

**Webber and Quentin TMO
Recruitment and Selection Policy**

Webber and Quentin TMO			
Title	Recruitment and Selection Policy	Ref:	
For	All employees, all Board members		
Form(s)	None		
Linked to	Equal Opportunities Policy		
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Recruiting and selecting the right people is of paramount importance to the success of W&Q TMO to deliver services of the highest quality to its residents. This Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out how to ensure, as far as possible, that the best people are recruited on merit and that the recruitment process is free from bias and discrimination.

By following the policy, in addition to fulfilling employment law requirements, W&Q will also ensure that it continues to uphold its commitment to equal opportunities.

Introduction

1. This policy is designed to assist in the recruitment and selection of the best candidate for a vacancy. In doing so it takes account of:
 - Webber and Quentin TMO’s Equal Opportunities policy;
 - Legislation including the Equality Act 2010;
 - Advice on good practice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission; and
 - Requirements for compliance with UK Immigration legislation.
2. It is the responsibility of the W&Q HR Sub-committee to ensure that this policy is carefully followed within each recruitment and selection process.
3. The policy will be reviewed from time to time and amended as appropriate.

Scope

4. Normally appointments will be made in accordance with this policy and must, therefore, be subject to advertisement and interview. The Board must approve any exceptions in advance of formal appointment, for example where a grant awarding body approves funding to continue a post or for a short-term specialised project.
5. When employing temporary or casual staff on a short-term basis the principles of good practice outlined in this policy should be followed. In summary these are that details of a post must be publicised in a manner relevant to the post, selection must be on the basis of appropriate criteria and merit.

New Jobs and Vacancies

6. The occurrence of a vacancy is an opportunity to review the necessity for the post and its duties, responsibilities and grade.
7. When a vacancy arises, consideration must be given to staff whose posts are being made redundant and for whom redeployment is being sought.

Job Description (duties of the role)

8. A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It should clearly set out the duties and responsibilities of the job and must include:
 - the job title;
 - the location of the role;
 - the post to whom the post holder is responsible;
 - any posts reporting to the post holder;
 - main purpose of the job;
 - main duties and responsibilities;
 - any special working conditions (e.g. working patterns).
9. Items that should be included in job descriptions are:
 - A note that indicates that, as duties and responsibilities change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder;
 - An indication that the post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job;
 - A statement that the post holder will actively follow policies including Equal Opportunities policy;

- An indication that the post holder will maintain an awareness and observation of Health & Safety Regulations.

10. The language in job descriptions should:

- Avoid jargon and unexplained acronyms and abbreviations;
- Be readily understandable to potential applicants for the post;
- Avoid ambiguity about responsibilities and be clear about the post holder's accountability for resources, staff, etc.

Person Specification

11. The person specification is of equal importance to the job description and informs the selection decision. The person specification details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

12. The person specification should be specific, related to the job, and not unnecessarily restrictive - for example only qualifications strictly needed to do the job should be specified. The inclusion of criteria that cannot be justified as essential for the performance of the job may be deemed discriminatory under discrimination law.

13. The person specification must form part of the further particulars of a vacancy along with the job description in order that applicants have a full picture of what the job entails. The person specification enables potential applicants to make an informed decision about whether to apply and, for those who do apply, to give sufficient relevant detail of their skills and experience in their application. The person specification forms the basis of the selection decision and enables the selection panel to ensure objectivity in their selection.

14. The person specification details the required:

- knowledge (including necessary qualifications);
- skills and abilities;
- experience;
- aptitudes.

15. Criteria which are subjective and for which little evidence is likely to be obtained through the selection process should be avoided (for example, 'a flexible approach' is often too vague to be of any help in the selection process).

16. For some jobs a particular qualification(s) may be essential, while for others no single qualification may be appropriate and a particular type of experience may be just as relevant as a formal qualification. Where qualifications are deemed essential these should reflect the minimum requirements necessary to carry out the job to an acceptable standard.

