

# Recruitment & Selection Policy

<b>Owned and maintained by:</b>	Human Resources
<b>Date checked/ created:</b>	June 2022
<b>Next review date:</b>	June 2024

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## 1. Introduction

The recruitment of new staff and the promotion of existing staff is a major way in which Audit Scotland can ensure it remains a high performing, efficient and effective organisation

This policy and procedure covers all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process. It is applicable to all applicants seeking employment or promotion with Audit Scotland. For the policy and procedure to be effective it is essential that any employee who is involved in any aspect of the recruitment and/or selection of staff is aware of this document and that all recruitment carried out will be in accordance with this policy.

## 2. Purpose

At Audit Scotland we are keen to attract and appoint talented, high calibre people who share our values. Our approach to recruitment and selection reflects this. To help us to achieve this it is essential that we have effective means of recruiting, selecting and retaining employees with the right skills and attitude to further Audit Scotland's aims.

Audit Scotland embraces equality & diversity as a fundamental part of the way we recruit and select people for employment and promotion. We comply with employment legislation in the area of equality of opportunity but our approach goes further - being embedded in our values and beliefs about treating everyone with respect and dignity.

## 3. Core Principles

There are a number of core principles that underpin the way in which we recruit and select our staff. On this basis, we will:

- Adhere to the principles of high quality, objective, transparent and professional recruitment.
- Maintain the principle of open competition in our approach to recruitment.
- Seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit.
- Encourage the recruitment of staff with additional needs and disabilities, making reasonable adjustments to all stages of the recruitment process and subsequent role, as required, for a successful candidate with a disability to undertake the post. Audit Scotland works closely with its internal Disability Confident Working Group to ensure that our approach is influenced by those with experience of living with a condition that affects their daily life.
- Ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.
- Provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in recruitment and selection activities..
- Treat all candidates fairly, equitably, efficiently, and with respect, to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome. Audit Scotland works with external organisations<sup>1</sup> and internally with colleagues to ensure that our approach is fair, open and supportive to all.

<sup>1</sup> Previously this has included organisations such as Stonewall and Business in the Community

- We will continuously develop our recruitment and selection practices to allow new ideas and approaches to be incorporated.
- Ensure that the recruitment and selection process is cost effective.
- Assume that all vacancies are open to applicants who wish to propose working patterns which might be classified as non-standard (e.g. part-time, job-share etc). If this is not the case then the recruiting manager will provide a business case to the Head of HR prior to the recruitment campaign beginning.
- Ensure all documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

#### 4. Equality of Opportunity in Employment

All job applicants will be assessed only according to their capability to carry out a given job, based on justifiable, objective criteria which are clearly related to the duties of the job. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity amongst our workforce and will work towards increasing the diversity of our staff.

We will not condone any form of discrimination against an employee or job applicant on any grounds relating to any characteristic protected in law. We are committed to creating a working environment for all employees that is safe, accessible, and free from harassment or discrimination and which values and respects each individual's identity, dignity and culture.

In line with our general commitment to equality, the following actions will be taken:-

- We will sample, monitor and audit our recruitment activities, to assess adherence to policies, legislation and best practice;
- A qualified HR practitioner will be available, as required, to offer assistance and advice on the application of this policy;
- Interview panel members will complete a Recruitment & Selection training course, which includes equality and diversity issues;
- Panel members will consist of mixed gender, grade and, wherever possible, of mixed age and include at least one member from outside the business group to which the vacancy relates;
- Audit Scotland will participate in the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme for applicants self-assessed as having a disability, in accordance with [Disability Confident](#) scheme;
- Candidates will be sought from a wide a pool as possible through advertising all jobs externally, except as otherwise provided for in this policy.

#### 5. Disability Confident Employer

Audit Scotland is committed to the principles and objectives of the disability confident employer. The [Disability Confident](#) Scheme is a recognition given by the DWP to employers who have agreed to take action to meet commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.

As part of this commitment, Audit Scotland will participate in the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme for applicants self-assessed as having a disability. Our recruiting managers demonstrate the commitment to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum essential criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.

## 6. Responsibilities

There are distinct roles in the recruitment process, each with their own responsibilities:

### People Leads will

- Demonstrate our organisational values in the whole process and in the way people are treated. Adhere to the policies and procedures.
- Evaluate the need for the post(s) in the context of staffing establishment, the workforce plan and the future needs of the business for such roles.
- Ensure that all new/revised posts are formally job evaluated before they are advertised and that formal authorisation to recruit has been obtained.

