



SEL ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

RECRUITING STAFF POLICY

Supported by




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Introduction

The aim of recruitment is to get the best person for the job – and consistently fill vacancies that way. The importance of effective and fair recruitment should not be under-estimated.

Appointing people unsuited to a vacancy can be costly and mean:

- managers and supervisors will often have to invest additional time in training and supporting such a recruit when they could otherwise use the time and effort on other business
- where training or other support cannot help, there is a strong risk the new recruit will leave (or be dismissed from) the role. This will be demoralising for the employee concerned and can also upset the morale of the team they leave behind
- another recruitment process to fill the vacancy.

On the other hand, securing the best and most suitable recruit should bring benefits to the individual, their team, managers and the business as a whole.



Recruiting Process

STEP 1: Hiring options

- Work out what is really needed – more staff, new skills, specific duties
- Make sure the employment terms and conditions on offer are attractive in the current labour market
- Don't forget the benefits of training and developing current staff

STEP 2: Essential documents

- Consider factors, such as has the role changed or is it a completely new role, before preparing the documents
- The six documents:
 - 1. Job description 2. Person specification 3. Job application form
 - 4. Equality and diversity monitoring form 5. Information about the employer 6. Job offer letter template

STEP 3: Advertise the job

- Consider the range of media and advertise opportunities in at least two channels
- Make important decisions, such as how the successful candidate will be picked, before compiling the job ad
- Compile the ad, including asking applicants to say if they need any 'reasonable adjustments' for any part of the recruitment process

STEP 4: Sift and select

- Check again if applicants need any 'reasonable adjustments'
- Make 'reasonable adjustments' if the candidate is disabled
- At least two people should sift applications to select candidates for interviews etc
- Prepare for the interview/ tests/ assessment centre
- Conduct the interview/ tests/ assessment centre and score candidates
- Select the best candidate for the job

STEP 5: Complete final details

- Offer the job and make necessary pre-employment checks
- Resolve any queries over the contract of employment and the checks
- File documentation e.g. candidate's written acceptance of the job offer
- Start to prepare for the new recruit's arrival



Step 1: Hiring options

There is far more to it than how many staff is needed and what it needs them for than might at first appear to be the case. In less considered situations, recruitment might simply amount to trying to plug gaps when they appear. Consider a range of factors in determining current staffing needs – and anticipating what they may be in the future.

Consider:

- the needs of the business: Consider if there will be enough work for new recruits – for example, can workloads be seasonal? Also, how can a temporary decline in productivity be avoided while new recruit/s are brought up to speed? In addition, check that the recruitment process will give a reasonable amount of time to both hire and settle in new recruits
- changes in the labour market: This includes monitoring the availability of appropriately-skilled candidates in the desired location, on the terms and conditions on offer, as well as what competing organisations are looking for and offering
- developing new and existing staff: Organisations will usually benefit in a variety of ways – including in recruitment - by developing the capabilities of new and existing staff. Coaching and training will better equip them for promotion, particularly where there may otherwise be a shortage of candidates. They are more likely to buy into this enthusiastically if they are consulted individually and/or through recognised representation such as a recognised trade union
- are more staff needed?: Pinpoint why and where extra staff are needed, and how many
- are new skills needed?: Pinpoint why and where new skills might be needed – sometimes an organisation needs more than just a higher headcount. Also establish if there is any need for specialist skills or knowledge and if the organisation can acquire these through staff development, recruiting new and already-skilled staff, or a blend of these options?
- competitors' pay and benefits packages: Knowing what rivals are offering to attract recruits is important and is rarely just about pay. Benefits such as training, career development, flexible hours, part-time work/jobshares and working from home can be factors, too
- presenting a people and family friendly image: Having and/or developing such a reputation can be an advantage in attracting good applicants. This might involve offering increased flexibility or perks such as childcare vouchers and health plans