17. Required abilities should be expressed in terms of the standards required, not just in terms of the task to be undertaken. For example, avoid statements such as 'Ability to write reports'; instead, indicate the expected standard, such as 'Ability to write detailed financial reports that encompass budgeting and forecasting'.

Details for Applicants

18. The details of a vacancy or 'further particulars' of a post must include the job description and person specification for the post together with any other important information that a potential applicant needs to decide whether to apply.

19. Further particulars must include the following where they apply:

- details of the main terms and conditions of employment (including holiday and pension arrangements, entitlement to apply for sabbatical leave if appropriate, working hours, call-out or shift patterns arrangements if appropriate, etc.);
- Information about Styles House, values, strategic plans;
- The Equal Opportunity Policy;
- guidelines about completing the application form, including the number of referees and whether there is an intention to seek references before interview;
- where a CV is required, candidates should be advised that it must include: education history (institution name, start and end dates of courses, qualification gained), details of membership of any professional organisations, details of current or most recent employer (name and address of current organisation, job title, salary and duties), details of previous employment and how the applicants' knowledge, skills, and abilities meet the job requirements;
- where applicable, a statement explaining that only candidates who are shortlisted will be contacted;
- An indication of the need for a Criminal Records Bureau check, depending on the post;
- Proof of Right to work – see appendix 1.

20. Consideration should be given to making all recruitment information available electronically as this is an increasingly effective and less resource intensive method of communication. When requested and where reasonable, documentation should be translated into alternative formats. For example blind or partially sighted people may have preferred ways of receiving information e.g. Braille, large print, tape or an electronic format so that their accessibility software can be used.

Publicising the Vacancy

21. All posts must be advertised on the Styles House website. The only exceptions to this are where restructuring is taking place or where staff are facing redundancy.

22. The majority of posts will be advertised in other specialist and national publications. All posts must be advertised for a minimum of two weeks to help attract the best pool of applicants and ensure compliance with immigration rules.
23. The Equality and Human Rights Commission advises that 'word of mouth' recruitment is likely to be indirectly discriminatory in terms of race and/or sex discrimination. It is very important therefore that all posts are advertised as widely as possible in media that reach underrepresented groups and that all applicants are dealt with in the same way and given the same information and opportunity to make an application.
24. An advertisement is written from the job description and person specification and should contain the following points:
 - Styles House name and logo
 - title of vacancy
 - salary
 - brief details of the job
 - key details of the person specification
 - the necessity of a criminal records check, if required
 - duration of the appointment (if fixed term)
 - how to obtain further particulars of the vacancies
 - closing date for applications (sufficient time should be allowed to enable applicants to consider the further particulars and make their application)
 - where known, date of interview
 - All necessary and required logos from funders
25. The Board must provide permission to fill a post before seeking to publicise a vacancy.
26. All job advertisements must be placed through the Board to ensure consistency.
27. A copy of adverts placed in all media should be retained by the Board in both hard copy and in electronic form.

Processing Applications

28. Care must also be taken when initiating contacts with applicants that all are treated in the same way, for example with regard to invitations to visit, informal meetings to discuss the vacancy, and provision of information.
29. Disabled candidates should be allowed to submit an application in a different form e.g. by tape/CD/mp3.
30. The confidentiality of applications must be respected by all of those involved in the selection process.

Selecting the Interview Panel

31. All interviews must be conducted by a panel. The Board should agree the interview panel with Southwark Council prior to the closing date. This allows panel members to assist in the short listing process. Familiarity with the vacancy and preparation for the interview is a key to successful interviewing.
32. Panels must:
- consist of a minimum of three people, one of whom must be the immediate line manager. Team members or external agencies should be invited where this is appropriate;
 - include those who have received training in fair recruitment and ideally at least one member who has received disability awareness training;
 - consider inviting an end user of these services to join the panel;
 - declare if they already know a candidate;
 - be willing and able to attend all interviews for the duration of the recruitment process, to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all candidates.

Monitoring

33. Styles House monitors the diversity of all shortlisted candidates and appointees. All applicants are therefore required to complete an Equalities Monitoring Form.