### Recruiting Managers and other staff will

- Demonstrate our organisational values in the whole process and in the way people are treated. Adhere to the policies and procedures.
- Attend Audit Scotland's recruitment and selection training course and refresher training every 3 years.
- Secure a suitable recruitment panel, prepare the job description, person specification, shortlisting criteria and draft the advert as appropriate.
- Ensure that any agencies or external consultants who assist in the recruitment process adhere to Audit Scotland's recruitment policy.
- Keep a written record of all short-listing and interview decisions, returning these documents immediately after making a job offer and providing feedback.
- Make a verbal offer of employment and manage the early relationship with the candidate to ensure a successful route to employment with Audit Scotland.
- Provide feedback to candidates if requested and ensuring that equal opportunities requirements are followed.
- Ensuring that you are proactively giving advice if there may be other suitable future roles at Audit Scotland that the candidate may like to apply for.

### Human Resources will

- Co-ordinate, facilitate the process and engagement between different parties throughout the recruitment & selection campaign, as appropriate.
- Provide professional HR advice on content of job descriptions / person specifications, job evaluation, and appropriate salary levels.
- Provide advice, based upon research and experience, about draft adverts, appropriate media and timescales for recruitment - i.e. the attraction strategy.
- Monitor and review the recruitment process and supporting policies / guidance.
- Provide training and refresher training on recruitment and selection, including equality issues and e-Recruitment system.

- Manage the e-Recruitment system, candidate management and correspondence (e.g. invitation to selection centre / interviews)
- Ensure that any agencies or external consultants who assist in the recruitment process adhere to Audit Scotland's recruitment policy.
- Contract manage the performance and product / service offering of external partners.
- Ensure a fast and efficient route to employment for candidates who have been offered employment (e.g. taking up references, carrying out pre-employment vetting checks, issuing contracts of employment).
- Keep in touch with recruiting managers, building strong and productive business relationships.
- Ensure proper risk management and good governance standards are maintained.
- Retain the written record of all short-listing and interview decisions, escalating any outstanding documentation to the Head of HR if this is not returned within a 2 week timeframe after the job offer has been made.

#### **Internal Applicants will**

- Submit job applications before the deadline date (including any supporting documentation, performance appraisal and references).
- Ensure applications are completed to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure availability to attend selection centres and / or interview as required.

#### **Internal Line Managers will**

- Ensure that applicants in their team (both successful and unsuccessful) use their feedback from the recruitment process effectively to inform the applicant's future personal development.
- Foster personal / professional development in their teams to ensure good talent pools for succession planning.

## **7. Attraction Process**

Audit Scotland has a commitment to be open and accessible in its recruitment procedures.

## **8. Vacancy Review**

The HR team require approval to recruit from a business group director before any permanent or temporary / fixed term recruitment can take place if it is out-with the budgeted staff establishment. It is each business group's responsibility (recruiting manager) to approve and obtain Director approval where required.

When a post becomes vacant, it provides the opportunity to:

- Assess the role based on the business group's establishment figures as agreed in the corporate work force plan<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> It is essential that Directors and Recruiting Managers specify at the outset of a campaign the number and duration (i.e. temporary or permanent) of any vacancies. This will require reference to the establishment as per the work force plan and ensures clarity for all those involved, particularly recruitment applicants.

- Evaluate the necessity for the post to be filled or to explore alternative methods of undertaking this work.
- Review the job description and evaluate whether the skills, knowledge and experience required to fulfil the role need to be revised. All new or changed posts must be formally evaluated and graded before they are advertised in order to help ensure equal pay for work of equal value. For more details on this, please refer to [Job Evaluation Policy](#).
- Determine the contractual status of the role (e.g. permanent, fixed term contract, secondment). When the requirement for fixed term vacancies arise (e.g. maternity / secondment cover) Managers and Directors should undertake a robust appraisal at the outset of the likely duration of the post. A succession of short-term contract renewals should be avoided as this conflicts with the principles of this aspect of Audit Scotland's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity. A member of the HR team will discuss the business case for any fixed-term recruitment to ensure compliance with employment legislation for this category of worker - this will include a 'downstream assessment' of the objective justification for the eventual cessation of the contract when it expires. For more details on this, please refer to our [Fixed Term Contract Policy](#).

If a manager believes that there may be potential difficulties in attracting suitable candidates they should contact the HR Team for advice and guidance..

## 9. Preparing the Advert

All advertisements will take place under broad based recruitment and selection arrangements via the e-Recruitment system (on-line recruitment portal) including contacting other organisations.

