



ANTI DISCRIMINATION
COMMISSION QUEENSLAND

**SELECTION
PROCESS
GUIDELINES**

HR 03/03

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1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are designed to assist panels to make effective selection decisions using a process that reflects best practice and is based on the principles of equity and merit.

The subject matter is addressed by:

- detailing the roles and responsibilities of all selection panel members, including pre and post interview tasks; and
- explaining all documentation required throughout the process (samples are attached to these guidelines).

2. MANDATORY PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTION DECISIONS

Selection decisions must:

- be based on the principles of equity and merit;
- be fair, unbiased, transparent and able to withstand scrutiny;
- comply with legislative provisions and practices relating to recruitment and selection in the Queensland public sector; and
- be finalised within a reasonable timeframe.

3. COMPOSITION OF SELECTION PANELS AND QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO BE A PANEL MEMBER

The responsibility for determining and managing the selection process belongs to the selection panel. This is a suitably experienced team (usually three people) comprised of:

- (i) a Chairperson to oversee and co-ordinate the process;
- (ii) one panel member to be independent of the organisation;
- (iii) at least one male and one female, in order to maintain gender balance;
- (iv) at least one panel member should have a sound knowledge of contemporary human resource principles, in particular EEO.
- (v) representatives of any of the four EEO target groups (ie. women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from a non english-speaking background, people with disabilities), for positions directly relevant to the target groups (Note: a fourth panel member may be included to ensure adequate representation);
- (vi) one member external to ADCQ for AO7/PO5 positions and above;
- (vii) at least half are from outside the 'host' portfolio, for Senior Executive Service (SES) and Senior Officer (SO) vacancies. The selection committee for a SES vacancy will include at least one member who has been nominated by and will act as the representative of the OPSME. The authority to determine the composition of selection panels for SES and SO vacancies lies with the Ant-Discrimination Commissioner. Please also see OPSC Directive 29/99.

As a minimum, the Chairperson must have previous selection experience and/or formal training in the selection process. The other panel members should also have previous selection experience or training.

The Human Resource Management Services (HRMS) Branch, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, conducts Selection Panel training on a regular basis and will arrange and/or conduct Selection Panel training upon request.

4. ROLE OF SELECTION PANEL

Role of Chairperson

The Chairperson is the chief accountable officer for the process, ensuring that legislative and ADCQ requirements are met, and that the process is free from bias.

Duties/responsibilities include:

- ensuring that each of the selection panel members clearly understands their responsibilities in relation to ADCQ Guidelines, legislation and Directives;
- certifying that composition of the selection panel has been approved by the Delegate;
- coordinating and overseeing the selection process including adherence to time-frames;
- ensuring that the selection process is undertaken as quickly as practicable;
- deciding on the methods to be used in selection eg. work sample, test, interview;
- responding to issues such as submissions of extra material, granting of alternate interview dates, acceptance of late applications and responding to applicant inquiries;
- overseeing the preparation of interview schedules, contacting the interviewees and preparing the venue;

Note: *The Chairperson should also identify any special considerations such as access for a person with a disability, interpreter etc., when contacting interviewees and provide for these prior to the interview.*

Travel costs/expenses for interviewee/s should be negotiated with the manager of the relevant cost centre, (ie. where the vacancy lies) prior to incurring any expenses in bringing a candidate to the centre for an interview.

- leading the interview and active participation throughout (eg. questioning, listening, probing etc);
- overseeing the documentation of referees' reports;
- arranging preparation of the selection report including justification of pay-point levels, identification of and provision of 'reasonable adjustment' for candidates with disabilities and completion of benchmarking data;
- notifying all applicants of the outcome as soon as possible after the nomination has been approved;
- ensuring feedback is provided to applicants on request;
- representing ADCQ at any merit or process appeal arising from the selection exercise, or providing information to enable the ADCQ to be adequately represented; and
- expeditiously forwarding all selection documentation material to Manager, Support Services for action.

