*institute*>> and the successful candidate will therefore be required to live within reasonable daily travelling distance thereof.



**8. SALARY**

£

The starting salary for this post will be dependent upon relevant qualifications and experience.

Employees receive a standard pay award each year for a commensurate performance. However, performance, which is considered exceptional and above, may receive an enhanced pay award, which would increase the rate of progression towards a maximum threshold.

**9. HOURS**

**10. OFFICIAL TRAVEL/JOURNEYS**

When travelling on authorised journeys, the postholder will be reimbursed expenses and paid subsistence, within the rules prescribed by BBSRC.

**11. ANNUAL LEAVE**

**12. SICKNESS ABSENCE**

Sickness absence, within prescribed limits, is normally granted with pay.

**13. SUPERANNUATION**

**14. PROBATION**

On joining BBSRC all staff are subject to a 6 month probation period, with a formal appraisal at 2 monthly intervals.

**15. OTHER BENEFITS** (*Health care, screening, childcare etc*)

**16. FACILITIES AT** *institute*

**17. BBSRC/institute is pleased to be able to confirm their commitment to equality of opportunity for people with disabilities through our involvement in the Two Ticks Scheme.**

The scheme exists to encourage people with disabilities to apply for the full range of jobs on offer and for employers to be able to select the best person for the job from a wider, more diverse, range of applicants.



If you have a disability, this means that we guarantee to invite you to interview if you meet the essential specified requirements of the job. This does not mean that we invite applicants with disabilities to interview solely because of their disability nor does it mean that applicants without disabilities will be in any way disadvantaged.

What this means for you is that if you are interested in the job and think you have the right skills, whether you have a disability or not, then we want to hear from you. We do not operate quota systems on the people we appoint; if you are the best person for the job, you will be offered it.



## 18. APPLICATIONS

*Contact details for returning application forms (either hard copy or on line or both), contact details for more information about the job and organisation, closing date for applications and interview date.*

**Please ensure that you complete an application form as CVs will not be accepted**

## EXAMPLE Oracle iRecruitment JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

This template has been created using the Oracle iRecruitment headings.

### Organisation Description

The default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

### Brief Position Description

- **Background**

*Give a short summary of the role of the department/team, where the post holder will fit in and what their main role is.*

- **Organisation Position**

*Give a short summary of where the post holder will sit in relation to the existing team and the position they report to.*

### Detailed Description

- **Main Job Activities**

*Enter main job activities with percentages*

### Position and Person Requirements

The following default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

Attainments (A), General Intelligence (GI), Special Skills (SS), Special Requirements, Physical Make up (PM).

- **Essential**

- **Desirable**

Stage at which tested: Shortlisting (S), Interview (I), Test (T)

*List all essential and desirable criteria required for role, detailing at which point it will be tested e.g. (AE1 – S) see [ANNEX G](#) for a completed example*

### Additional Details

- **Status**

*Explain the status of the post and whether it is suitable for flexible working.*

- **Location and Mobility**

The default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

- **Salary**

The following default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

Full Time Band X  
£X (minimum)

The starting salary for this post will be dependent upon relevant qualifications and experience.

*Complete band and salary information*

- **Hours**

*Enter standard appropriate text dependant on band of position, for example:*

The post holder will be contracted to work a 37 hour week, Monday to Friday. However, a Flexible Working Hours Scheme is in operation which allows staff considerable freedom to organise their hours of work, subject to the agreed levels of Office cover being maintained.

OR

Staff normally work a 37 hour week, Monday to Friday. However, the jobholder will be classified as a "Self-Managed Hours" employee and will be required to attend for whatever hours are necessary in order to fulfil the requirements and objectives of the job, within the Working Time Regulations. Such staff do not have fixed working hours but are instead expected to self-manage their hours so as to achieve those requirements and objectives (for example, they may work longer hours when the workload is high or in order to meet a tight deadline, and fewer hours when the workload is light).

Self Managed Hours employees are not be eligible for overtime pay or other payments for working longer hours.

- **Equal Opportunities**

The default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

- **Employee Benefits**

The default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

## **How to Apply**

The following default information has been pre-loaded into Oracle.

It is BBSRC policy to use an online application form, please ensure that you complete an application form as CVs will not be accepted.

If you are unable to apply on-line, please contact the Research Council Shared Service Centre by telephone on 01793 867003.

