Guidelines

Title: HIRING MANAGER GUIDANCE ON SELECTION METHODS

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1. **Introduction**
This document has been created to support hiring managers with using selection methods in addition to interviewing. It provides an overview of what good practice recommends and what our legal obligations are, in particular, by helping those involved in interviewing to avoid discrimination.

Read the University’s recruitment policy and interview guidelines.

2. **Selection methods**
Consider using job-related selection exercises as part of the selection process. These are useful for elements of the person specification that are difficult to test at interview or evaluate through references. They also offer a more rounded assessment of the candidate’s suitability for a role.

We recommend discussing the suitability of the various exercise options with HR before making a final decision.

Some examples of selection exercises are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of post</th>
<th>Possible selection exercise</th>
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| Academic, research or teaching post | • Deliver a seminar.  
• Give a departmental presentation.  
• Write a report. |
| Administrative posts         | • Complete a speed typing test.  
• Write a letter/email in response to a complaint.  
• Demonstrate use of Microsoft packages such as Word, Excel.  
• Use an “in-tray” exercise to test organisational and prioritisation skills. |
| Technical posts               | • Diagnose equipment faults and suggest possible methods of rectifying them. |
| Posts involving finance      | • Interpret financial information.  
• Complete a numeracy skills test. |
| Posts that require supervisor skills | • Take part in a supervisory role play.  
• Respond to a “what if” scenario. |

**Checklist for setting up and running selection exercises:**

- Ensure any assessment of performance is made on a predetermined set of factors rather than vague generalisations, to enable it to be objective.
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of what is being tested and what status the exercise has within the overall selection process.
Where the exercise involves using a software package, ensure that experience of using that specific package was included in the selection criteria for the post.

Design the exercise to provide an equal opportunity for each candidate to demonstrate their abilities in accordance with the University’s equality and diversity policy.

Adapt the exercise for a candidate with a disability where appropriate.

Plan the exercise in advance and provide each candidate will full information on what is involved and sufficient time for any preparation.

Ensure the exercise is not biased in favour of internal candidates. It should test basic principles in relation to the post, not knowledge of internal procedures.

3. Presentations

Presentations can be used in a variety of ways depending on how they relate to the job description and the normal working practices expected of the post.

| Example 1: | For a role which is required to respond to the public in a very short timescale given a few facts.
| | • Candidates could be asked to arrive early to the interview, be quickly briefed and given 30 mins to prepare a 5 min presentation, before delivering it orally with no supports. |
| Example 2: | For a role which is required to prepare and deliver lectures of 45 minutes.
| | • In this scenario, the post-holder would generally have time to prepare. It would be unreasonable to give the candidate the same task as Example 1. Instead they could receive the topic well in advance and have time beforehand to prepare their delivery. |

In assessing presentations, it is important to decide on the criteria against which each candidate will be marked. These could include criteria which will also be assessed at interview, but may take on a particular aspect.

For example, communications skills could be assessed in the interview – how the person communicates and interacts with the panel and gets their points across. Then in a lecture style presentation, their skills in communicating more formally to a large group will be assessed instead.

Other criteria can be assessed in a presentation exercise. For example the candidates’ ability to assimilate information quickly could be included in Example 1 but not in 2. Strategic perspective skills might be included if the topic allows it, and judgement and self-confidence could also be assessed through a presentation.

Presentation checklist:

☐ Give candidates as much information as possible about the expected focus of the presentation, linking this to the criteria shown in the person specification.

☐ Provide candidates with information about the intended audience, the expected length of the presentation and the facilities available, eg: PowerPoint available on a laptop, etc.

☐ Set objective criteria to assess presentations for potential lecturers, eg: academic content, clarity of expression, ability to adjust content to audience, etc.

☐ Endeavour to ensure that interview panel members attend all the presentations where possible and are prepared to give feedback on each candidate presentation.

☐ If others are involved in assessing the candidate presentations (eg: as an audience) ensure they are able to provide their views to the panel to make the process worthwhile. For example, ask a representative from the group to comment on tone, delivery, content, suitability, interest, enthusiasm, etc.

4. Practical tests

For some roles, the person specification criteria required can be hard to assess through application or from face-to-face interview. For example, a candidate can say they have the IT skills required for a role and even
describe how they use a system, but it is hard to be sure. It may therefore be worth using a practical test as part of the shortlisting process.

In addition, tests such as numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, critical thinking and manual dexterity may also be appropriate.

**Skills test checklist:**

- Ensure all tests are given with clear, unambiguous instructions written in Plain English.
- Ensure tests are administered in the same way – the same person, in the same circumstances, with the same instructions and with the same time limits.
- Provide all candidates with the same conditions for the test (excluding any allowances made as "reasonable adjustments" for disabled candidates).
- Ensure the test administrator is aware of their role and responsibilities, and has clarity of understanding about discrimination.

5. **Psychometric tests**

Psychometric tests are particularly useful to assess candidates for managerial or senior appointments, or where there is a specific special requirement for the post such as strong relationship-building skills.

These types of test are especially good at assisting with assessing how candidates are likely to behave eg: towards a manager, towards their peers, and towards their subordinates.

They will often provide a profile which should be discussed with the candidate to check validity as they are self-perception questionnaires. The profile should be a part of the assessment, contributing perhaps up to 10% towards the final decision. The results of psychometric tests should be considered with care as they require using in the right way by properly trained assessors. Candidates should also be given feedback on the profile.

Read the University’s [psychometric testing policy](#).

6. **Assessment centres**

An assessment centre uses a range of selection tests and applies them to a group of candidates at the same time and place. Trained assessors observe the candidate performances across a range of exercises related to the demands of the vacancy, typically scoring them against an objective pre-determined list of job criteria.

The range of selection activities designed for an assessment centre should be appropriate to the role but typically cover both individual and collective approaches. For example, they can include work-sample and/or psychometric tests, competency-based interviews, group exercises and presentations. These selection exercises should be designed to reveal how candidates would actually perform in the role should they be appointed.