- holding exit interviews: Talking to departing staff, their colleagues and manager may give an insight into a consideration or requirement of which the recruiter may be unaware. They may also generate good ideas for useful changes, as well as giving the organisation a better understanding of why staff leave and if any steps might be taken to retain them
- recruiting an adaptable workforce: Recruiting staff who are multi- skilled, open to change, and demonstrate an enthusiasm for training and development can help the business deal more efficiently with organisational changes
- business practicalities: Check the organisation has the premises, equipment, technology and resources to accommodate and develop new recruits as well as existing staff
- will recruitment be handled in-house, or using an agency? In some circumstances, especially where there is a need for particularly fast recruitment, a recruitment agency may be preferable. Recruitment agencies which are members of a trade association are subject to a code of practice and can provide effective recruitment.



Step 2: Essential documents

The key task here is to get ready all the necessary documents for a smooth recruitment process. It's also important to determine if and how a job may need to change from the role held by the last post-holder. Or, if it's a completely new role, it's important to finalise the requirements.

Before preparing the documents, consider:

- key tasks, skills, attributes, behaviours, values, knowledge and experience required for the role: Have the aims of the role changed? Is new technology being introduced? Will the new jobholder require additional skills? Also, does the company have new products which need to be taken into consideration?
- work flow: Is it fairly constant or seasonal? Has it altered? Could staggered hours or overtime help with any peaks, troughs or changes? Details such as hours and times of work would need to be included in writing in the new employee's terms and conditions of employment
- flexibility: Being open to requests from candidates for flexible working can open up a vacancy to people with the skills the organisation seeks and who otherwise might not be able to consider the vacancy. The request may meet the organisation's business needs.

However, circumstances may suit keeping the role as performed by the last jobholder, and offering the same terms and conditions.

Job description

Also known as a job specification, it should make clear the job's...

- main purpose: Try to do this in one sentence. For example, 'To increase revenue from advertising on the company's website by 25%'
- main tasks: Be precise. For example, 'Answering phones and typing company letters' is clearer than 'general office duties'
- scope: Explain briefly the importance of the job and how it fits into the business. Also outline other duties and responsibilities.

Writing a good job description can help clarify for everyone the requirements of the job, how a new recruit might need to be trained and settled into the role, and provide a basis for drawing up the person specification. It will also help to set expectations up-front for how performance is likely to be managed.

Be careful not to potentially discriminate in compiling the job description and the person specification. For example, does the role really need to be full-time? Or could it be done by two people working part-time in a job-share?



Person specification

This should focus on...

- skills and knowledge:
- experience:
- aptitudes:
- personal qualities

The specification should be a concise profile of the person who would best match the job, spelling out which attributes are essential and which are desirable. It should help would-be candidates assess whether they should apply, and provide a benchmark to assess applicants.

The attributes should not be inflated beyond those necessary for effective job performance - false expectations may result in disillusioned employees.

It is essential to any successful recruitment that the process is designed to actually test these areas, and do so in a way that can be measured.

Job application form

This should match the level of the role and ask for information relevant to the job about...

- the applicant: For example, their current employment situation and notice requirements.
- skills and knowledge: For example, brief details of how they have used their skills in the past, and professional or technical qualifications.
- experience: For example, asking for brief explanations demonstrating team-working or managerial ability in previous roles.

It is important to ensure application forms are not discriminatory. For example, to require a form to be filled out 'in your own handwriting', where written English is not relevant to the job, may discriminate against applicants whose first language is not English or applicants with disabilities that affect writing ability – an issue which may be avoided by making an online version of the form available.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form

This is used to seek details, where relevant, and which do not give the candidate's identity, of their...



- Age group
- Disability or long-term health condition
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Race/nationality/ethnic group
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation

A job candidate should send back the equality and diversity monitoring form separately from the rest of their application, without including their name. It should be filled in voluntarily and the form should state that the details will be used solely to build an accurate picture of the make-up of the workforce in encouraging equality and diversity.

