

Inclusive recruitment

This guide is designed to provide the understanding and tools required to reach, engage with and support diverse applicants across the whole recruitment cycle.

Why recruitment needs to be inclusive?

The gender split in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) at GCSE and A-Level was very balanced as of September 2022. However, this does not translate through to degree level and the workforce.

48% of STEM GCSEs are awarded to girls/women.

51% of STEM A-level qualifications come from girls.

29% of STEM degree qualifications come from women.

26% of the STEM workforce is made up of women.

Source: WISE Campaign, Workforce Statistics September 2022 - [Click here to learn more.](#)



A person from an ethnic minority background is **10.7%** less likely to find work.

Source: London School of Economics



A total of **52.6% (4.9m)** of the UK disabled population are employed.

Source: GOV.UK Employment of Disabled People 2022

What legislation is there?

The Equality Act 2010 – protect characteristics

This piece of legislation brings together all previous separate equality legislation into one. The Act stipulates that every private, public and voluntary sector must not discriminate against employees and service users because of one or more of the nine protected characteristics.

The nine protected characteristics are:



Gender reassignment



Disability



Marriage and civil partnership



Sex



Age



Sexual orientation



Pregnancy and maternity



Race



Religion and belief

How can an individual impact inclusive recruitment processes?

Our own unconscious bias

We are all a product of our environment and the circumstances of our upbringing. This means that we all develop unique biases during our life, many of these are unconscious and can result in unfair discrimination against others, often unintentionally.

For more information about the different types of unconscious bias, and the different methods of identifying and mitigating again them. Please see our guide on unconscious bias [here](#).

What can an organisation do to help inclusive recruitment processes?

Job descriptions (JD) - best practice and removing barriers

The wording and terminology used within job descriptions can have a larger effect on inclusive recruitment practices than we might think. This can result in an unintentional creation of barriers that could exclude certain applicants. Below are eight tips to help you reduce this:

Update job descriptions



The temptation to use the same JD multiple times is strong, it saves time but don't do this! Keep them up to date.

Engage with managers



Hiring managers who understand the role are best placed to identify what must go into the JD.

Formal qualifications



Clearly state what formal qualifications are a requirement for an applicant to be successful.

Experience-based salaries



Listing that salary grading is based on experience will put off applicants who have the skills and knowledge but lack years of experience. If the budget is there for a higher base salary, use this for all applicants.

Workplace experience and qualifications



Make sure it's clear if employees can have suitable workplace experience as an alternative, or if they can work towards a required qualification whilst on the job. This is a great way to include applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds who may not have had the same education opportunities.

Time in post doesn't denote ability



Stating a certain length of time as a requirement, will exclude those younger applicants who are well qualified. Age is a protected characteristic, making this a form of discrimination.

Essential or desirable



Females apply less if they don't meet all the criteria listed. Think, what is must have, not a nice to have?

Time-based measurements of applicability

Using time-based measurements can be applicable when hiring for certain roles, knowing when not to use them is key. Removing them from job descriptions will increase application rates, prevent discrimination against and afford equal opportunity to those who have:



Taken parental leave



Non-traditional career paths



Had career breaks



Worked part-time

Sifting

This part of the recruitment process is often the longest, which can make it the most rushed stage in the process. Ensuring that sifting is as fair and inclusive as possible can be achieved by using the below three steps:

1 Have a set criteria of what you are looking for, which are:

- Relevant to the job and role.
- Measurable.
- Not discriminatory.

2 Review all applications in the same format, using your set criteria.

For example: use a physical or online form that goes through each criteria systematically and assigns a final score, enabling easy comparison.

3 Use multiple people to mitigate against bias:

- 2-3 people independently reviewing.
- Come together to discuss opinions.
- Create an environment where you can challenge views.

Interviews

Interviewing is a pivotal moment for both the candidate and hiring company, so it's key to maintain inclusive practices. By implementing as many of the below mentioned interview tips, the hiring company can safeguard its inclusive recruitment process.

Interview panels

- Avoid one-on-one interviews.
- Have a mix of different characteristics and lived experiences
- Include at least three members.

Reasonable adjustments

By law, employers must consider reasonable adjustments. This includes job applicants and is not limited to current employees only.

Candidate selection

- Involve the whole panel and hiring manager in the selection process.
- Don't let time be a factor.
- Use your set and specific criteria.

Question standardisation

- Situational, not psychometric.
- Structure ensures consistency.
- Easier cross candidate comparison.
- Keep them job and role specific.

Feedback and review

Collecting feedback should be a key part of all interview processes. Feedback from successful and unsuccessful candidates should be taken on board and incorporated into continuous improvement. Here are six tips on how to collect candidate feedback effectively:

1. Create a set feedback form, enabling a like-for-like data comparison.
2. Request feedback within 48-hours, to gather clearer recollections.
3. Ask how the interview compared to others they have been on to learn from competitors.
4. Allow candidates to complete it anonymously, this produces honest responses.
5. Include a section dedicated to recommendations, don't just ask questions.
6. Factor in the whole recruitment process, not just the interview itself.

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