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Recruitment Policy

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An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

Recruitment Policy

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1. Scope

This policy covers the principles and procedures applied by the Health and Safety Authority in its Recruitment and Selection processes.

2. Definitions

The terms contained in this policy are defined as:

- **Recruitment** – the process of filling a vacancy from the initial definition of job content up to the appointee’s start date
- **Best practice** – the generally accepted “best way of doing a thing” based on the study of specific business/organisational experience and as disseminated through academic studies, popular business management books and through "comparison of notes" between organisations
- **Short-listing** – selecting the most suitable applicants for interview
- **External business partners** – external individuals or organisations who assist the Authority with its recruitment processes, whether for financial gain or otherwise
- **Job Description** – summary of information regarding a position within the Authority, including details of duties, reporting relationships, skills, experience and competencies required.
- **Interview** – the process by which a candidate verbally provides information to the Authority for assessment as to his/her suitability for the position sought (this may include formal presentations and simulated work exercises)
- **Test** – the process by which a candidate provides information to the Authority for assessment as to his/her suitability for the position sought (this may include written material, formal examinations and simulated work exercises)
- **Advertising** – the means of making candidates aware of the vacancy being filled
- **Screening** – corroborating facts and conclusions regarding an applicant’s suitability for a position with external individuals/bodies.

3. Responsibilities

The person with overall responsibility for recruitment and selection is the Head of People and Organisational Development (P&OD). No post is advertised internally or externally unless approved by the Head of P&OD who ensures that the recruitment process is carried out in accordance with any agreements with staff unions and that all processes are carried out in accordance with Authority policy and legislative requirements.

The specific responsibilities are as follows:

People and Organisational Development

- Assists line management with the identification of the responsibilities of the job and the qualifications, competencies and experience required
- Approve job specifications and competency profiles which identify relevant criteria against which candidates can be measured throughout the selection process.
- Ensures that requirements are not discriminatory or unduly restrictive

Recruitment Policy

- Manages the recruitment process, placing advertisements, sourcing and managing suitable employment agencies, administering the application response process, ensuring that short-listing is carried out in line with Authority policy
- Convenes an appropriately constituted interview board, representing functional and human resource expertise and independent (external) involvement, as required
- Briefs the interview board, advising on appropriate procedures and marking schemes
- Communicates interview outcomes to candidates and manages the Panel where appropriate
- Carries out reference checking, arranging medical examinations, processing request for Garda Vetting, and review of disclosures of potential conflicts of interests
- Manages the offer process, agreeing start dates and contractual terms with candidates in line with government policy and industrial relations agreements
- Communicates start date details (Relevant Manager, Training & Development, Facilities, Payroll, IT etc)
- For each competition a member of the staff of the HR unit is designated as the chief contact. The role of the chief contact is to:
 - Receive, log and acknowledge applications
 - Respond to candidate/potential candidate queries
 - Provide copies to those short-listing
 - Maintain records of outcome of the short-listing process
 - Arrange the interview schedule
 - Provide administrative support to the interview board
 - Record the outcome of the interview process
 - Contact candidates to inform them of the outcome.
- To manage internal capacity, some aspects of the above may be outsourced to an external business partner, however, the Head of P&OD remains accountable for the end-to-end process.

Line Management

- Identifies the responsibilities of the job and the qualifications, competencies and experience required to perform it
- Assists with the identification of suitable sources of candidates (e.g. specialist media)
- Shortlists applications
- May participate in interview boards.

CEO

- Approves the outcome of the interview process and issuing of offer of employment to the successful candidate(s).

4. Principles

The fundamental principles governing our Recruitment Policy and Procedure are:

A. *Legislative requirements*

All of our recruitment processes will conform to legislative requirements, including those relating to employment equality, disability, data protection and freedom of information.

B. Best Practice

Authority Recruitment practices will incorporate best practice principles and will specifically honour any commitments made with staff unions or through national/central agreements. We subscribe to the principles set out by the Commission for Public Service Appointments. These key principles are:

- Probity – integrity, impartiality, fairness, reliability and ethical conduct throughout our selection processes.
- Merit – the appointment of the best person for any given post through a transparent competitive recruitment process where the criteria for judging suitability of candidates can be related directly to the qualifications, attributes and skills required to undertake the duties and responsibilities to the required standard.
- Best Practice – All recruitment processes and practices should be efficient, cost effective and in line with best practice. Best practice extends to all aspects of the recruitment process including defining job and person specifications, advertising the vacancy, and selecting appropriate assessment mechanisms. It also includes the supporting management arrangements and training provided.
- Fairness and Consistency – The Authority wholly opposes any form of direct or indirect discrimination, whether active or passive. The selection process adopted and the manner in which it is applied must be undertaken fairly and with real commitment to equality of opportunity. We commit to treat candidates fairly, to a consistent standard and in a consistent manner.
- Openness, Accountability and Transparent Manner – Transparency in the processes and the openness with which candidates are dealt with enhances candidate confidence. We are committed to open and active communication on the process and the basis for assessment. We offer meaningful feedback to candidates who seek it.

C. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

It is our intention to have recruitment processes and procedures which are open to all, irrespective of their background, personal beliefs or circumstances. We will therefore, provide appropriate assistance and accommodation wherever possible, unless to do so would be to unlawfully disadvantage another candidate. This may include providing easily accessible interview facilities; agreeing an appropriately timed interview; arranging an alternative medical examination location/time; supplying/arranging appropriate equipment (e.g. suitable height presentation equipment) etc. There is an active focus on ensuring that adverse impact issues are considered and addressed in advance of recruitment campaigns. Clear decisions are made regarding the approach to be adopted in any recruitment campaign, and explicit consideration is given to opportunities and/or measures to promote (or remove possible barriers to) equality of opportunity, as part of the planning of a selection process. Reasonable consideration is given to equality principles when constituting selection boards, where practicable, e.g. gender representation is taken into account.

5. External Business Partners

Where resource constraints, the need for specialist expertise, or the need for independent involvement require, external business partners may be utilised to assist in the recruitment process. External business partners who will interface directly with candidates/potential candidates (test administrators, employment agencies etc) are required to carry out work assigned to them by the

Authority in line with the principles and procedures contained in this Policy and are provided with information on the standards expected of them when working on behalf of the Authority. They are required to inform the Authority of any information which indicates that a candidate has breached his/her obligations as above or that there has been any interference or attempted interference in the process.

6. Documentation & Records

We value the function of appropriate documentation as a basis for fair, systematic recruitment and selection processes, and in assisting candidates to self-select for suitable vacancies, to make an informed preparation for the process and inform them of the procedures and the standards which apply. For each advertised vacancy we will therefore make available:

Job Description – based on the requirements of the role, free from bias or poor practice and used consistently as the basis for the various stages of the selection process. We provide this to candidates to assist them in understanding the position, the competency framework and the required skills, qualifications and experience deemed necessary.

General Information – to inform candidates of the process and procedures to be followed.

Equal Opportunities – to ensure that it is clear to potential applicants that the Authority welcomes and strives to achieve a diverse workforce. External documentation (job advertisement, website, general recruitment information, etc) will also include a short equal opportunities statement and prospective candidates are advised of the possibilities for appropriate arrangements to facilitate applicants with a disability through the use of statements in general recruitment documentation. The letter asking candidates to attend for interview includes an invitation to contact P&OD to discuss any specific arrangements/facilities where required.

Appointment processes are fully documented at all stages and these documents and records, including advertisement texts, applications, marking schemes and results, interview notes, feedback etc., will be retained for a period of 12 months from the date of interview or 6 months from the date of expiry of the resulting panel, whichever is the later.

Documentation and the use of all documents support a commitment to offer open feedback to candidates. All documentation and the use of such documents comply with relevant employment, freedom of information, data protection and equality legislation and guidelines. Records/papers are retained for a reasonable period of time and only then disposed of in accordance with the Authority's Records Management Policy.

7. Confidentiality

The fact of and the information contained in a candidate's application, his/her performance at interview and the subsequent marking process are highly confidential. This information is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003 and 2014 and any other provisions that have been clearly identified in the published documentation. Those involved in recruitment processes are made aware of their responsibilities in this regard.

8. Job Description

Each vacancy will be filled based on a job description agreed between the relevant manager and P&OD. This will relate accurately and precisely to the duties of the post, will identify relevant criteria against which candidates can be measured throughout the selection process and can be justified in accordance with the requirements of the role.

Once a vacancy/potential vacancy has been identified, the relevant manager and P&OD will collaborate to develop an appropriate job description with the relevant management advising on the core job content and requisite knowledge and experience; and P&OD advising on the appropriate structuring of the job, relevant competencies etc. Where an existing job description is in place it is reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and not discriminatory.

9. Advertising

Advertisements are drawn up based on the job description which has been prepared or revised as above. To ensure that recruitment is from the widest pool of available (and relevant) talent and experience, advertising approaches are clear, concise and effective, designed to target an appropriate applicant field and communicated openly to afford equality of opportunity.