The closing date for applications is

Interviews will be held on

*Complete closing and interview dates*

ANNEX G

**EXAMPLE PERSON SPECIFICATION TEMPLATE (for establishments not using Oracle iRecruitment).**

Element	Specific criteria		Stage at which tested (e.g. shortlisting and/or interview)
	Essential	Desirable	
<b>Attainments</b> (e.g. educational and occupational attainment)			
<b>General intelligence</b> (e.g. ability to reason accurately and quickly, to learn quickly, to handle complex ideas, to innovate, to solve problems, to make decisions, to act on own initiative)			
<b>Special skills</b> (e.g. in science, research and development, experimental techniques, communication, interpersonal and team working, management/leadership, budget control, ability to operate specialist equipment, computer knowledge)			
<b>Special requirements</b> (ability to comply with essential job requirements which restrict flexibility e.g. unsociable hours, overnight absences, extensive travel, overseas working)			
<b>Physical make-up</b> (e.g. health, hearing - where these relate to effective performance)			

**EXAMPLE PERSON SPECIFICATION TEMPLATE (for establishments using Oracle iRecruitment).**

Attainments (A), General Intelligence (GI), Special Skills (SS), Special Requirements, Physical Make up (PM).

- **Essential**
  
- **Desirable**

**Stage at which tested: Shortlisting (S), Interview (I), Test (T)**

## EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

## BAND D RESEARCH SCIENTIST (for establishments not using Oracle iRecruitment).

Element	Specific criteria		Stage at which tested
	Essential	Desirable	
<b>Attainments</b> (e.g. educational and occupational attainment)	<p>Masters Degree or PhD in a biological or related subject and/or previous relevant experience (AE1).</p> <p>Experience in plant molecular biology (AE2)</p> <p>Experience of plant biochemistry (AE3)</p>	Knowledge of cereal starch metabolism and analysis (AD1)	<p>AE1 – S</p> <p>AE2 – S/I</p> <p>AE3 – S/I</p> <p>AD1 – S/I</p>
<b>General intelligence</b> (e.g. ability to reason accurately and quickly, to learn quickly, to handle complex ideas, to innovate, to solve problems, to make decisions, to act on own initiative)		Demonstrate experience of planning organisation and execution, including resource management of research project (GD1)	GD1 - I
<b>Special skills</b> (e.g. in science, research and development, experimental techniques, communication, interpersonal and team working, management/leadership, budget control, ability to operate specialist equipment, computer knowledge)	<p>Demonstrate experience of gene cloning and analysis of protein structure (SSE1)</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively with all in the science community (including giving and receiving advice) and non-scientists (SSE2)</p>		<p>SSE1 – I</p> <p>SSE2 - I</p>
<b>Special</b>			

<b>requirements</b> (ability to comply with essential job requirements which restrict flexibility e.g. unsociable hours, overnight absences, extensive travel, overseas working)			
<b>Physical make-up</b> (e.g. health, hearing only where these relate to effective performance)			

**BAND D RESEARCH SCIENTIST (for establishments using Oracle iRecruitment).**

Attainments (A), General Intelligence (GI), Special Skills (SS), Special Requirements, Physical Make up (PM).

**Essential**

- Masters Degree or PhD in a biological or related subject and/or previous relevant experience (AE1 - S).
- Experience in plant molecular biology (AE2 – S/I)
- Experience of plant biochemistry (AE3 – S/I)
- Demonstrate experience of gene cloning and analysis of protein structure (SSE1 - I)
- Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively with all in the science community (including giving and receiving advice) and non-scientists (SSE2 - I)

**Desirable**

- Knowledge of cereal starch metabolism and analysis (AD1 – S/I)
- Demonstrate experience of planning organisation and execution, including resource management of research project (GD1 - I)