Upon Manager / Director approval to proceed, a designated member of the HR team will work with the Recruiting Manager to draft a concise advert for the role referring to the Recruitment Checklist.

HR will produce a timeline for each recruitment cycle to ensure that colleagues involved in a recruitment panel or recruitment-related activities are aware of the key dates to be met. All adverts must be placed through the HR team, except where alternative arrangements have been formally agreed in advance.

## 10. Internal Adverts

As a minimum, all positions will normally be advertised internally to help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff.

All advertised vacancies will be placed on our e-recruitment portal, careers site and notified to staff via Sharepoint news item and Yammer.

## 11. External Adverts

External recruitment will take place using composite adverts whenever possible, which will appear in appropriate media. The decision on the choice of suitable advertising media will be influenced by the grade and level of the post; the professional, technical or specialist skills and

experience required and the prevailing economic or market circumstances impacting on the availability of suitable candidates, as well as budgetary constraints.

The HR team will provide professional advice to recruiting managers about the attraction strategy for each campaign. This will include a discussion about candidate mining, use of external agencies, social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.), specialist and general job boards (e.g. S1 jobs, Indeed, Google Jobs, Monster, TotalJobs or specialist accountancy, audit, IT or public sector channels (e.g. My Jobs Scotland etc.)). The HR team may also advise that the attraction strategy include specialist channels that increase access to employment for people with additional needs (e.g. reaching out to people with visual impairment or other disabilities).

We will advertise all vacancies internally and externally with the exception of:

	Internal	External
<b>Vacancy (restricted transfer)</b> Temporary transfers of the same grade (e.g. secondment) advertised to a particular grade group so that applications are ring fenced	Yes*	No
<b>Vacancy (up to 6months)</b> Temporary promotions (e.g. maternity or long-term sickness cover and additional responsibility)	Yes*	No
<b>Vacancy (6 - 18 Months)</b> Temporary promotions (e.g. maternity or long-term sickness cover and additional responsibility)	Yes	Yes**
<b>Vacancy (more than 18 months/permanent)</b> Long-term temporary promotions (e.g. additional responsibility) and permanent promotions)	Yes	Yes**

\*In certain limited circumstances, a Director and Human Resources may waive the need to advertise the post at all either internally or externally. This is likely to include the following circumstances:

- Where urgent cover is required for an absent colleague (e.g. as a result of long-term sickness), a suitable member of staff may be elected to fulfil the acting-up / additional responsibility until the longer-term resource issue can be properly assessed and rectified;
- Where staff have an existing mobility clause in their contracts, thus providing managers with the discretion to deploy staff across the business without reference to internal advertising (providing there is no change in pay grade between the original and new posts). However, where there are a number of suitable candidates then these temporary opportunities should be advertised internally so that staff can express an interest in developing their career.

- Staff subject to redeployment will be given access to vacancies before they are advertised more generally within Audit Scotland or externally. For more information, please refer to our [Redeployment Policy](#).
- In certain circumstances it may be more effective to use a recruitment agency. This should be discussed and agreed with HR Team. This will, however, not eliminate the need to advertise the position internally and any external agencies or consultants who assist in the process must act in accordance with this policy and with respect to our equal opportunities requirements.

\*\* In certain limited circumstances, some opportunities may not be advertised externally. A Director may submit a case to the Head of HR requesting deviation from the standard recruiting policy, providing:

- that the previous selection processes were competitive and adhered to Audit Scotland's standard regarding evidence-based selection decisions;
- that the existing employee to whom the vacancy is eventually granted has a demonstrable track record of competent performance (e.g. an employee's period of acting up is extended);
- where certain groups of staff are at risk of redundancy (for more information please refer to Audit Scotland's Redundancy and Redeployment policies within the staff handbook);
- that the decision not to advertise externally is justifiable on the basis of one of the following: equal opportunity & diversity, cost or operational advantages.

Where the Head of HR and the Director cannot reach agreement then the matter will be referred to the Chief Operating Officer. If agreement still cannot be achieved, then the matter will be referred to Audit Scotland's Executive Team.

All deviations from the standard policy of externally advertising posts will be recorded by the HR team and reported in the annual equality audit.

## 12. Selection Process

At Audit Scotland, we use a variety of selection tools to help us find the most competent person for a given role. These tools are carefully selected to ensure a direct link to the requirements of each role. The recruiting manager will work with the HR representative to agree a balanced, appropriate and fair approach in this respect.

