

# **Recruitment Procedures**

## **Recruitment and Career Development**

## Contents

Recruitment Procedures .....	3
Recruitment Materials and Acknowledging Subsequent Applications .....	4
Applying for a Position .....	5
Planning Recruitment.....	6
Converting an Agency Temp to an Indefinite Contract .....	7
Identifying and Allocating Recruitment Funds.....	8
Interviewing Candidates.....	9
Making a Selection Decision .....	13
Using Tests and Presentations .....	15
Short-listing Candidates for Interview .....	18

## Recruitment Procedures

### Overview

This section describes the British Council worldwide recruitment and selection procedures for all staff. It covers:

- how to prepare a Job Description
- how to advertise a vacancy
- how to evaluate and select candidates
- how to convert temporary staff to an indefinite contract
- how to apply for a position.

### Audience

This section applies to all staff worldwide.

### Policy

#### Training requirements

- If you are involved in making recruitment and selection decisions, you must have undertaken Recruitment and Selection training within the previous three years and undertake refresher training every three years.
- If you are recruiting staff in the UK you must also have undertaken face to face Equal Opportunities and Diversity training within the previous three years and undertake refresher training every three years.
- If you are recruiting staff outside the UK, you must complete the e-learning Equal Opportunities and Diversity course. Managers must ensure that they and relevant staff have received this training.

What this means in practice is:

- At least two of the panel members must have undertaken full recruitment and selection training in the previous three years (by full training we mean you need to have done either the original two-day face-to-face course plus refresher training, if this was three years ago, or to have done the new combined e-learning and one-day face-to-face course).
- If you have not done recruitment and selection training before or are new to recruitment and selection in the British Council then you must successfully complete the E-Learning Recruitment and Selection Course and also, within one month, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course either in the UK or in country/region. If you do not have time to attend the face-to-face course before actually being involved in recruitment and selection decisions, then you may take part provided that two other panel members have had the full training, and that you have successfully completed the e-learning course before you take part in the recruitment. You must then, within three months, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course.
- If your face-to-face training in recruitment and selection was undertaken three years or more ago and you therefore require refresher training in recruitment and selection, then you must successfully complete the e-learning course before you take part in recruitment and selection again. We recommend that you also undertake the one-day face-to-face course which focuses on skills practice.
- If you are recruiting staff in the UK you must have attended a face to face Equal Opportunities and Diversity workshop within the last three years. If you are recruiting

staff outside the UK, you must complete the Equal Opportunities and Diversity e-learning Course.

Managers must ensure that they and relevant staff have received this training. For advice and support, consult your Human Resources (HR) contact.

### **Equal Opportunity monitoring**

You must carry out equal opportunity monitoring for all internal and external recruitment exercises using the appropriate form. In the UK, HR Services teams ensure that Equal Opportunities (EO) monitoring is carried out for all internal and external UK recruitment using the appropriate Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire.

The monitoring is done by whichever HR Services team is supporting the particular recruitment exercise. EO monitoring for posting batches is done by the HR Recruitment team. HR managers outside the UK must establish a system for monitoring EO data for all recruitment exercises in their own country, using the UK model as a guide. For more information, see Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Recruitment Policy.

### **Procedures**

The following steps for recruitment are covered in these procedures.

**Note:** Any variations from these procedures in accordance with the exceptions (see Exceptions to the Standard Recruitment Procedures) must be approved. Present your case through HR Services.

1. Prepare the Job Description for the vacancy.
2. Are there exceptional situations to consider before advertising the vacancy?
  - Consult your HR contact. For a list of exceptions, see Exceptions to the Standard Recruitment Procedures.
  - HR will inform or consult TUS, or local staff association, as appropriate.
3. Identify and allocate the necessary funds for this recruitment exercise.
4. Decide on the type of advertising and recruitment.
5. Place your advertisement.
6. Acknowledge all applications.
7. Short-list the candidates for interview and inform the unsuccessful applicants.
8. Interview the short-listed candidates.
9. Make your decision, offer the job to the selected candidate and inform the unsuccessful applicants. Give feedback, as appropriate.
10. File all records of the recruitment exercise.

## **Recruitment Materials and Acknowledging Subsequent Applications**

### **Overview**

This section describes the materials to be used for internal and external recruitment and how to acknowledge subsequent applications.

### **Audience**

This section applies to all staff worldwide.

### **Responsibilities**

These procedures are carried out by:

- Human Resources (HR) staff
- Recruiting managers.