**Stage at which tested: Shortlisting (S), Interview (I), Test (T)**

**BAND E PROJECT MANAGER (for establishments not using Oracle iRecruitment).**

Element	Specific criteria		Stage at which tested (e.g. short-listing and/or interview)
	Essential	Desirable	
<b>Attainments</b> (e.g. educational and occupational attainment)	<p>'A' levels or relevant equivalent qualification and/or previous relevant experience (AE1)</p> <p>Previous demonstrable experience of managing projects (AE2)</p> <p>Previous experience of projects involving PRINCE 2 or equivalent methodology (AE3)</p> <p>Successful delivery of a major project across multiple departments (AE4)</p>	<p>Degree or equivalent qualification and/or previous relevant experience. (AD1)</p> <p>Previous demonstrable experience of managing medium/large projects (AD2)</p> <p>Formal PRINCE 2 qualification or equivalent (AD3)</p> <p>Knowledge of large organisation business processes (AD4)</p> <p>Knowledge of Government Gateway process (AD5)</p>	<p>AE1 – S</p> <p>AE2 – S/I</p> <p>AE3 – S/I</p> <p>AE4 – S/I</p> <p>AD1 – S</p> <p>AD2 – S/I</p> <p>AD3 – S</p> <p>AD4 – S/I</p> <p>AD5 – S/I</p>
<b>General intelligence</b> (e.g. ability to reason accurately and quickly, to learn quickly, to handle complex ideas, to innovate, to solve problems, to make decisions, to act on own initiative)	<p>Logical problem solving (GE1)</p> <p>Imaginative thinker (GE2)</p> <p>Drive projects from conception to completion (GE3)</p> <p>An ability to manage conflicting priorities (GE4)</p>	<p>Strategic and tactical thinking when integrating multiple project demands (GD1)</p> <p>An ability to negotiate (GD2)</p>	<p>GE1 – I/T</p> <p>GE2 – I/T</p> <p>GE3 – I/T</p> <p>GE4 – I</p> <p>GD1 – I</p> <p>GD2 – I</p>
<b>Special skills</b> (e.g. in science, research and development, experimental techniques, communication, interpersonal and team working, management/leadership, budget control, ability to operate specialist equipment,	<p>Project management within a technical environment, IT/IS and office arena (SSE1)</p> <p>Good estimation skills (SSE2)</p> <p>Good verbal, report writing and presentation skills (SSE3)</p> <p>Translation of strategy / policy into work specs, contract documentation (SSE4)</p>	<p>Contractor procurement experience (SSD1)</p> <p>Contractor management skills (SSD2)</p> <p>Ability to communicate ideas and gain knowledge across the whole organisation / office structure (SSD3)</p> <p>Budget management experience (SSD4)</p> <p>Line management experience (SSD5)</p>	<p>SSE1 – I</p> <p>SSE2 – I</p> <p>SSE3 – I/T</p> <p>SSE4 – S/I</p> <p>SSE5 – I/T</p> <p>SSD1 – S/I</p> <p>SSD2 – I</p> <p>SSD3 – I</p> <p>SSD4 – I</p> <p>SSD5 – S/I</p>

computer knowledge)	Good interpersonal and team working skills (SSE5)		
<b>Special requirements</b> (ability to comply with essential job requirements which restrict flexibility e.g. unsociable hours, overnight absences)	Self motivated (SE1)  Work with minimum of supervision (SE2)  Work prioritisation skills (SE3)	Willing to work away from the office for short periods of time as necessary (SD1)	SE1 – I/T SE2 – I/T SE3 – I/T SD1 – I
<b>Physical make-up</b> (e.g. health, hearing where these relate to effective performance)			

**BAND E PROJECT MANAGER (for establishments using Oracle iRecruitment).**

Attainments (A), General Intelligence (GI), Special Skills (SS), Special Requirements, Physical Make up (PM).

- **Essential**

- 'A' levels or relevant equivalent qualification and/or previous relevant experience (AE1 - S)
- Previous demonstrable experience of managing projects (AE2 – S/I)
- Previous experience of projects involving PRINCE 2 or equivalent methodology (AE3 – S/I)
- Successful delivery of a major project across multiple departments (AE4 – S/I)
- Logical problem solving (GE1 – I/T)
- Imaginative thinker (GE2 – I/T)
- Drive projects from conception to completion (GE3 – I/T)
- An ability to manage conflicting priorities (GE4 - I)
- Project management within a technical environment, IT/IS and office arena (SSE1 - I)
- Good estimation skills (SSE2 - I)
- Good verbal, report writing and presentation skills (SSE3 – I/T)
- Translation of strategy / policy into work specs, contract documentation (SSE4 – S/I)
- Good interpersonal and team working skills (SSE5 – I/T)
- Self motivated (SE1 – I/T)
- Work with minimum of supervision (SE2 – I/T)
- Work prioritisation skills (SE3 – I/T)

- **Desirable**

- Degree or equivalent qualification and/or previous relevant experience. (AD1 - S)