To ensure consistency, transparency and fairness, internal and external candidates will be subject to the same or comparable selection tools within each campaign. The range and degree of selection tools used depends upon the level of and vacancy duration.

The HR team work in partnership with a specialist external assessment partner. Our partner may be involved in all or some of the process and deal directly with HR and/or recruiting managers, as appropriate.

## 13. Short-listing

The first stage selection criteria will be based on an agreed set of key essential shortlisting requirements as set out in the job description and person specification. The short-listing criteria



will be relevant, clearly identified and be able to assess whether the applicant possesses the abilities required to fulfil the duties of the job.

The completed shortlisting paperwork must be returned to HR team prior to any interviews being arranged.

HR will be alerted through the early stages of the recruitment process to any applicant who declares they have a disability. HR will track these applications and when short-listing is complete and at the appropriate stage in the recruitment process, they will quality check the application against the essential shortlisting criterion. Where a candidate who is declared as having a disability meets this criterion, they will automatically be invited to interview and HR will contact the candidate to ensure that any adjustments or special arrangements that need to be made are put in place for the interview and / or any other selection exercises.

In situations where HR believe the minimum criterion has been met but the applicant has not been short-listed, HR is required to investigate this further with the short-listing manager.

## 14. Interview

The Recruiting Manager will select a panel of representatives from the business<sup>3</sup>. Only employees who have received up to date formal recruitment training in are authorised to take part in interview panels<sup>4</sup>. In some instances, the interview panel will include a representative from HR.

Interviews are carried out using questions which have been agreed in advance as part of a structured interview, typically requiring the demonstration of a required competence or behavioural attribute.

Each interview panel member will independently score the answers provided by each candidate and give an overall score based on the interview. This should be accompanied by 3 stand out areas of findings in preparation for the wash up discussion.

Equally, selection is a two-way process, as candidates are also assessing the role and Audit Scotland. Those involved in recruitment should consider how best to convey a positive image.

## 15. Expenses

Audit Scotland recognise that some candidates may have a distance to travel to attend an interview at one of our offices in the event that interviews are not being held virtually or candidates have requested an in person interview as a reasonable adjustment. We do not want to disadvantage anyone from being able to attend an interview. We are always working towards increasing the diversity amongst our workforce and so if requested, we will normally cover reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation. All costs will be agreed by a member of the HR team, where possible, upfront before any travel or accommodation is confirmed. We will use our [internal travel and expenses policy](#) as guidance for what are reasonable expenses.

Expenses will be reimbursed via BACS to candidates after their interview, following receipt of all confirmation of bookings or receipts. Expenses should be claimed no later than 1 month following the interview date.

<sup>3</sup> Panels should be of mixed gender and, wherever possible, of mixed age and include at least one member from outside the business group to which the vacancy relates. This latter person has an important challenge role to play within the panel.

<sup>4</sup> Training and awareness courses are run at regular intervals according to demand. You should contact HR to find out when the next course is taking place.

Please speak to either the HR Assistant Manager or the Head of HR for further guidance.

## 16. Wash Up

All members of the panel should attend a wash up meeting (this can be undertaken using remote access virtual meeting technology) to discuss and compare the candidate rankings. A wash-up matrix should be drawn up during this process and discussion should take place amongst all members of the panel to ensure a consistent, well thought out approach is taken to the appointment is made<sup>5</sup>. It is essential that a member of the HR team attends the wash up meeting and this should be arranged at the start of the process and included in the recruitment timeline.

The interview record sheets and any supporting documentation should all be completed and returned to the HR team after the offer of employment being made, not exceeding more than two weeks after the washup meeting has taken place.

## 17. Fast Track Approach

It is Audit Scotland's intention to reuse selection score material where reasonable and appropriate.

HR practitioners will provide support to recruiting managers and will examine whether previous selection centre assessments can be reliably interpreted for other campaigns of the same grade / role.

All candidates who are invited to attend a 'repeat' selection centre, will be given the option to reuse their selection centre materials. This is subject to a maximum time lapse of 6 months.

Candidates who were deemed appointable from campaigns less than 6 months old will not be asked to attend 'repeat' selection centres. Instead, with the applicant's consent, they will be automatically fast-tracked to interview stage.

## 18. Making the Appointment

Once a decision on whom to appoint has been reached, the Recruiting manager should complete a [Job Offer Form](#) and forward to HR.

### Contacting Candidates

Recruiting managers should contact the successful applicant and make a verbal, conditional offer. This would include discussion and agreement regarding salary and other key terms & conditions of employment<sup>6</sup>.