Information about the employer

This includes brief, relevant and interesting details which can help a candidate judge whether they match the job and workplace culture, ethos and values. Include a copy of the privacy policy explaining clearly what it will be doing with the candidate's information and the candidate's rights regarding their information.

Job offer letter

Option A

A covering letter offering the job to the successful candidate and referring to an attached document, a Written Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment. Part of the document is called the "principal statement" and must include details of:

- names of the employer and employee
- date employment starts
- whether a previous job counts towards a period of continuous employment and when that period started
- job location or locations
- pay and whether it's weekly, monthly etc
- working hours
- holiday entitlement
- job description/job title
- details of any collective agreement that directly affects the employee's conditions of employment.

The rest of the Written Statement must outline: how long a job is expected to last if temporary; the end date if a contract is fixed-term; notice periods; pension information; and who to go to with a grievance. It must also say where details of sick pay, disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures can be found.



The letter should say what the candidate needs to do to accept or decline the offer. In the letter, also state we will carry out pre-employment checks and that the job offer is made on the condition that the results of the checks are satisfactory.

Option B

A letter offering the job and giving some of the basics:

- job title
- any conditions applying to the offer – for example, before they start, passing exams, or after they've started, completing a satisfactory probation period
- main terms and conditions including salary, hours, benefits, pension arrangements, holiday entitlement and place/s of employment
- start date and any probationary period
- what the candidate needs to do to accept or decline the offer.

If this letter is to be part of the employment contract, it should say so. Also, if the employment lasts at least a month, the employee must be given the Written Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment (outlined in Option A above) within two months of them starting work.

In the letter, it should say it will carry out pre-employment checks and that the job offer is made on the condition that the results of the checks are satisfactory.



Step 3: Advertising a job

The aims of advertising a job include tempting the best candidates with the necessary skills and attributes, getting the right number of applicants and candidates to choose from and getting the best person for the job at the most effective cost.

Considerations before advertising

- How should applicants respond to the advertisement – direct to SEL or to a recruitment agency? By application form or CV? By email, online, post, telephone or in person? Are alternatives like tape or Braille available where needed?
- Who will sift applications, select candidates for the next steps and reply to the applicants promptly? Have they been trained to handle these tasks correctly?
- What do the next steps include – an interview, practical or written tests, an assessment centre? When will they be held and who will conduct them?
- How will the successful candidate or candidates be selected – will a scoring system, as outlined in Step 4, be used?
- If practical or written tests are to be used, are they appropriate and non-discriminatory?
- Is everyone involved aware how personal information must be handled?

Writing the advertisement

- Does the advertisement convey the organisation's image and appear eye-catching?
- Is it easily understood and to the point?
- Make sure it includes the job title and main aspects of the role including pay, location and type of contract (for example, is it permanent or fixed term?). Where space permits, cover qualities, skills and knowledge essential for the post and career prospects.
- State how applicants should apply, and give a contact name, phone number and/or email address if an applicant would like additional information or has queries.
- Give a clear closing date for applications.
- Make sure current employees, agency workers and external applicants are given the same information.



- Check it steers clear of any unclear wording or might be open to legal challenge. Apart from in very limited and lawful exemptions and exceptions, the advertisement must not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
- State the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities and that it welcomes applications from all who believe they fit the essential requirements of the job.
- Ask applicants whether they need any 'reasonable adjustments' for any part of the recruitment process –it is good practice to do this at this stage. If space is limited, such as in a newspaper job listing, make sure this information is available as soon as further information is given or can be accessed.
- Where the services of an employment agency are being used, there are certain mandatory requirements when advertising a job. The agency should be aware of these, but further information can be found at www.rec.uk.com/legal-resources.

Where to advertise

To benefit from drawing on the experiences of applicants from different backgrounds. advertise in at least two different channels to avoid discriminating or ending up with candidates from too narrow an audience.