**Policy**

All recruitment literature must conform to British Council official style. For more information see Placing an Advertisement, Corporate Identity Standards and the Advertisement Template. All recruitment literature in the UK must be made available in other formats (large print, Braille, CD ROM or audio tape) if candidates request these, and you must indicate this availability in your advertisement.

There is separate policy and procedure relating to the use of tests and presentations in recruitment, see Using Tests and Presentations.

All internal applications are acknowledged within five working days of receipt. Where numbers permit, all external applications should also be acknowledged. If you anticipate not being able to acknowledge applications, you must state this in the recruitment literature.

**Procedure**

1. Your advertisement and associated materials must provide as much information as possible about the recruitment exercise, including a timetable indicating when short-listing, interviews and decision making will take place. If you subsequently can't keep to the timetable, you must let all candidates know what is happening.
2. For internal recruitment you need to include an up-to-date job description with your Bulletin advertisement, see Confirming a Vacancy and Preparing a Job Description. The Bulletin has a standing link to the Internal Application form.
3. Materials for external recruitment must include Information about the Job, an External Application Form, the Competency Dictionary for External Candidates and guidance on completing applications for external applicants.
4. Acknowledge all internal applications, using the Model Letter.

**Note:** Managers in the UK can order recruitment materials in alternative formats, that is, braille, computer disk, and audio tape, if these are needed they should contact their HR Adviser or HR Recruitment Team. Managers based outside the UK are encouraged to find out about similar services for their own countries.

**Applying for a Position****Overview**

This guidance describes how internal staff can apply for British Council positions and give feedback on the application process.

**Audience**

This section applies to all staff worldwide.

**Policy**

British Council staff must apply for positions using the correct procedures.

**Guidance**

For job advertisements, and how to respond to them, see the job vacancy section of the Bulletin. Further information is available on the Human Resources (HR) intranet.

For guidance on transferring jobs, see Transfers (Internal and Overseas).

For guidance on UK relocation, see Relocation (Internal). Relocation benefits are awarded on a discretionary basis, according to individual circumstances. In some few cases relocation benefits may not be offered, or only on a reduced basis.

After you have been through the application process, you may like to complete the Job Applicant Feedback form, anonymously, and send it to HR Services. HR Services will not forward your feedback to anyone involved in the selection process until that process is completed.

You are entitled to appeal against a recruiting manager's decision. For more information, see Grievances and Appeals.

## Planning Recruitment

### Overview

This section describes how to plan recruitment, whether internal or external, and gives guidance on the options available.

### Audience

This section applies to all staff.

### Responsibilities

This procedure is carried out by recruiting managers, with support from the appropriate Human Resources (HR) contact.

### Policy

All jobs must be advertised internally to staff based in the country in which the vacant post exists. This does not apply to jobs within the teaching centre network or on overseas package terms which may be advertised internally more widely.

- If there is no suitable candidate the post can be advertised in one of the following ways:
- externally within country, through the corporate website and appropriate media, or
- among British Council staff in the region
- externally within country(ies) in the region
- to British Council staff globally via the Bulletin

The expectation is that jobs advertised outside the country in which the vacancy exists would be those requiring 'specialist' skills and/or regional knowledge and experience of the organisation in order for the duties to be performed. It is likely that these jobs will at pay band 7/Grade F and above.

Country Directors should refer to the Framework for Country to Country Transfers outlining the benefits, disadvantages and points to be considered in determining which of the above options is most appropriate. Any decision to advertise outside of the country in which the vacancy exists must be approved by Regional Director or, for UK jobs, the relevant SMT member.

- If the job was advertised internally more than six months ago then it should be re-advertised internally before it maybe advertised externally.

For exceptions to this standard procedure, see Standard Recruitment Procedures and Exceptions

### Guidance

Recruitment is normally to a specific job but may also be for a batch of vacancies. There are considerable gains to be made by grouping broadly similar vacant posts into a batch: it costs less and has much greater impact. Factors most likely to lead to a vacancy being included in a batch are degree of specialisation, timing, location and level. Your HR contact will discuss with you whether your needs can be met through a batch exercise or need to be handled as a single vacancy.

