

Person Specification Guidance for Recruiting Managers

A person specification is the profile of qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience the successful candidate requires to undertake the role being advertised. The person specification should be divided into essential and desirable criteria. This should be used in the shortlisting process to distinguish between candidates suitability.

- **Essential criteria** are those that are critical for the satisfactory performance of the job. It is expected that applicants will meet all the essential criteria to be considered eligible for appointment.
- **Desirable criteria** are those that enhance a person's capacity to do the job. These are usually not listed as essential because it is expected that they can be acquired once in employment. For example, while specific knowledge of the University and its environment could be of benefit, it can also be learnt.

A person specification has a number of uses including:

- it informs potential applicants about the level and complexity of the job and helps them to decide whether to apply for the job
- it establishes the essential criteria against which all candidates will be judged objectively
- it sets desirable criteria which can be used to establish the most suitable candidates
- it provides a template for transparent decision making during the selection process

The criteria you decide on should relate directly to the duties detailed in the job description, and contain the minimum requirements necessary to do the job effectively. It is important to be as explicit as possible in the person specification to ensure that the appropriate candidates apply.

The person specification should detail the knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences and aptitudes required to do the job. These will form the basis of the selection decision, enabling the recruitment panel to ensure they have chosen objectively by being specific, measurable and evidence based.

The person specification should avoid referencing experience and knowledge which is specific to the University of Aberdeen in the essential criteria as this would preclude potential candidates from outwith the University. If a requirement, this should be referenced in the desirable criteria.

Below is a guide to recruiting managers on the essential criteria within each section of the person specification:

Education/Qualification

This section should detail the minimum education qualification that an individual requires to undertake the position such as:

Grade 3 National Grades 4/5 or equivalent commensurate experience

Grade 4 Higher (National Grade 6) or HNC or equivalent commensurate experience

Grade 5 Degree or equivalent commensurate experience

Grade 6 + Research/Teaching posts

PhD/MSc plus commensurate experience

The essential criteria should avoid overstating the qualifications and level of experience required to perform the job. It should be recognised that some candidates may have a high level of experience without holding the necessary qualification. In this circumstance it is for the panel to decide if the

individual would be appropriate to undertake the role and for the Head of School/Director to have a final decision on this.

Work and Other Relevant Experience

This section should include any specialist knowledge, levels of experience, supervisory experience, research experience and training which the individual is required to have for this position.

This section should not refer to a number of years of experience due to the potential for this to cause age discrimination.

Personal Qualities and Abilities

This section should include the requirement for initiative, leadership, ability to work on own or with others, the candidate's communication skills, problem solving skills and interpersonal skills.

Other

This section covers any special circumstances (if any) appropriate to the role such as, language requirements, travelling, unsociable hours etc.

Care should be taken when stating that a driver's license is essential to positions within the University. Requiring applicants to have a driver's license, rather than facilitating alternative transport options is potentially discriminatory.

Care should be taken when consideration is given to how the candidate is going to be measured against these criteria. All tests are subject to reasonable adjustment and people with impairments must be allowed to undertake an assessment in a suitable alternative manner.