Options include:

- looking within the organisation: The best candidate might be an existing employee, and it is good for morale for staff to see they can progress within the organisation. Make sure internal applications are handled the same as external ones, in a clear and consistent process, to avoid suspicion of favouritism
- the internet: The dominant means for people to look for a new job. It is estimated that more than half of all jobseekers in the UK go online to look for a new post, and nearly all employers use the internet at some stage of taking on a new employee. This can range from simply advertising a vacancy through to handling the recruitment process largely online

The main internet recruitment tools include:

- job-boards, the numerous websites advertising vacancies, while some also profile jobseekers.
- social media, the internet-based tools people use to make contact and interact in all kinds of ways. It includes channels for listing job vacancies.



Step 4: Sifting and selecting

To avoid any unintended or unconscious bias, the sift and interviews should be done by at least two people experienced in interviewing job candidates. They should involve the line manager the successful candidate will report to.

Interviews

Its main purposes are to find out if the candidate is suitable for the job and give the candidate information about the job and the organisation.

Preparing for the interview

- It is advisable to plan core questions to probe skills, qualities and values essential for the job. It can help to use the application form, job description and person specification in devising the questions. At the interview itself, interviewers may find they have to probe some areas more with certain candidates.
- The questions should be 'open-ended' so they cannot be answered 'yes' or 'no'. They usually begin with 'what', 'why', 'when' or 'how'.
- Interviewers should familiarise themselves with the application, job description and person specification in advance of any interview. If the interviewers need to ask candidates to explore or expand on their applications, they should make sure they have read the completed applications beforehand.
- The interview should be planned so the candidates do most of the talking, which can be achieved with a handful of questions to be answered at length, or a longer list of shorter questions.
- The interviewers should share questions between them to draw on their own skills, knowledge, experience, training and qualifications.
- Try to anticipate any questions the candidate might ask and, where possible, have the answers to hand.

Conducting the interview

- Make sure the practicalities are handled to set a candidate at ease before the interview starts – welcome them, show them where the toilets are and ask if they would like a drink. Most importantly, make sure the interview will not be interrupted by visitors or telephone calls.
- Interviews should, where possible, be conducted by more than one person to avoid unintended or unconscious bias.



- So all candidates are treated fairly and consistently, they should be given the same opportunity to demonstrate they are the best person for the role, and to ask questions of the interviewers.
- Understand that it is common for both candidates and interviewers to be nervous.
- Listen carefully and make brief notes on key points.
- It can be helpful to score candidates' answers to core questions - for example, out of ten, with the top possible figure being the ideal score.
- Avoid asking for personal information or personal views irrelevant to the job, or potentially discriminatory questions such as 'Are you planning to have children in the next few years?'
- How an interview is handled can vary, but can typically involve:
 1. thank the candidate for coming, give them time to sit down and get their application materials in place, then make any introductions
 2. briefly outline information about the role and the organisation, and then move to the first question
 3. keep to the interview's time frame and ensure there is time to ask all the questions. Allow for some flexibility in the time candidates are given to answer questions - for example, by rephrasing a question if they answered it poorly the first time, or to ask for further examples in answer to a question if there's time at the end of the interview
 4. Confirm the last question has been asked, check the candidate is familiar with the terms and conditions of the job and ask if they have any questions
 5. tell the candidate what will happen next and when they can expect to hear about the outcome of the interview.

Practical tests

These tests are now widely used together with application forms, interviews and references. If the job involves practical, technical or specialist skills, it is likely the candidate should be tested for ability before or at the time of interview.

Tests must relate to the requirements of the job. The aims should be clear and how the results are assessed objective. Records of tests should be retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Health checks



If it is necessary to ask health-related questions before making a job offer, it can do so only in the following circumstances:

1. to determine whether an applicant can carry out a function essential to the role
2. to take 'positive action' to assist disabled people
3. to monitor, without revealing the candidate's identity, whether they are disabled
4. to check that a candidate has a disability where this is a genuine requirement of the job.