- Previous demonstrable experience of managing medium/large projects (AD2 – S/I)
- Formal PRINCE 2 qualification or equivalent (AD3 - S)
- Knowledge of large organisation business processes (AD4 – S/I)
- Knowledge of Government Gateway process (AD5 – S/I)
- Strategic and tactical thinking when integrating multiple project demands (GD1 - I)
- An ability to negotiate (GD2 - I)
- Contractor procurement experience (SSD1 – S/I)
- Contractor management skills (SSD2 - I)
- Ability to communicate ideas and gain knowledge across the whole organisation / office structure (SSD3 - I)
- Budget management experience (SSD4 - I)
- Line management experience (SSD5)
- Willing to work away from the office for short periods of time as necessary (SD1 - I)

**Stage at which tested: Shortlisting (S), Interview (I), Test (T)**

## ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ADVERTISING

The following are some examples of web sites, newspapers, magazines and organisations that can be explored as alternative sources of advertising.

### Women

**capabilityjane.co.uk** – offers employers access to women seeking to return to work.

**workingmums.co.uk** – similar site (as above) with access to women seeking to return to work.

**wherewomenwanttowork.com** – global job vacancies site.

**Ukrc4setwomen.org** – UK resource centre for women in science and technology

### Ethnic Minorities

**ethnicjobsite.co.uk** – job site targeted at ethnic minorities.

**The Asian Times – theasiantimesonline.co.uk** – leading UK Asian newspaper with link to **jobsbuster.com** – a careers and recruitment opportunities website for ethnic minorities

**thediversitygroup.co.uk** – website with job vacancies by region aimed at minority groups.

### Disability

**Jobcentre Plus** – work with employers and can provide job-match and referral service – see local contact details or **jobcentreplus.gov.uk**.

**Disabilityjobsite.co.uk** – job site for jobseekers with disabilities.

**opportunities.org.uk** – national charity (part of the Shaw Trust) dedicated to creating routes into employment (working with employers and provision of advice).

**remploy.co.uk** – funded placement programmes and job referral for people with disabilities.

### Sexual Orientation

**velvet.com/jobs** – gay and lesbian job site.

**circa-club.com/jobs** – associated job site to velvet.com.

### Religion & Belief

**salaam.co.uk** – Muslim web site with job vacancies.

### General

**access-sciencejobs.co.uk** – online job-board for the UK science industry.

**prospects.ac.uk** – graduate career information and jobs.

**jobs.ac.uk** – science, research and academic related vacancies.

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES AND QUESTIONS TO AVOID

### Ask:

- Relevant questions.
- Open questions – to obtain information and encourage the candidate to speak. These start with, for example, *how...? what...? why...? tell me about... give me an example of...*
- Short unambiguous questions.
- Questions which help you to discover how fully the candidate meets the requirements for the post.
- Probing questions. These questions follow up for more information or allow the candidate to develop a point, for example, *tell me more about..... I'd like to pick up on.....*
- Linking/building questions. These questions relate to something said earlier by the candidate. They may be introduced by saying for example, *let me go back to the point you made.....*

### Don't ask:

- Multiple questions e.g. *what was the main reason for you leaving the post and what do you feel you learnt in that job?* These questions confuse candidates and provide an opportunity for them to answer only the one they want.
- Leading questions. These can signal to the candidate the answer you are looking for. E.g. *We're looking for someone to grab hold of the team and knock it into shape. Do you think you can do that?*
- Self assessment questions. For example, *How do you rate your communication skills? Why do you think you are suitable for this job?* These can be difficult questions for candidates to answer and do not provide reliable evidence. They are likely to favour the verbally fluent/experienced candidate and disadvantage modest candidates. It is up to the interviewers to assess the candidate rather than asking candidates to assess themselves.
- Trick questions.

### Some questions are of limited use, so use them sparingly:

- Hypothetical questions. These involve asking candidates what they would do in a given situation. They do not demonstrate how the candidate would actually behave. It is better to ask candidates a direct question about their experience in relation to a specific selection criterion. So rather than *How would you prioritise between conflicting pressures?* ask *How have you dealt with conflicting pressures?* You may need to ask hypothetical questions if a candidate does not have relevant experience.
- Closed questions. These questions can be answered in one word and will provide very little information. Closed questions do not usually provide much information but can be used to verify facts.

### The following questions are inappropriate or discriminatory and must not be used:

- *What arrangements would you make to look after your children if you had to work late?*

People's domestic arrangements are their own affair. Assumptions can be made that children present more of a 'problem' to working mothers than fathers. It may not be family responsibilities that prevent an individual working late.