Advertising techniques do not exclude any particular group within society, are appropriate to the position under consideration and to the potential applicant pool and used with supporting rationale for the approach adopted. To encourage diversity of applicants, vacancies are advertised using at least two of the following (based on discussion between P&OD and the relevant manager). The final decision on the form of the advertisement and the media to be used rests with the Head of P&OD as budget holder.

- Authority Website
- Recruitment Websites
- Professional Bodies
- Specialist Journals
- National Press
- Local Press
- Employment Agencies
- University/3rd level institution careers services
- Representative Organisations
- Social Media
- Other appropriate sources

10. Applications

Reasonable efforts are made to ensure an application process which is accessible to all candidates. Applications will be accepted in a variety of formats, including web-links, once they are accessible using standard office applications and are received in the manner nominated (this may vary for different competitions and will be clearly indicated in the documentation) up to the advertised closing date/time. Applications will not be accepted beyond that time - it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application reaches the Authority by the time specified.

Receipt of applications will be acknowledged in writing, usually by email.

11. Speculative Applications

Speculative applications will be acknowledged and potential applicants are advised to check our website on a regular basis as all vacancies will be advertised in that manner. We do not hold speculative applications on file.

12. Selection Process

We aim to have a high-quality selection process based on the skills and qualities relevant to the post. Job and person specifications/competency profiles are reflected consistently throughout the selection process. Criteria for selection are based on the essential requirements of the post, promoting the principle of equality of opportunity.

Appointments are made following a competitive, merit-based selection process in which all candidates have been treated equally at each stage. Merit relates to the competencies, abilities, experience and qualities of individuals who best meet the requirements of the particular job. Information on the selection approach that may be adopted to determine the order of merit is communicated to candidates at the outset. The criteria on which selection decisions will be made are identified in advance. Based on an agreed competency framework, decisions taken throughout the selection process are based on the qualifications, attributes and skills necessary to undertake the duties and fulfil the responsibilities of the post to the required standard. At the final stage, candidates who meet the required standard for the job are placed in order of merit and considered for appointment in that order.

Systems are in place to ensure that selection boards carry out the selection process in a fair and consistent manner. Selection processes consist only of properly validated selection tools and techniques.

We aim to accommodate candidates with no unnecessary obstacles placed in their way. We will assist candidates with disabilities so they are provided with appropriate and reasonable accommodations to ensure that they have the best opportunity to perform to their optimum.

13. Assessment mechanisms

Assessment mechanisms facilitate the identification and selection of the person or persons who best match the requirements of the post as defined by the Job Description. Assessment tools comply with requirements for fairness and freedom from bias. Assessment mechanisms are used in line with best practice.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that all those participating in an appointment process fully understand their role and have the necessary skills and are provided with appropriate information on the process.

Chosen selection techniques are only used by appropriately qualified individuals who have been properly trained in their administration, scoring and interpretation, and who are qualified to select a test which is valid for a particular purpose. Equality, Disability and Inclusion awareness training is provided as appropriate. Effectiveness of training is monitored and evaluated and follow-up action is taken on an ongoing basis.

A. Short-listing

Short-listing is the process of selecting those applicants who are most suitable for a position so that they can be invited to interview. This procedure is governed by the same principles as any other part of the recruitment process. Candidates who do not satisfy the eligibility criteria are disqualified from the process and notified accordingly. Applicants are considered on the basis of an agreed competency framework, skills, qualifications and suitability for the post in question.

B. Tests

Where it is decided that tests are appropriate to the recruitment for a certain position, these tests will be selected and administered in line with principles of best practice: only tests which are relevant to the skills/knowledge or aptitudes required will be carried out; where tests relate to personality or general aptitude they will be evaluated by an accredited professional and an appropriately trained person will communicate the results to the candidate.

C. Interviewing

Interviewing is carried out in line with the Authority's Interview Management Guidelines and all interviewers are appropriately trained.

14. Outcome Notification and Panel Management

All candidates will receive notification of the outcome of their interview as soon as possible, including the marks awarded under each competency. If they have been placed on the panel they are informed of their position on the panel, unless the panel is mixed e.g. location or disciplines.

Where a panel has been formed, vacancies which arise are filled from the panel in order of merit – i.e. the person placed first on the panel is offered the first vacancy to arise. Where someone declines an offer they will not be considered for future vacancies for the rest of the life of the panel.

15. Screening (References, Medical Examination & Garda Vetting)

When a selected candidate has indicated their interest in the position which is being filled, the next stage is to carry out reference checks, medical examinations and for Inspector grades, Garda Vetting.