The options for filling vacancies externally are:

- Run an external recruitment exercise, managed in-house.
- Appoint a recruitment and selection agency to run all or part of an external recruitment exercise, for example placing the advertisement, handling applications and doing initial short-listing, in line with the new policy and procedures.
- In the UK, ask Adecco, our preferred supplier of temporary staff, to advertise the vacancy to people registered with them. Interested candidates should complete application forms and normal recruitment process is then followed. You must also, at the very least, advertise the vacancy on the Council's external website and with JobCentre Plus. You may choose to advertise the vacancy in other specialist media if appropriate. Managers are also encouraged to advertise in minority ethnic and disability media. Your HR contact will advise and support you in selecting the best place for your advertisement.
- For appointments of eight weeks or less at junior management and administrative levels, you should appoint an agency temp. For more information, see Employing Agency Temps in the UK.

### **Procedure**

1. Before undertaking any recruitment, internal or external, you must consult your HR contact. In the UK, HR Services can advise you of anyone to whom we have a legal obligation to offer a post and who meets the requirements for the job. This may be, for example, someone returning from maternity leave or long sickness absence.
2. At this initial consultation, be prepared to discuss:
  - the job description, and essential and desirable criteria; bearing in mind that if large numbers of candidates are anticipated short-listing may need to be done against desirable as well as essential criteria
  - whether the duties of the job can be re-assigned (and there is therefore no need for recruitment)
  - the funding available to pay for recruitment
  - whether the job is in line with headcount requirements
  - length of vacancy and most appropriate contractual arrangement to offer
  - how soon the job needs to be filled
  - the availability of management time and administrative resource for recruitment
  - an appropriate recruitment option, the design and management of the exercise, and mutual roles and responsibilities.

## **Converting an Agency Temp to an Indefinite Contract**

### **Overview**

This guidance and procedure gives advice on how to convert an agency temp to an indefinite contract.

### **Audience**

This section applies to UK-appointed staff. Offices outside the UK can use this section as guidance for establishing their own policy and procedures for booking temps through agencies.

## Responsibilities

Recruiting managers, with the support of Human Resources (HR Services), are responsible for making sure these processes are followed correctly and that:

- all members of staff recruited externally are recruited in line with our recruitment policy and standards and fully meet the competency requirements of the relevant post
- documented evidence is available to support this.

## Policy

You must try to fill a permanent vacancy through internal recruitment first. The recruitment of the temp/s must be in line with our standard recruitment and selection policy and must follow the process below.

## Procedures

**Note:** In the UK, once a temp has been working at the British Council for 16 weeks continuously, it is possible to convert the temp's contract to an indefinite contract. For more information see Contract types. Earlier conversion incurs a fee from the agency.

Before starting the process, consult HR Services (in the UK) or the overseas HR team.

Talk to your HR services team about the best way to approach the exercise but, as a minimum, you must do the following:

1. candidate completes an external application form (including the competency section for the selection criteria being used), is short-listed and interviewed. The panel should include a manager not directly involved in the management line of the job in question. Please note that we are currently piloting new tests and this is not an option during the piloting. All temps being considered for conversion will undertake the tests
2. candidate completes an external application form (including the competency section for the selection criteria being used), is short-listed, and sits standard tests (these are currently being updated. In the interim please talk to your HR services team (in the UK) or Geographical consultant (overseas). We are currently piloting new tests and all temps being considered for conversion will undertake the tests.

For further information about the appointment and management of agency temps, see Employing Agency Temps in the UK.

## Identifying and Allocating Recruitment Funds

### Overview

This section describes how to identify and allocate the necessary funds to cover a recruitment exercise.

### Audience

This section applies to UK-appointed staff worldwide.

### Responsibilities

This procedure is carried out by recruiting managers.

### Policy

Recruiting managers are responsible for all direct and indirect recruitment costs, including those for staff recruited through a temp agency. The recruiting manager is not responsible for the costs of corporate exercises.

**Procedure**

1. Ask your Human Resources (HR) contact for an indication of recruitment costs.
2. Identify the direct costs for the recruitment exercise, including:
  - the external advertisement (if necessary)
  - any extra temporary administrative assistance
  - out-sourced administration / venue hire (if used)
  - travel costs for candidates, interviewers and external testers where applicable.
3. Identify the indirect costs, which are the management and administrative time involved.
4. Set aside funds, as appropriate.
5. Recruiting managers need to be aware that in the UK, if an applicant from another UK office is successful in applying for a job, they may be eligible for relocation benefits. Full details of the policy and procedures on relocation benefits are available in Relocations (Internal).