Role of All Panel Members

Duties / responsibilities include:

- obtaining a clear understanding of the requirements of the position and relevance of the selection criteria;
- determining an inclusive selection strategy and process, including assigning weightings to the selection criteria, generating interview questions and associated ratings, and if deemed appropriate, developing supplementary skill tests, case studies, etc;
- undertaking the short-listing and completing the short-listing schedule;
- actively participating throughout the interview (eg. questioning, listening, probing etc);

- preserving the confidentiality of applicant interview and performance; and
- avoiding conflicts of interest (real and/or perceived). It is the responsibility of each panel member, including the Chairperson, to advise the other panel members of any such situation and to disclose any personal knowledge of applicants and/or between other members of the panel that may adversely affect the outcome of the selection process. Any conflict of interest must be resolved in favour of the ADCQ. If a panel is unsure about a conflict, advice should be sought from the Manager, Support Services.

5. THE SELECTION PROCESS

Before the selection process can start, there needs to be a suitable pool of applicants. Normally this is obtained by advertising the vacancy in the Government Gazette, Internet and/or by electronic mail throughout the Sector. For base grade positions, it may be convenient and cost-effective to arrange with an approved recruitment agency to conduct the selection process. Selection pools for temporary and base grade positions may also be supplemented with unsolicited applications. The Manager, Support Services, can offer advice on the method of selection to meet your needs.

Positions above base grade level, all permanent vacancies, and all temporary vacancies greater than twelve months must be advertised in the Government Gazette. In many cases it is also wise to advertise in the press to maximise the applicant pool. The Manager, Support Services, can arrange advertising on request.

The Chairperson will be required to certify that all panel members adhere to the guidelines and selection policy and disclose individuals nominated as panel members. The Anti-Discrimination Commissioner will then approve the panel composition (using the Selection Panel Composition Form).

The form can be completed before the position is advertised (with the Request to Advertise) or before the closing date of the advertised vacancy. Job applications may not be released to the selection panel until this form is lodged with JAG HRMS.

The vacancy will be checked by JAG HRMS for any possible deployees that may be suitable for the position. If there is a deployee interested in the position, the vacancy will not be advertised until the employee has been assessed on suitability for the position (for more information refer to the OPSME Assessment of Suitability Guideline).

JAG HRMS will check the 'Request to Advertise' form to confirm if part-time employment as an option has been noted or justification given as to why part-time employment is not available for the vacancy. Please note the vacancy will not be advertised until this issue is addressed. Once these checks have occurred and the vacancy is cleared, it will be advertised.

The Vacancy Processing Officer, JAG HRMS, is responsible for registration of all applications received and forwarding these (including blank selection documentation) to the Chairperson as soon as possible after the closing date.

One selection process may be used for the filling of recurrent vacancies in a 12 month period, where:

- 1) the advertisement states that applications will remain current for a period not exceeding 12 months;
- 2) the position description remains unchanged; and
- 3) the quality of the applicant pool will not vary significantly.

5.1 PRE-INTERVIEW STEPS

Prior to interviewing applicants for a vacancy, the following steps need to be undertaken.

- i) Define the process and individual panel roles
- ii) Assign the weightings to selection criteria
- iii) Decide on the rating system
- iv) Shortlisting

These are discussed in turn below.

i) Define the Process and Individual Panel Roles

The Chairperson should arrange an initial selection panel meeting to discuss and agree on:

- the process (including time frames);
- individual roles within the selection process ie. specifically who will do what;
- interpretation of the selection criteria, to ensure all members have a clear and shared understanding of the skills and qualities being sought; and
- selection techniques to be used. These include: application, structured interview, referee checking, and skills tests.

Skills tests may be included as a selection technique provided the testing is directly related to one or more of the key selection criteria. The use of standardised tests such as those used to measure aptitude and ability, must be conducted by accredited specialists such as psychologists or by people with relevant qualifications. They are permitted for high level positions and must be approved by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner or delegate.

At a minimum, the selection process **must** include a combination of the following components:

- application;
- a structured interview; and
- referee checking.

Referee Checking may be used during shortlisting to verify experience and achievements claimed in applications, and must be used after completion of interviews to check information gained through the selection process and/or to 'fine tune' scores awarded throughout the selection process.

Panels need to be cognisant of the information regarding referee checking under the section entitled 'Verification of Claims made in Applications' and also under the 'Referee Checks' section. Referee reports are not normally allocated a percentage but may be as part of the agreed selection strategy.

