

# Good practice, good business



Australian  
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Eliminating discrimination and harassment from your workplace

## BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruiting and selecting the most appropriate person for the job is a complex task which requires trained staff who are aware of anti-discrimination laws and guidelines.

These guidelines will help you to implement a consistent method of recruitment and encourage applications from the widest possible pool.

Following are some **best practice guidelines** for developing selection criteria, advertising, short listing, application forms, testing, interviewing, referee reports, making the decision, and medical examinations for recruiting and selecting the most appropriate person for the job.

### *Developing selection criteria*

- Ensure job specification is up-to-date and consistent with requirements of the job.
- Formulate selection criteria which are consistent with the job specifications: (ie, only includes skills, experiences, etc that are required on a regular basis to carry out the duties of the position).
- Distinguish between essential criteria (those that the person must satisfy to be able to do the job) and desirable criteria (those that will help to do the job).
- Assess whether formal qualifications (academic, trade, etc) are essential to the performance of the job.
- Ensure length of experience, age required, etc are essential and justifiable, for performance of the job and not set arbitrarily or based on stereotypes.
- Ensure there are no unnecessarily restrictive English language qualifications on jobs that do not require them.

- Be specific – for instance, does ‘communications skills’ refer to talking on the phone to customers, writing reports for management, instructing technical operators, inter-cultural skills or teamwork.
- Determine how criteria will be assessed: interview, referees’ report, work record, testing, etc.

### *Advertising*

- Consider benefits to the organisation of a multi-skilled workforce, by advertising all positions internally and externally.
- Determine strategies for reaching the widest pool of applicants possible (eg, use of ethnic media, informal networks, community groups, and organisations, industry groups, trade journals).
- Ensure the information in the ad matches the selection criteria.
- Do not use stereotyped or discriminatory language or discriminatory requirements (‘Salesman’, ‘Age 30-45 years’).
- If used, ensure recruitment consultants are fully briefed on your requirements and have a good understanding of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination principles.
- Include the name of a contact person in the advertisement and ensure they have information (presented in a clear and consistent way) prepared about the position.

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### ***Short listing***

- Cull (short list) applicants on essential qualifications first, then on desirable qualifications, prioritising criteria and determining method first.
- Seek more information if necessary. The aim is to find the best person for the job.
- Be consistent. Document decisions made and the reasons for them.

### ***Application forms***

- Ensure language and experience are relevant to the performance of the job.
- Do not include any invasive or irrelevant questions.
- Ensure strict confidentiality.

### ***Testing***

- Tests match the essential requirements of the job.
- Check that tests are up-to-date and relevant.
- Check for any bias or indirect discrimination (eg, a test for potential trades apprentices which examine prior knowledge of the trade, rather than aptitude).

### ***Interviewing***

- Allow applicants to demonstrate what they can offer the organisation, not to simply confirm expectations or to see how applicants perform under pressure.
- Check if there is a need for any specific arrangements (eg, physical access, interpreters, etc).
- Have questions prepared in advance.
- Ensure consistency and fairness in questioning.
- Focus on the real needs of the job. Don't make assumptions or stereotype individuals.

- The selection committee is entitled to ask applicants whether they can fulfil the requirements of the job (eg, travel, work overtime, perform the physical functions) but such questions must be asked of all applicants.
- It is appropriate to ask people with disabilities whether they require any adjustments to perform the job.
- Allow the interviewee time to make their point. Allow silence. Rephrase or clarify if necessary.
- Don't make assumptions about a person's ability to do the job based on physical characteristics.
- Do not ask invasive and irrelevant questions (eg, 'Do you intend to have a family?'). If necessary rephrase to gain the essential information you require and ask of all applicants (eg, 'Can you commit yourself to the organisation for two years?').
- Keep records of questions and answers.

### ***Referee reports***

- Applicant provides list of referees, or is able to comment on choice of referees (eg, supervisor's report).
- Be consistent in use of referees. Ideally use a standard referee reporting form which matches the selection criteria.

### ***Making the decision***

- Focus on the selection criteria.
- Rank applicants according to performance against essential and desirable qualifications.
- Assess all information; application form, interview, referee's reports, tests, etc.
- Record decisions made and reasons for them.
- If requested, provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants on their performance against the selection criteria.

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***Medical examinations***

- It is appropriate to have employees medically examined if potential health risks could be high for employees with particular health problems (eg, jobs which involve heavy lifting for people with spinal injury or disease).
- The Medical Examiner should have the job specifications so any recommendation made relates specifically to the job.
- Ensure only information relevant to the position is sought and avoid invasions of privacy irrelevant to the job requirements.
- Selection Committee and Medical Examiner to be aware of technical equipment and other reasonable adjustment provisions for people with disabilities.
- Where there is concern about ability to perform a job, the Medical Examiner should seek expert advice and assessment from vocational specialists in disability organisations.
- Ensure strict confidentiality.
- Applicants to be advised of results.

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This fact sheet is part of *good practice, good business* – information and resources for employers to address discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

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