**Relocation benefits**

Recruiting managers must bear in mind:

- Who pays for the relocation benefits.
- The availability or non-availability of relocation benefits may influence the candidate's decision on whether or not to accept the job.
- Relocation benefits are:
  - charged to the new post of the person relocating. There is no central fund held by HR
  - awarded on a discretionary basis, according to individual circumstances. In some few cases, relocation benefits may not be offered, or only on a reduced basis, and this may affect a candidate's decision on whether or not to accept a job offer.
  - transfers from overseas, see Transfers (Internal and Overseas).

**Interviewing Candidates****Overview**

This section describes how to prepare for and manage interviews.

**Audience**

This section applies to UK-appointed staff worldwide.

**Responsibilities**

HR staff and/ or recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring these procedures are carried out.

**Policy**

All staff involved in interviewing must be trained in selection interviewing.

## Procedures

### Pre-requisites for involvement in recruiting

- If you have not done recruitment and selection training before, or are new to recruitment and selection in the British Council, then you must successfully complete the E-Learning Recruitment and Selection Course and also, within one month, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course either in the UK or in country/region. If you do not have time to attend the face-to-face course before actually being involved in recruitment and selection decisions, provided two other panel members have had the full training, you must successfully complete the e-learning course before you take part in the recruitment. You must then, within one month, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course.
- If your face-to-face training in recruitment and selection was undertaken three years ago and you therefore require refresher training in recruitment and selection, you must successfully complete the e-learning course before you take part in the recruitment. We recommend that you also undertake the one-day face-to-face course which focuses on skills practice.
- If you are recruiting staff in the UK, with effect from January 2006, you must have attended a face-to-face Equal Opportunities and Diversity workshop within the last three years. With effect from July 2005 if you are recruiting staff in the UK but have not yet done the face-to-face Equal Opportunities and Diversity training, then you must successfully complete the Equal Opportunities and Diversity e-learning Course and by January 2006 have also undertaken the face-to-face course. If you are recruiting staff outside the UK, you must complete the e-learning course.

### Preparing for interviews

1. Form an interview panel. The following standards apply in all cases:
  - At least two people must be involved, and not more than four.
  - At least one interviewer must not have been involved in the short-listing process or an earlier interview or separate presentation exercise if these took place.
  - All members of the panel must be at least one pay band above or the same pay band as the vacant job being recruited for. HR staff at any level may participate in an interview panel. Any exceptions to this must be agreed by Head HR Recruitment.
  - At least two of the panel members must have undertaken full recruitment and selection training in the previous three years (by full training we mean you need to have done either the original two day face-to-face course plus refresher training if this was three years ago, or to have done the new combined e-learning and one day face-to-face course). See Pre-requisites for involvement in recruiting above.
  - The interviewers must represent a diverse mix of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation where possible.
2. Schedule the interviews and make appointments. Where a face-to-face interview is difficult to arrange because of the location of those involved, the interview should take place by telephone or video-conference following the same standards. For more information, see Conducting telephone interviews and Conducting video-conferenced interviews below.

3. Book a private room for the interviews and make sure the seating is arranged comfortably and suitably. Do not interview in an open plan area.
4. Read the Job Description.
5. Read each candidate's application form and, for internal recruitment, the last three performance evaluations. Make a note of any areas you want to explore at interview or which have been highlighted on the short-listing matrix for further exploration.
6. Meet as a panel and agree on:
  - who will introduce which part of the interview and lead on it
  - the initial questions on the essential and desirable criteria/competencies, for further information see Sample Interview Questions.

### Scheduling interviews

Interviewing is extremely tiring and you will lose your focus and objectivity if you try to see too many people in one day.

Pay band	Interview time	Comments
Junior and middle management	45 minutes to one hour plus 45 minutes post-interview for discussion and scoring.	Maximum of five candidates a day.
Middle and senior management	One to one and a half hours plus 45 minutes to one hour for post-interview discussion and scoring	Maximum of three candidates a day.

Use the following guidelines for scheduling interviews:

- Aim to interview three candidates for each vacancy.
- Ask candidates to confirm their intention to attend.
- Ask candidates to attend 15 minutes earlier than their interview time.
- Assign interview times in the middle of the day to candidates with long journeys.

### Conducting interviews

Conduct the interview carefully. Ensure that candidates are put at ease, are aware of the process and what is required of them. Each interviewer must take notes during the interview of evidence of the required competencies.

The way you ask a question helps to determine the response. Use open questions such as, what, where, how, why and tell me about, which elicit the fullest responses and provide evidence of past behaviour. This is the best predictor of future performance. Use hypothetical questions with caution, as these yield hypothetical answers rather than hard evidence. However, such questions may give useful information about a candidate's approach to an issue. Avoid judging candidates negatively on issues that might be the subject of cultural differences.