The selection panel must allocate and document percentages of the overall score to the different components for the agreed selection strategy.

<i>For example:</i>	Application	30%
	Interview	70%

ii) Assign Weightings to Selection Criteria:

The selection criteria must be weighted in importance prior to short-listing and/or establishing a rating system. The weightings are used to calculate final scores for each applicant and to ensure the value placed on each criterion reflects its importance.

It should also be noted that if all the selection criteria are considered of equal importance, weighting is not required.

Mandatory qualifications need not be assessed, as applicants are automatically excluded if they do not meet the criteria.

Weighting must be quantitative and the following 10-point scale is recommended:

- 10 = Critical
- 9 = Extremely important
- 8 = Important
- 7 = Highly desirable
- 6 = Desirable
- 5 or below should be used carefully

Note: *Once the weightings have been set they cannot be changed during the selection exercise.*

iii) Decide on the Rating system:

Prior to assessing applications the panel must agree on a rating system. Ratings allow selection panels to record the level of skill, ability, knowledge or experience of applicants in relation to each selection criterion. This will assist all members of the panel to make assessments throughout the process that are consistent with the outcome required.

In developing and applying rating scales, the panel must:

- (a) develop, agree and clearly understand the level of competency represented by each rating; and
- (b) rate each criterion separately.

An example of a 10 point rating system is provided below and also on the Shortlist and Interview Scoresheets:

- 7-10 = Strong breadth and depth of skills/knowledge/abilities demonstrated by the applicant.
- 4-6 = Moderate to sound knowledge/skills/abilities demonstrated.
- 1-3 = Limited knowledge/skills/abilities were demonstrated.
- 0 = Failed to demonstrate sufficient experience/ knowledge/skills/abilities.

iv) Shortlisting:

Shortlisting is the process of determining which applicants have the strongest claim to the position based on applications (including supporting documentation) received.

Each selection panel member is required to:

- read each application (if there is an unmanageable number of applications, consideration may be given to sharing applications amongst selection panel members. In these instances all applications are to be read by at least two panel members).

- compare the information submitted in the application with the rating system developed for each selection criterion eg. **Appendix 2**.
- record a rating and total the score allocated for each criterion ie **Appendix 2**.

The selection panel then reconvenes to discuss the need for verification of claims made by applicants (defined below) and moderate (defined below) all ratings and determine the final short list from the highest scoring applications. It is advisable when considering the cut off point to look for a natural break in the point spread. However, it is better to have an inclusive rather than exclusive approach.

The selection panel documents all their ratings on the 'Short List Score Sheet'.

Definitions of terms used in Shortlisting

Verification of Claims made in Applications:

The advantage of conducting referee checks on all applicants prior to shortlisting is that it allows the panel the opportunity to verify the information contained in the application and/or clarify particular points outlined in their application. All information gained through this process must be documented.

Applicants should nominate, as referees, people who can verify information in their application. Normally, the most qualified to do this will be current or recent former supervisors. The Chairperson may seek permission of the applicant to contact relevant supervisor(s) for the purpose of verifying claims made in the application. However, without the applicant's permission, contact should not be made.

If an applicant does not wish to nominate a supervisor or another person as a referee, the applicant should be advised of their right to respond to adverse comments.

If no referees have been nominated and the selection panel does not have adequate information to make a decision, the applicant will need to be informed that failure to nominate a referee may result in their application being excluded from further consideration.

Moderation:

Moderation is a process in which panel members' scores are compared and variations discussed to canvass opportunities for voluntary amendments etc. While scores are sometimes settled by compromise, panel members should not amend any score beyond a point which they can justify. However, if a panel member believes in, and can justify their scores, these may remain unaltered. Where there is a wide variance in scores the panel member(s) should record the reasons with their notes.

5.2 THE INTERVIEW

The selection panel, having agreed on the applicants to be interviewed (short listing), determines structure, questions, date, time and venue for the interviews. Applicants are to be provided with sufficient notice (minimum 48 hours) but additional consideration is to be given to applicants required to travel to enable their arrangements to be made.

