



Recommendations

This list of Recommendations is intended to be used as a quick reference and handy reminder. It should be read in conjunction with the Commission's main document "Removing Sex Bias from Recruitment and Selection: A Code of Practice".

Introduction

The recruitment and selection process should be consistent, with each candidate being objectively assessed against the justifiable requirements of the job. Selection should be on the basis of merit and documentation should be kept for twelve months.

1. Training

- 1.1 All those involved in assessing candidates should be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques and in the content of the Code of Practice.

2. Job Descriptions and Requirements

- 2.1 The job description should accurately reflect the specific duties of the job.
- 2.2 A vacant or new post should be analysed before the job description is drawn up to determine what duties it involves and the proportion of time associated with each task.
- 2.3 Job descriptions should not contain unnecessary and unjustifiable conditions or requirements.
- 2.4 Wording should not be used which implies that the post may be most suitable for women or for men.

3. Personnel Specifications

- 3.1 Objective standards should be set in the personnel specification for the essential and desirable criteria needed for the effective performance of the job.
- 3.2 Only factors which are relevant to the job should be considered; factors which were relevant in the past may no longer be so.
- 3.3 All standards set should be justifiable in terms of the duties to be carried out.

4. Attracting Applicants

Advertising

- 4.1 Advertisements should make it clear that women and men can apply.
- 4.2 Internal and external advertising practices should be regularly reviewed.
- 4.3 Phrases like "single applicants only" or "unsuitable for persons with family commitments" should not be used.
- 4.4 Positive action advertising should be considered in appropriate situations.

Positive Action Encouragement

- 4.5 Positive action encouragement should be considered when no members of one sex or only comparatively small numbers of that sex were employed in particular jobs at any time within the past twelve months.
- 4.6 All applicants should be treated equally in selection for a post and no advertisement should imply otherwise.

Temporary Recruitment

- 4.7 Longer term temporary vacancies should be advertised in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the Code of Practice.
- 4.8 Names of reserve candidates should not be retained for longer than one year.
- 4.9 Employment Agencies should be advised that all suitably qualified candidates will be considered.

Emergency Recruitment

- 4.10 Emergency vacancies should be filled by way of contact with the widest possible pool of applicants.
- 4.11 Emergency reserve lists should only be drawn up in limited circumstances and only in accordance with the recruitment and selection practices set out in the Code of Practice.
- 4.12 Emergency lists should be discarded following a reasonable period, generally no more than one year.

5. Application Forms

- 5.1 Application forms should be used for all recruitment.
- 5.2 Only questions which are relevant and job-related should be included.
- 5.3 Questions should not be asked about an applicant's marital status.
- 5.4 Questions should not be asked about an applicant's spouse/partner or children or other personal circumstances.
- 5.5 An applicant's age should not be considered unless there is a justifiable reason for doing so.
- 5.6 Any length of service requirement should be considered to ascertain if it is necessary for the post.
- 5.7 Applicants should be encouraged to indicate skills, expertise and abilities gained through voluntary work or in the home.
- 5.8 Documentation should be retained for twelve months.

6. Shortlisting

- 6.1 Shortlisting should be carried out systematically and in a consistent fashion.
- 6.2 The personnel specification should be used to develop shortlisting criteria.
- 6.3 All criteria should be strictly job-related and rigorously applied.
- 6.4 More than one person should be involved in shortlisting candidates.
- 6.5 Assumptions or stereotypes about applicants should not be allowed to influence the process.
- 6.6 A standardised method of recording shortlisting decisions should be developed and the documentation should be retained for twelve months.

7. Selection Testing

- 7.1 Tests should assess actual or inherent ability to do the tasks relevant to the job and should be validated for sex bias.
- 7.2 The continuing relevance of any tests used should be regularly reviewed.
- 7.3 If external consultants are being used, only those who are experienced in testing should be used.
- 7.4 The outcome of selection testing on women and men should be monitored.

8. References

- 8.1 Where references are sought, structured guidance, including the job description, should be provided for referees on the job for which the candidate is applying.
- 8.2 Specific questions should be asked about abilities and skill levels.
- 8.3 Comments of a personal nature should not be asked about candidates.

9. Interviews

- 9.1 All interviews should be conducted in a fair and consistent manner and should be structured and systematic.
- 9.2 Interview panels should have female and male members; if this is not possible from within, the organisation should consider bringing in a suitable outsider.
- 9.3 The areas to be covered during the interview should be determined beforehand.
- 9.4 A standardised scoring system should be devised and used throughout.
- 9.5 All interview questions should be objective and relevant to the requirements of the job.
- 9.6 Questions should not be asked about a candidate's marital status, children or other personal circumstances and stereotyped assumptions based on this type of information should not be made.
- 9.7 If any candidates are being placed on a reserve list, names should not be retained for longer than one year.
- 9.8 Every stage of the process should be documented and the documentation should be retained for twelve months.

10. Promotion

- 10.1 All promotion opportunities should be advertised and should be conducted in a fair and consistent manner with procedures being reviewed regularly.
- 10.2 Care should be taken in the use of internal trawls, especially if there is an existing imbalance in the workforce.
- 10.3 The operation of any informal mechanisms for promotion should be guarded against.
- 10.4 Employees on maternity leave or career breaks should be notified of promotion opportunities.
- 10.5 Managers should be trained on the avoidance of sex bias in any promotion assessment.
- 10.6 Any age, mobility or other conditions or requirements for promotion should be justifiable without regard to sex or marital status.
- 10.7 The monitoring system should be used to identify problem areas and positive action training courses should be considered.

11. Medicals

- 11.1 Neutral questions should be asked of all applicants.
- 11.2 Questions should not be asked about pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- 11.3 Women should not be asked about their gynaecological conditions.

12. Monitoring

- 12.1 A monitoring system should be developed to assess the effect of recruitment and promotion decisions.
- 12.2 Applications for all full-time and part-time appointments should be monitored on the basis of sex, marital and family status.
- 12.3 Success rates should be monitored at the shortlisting and appointment stages.
- 12.4 Monitoring information should be used to develop appropriate positive action initiatives.
- 12.5 Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

13. Employment Agencies

- 13.1 Employment agencies should not be directed to discriminate on grounds of sex or marital status unless a lawful exemption applies.
- 13.2 Employment agencies should follow the recommendations laid down in the Code of Practice when recruiting from the labour market.
- 13.3 Employment agency registers should be operated in a manner consistent with the principle of equality of opportunity.
- 13.4 If executive search or headhunting is being used as the method of recruitment, vacancies should also be widely advertised.