Interview panels must follow the interview guidelines below:

- Start on time and keep to time.
- Open the interview by welcoming the candidate.
- Try to establish a good rapport with the candidate.
- Introduce the interview panel and clarify your roles.
- Explain that you will be seeking information and evidence about the candidate's skills and experience and taking notes.

- Remind each candidate to ask for clarification of your questions if necessary, and point out that there will be an opportunity for their own questions towards the end of the interview.
- Indicate the length of the interview.
- Provide brief information on the job and department, and any special requirements. Be prepared to provide information about the organisation for external candidates.
- Use a logical sequence of questions and indicate when you are moving on to discuss a different competency.
- Allow the candidate to do the majority of the talking.
- Listen actively.
- Refrain from filling silences too quickly, as this may discourage the candidate from providing more information.
- Check any gaps, omissions and contradictions in the information you are eliciting.
- Check the candidate's claims about their level and type of experience.
- Before ending the interview, ask the candidate whether they want to expand on anything or supply any further information.
- Ensure the candidate understands the timing of the decision making process.

### **Conducting telephone interviews**

**Note:** Telephone communication is constrained because non-verbal communication is impossible. It is harder to:

- build rapport
- observe personality
- control the flow of the interview
- explore complex and difficult issues
- check understanding
- communicate feelings
- express or deal with uncertainty.

There may be added technical obstacles, such as poor lines, satellite echo and sound transmission delays.

If conducting a telephone interview, you must make an appointment as you would if meeting face-to-face and follow the guidelines below:

- Ensure you are using a conferencing telephone so that all interviewers are in the same room.
- Ensure the call takes place at a reasonable time of day for all parties.
- Ensure that you allow sufficient time for the call.
- Ensure the call is made in privacy, without interruptions, and that the candidate has arranged a similar environment for themselves.
- Allow plenty of preparation time.
- Clarify what will happen if you get cut off and that the interview panel will be responsible for calling back.
- Introduce the interviewers clearly and state their role.
- Explain that the interviewers are taking notes.
- Clarify the time-scale and purpose of the call. For example, is this an informal chat about the job or a formal interview?
- Clarify the structure of the call, indicating what you will cover and in what order.
- Ask effective questions linked to the competency levels required.
- Listen carefully and actively, and make listening noises.
- Ensure there are enough opportunities for the candidate to ask questions.
- Ensure all available evidence is taken into account.
- If lines are poor, it is tempting to spend less time on the call than on a face-to-face interview because listening in adverse circumstances is tiring for all involved. If necessary, reschedule the interview or agree to make two shorter calls.

- Ensure the interviewers are not tempted to base their selection decision solely on the outcome of an interview carried out in difficult conditions

**Conducting video-conferenced interviews**

Video-conferencing is an extremely disadvantageous medium for anyone with hearing difficulties. Before arranging a video-conferenced interview you must ensure that no panel member or candidate has a hearing difficulty.

At a video-conference interview, although you can see the people you are talking to, communication is still more restricted than in a real face-to-face interaction:

- Eye contact is difficult to manage.
- You may be able to see your own image, which is very distracting.
- Individuals at the other end appear further away than the distance at which it is normally comfortable to build rapport.

At a video-conference, your eye and brain receive conflicting information: the people at the other end are apparently in the room with you, yet not physically present. At a subconscious level this is uncomfortable for anyone who is not a regular user of video-conference equipment.

There are added technological difficulties, such as:

- unfamiliarity with the equipment
- poor sound and/or image transmission.

If you are going to hold an interview by video-conference:

- Familiarise yourself in advance with the equipment.
- Check that the candidate at the other end can see and hear you well; spend a little longer on introductions and breaking the ice than you might in a face-to-face interview.
- Your instinct will be to look at the candidate's face on the monitor screen; instead you should look at and speak to the camera rather than the screen - the camera is usually mounted just above the video screen.
- Build rapport by leaning slightly towards the camera.
- Avoid excessive or expansive gestures - they are visually distracting.
- Avoid tapping on the table or shuffling papers - the equipment magnifies these sounds.
- Remember that video conferencing can be difficult or impossible for people with a hearing impairment.

## Making a Selection Decision

**Overview**

This section describes the process of deciding which candidate to appoint and communicating that decision to all candidates.

**Audience**

This section applies to UK-appointed staff worldwide.