The four limited circumstances under the Equality Act 2010 apply to all stages of recruitment before a job offer. This includes application forms, health questionnaires, interviews and any other assessment and selection methods. There are also safeguards for information about a candidate's health and/or disability under the General Data Protection Regulation.

Include the need for any health check or medical in the application pack for the job, and include it again in the letter offering the job. If a health check is required from the candidate's doctor, written consent must be obtained from the candidate first. Also, the candidate has a right to see the doctor's report and ask for it to be changed or withheld.

Keep a full record of why an offer is withdrawn for health reasons in case the matter leads to a claim of discrimination. Ensure that a health check itself does not discriminate.

Selecting the best candidate for the job

Using a structured scoring system will help avoid the pitfalls of making snap judgements based on 'gut feeling' or sub-consciously looking for similarities to themselves in the candidate.

As soon as possible after an interview the interviewers/assessors should write up their notes of key answers, scores and other important details.

Offer the successful candidate as soon as possible. If they decline, the job should be offered to the next most successful candidate etc until the offer is accepted (or no acceptable candidates remain).

As soon as possible after this, inform all the other applicants that they have been unsuccessful in the current recruitment.



If requested give positive feedback to unsuccessful candidates on where they might reasonably improve – in future. If candidates' details are kept to match against future vacancies, make this very clear to the candidates at the start of their first application.

A candidate can ask to see information held about them – for example, the application form, interview notes and references, or the full personal file if the candidate already works for the organisation.



Step 5: Completing final details

Pre-employment checks and offering the job

Before offering the role permanently, some legal checks may need completing before employment starts, and other checks may inadvertently become forgotten or disregarded.

Some of the checks are covered in the next section, including:

- Checking the right to work in the UK
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- References
- Proof of qualifications.

Any checks must be lawful, necessary and fair, and comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

The right to work in the UK

It is essential to check whether a job applicant it wants to employ is entitled to work in the UK before employment commences. Check thoroughly that all necessary paperwork is correct and up to date, as the penalty could be up to five years in prison for employing someone whom it has 'reasonable cause to believe' is an illegal employee. Also potentially a fine up to £20,000 per employee without the right to be employed in the UK.

British citizens, citizens of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the European Union, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are all entitled to work in the UK.

Criminal records

If the job offered requires a DBS check, explain to the applicant or employee how or why the role is eligible for a DBS check and where they can get independent advice.

For most roles, you are only allowed to ask about what are termed 'unspent cautions and convictions' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA). For these roles, an employer is entitled to a basic criminal record check called a 'Basic Disclosure' and the correct question to ask applicants is: Do you have any unspent convictions? Yes / No.

However, there are certain types of job exempt from the ROA where it is necessary to ask a different question. For example, for roles including working with children and/or vulnerable groups, and in healthcare, and certain regulated financial roles. The correct question for these roles is: Do you have any cautions, convictions, reprimands or final warnings which are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)? Yes / No.



References

Following a successful interview, references offered by the candidate must be checked prior to offer of the position advertised. The job application form should state this.

There are two types of reference:

- professional reference: usually from the candidate's current employer, or a previous employer or manager.
- character (or personal) reference: this typically comes from an independent person, often in a respected position, who knows the candidate well.

Only approach the candidate's current employer with the candidate's permission. Any request should include a job description to give the referee context. It should not ask for personal information or conjecture about the applicant.

Proof of qualifications

It is reasonable to ask the applicant for proof of qualifications, training or licences important to the job. The candidate may be asked to bring evidence of qualifications to the interview. If the checks are being made with someone or an organisation other than the candidate, it is good practice to tell the applicant. How the information is kept and for how long should meet the General Data Protection Regulation.

Job Offer

The successful candidate should be provided with a job offer letter and the Terms and Conditions of Employment before the new recruit starts to avoid disagreements, or misunderstandings. Make sure the new recruit has the opportunity to raise any queries and that it deals with them promptly, so that once they start they can focus on learning their role and fitting in.

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