If there is an unavoidable job requirement to work late, all candidates could be asked, for example, *You will occasionally be required to work to 7 p.m., sometimes at short notice. Will you be able to do that?*

If the applicant says 'yes' you must accept their word. Do not make assumptions, based for example on gender stereotypes.

- *How would you feel about being the only man in an all female department?*

This is likely to suggest to the candidate that the panel has some concerns about this and that judgements are being made which relate to the candidate's gender rather than, for example, something non gender-specific such as team working skills.

Do not to make assumptions about **any** candidate's abilities. This is particularly true when interviewing candidates with disabilities.

- *Do you find it difficult to deal with paperwork?* (asked of an applicant with a visual impairment).

This question is phrased negatively and suggests the interviewer perceives a problem. It may make the candidate defensive or demoralised.

Instead ask *"Can you give me an example of how you would deal with [particular type of paperwork]?"*

- *Tell me about your hobbies.*

It can seem odd to a candidate to be asked about what s/he does in his/her spare time. It often produces a halo effect (i.e. interviewers warm to candidates with hobbies they deem 'interesting' or which are similar to their own) or the horns effect, where the interviewer makes a negative judgement about the individual often based on stereotypes.

Some candidates' opportunities to pursue hobbies may be limited by cultural backgrounds or family responsibilities.

People can acquire useful, job relevant skills outside paid employment but it would be better to relate the question to a specific selection criterion. An alternative question would be *"Can you tell us about your experience of running a budget in any aspect of your life?"* or *"This job involves precise work requiring good dexterity. What skills or experience do you have which you feel might demonstrate your ability to perform this aspect of the job?"*

**Some questions are, quite frankly, useless!**

The following questions are frequently asked, but provide little valuable information about the experience or abilities of candidates. They are 'classics' and candidates who know how to play the game will have their answers prepared – these answers may not be 100% accurate, but they will sound good.

*“What are your strengths and weaknesses?”*

This is an opportunity for the confident or experienced candidate to sell her/himself. A few general strengths such as 'conscientious, hard-working, innovative, good team-player' will be supplemented by a couple which appear to relate specifically to the job on offer.

When it comes to weaknesses, the canny candidate will confess to the odd one, but make it sound like a strength. For example, "Some people say I'm a perfectionist and that I set very high standards" or "I'm a bit of a workaholic". They will not say "I'm slow and lazy", "I don't get on well with people" or "I'm not good at time-management".

What has their answer told you that provides real **evidence** of ability or achievement against the selection criteria you have specified?

*“If we offer you this job, will you take it?”*

Very occasionally someone will say "No" but the vast majority of applicants will say "Yes" but may still turn the job down, so why waste time with this question when there must be something more important to ask?

*“Why do you want to work here?”*

Again, this is one that they will have prepared for and the answer may not be 100% truthful. The reason may be £30K per annum and lots of foreign travel, but they will not tell you that. Again, which selection criteria does this question relate to?

*“Are you applying for any other jobs?”*

The candidate who knows how to play the game will not confess to this unless s/he is supremely confident or doesn't want your job anyway. Also, if the answer is "yes", how does this affect your selection process? Do you doubt their motivation? Any of these can cloud your judgement when assessing candidates against the agreed selection criteria.

*“Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?”*

There is an assumption that the answer to this question will tell you whether or not you are dealing with someone ambitious or go-ahead. You will be able to tell if you are dealing with someone who **sounds** ambitious (or not, as the case may be). How is this relevant to the job?

*“Why should we give you this job?”*

This is a variation on the 'strengths and weaknesses' question and a real gift for someone who has practised this answer.

## **GUIDANCE ON EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

### **Active listening**

- Listen carefully – not only to answers but for changes in tone of voice, pace, facial expression.
- Establish eye contact.
- Don't be afraid of pauses but do not use them to put pressure on the interviewee.
- Show that you are listening by your body language, responses and follow-up questions.

### **Barriers to listening**

- Thinking of your next question.
- Relating what you hear to your own experience.
- Mind reading – predicting what the interviewee is really thinking or going to say next.
- Daydreaming.
- Labelling i.e. categorising an interviewee without hearing all the evidence.
- Interrupting.

### **Managing the interview**

- Good questioning and listening skills essential.
- Link answers/questions.
- Open and close topics.
- Avoid/head off irrelevancies.
- Probe where items have been glossed over.

### **Note taking**

- Announce your intention to take notes.
- Use 'memory triggers', not verbatim accounts.
- Maintain eye contact.