**Responsibilities**

These procedures are carried out by recruiting managers.

**Policy**

Accurate records of all recruitment exercises must be completed and kept by the recruiting manager for one year. IT records must be kept for three years.

**Procedures****Assessing and comparing individual candidates against selection criteria**

1. At the end of the interview each interviewer:
  - Reviews their own overall assessment of the candidate, using their own interview notes.
  - Considers the score they would give the candidate against each competency, based on the evidence gathered from all data sources. For example job applications, performance evaluations, and interview
2. The panel discuss the assessment of each candidate. One interviewer records their jointly agreed conclusions about the candidate on the Candidate Record:
  - Complete part 2a if this is a preliminary interview.
  - Complete part 2b if this is a main interview.
3. Make sure the panel has taken all available evidence into account.
4. When all the candidates have been interviewed, the panel select the strongest candidate and reserve(s). The following guidelines apply:
  - The candidate must be measured against the selection criteria/competencies and levels as specified in the advertisement and job description.
  - If you cannot reach a decision based on essential criteria/competencies alone, take desirable criteria into account.
  - Selection criteria and their relative importance must remain the same throughout the process.
  - Take account of the competency levels required/specified in the job description when making a final decision.
  - You cannot appoint a candidate who scores a C on any essential competency.
5. Retain all hard copy records, including the notes of individual interviewers for one year.

**Communicating with candidates about the decision**

The following standards apply:

1. Appointments to posts at band 9 and above are to be approved by SMT
2. For internal recruitment, except posting batches, the recruiting manager must inform the candidates within five working days of the interview.
3. For posting batches, Human Resources (HR) must inform the candidates within seven days of the final posting meeting.
4. For external recruitment in the UK, the HR Services team supporting the recruitment exercise will usually inform candidates.
5. Recruiting managers are encouraged to invite feedback from candidates on their experience of the interview. Internal candidates can use the Job Application

Feedback form to do this.

#### Procedure

1. For recruitment exercises at pay band 9 and above the recruiting manager must write to SMT for ratification of the outcome prior to informing the candidates.
2. Inform unsuccessful candidates, using the Model Letter for Unsuccessful Internal Candidates or the Model Letter for Unsuccessful External Candidates, as appropriate.
3. Inform the successful candidate verbally and then in writing. For guidance on the procedures for appointing successful internal candidates, see Transfers (Internal and Overseas).
4. Candidates are encouraged to seek feedback whether they have been successful or unsuccessful. If this is requested, give candidates:
  5. Face-to-face feedback, where possible. The recruiting manager usually does this.
  6. A copy of their Candidate Record.
7. If an internal or external candidate appeals against a recruiting manager's decision, this should be done following the British Council's appeals procedure, see Grievances and Appeals.

## Using Tests and Presentations

### **Overview**

This section describes how and when to use skills, ability tests, psychometric instruments and presentations as part of the selection process for a British Council job.

### **Audience**

This section applies to UK-appointed staff worldwide.

### **Responsibilities**

Human Resources (HR contacts) and recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that these procedures are used and carried out in accordance with policy.

### **Policy**

#### **Using tests**

- Managers in the UK must use the British Council's own work-based tests as part of the selection process when recruiting externally for administrative and junior management level jobs (pay bands 4 and 6). Managers outside the UK are strongly recommended to use these tests for jobs requiring the use of written and spoken English, unless local circumstances or local legislation rule out this possibility. Work-based tests have been designed so that they can be used globally and you do not have to be licensed (specially trained) to administer and score them.
- Ability tests and other appropriate psychometric tests may only be administered and interpreted by appropriately qualified people.

#### **Using presentations**

You may only include a presentation exercise as part of a selection process if presentation skills or the underlying abilities required are among the essential criteria for a job.

## **Tests**

### **Guidance**

You must use the British Council's own work-based tests for external recruitment to administrative and junior management jobs, see Policy above. There is staff time involved in running the tests but there are no additional costs. For further information consult your HR contact.

To complement the quality and range of information available about candidates, ability tests produced by reputable specialist publishers may also be appropriate as part of the selection process for some jobs. There are strict ethical guidelines on the use of these tests and the use of personality assessment techniques as part of a recruitment process. Personality assessment techniques can also be used for individual staff development, and are usually most appropriate in this context.

There is a cost attached to using all psychometric instruments; only staff who are trained test users and hold relevant qualifications may purchase, use or interpret psychometrics. You must consult your HR contact or the Recruitment team about the appropriateness and correct use of any psychometric instrument, and the availability of appropriately qualified staff or external consultants.