Unsuccessful candidates should be dealt with sensitively and will, as a minimum, receive telephone or written notification of the outcome of the selection process.

### Reserve List

<sup>IV</sup> See Appendix for a template of the wash-up matrix.

<sup>V</sup> Training and awareness courses are run at regular intervals according to demand. You should contact HR to find out when the next course is taking place.

<sup>VI</sup> Managers should note that Audit Scotland policy is to offer a starting salary at the minimum of the pay grade unless they can justify offering a higher amount. Justification may include the applicant's current package, skills and experience in relation to the job/other existing Audit Scotland job holders etc. This information will be shown on the offer form sent to HR

Once the successful candidate is selected, the recruiting panel may wish to rank the remaining candidates to establish a reserve list of appointable candidates. This is completed in case the successful candidate declines Audit Scotland's offer of employment or if any problems arise from the pre-employment checks which result in Audit Scotland withdrawing the offer. The recruiting manager should confirm to HR the ranked reserve list.

In the event that subsequent vacancies arise for the same role and within a six month period, Audit Scotland will in the first instance contact the next appointable candidate on the reserve list with the intention of making an offer of employment, without reference to further recruitment.

### **Starting Salaries and allowances**

Successful applicants will normally be appointed at the scale minimum. Recruiting managers can exercise discretion and offer a higher starting salary in certain circumstances. This should be done in consultation with HR.

### **Providing Feedback**

In the event that a candidate requests feedback about their performance in the selection process this should be arranged by the Chair of the panel, although they may delegate this to another member of the panel where appropriate.

For internal candidates, recruitment feedback should form part of the 3D discussions in terms of forward-looking objectives and learning and development needs.

### **Pre-employment checks**

Once the successful candidate is selected, HR will send a conditional offer with terms and conditions of employment which are subject to:

- evidence of eligibility to work in the UK
- pre-employment health checks through Audit Scotland's Occupational Health provider
- receipt of satisfactory written references. References pose certain legal risks which need to be managed by the Human Resource Team. References must span a minimum of at least three years and should be from
  - the most recent employer / University or College lecturer.
  - Another previous employer / placement.
  - A character reference from a professional contact.
- where a particular qualification is required for the job, or where there is a minimum standard of education expected for the job, original documentation will be sought.
- receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland check at the required level and adherence to the security vetting standard relevant to the role and business group. .

Once checks are completed satisfactorily, the offer of employment will become unconditional and a start date is agreed.

## 19. Induction

Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. The line manager is responsible for preparing a comprehensive induction programme for the new employee with support from the L&D Assistant Manager. For more information, please refer to [Induction Policy](#).

## 20. Recruitment Records

To ensure Audit Scotland can demonstrate that these procedures are fair, it is essential that the recruitment exercise is well documented. This information could also form part of the evidence where an unsuccessful applicant complains, requests feedback or requests information under the Freedom of Information Act. In addition, the information is essential if our Equal Opportunities monitoring is to produce accurate and meaningful results.

Upon completion of the recruitment campaign, the recruiting manager should ensure all recruitment documentation is returned to HR within 2 weeks of making a formal job offer and providing feedback. The information collected as part of the recruitment process will be treated in confidence and will be shared only with members of the selection panel, HR and our third-party assessment specialists where appropriate.

All unsuccessful candidate documentation will be held on file as indicated and agreed by the candidate for a period of 18 months; thereafter they will be securely destroyed. All appointment related documents will be held in the employees personnel file within HR.

	Panel member 1 (interview score)	Panel member 2 (interview score)	Panel member 3 (interview score)	Other assessment types*	Overall score
Candidate 1					
Candidate 2					
Candidate 3					
Candidate 4					
Candidate 5					

## 21. Related Documents

- Job Share Guidance
- Security Vetting
- [Job Evaluation Policy](#)
- [Fixed Term Contract Policy](#)
- [Redeployment Policy](#)
- [Job Offer Form](#)
- [Induction Policy](#)

## 22. Appendix

\* Subject to the recruitment campaign and the essential criteria for the role, we may use other assessments to support our recruitment campaigns. The HR team will discuss additional assessment options with the recruitment manager. The additional assessment(s) will form part of the wash-up, together with the panel interview scores. This may include:

- An online assessment
- An assessment supplied during the interview day (such as an in-tray or analysis exercise)
- Presentation
- Role-play
- Informal interview (this may be an opportunity to meet with the wider team, but will be scored for use at the wash-up)