It is good practice to schedule interviews to allow sufficient time for the selection panel to score and initially discuss each applicant at the conclusion of the interview. This approach is beneficial to both the applicant and the interviewer, as it reduces the likelihood of applicants being compared to others instead of being individually assessed in relation to the set performance criteria.

Telephone interviews are encouraged for applicants from distant locations. However, selection panels need to be sensitive to the added communication difficulties in these types of interviews.

Reasonable panel behaviour in these circumstances includes:

- speaking clearly and audibly;
- repeating questions; and
- prior checking of speaker phones and other equipment used eg. facsimile machines.

Questions

The panel must develop questions and model answers, aimed at allowing interviewees to demonstrate how they meet each selection criterion. This enables the selection panel to assess the ability and potential of the candidates using the rating scale developed prior to interview. The questions and model answers should be developed by the panel just before the interviews to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Enough time should be allowed for the preparation (typing) of documentation.

Questions should be framed so as not to discriminate against candidates who have had experience in an alternative environment, ie. questions are not to be ADCQ specific. This concept is particularly important in framing questions for positions that may attract EEO target groups.

Interview Structure

An example of typical interview information provided to each applicant at interview (usually by the Chairperson) is attached – ‘Interview Format’.

Other points to observe include:

- the structure for the interview and questions are to be the same for all interviewees. This does not mean however, that clarifying and follow-up questions cannot be pursued on relevant points. Indeed clarifying and probing for examples related to the selection criteria can assist the panel to arrive at a better understanding of the applicants skills and abilities.
- all interviewees are to be allocated the same amount of time and the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring appropriate time keeping.
- all applicants are to be given an opportunity to provide relevant and considered answers. One method is to provide interviewees with a copy of the questions, plus weightings (as mentioned above), together with note-paper, pencils etc, and a fixed time period (perhaps 20 to 30 minutes) before the actual interview to prepare.

5.3 POST INTERVIEW STEPS

The activities that need to be completed after the interview are:

- i) Moderation of scores
- ii) Referee checks
- iii) Selection Decision
- iv) Nominate appointee(s)
- v) Obtain approval
- vi) Advise successful applicant(s)
- vii) Advise unsuccessful applicants and provide feedback on request

i) Moderation of Scores:

The selection panel meets, scores are discussed, and where necessary moderated. Individual panel members document their scores against each criterion as per the 'Interview Score Sheet'.

On completion of this process the total combined score is entered on the 'Summary Score Sheet'. The completion of the 'Summary Score Sheet' establishes the **Order of Merit**. The Order of Merit may also be assessed in the event of a promotion appeal.

All selection panel members must sign the various documents (the shortlist scoresheet, the interview scoresheet and the summary scoresheet) produced in the selection process.

ii) Referee Checks:

Referee checks which canvass the opinions of current/former managers are an important component of the merit selection process and may supply valuable supplementary information.

Having determined the most meritorious applicant, the selection panel should conduct referee checks (providing this has not already been conducted during shortlisting) using the 'Referee Report'. These reports are conducted to confirm the panel's assessment of the highest scoring applicants.

It may be beneficial for the panel to conduct referee checks on all shortlisted applicants, but as a minimum if candidates at the top of the order of merit are closely grouped, it is recommended that referee checks be done on all the candidates so grouped.

The panel needs to agree on who will conduct the referee checks. This may be one or more members. Referee checks should be conducted in a structured manner with assessments requested against each of the selection criteria and preferably in writing.

The Referees should have first-hand knowledge of performance relevant to the selection criteria. If the applicant has not nominated their current manager, the panel should seek permission from the applicant to contact other people whom it deems appropriate eg. current supervisor. If an applicant is reluctant to nominate a supervisor as a referee or to provide further referees, the applicant should be informed of their right to respond to adverse comments.

If the applicant refuses to nominate a supervisor and fails to provide another referee who can comment from a supervisory perspective, or refuses to provide additional referees, and the committee believes it does not have adequate information to form a decision, the committee should inform the applicant that failure to nominate a referee or further referees may result in the applicant being excluded from further consideration.

Discretion should be used when contacting referees. For example, a routine inquiry may jeopardise the applicant's present job, if outside the public sector, particularly in the case of temporary or casual employment. The committee should ask applicants if there is anyone who may not be contacted and, if there is, they may ask for the reason. Costly litigation can result from inappropriate referee checking.

Referees should be informed that their comments will be made available to the applicant upon request, and also that they may be made available to any authorised person, or those having entitlements under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* or the *Judicial Review Act 1991*.

The applicant has the right of response to unfavourable referee comments. Two or more members should deliver these. Panel members may seek HR advice if the referee report is of a serious nature and will affect the outcome of the selection process.

Where adverse information is obtained from a referee which may significantly affect the selection committee's decision, the applicant should be given the opportunity to respond. In these circumstances, the applicant should be allowed to nominate additional referees in order to assess the validity of any concerns.

iii) Selection Decision:

The selection decision is made by the panel by combining a percentage of the total weighted scores from shortlisting and interviews. The weightings for the application and interview (as agreed prior to interview – see 'Assign Weightings to Selection Criteria' page 7) are applied in this calculation. Normally the highest scoring applicant will be the nominee. However, if the highest scoring applicant is not being nominated, the selection panel is to provide a detailed written statement justifying their decision. The Chairperson must complete the selection report.

If the most meritorious applicant is an external applicant (ie. not currently an officer of the Queensland public service), the terms of an offer may be discussed with the applicant. Prior to approval this needs to be communicated to the applicant as only a 'possibility'. This affords the Chairperson the opportunity to confirm the applicant is still interested in accepting the position, to discuss terms and conditions of employment and to negotiate salary (ie. starting point within the salary range).

Care is to be taken to clearly indicate that final approval for the appointment (and salary if nomination is above pay-point 1) has not been given and the nominee should be prudent with regard to terminating their present employment etc.

Note: *Advice is available from JAG HRMS on appropriate levels, in relation to tertiary studies or time relieving etc. As a guide, when recommending a commencing salary level above the first pay point, written justification should be produced detailing the applicant's knowledge, skills and experience in similar duties at the same or higher work value than the advertised position.*

In addition to documenting the Panel's assessment numerically, an overall description of the relative merits of each applicant must be provided on a 'Merit Statement'. Merit statements are brief summaries for the selection panel's assessment of each of the interviewed applicants and they may be used in providing feedback and if necessary, in the event of an appeal.

In the event of a majority decision only, the dissenting panel member is to provide the Chairperson with a Minority Report (a written statement justifying their views).

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson and selection panel members to ensure that their process complies with the Selection Process Policy 1.6 and OPSME Directive 5/97.

iv) Nominate Appointee(s):

The Chairperson must complete a 'Justification and Nomination Form' and attach the previously completed documentation.

v) Approval Process:

The full report is submitted for approval to the relevant delegated authority (see current Human Resource Delegations).

vi) Advise Applicants:

All applicants are to be advised of the selection outcome as soon as possible after the delegate has approved the nomination. On approval, it is usual for the Chairperson to contact the successful candidate, negotiate commencement date with the candidate's employer etc. Nominees should commence duty within four weeks of the approval date. In special circumstances a longer period may be negotiated.

The Chairperson should also advise the other applicants that they were unsuccessful. Formal notification to unsuccessful applicants is normally prepared by JAG HRMS unless otherwise advised by the Chairperson.

vii) Selection Feedback:

Feedback (either verbally or in writing) is to be provided to applicants upon request by either the Chairperson or nominated member(s) of the selection panel.

Feedback is based on the selection panels' assessment of the individual applicant's suitability in relation to each selection criterion.

Whilst it is not essential for all selection panel members to be involved in providing feedback, it must reflect the selection panel members' assessment as a whole. It is usual for the Chairperson to be involved in providing the feedback (see for 'Feedback Report Form').

6. FILING OF DOCUMENTATION

The nomination and all relevant and signed documentation should be forwarded immediately to the Manager, Support Services.

The Chairperson and panel members however are to retain, in a secure and confidential manner, their individual notes taken at interviews, applications etc for a period of at least 12 months from the date the appeal period elapsed. This period expires 21 days after gazettal notification of the appointee.