### **Procedure**

The procedures stipulated by the test publisher and/or the British Council's own work-based tests must be followed. (The British Council's work-based tests for administrative and junior management staff are currently being piloted; this document will be updated when the pilot phase is completed).

## **Presentations**

### **Guidance**

Presentations are not easy to assess objectively and extend the time required for assessing the candidate. They can only provide evidence about the skills involved in giving them, that is:

- presenting ideas clearly
- building a positive relationship with and engaging an audience
- structuring the delivery of information logically
- keeping within a time frame
- using tools, such as overhead projectors or flipcharts.

Do not use presentations to judge or assess the following qualities:

- effectiveness as a teacher or trainer
- managerial or administrative skills
- creativity or innovation
- resilience under pressure.

### **Procedure**

1. Get professional advice from your HR contact or the Recruitment team before designing a presentation exercise.
2. Choose a subject on which a wide range of candidates can find something to say, or are likely to have opinions or ideas.
3. Decide what information and instructions to give to candidates. State:
  - What you are assessing and what you are not assessing. For example, is it the ability to engage an audience, the content, the materials, whether time limits are adhered to?

- Which of the competencies/selection criteria will be assessed in whole or in part by the presentation?
  - How the presentation will be assessed. Are you looking for mention of specific topics or issues; particular behaviours like eye contact with the audience, use of notes/overhead slides/PowerPoint and so on?
4. Decide who will act as assessors. There must be at least two people on the assessment panel, at least one of whom should not be on the associated interview panel
  5. During the presentation, assessors must:
  6. Record evidence in support of their judgements. Their record sheets form part of the set of auditable documents kept for one year following the recruitment exercise.
  7. Use a marking scheme, rating candidates as A, B or C.
  8. Use the ratings to contribute to the final selection decision. See the example below.

**Example**

The job involves giving briefings to small groups of external contacts about British Council's work. The recruitment manager needs to judge how candidates manage communication and build rapport when on display and dealing with a small audience, as well as in the more intimate situation of a panel interview. So, as well as having an interview, the candidates are asked to give a five minute presentation on the advantages and disadvantages of working from home.

What is being assessed:

- ability to present ideas clearly and in a logical sequence
- ability to keep to the time frame required
- ability to build rapport leading to a positive relationship with an audience.

What is not being assessed:

- use and/or quality of visual aids, because training can be given
- the candidate's opinions on the topic in question.

Assessment panel: Assessor 1, Assessor 2 (who will also be on the interview panel) and Assessor 3.

The panel will:

- record and be able to state what the candidate sees as advantages and disadvantages (that is, whether the ideas were presented clearly and in a logical sequence, not whether they were good or bad ideas)
- time the presentation (ability to keep to time)
- record and be able to state what verbal and non-verbal behaviours the candidate used to build rapport (ability to build positive rapport with a small audience).

Fifteen minutes is allowed for each presentation: five minutes for the presentation, five minutes for any over-run and five minutes for the panel's discussion and recording. A record sheet is completed for each candidate (see the example below).

Candidate's name	Subject of assessment	Evidence	Rating
	Advantages: were they stated and clear?		
	Disadvantages: were they stated and clear?		
	Ended before/on/over time?		
	Examples of verbal and non-verbal communication which did/did not build rapport		
<b>Overall rating for the presentation</b>			

The panel notes behavioural and verbal evidence. Presentations are timed with a stopwatch. The panel stops candidates who over-run by more than two minutes. Over-runs of up to two minutes are noted but not stopped. Candidates are rated for each criterion, and overall, as follows:

- A: Exceeds competency level required
- B: Meets competency level required
- C: Did not meet competency level required

After each presentation, the panel members:

- form their own opinion of the candidate's performance
- discuss and reach consensus on the ratings to be awarded
- record the ratings and supporting evidence.

Candidates with an overall rating of C are not offered appointment. Candidates with an overall rating of A are considered for appointment before those with an overall rating of B.

## Short-listing Candidates for Interview

### Overview

This procedure describes how to short-list candidates for interview.

### Responsibilities

HR staff and recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring these procedures are carried out.

### Policy

All candidates must be short-listed against the criteria for the job.

### Procedures

#### Handling external application forms

1. Assign a number to each candidate on the Short-listing Matrix form.
2. Put the same number on the application form. It is important to number the forms in this way for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and, if necessary, random selection.