Shortlisting

34. After the closing date has passed the interview panel should assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be called for interview. At least two members of the interview panel, including the immediate line manager, should undertake the task of short listing. Where the panel has an external member, that person should take part in the short listing wherever practicable. Shortlisting decisions should be based on evidence that the applicant has met the requirements of the person specification. Assumptions should not be made about their reasons for applying for the post as they may eliminate an otherwise exemplary candidate.
35. The original applications for all applicants along with the scoring process, must be retained for a minimum of 12 months from the date that an appointment decision is notified, in case of complaint to an Employment Tribunal and to satisfy Border Agency requirements.

Arrangements for Interviews

36. Letters or e-mails to shortlisted candidates should include:
- date, time and place of their interview;

- instructions on how to find their way to the interview venue;
- a request that they contact the author of the letter/message if they have any particular requirements or to discuss the interview facilities (related to access to the venue or any other need related to a disability);
- if appropriate, details of any test or presentation they will be required to take or anything they should bring with them (e.g., examples of work);
- qualification certificates that are essential to the post;
- permission to work in the UK documents (or to indicate if a Certificate of Sponsorship is required);
- A specimen letter is set out in Appendix Two.

37. The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it an offence to employ anyone who does not have permission to be in, or work in, the UK. To avoid making assumptions about such permission, all appointees must provide evidence of eligibility to work in the UK. It is unlawful racial discrimination to carry out checks only on potential employees who by their appearance or accent seem to be other than British. It is therefore a requirement to ask all candidates attending for interview to bring with them evidence of their right to work in the UK.

38. A copy of the original document (i.e. passport) must be taken.

39. It is best practice to write to candidates who have not been shortlisted, but if this is not possible due to limited resources, the further particulars for the post should make clear that after a certain period, if they have not heard, applicants should consider themselves not to have been shortlisted.

Interviewing

40. All members of the interview panel must have received training in fair recruitment and ideally at least one panel member should have attended disability awareness training.

41. Interviews should be scheduled as soon after the closing date as reasonably possible, as delays are likely to lead to a loss of candidates.

42. The structure of interviews should be decided in advance by determining who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all of the elements of the person specification. The question areas to be explored by each panel member should be agreed in advance to avoid overlap or repetition and panels may find it helpful to discuss their expectations of full answers to the questions, prior to the interview.

43. The same areas of questioning should be covered with all candidates and assumptions should not be made regarding the expertise or abilities of candidates because of their employment history. Interview questions should be phrased so that they do not favour any one candidate or group of candidates. Supplementary questions should be used to probe

for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous. Care must be taken to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g., questions about personal circumstances that are unrelated to the job). It is, for example, legitimate to ask for confirmation of whether individuals can comply with the working patterns of the post, but not to ask details of their domestic or child care arrangements etc.

44. The panel should not enquire into an individual's sickness absence record or health, either through the application form or in the recruitment interview as this is contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
45. Interview panels acting for W&Q in making selection decisions are accountable for them. Interview notes must be taken by each panelist to help the panel to make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills, experience and abilities in relation to the person specification. The Data Protection Act allows applicants to request disclosure of such notes in the event of a complaint and an Employment Tribunal would expect Styles House to have notes of every selection decision. The lack of such notes would seriously impede Styles House's ability to contest such a complaint. Obviously any inappropriate or personally derogatory comments contained within the notes could be considered discriminatory and are unacceptable.
46. Where the candidate being interviewed is disabled and reasonable adjustments may need to be considered in relation to the workplace or job, these should only be discussed if the disabled candidate is successful at interview.
47. It is good practice to offer internal applicants feedback after interviews and it is Styles House's policy to respond to requests for feedback from external applicants. Feedback should be specific, relating to the person specification, and honest. In feeding back to candidates it is good practice to balance the applicants' weaknesses with some positive points.