References are sought, in writing or by phone, and candidates will be informed in advance of referees being contacted.

Verification of qualifications relevant to the post will be required. This may take the form of requiring sight of qualifications in original or copy form, transcripts of results, verification of awards/memberships directly by the awarding/professional body etc.

Medical examinations will be carried out to ensure that candidates are fit to fulfil the requirements of the role for which they have been selected, and, where necessary, to identify special arrangements which should be put in place to assist them in fulfilling the requirements of the position.

Garda clearance must be sought for all staff who will be appointed to an Inspector or Accreditation role and any other positions in accordance with our Garda Clearance Policy. Potential candidates are made aware of this requirement in the general recruitment literature.

16. Offer & Acceptance Process

The offer and acceptance process is managed by the Head of P&OD who may delegate to staff within the unit as required. Adequate checks are in place to ensure that a candidate meets the eligibility requirements before an offer of appointment is made. Only candidates who fulfil the eligibility criteria and who have successfully completed the selection process (including compliance with this Policy) are deemed eligible for appointment.

Terms and conditions of employment will conform to statutory requirements and will be within the guidelines/requirements communicated to the Authority by its parent Department.

Staff of the Health and Safety Authority may not at any time engage in, or be connected with, any outside business or activity which would in any way conflict with the interests of the Authority, or be inconsistent with their official positions. For this reason, candidates who come under consideration for appointment will be required to complete a conflicts of interest declaration, which will be reviewed by the Head of P&OD prior to their appointment. In the event of identified conflicts of interest, it may arise that candidates may not be considered for certain posts.

17. Handover To Pre-Induction

The P&OD staff member responsible for the vacancy (usually at HEO level) will inform Line management, Training & Development Officer, Payroll, Facilities, IT etc of the new staff member's start date.

18. Communication with Candidates

There is a commitment to open, timely and effective communication to candidates. Accurate, sufficient and appropriate documentation is issued to candidates, including information on how to access this policy. Enquiries are dealt with in an efficient and timely manner.

Clear, specific and meaningful feedback is provided when requested by candidates. Effective systems are in place to manage the feedback function. The Chairperson's report contains a short paragraph giving feedback on each unsuccessful (unpanelled) candidate in an external competition, and each candidate in an internal competition. This feedback is provided to candidates on request to P&OD. Candidates may also receive copies of the notes taken during their interview and the marks they

received under each heading. Candidates may not receive information, marks or notes regarding any of the other candidates.

The Authority's recruitment process is governed by the Freedom of Information Acts and candidates may request information in line with the requirements of that Act. It is Authority policy however to provide such information without the necessity for an FOI request.

19. Promotions

Promotions take place in line with the promotion arrangements agreed between the Authority and the staff unions. All potentially eligible staff members have appropriate access to the marketing approaches used in the case of internal appointment processes.

20. Review Process

The review process enables candidates to seek review when they believe that an action or decision taken in relation to the selection process was unfair or unreasonable.

Candidates must address their concerns in relation to the process, in writing, to the Head of P&OD in the first instance. A request for review must be received within 7 working days of the notification of the decision. Where the decision relates to an interim stage of the selection process (e.g. shortlisting for interview) a request for review must be received within 3 working days.

The case will be dealt with in an efficient and timely manner and in line with this policy and procedures and will be reviewed by a person other than the individual who made the decision in question. If the candidate is unhappy with the outcome of the review he/she may request a further review which will be carried out by a more senior reviewer or an external person, as the Head of P&OD decides.

21. Candidate Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the competition.

Candidates must not:

- Knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- Canvass either directly or indirectly any person involved in the recruitment process
- Interfere with or compromise the process in any way, for example by sharing information in relation to the selection process or by using recording equipment of any kind
- Personate another candidate at any stage of the process.

Candidates who fail to comply with these obligations may be disqualified from the process or, if already appointed they may have to forfeit the appointment.

Candidates who do not attend for interview or other test, when and where required, or who do not when requested, furnish such evidence as the Health and Safety Authority require in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature will have no further claim to consideration.

22. Monitoring of Procedures

In order to ensure that our Recruitment Policy and Procedure conforms to HR best practice, P&OD will regularly review this Recruitment Policy to ensure that the best possible standards are maintained and that business requirements are being fulfilled. In addition the content and application of the Policy and Procedure are subject to audit through the Internal Audit function.

Appointment processes are monitored and evaluated, and positive solutions are found to tackle any matters arising.

Controls are in place to ensure that appropriate processes are adopted and delivered in line with this policy.

Mechanisms are in place to collect feedback from all those participating in the appointment process.