## Setting up a short-listing panel

### Pre-requisites for members of a short-listing panel

- If you have not done recruitment and selection training before or are new to recruitment and selection in the British Council then you must successfully complete the E-Learning Recruitment and Selection Course and also, within one month, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course either in the UK or in country/region. If you do not have time to attend the face-to-face course before actually being involved in recruitment and selection decisions, provided two other panel members have had the full training, you must successfully complete the e-learning course before you take part in the recruitment. You must then, within one month, attend the one-day face-to-face recruitment and selection course.
- If your face-to-face training in recruitment and selection was undertaken three years ago and you therefore require refresher training in recruitment and selection, you must successfully complete the E-Learning Recruitment and Selection Course before you take part in the recruitment. We recommend that you also undertake the one-day face-to-face course which focuses on skills practice.
- If you are recruiting staff in the UK, with effect from January 2006, you must have attended a face-to-face Equal Opportunities and Diversity workshop within the last 3 years. With effect from July 2005, if you are recruiting staff in the UK but have not yet done the face-to-face Equal Opportunities and Diversity training, then you must successfully complete the Equal Opportunities and Diversity e-learning Course and by January 2006 have also undertaken the face-to-face course. If you are recruiting staff outside the UK, you must complete the e-learning course.

### Standards

The following standards apply in all cases:

- At least two people must be involved.
- All members of the panel should normally be at least one pay band above or the same pay band as the post being recruited for. HR staff at any level may participate in a short-listing panel. Any exceptions must be agreed by Head HR Recruitment.
- At least two of the panel members must have undertaken full recruitment and selection training in the previous three years (by full training we mean you need to have done either the original two-day face-to-face course plus refresher training if this was three years ago, or to have done the new combined e-learning and one-day face-to-face course). See Pre-requisites for members of a short-listing panel above.
- The people involved must, where possible, represent a diverse mix of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

### **Short-listing the candidates**

The aim of short-listing is to identify candidates who meet all the essential criteria for the post, and then to decide which candidates to interview. The short-listing process is normally based on essential criteria only.

1. Prepare the short-listing matrix.
2. Evaluate each candidate against the essential criteria. When you are recruiting internally and externally as part of the same exercise, consider both internal and external candidates in exactly the same way:
  - Each short-lister must read the job application form and, for internal candidates, the candidates' three most recent performance evaluations, to

establish if there is evidence or contra-evidence of the required essential competencies.

- If a candidate is rated 'no' on one of the essential criteria/competencies, do not continue short-listing them but move on to the next candidate.
  - Do not take into account any additional information provided by the applicant or the applicant's line manager.
  - Do not take into account any previous short-listing or interview decisions.
3. **For internal candidates:** If there are no evaluations for the applicant, ask the applicant's manager in writing to provide an open reference against the competencies required for recruitment, and send a copy of the letter to the candidate.
  4. **For external candidates:** HR contacts are responsible for requesting both personal references and references from employers, using the model letters. Outside the UK, managers should draft their own letters, using the UK ones as their model.
  5. If five or more candidates meet the essential criteria/competencies, you can also short-list against desirable criteria/competencies, provided that this possibility was mentioned in the advertisement/recruitment literature sent to candidates.
  6. The short-listing managers meet together to complete the Short-listing Matrix form:
    - Disabled applicants who meet all the essential criteria must be short-listed. See Guidelines on Employing Staff with Disabilities.
    - You are required to interview all short-listed internal candidates.
    - Aim to reduce the number of external candidates to between three and five per job to be filled, as you need to leave yourself with a reasonable field from which to make your choice.
    - If, after short-listing for external recruitment, the number of eligible candidates is still more than it is practical to interview, you can use the approved mechanism for random selection. Keep a copy of the random selection printout with the recruitment records for auditing purposes.
    - One final record of the short-listing must be drawn up by the leader of the short-listing panel; the other panel members' notes must also be kept.

### **Informing candidates**

Either the recruiting manager or their HR contact is responsible for informing candidates of the short-listing results:

1. Inform all candidates of the results of short-listing using appropriate model letters.
2. Agree who will give feedback to unsuccessful candidates if they request it. This is normally done by the recruiting manager. Successful candidates are offered feedback after their interview and the final selection decision.
3. Give all unsuccessful candidates the opportunity to receive feedback on their application based on the short-listing matrix. Send a copy of the short-listing matrix to the candidate on request but remember first to remove all details about other candidates.