Selection Tests and Presentations

48. Consideration should be given to using job-related selection tests or asking candidates to give presentations as part of the selection process if there are some elements of the person specification that are difficult to test at interview. If selection tests or presentations are to be used, all candidates should be given the same written information as to how long they will take, the topic area(s) they will cover, and what - if anything - they should prepare in advance. In all cases care should be taken to ensure that job-related tests are well explained in writing for candidates, in plain language, that all candidates are subject to the same tests under exactly the same conditions, (excluding any allowances made as 'reasonable adjustments' to disabled candidates) and that presentation topics do not favour any one candidate.

Making a Decision after Interview

49. The information obtained in the application (including the applicant's attendance record), the interview, any selection tests and in references (if obtained prior to interview) will allow candidates to be assessed against the person specification and a selection decision to be made. The Board must ensure that a written note of the reasons for selecting the successful candidate and rejecting others is made and placed on the recruitment file, together with the original applications and notes of all panel members, for a minimum of 12 months after the appointment decision has been notified to the candidates.
50. If a member of a selection panel feels that there has been any irregularity in the recruitment and selection procedure and the panel cannot resolve the matter at the time, they must report the matter without delay to the Chair of the Board.
51. Interview proceedings are confidential and interviewers are free to divulge to others the decision reached only once the appointee has accepted the post.
52. A contract will only be issued once references, or other pre-employment checks, e.g. the right to work, have been completed. Provisional offers may be made, subject to certain conditions being met, for example, the receipt of satisfactory references, CRB checks and clearances being obtained.
53. Where the successful candidate is disabled, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on their disability in consultation with them. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. Urgent advice should be sought from the Occupational Health Service regarding adjustments to work premises, practices, equipment or the job itself. The candidate may qualify for the Government's Access to Work Programme. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed these must be recorded in writing. The candidate should also receive written confirmation of whatever adjustments have been agreed.

References

54. The further particulars for a post should make clear to candidates the number and status of referees required. References from relatives or friends should not be accepted. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of a candidate's work, education or training: preferably in a supervisory capacity and a reference must be obtained from the current or previous employer.
55. When requesting references, it is helpful to seek precise information and confirm facts, such as length of employment, relationship of the applicant to the referee, job title, brief details of responsibilities, reasons for leaving, unauthorised absence, attendance including sickness absence, performance, and any other relevant information. It is helpful to the referee to include a copy of the job description and person specification of the post to which you are recruiting. Do not make requests that only elicit generalisations about

candidates' attendance, honesty, or subjective information as to the applicant's suitability for the job. Model reference requests are shown in Appendix Three.

56. When conducting telephone references, it is helpful to plan the conversation beforehand and to have a list of questions ready. A file note should be made at the time of the telephone conversation and written confirmation should always be requested.
57. It should be noted that for TMO Manager appointments, references need to be obtained for external applicants covering the previous three years.
58. References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'. References should only be used for the purpose for which they were intended and their confidentiality must be maintained. Panel members must return all copies of any references with the application forms and their interview notes to the Recruitment Manager. References must only be kept on the recruitment file.

Criminal Reference Checks

59. W&Q will not discriminate unfairly against applicants who possess a criminal record and will not necessarily bar an applicant from employment due to an unspent conviction; the nature of the conviction and its relevance to the post will be considered. However, unspent convictions of violence, assault or damage to property are likely to be incompatible with working for Styles House.
60. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ex-offenders do not have to disclose spent convictions. However certain types of posts, particularly those that involve working with children or vulnerable adults or in other positions of trust or sensitive areas, are exempt from these provisions, and in these cases all convictions must be declared.
61. From 2009, the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) places additional requirements for checking the suitability of people working with children or vulnerable adults.

Appointment

62. Only the HR Sub-committee Chair will issue letters of appointment and place individuals on the payroll (other than very limited exceptions). If the job offer is conditional on completion of a qualification, CRB check, visa clearance or health screening, this will be made clear in the appointment letter.

Induction and Probation

63. It is W&Q's policy that all staff undergo an induction, followed by a probationary period during which they will be introduced to the main duties and responsibilities of their post.

Salary

64. Within the financial provision or established grading of the post, the salary offered should have regard to the applicant's experience or expertise but will normally be at the bottom of the salary scale. The most relevant issue will normally be the applicant's present salary. The salaries of other staff doing similar work with similar experience should also be taken into account to maintain fairness and consistency.

Breaches of Policy

65. Any member of staff with concerns about the application of this policy should raise their concerns to the Chair of the Board.

Appendix One - Right to Work Documents

Why are you being asked to bring evidence of your right to work to interview?

The new Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 came into effect on 29 February 2008. This strengthened the requirement for employers to check documents to establish a person's eligibility to work in the UK and compliance with any restrictions. New civil penalties were introduced with fines up to £10,000 for each illegally employed worker and unlimited fines and imprisonment of up to 2 years for knowingly employing illegal workers.

Under the Act we are required to check your eligibility to work in the UK **before** you start work. We are therefore asking all candidates to bring proof of their right to work to interview and a copy will be taken.

If you are successful at interview this documentation will be kept on your personnel file. If you are not successful the documentation will be shredded and securely disposed of. If you forget to bring this documentation you will be asked to bring the original before an offer can be made and contract sent.

APPENDIX Two - Sample Letters

1. Communicating with Candidates – Invitation to Interview

The following must be used as a model on which to base a letter of invitation to an interview. Aspects (such as presentation or test details) may be added, but none of these elements should be deleted:

Dear

Thank you for your recent application for the above vacancy.

I am pleased to inform you that you have been shortlisted and you are invited to attend an interview on (date) at (location).

If you have any particular requirements in relation to the interview or the prospective job, please let us know immediately so we can discuss any equipment or facilities you may need. We are requesting this information to make the process as equitable as possible for each candidate.

Please bring with you to the interview evidence of your right to work in the UK and the originals of your academic qualifications.

Please telephone (Administrator) on (telephone number) to confirm whether you will attend.

Yours sincerely,

2. Communicating with Candidates – Unsuccessful Application

Unless candidates have been told explicitly in the advertisement or in the further particulars for the appointment that they should assume that they have been unsuccessful if they have not been contacted by a specified date, it is only courteous to inform them that their applications have been unsuccessful as soon as is practicably possible after short listing or interview. The following may be used as a model on which to base a letter of rejection if a candidate has not been invited for an interview:

Dear

Thank you for your recent application for the above vacancy.

I regret to inform you that you have not been shortlisted on this occasion, as we have been able to draw on a shortlist of candidates whose experience and skills more closely match the requirements of the vacancy.

However, I do hope you will continue to apply for other posts at Styles House for which you feel qualified.

Thank you for your interest and I wish you every success in your future career.

Yours sincerely

Unsuccessful applicants can be expected to be disappointed at a rejection and it is natural to want to let them down as gently as possible. Nevertheless, one should not say things that are untrue, for example:

- “We were impressed with your application” (when quite clearly you were not)
- “There were a large number of better qualified candidates” (when there were not)

Communicating with Candidates – Unsuccessful Interview

The following may be used as a model on which to base a letter of rejection following an unsuccessful interview:

Dear

Thank you for attending an interview for the above position.

I regret to inform you that after careful consideration you have been unsuccessful on this occasion.

Thank you for your interest in this post. I hope you will soon be successful in finding a suitable position.

Yours sincerely

Appendix Three - Request for a Reference

The following may be used as a model on which to base a letter to a referee following a successful interview. In addition, the reference pro forma below may be used.

Dear

Re: (Applicant name)

The above-named is being considered for the post of (post title) and has indicated that you would be willing to provide a reference. I should therefore be most grateful if you would confirm for me:

(applicant name)'s title and service dates at your organisation

(applicant name)'s employment relationship to you as a referee

(applicant name)'s sickness/absence record over the last 24 months

(applicant name)'s reason(s) for leaving your employment (where applicable)

I am attaching a job description and person specification for the post of (post title). I would be grateful if you would comment on the above name's suitability for the post, and provide any other relevant information.

Any information you can give will be treated in the strictest confidence.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you in advance for any help you are able to give; your prompt reply would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely