

Appendix 5 - Guidance on Person Specifications and Template Person Specification / Interview Assessment Form

The person specification is one of the first decision making steps in the recruitment and selection process. A badly worded person specification will make fair selection impossible and is likely to lead to subjective judgements.

A person specification should set out a profile of the main competencies, skills and experience that will be required from the postholder based on requirements of the post as outlined in the job description.

Essential criteria mean that the postholder must possess these competencies in order to carry out the job effectively. Minimum essential criteria should not make demands which exceed the real needs of the job. Setting unnecessarily high standards might unfairly discriminate against certain groups, for example on the grounds of race, age, gender or disability and preclude them from applying for a job they may be fully able to do.

Desirable criteria cover those areas where the ideal candidate could have extra skills that would enhance job performance. It is important to determine how the competencies / criteria will be tested / evaluated i.e. proof of qualifications, ability tests etc.

All person specifications must be developed using the Trust's template and in doing so each of the criteria required must be:-

Agreed

All selection panel members must agree the criteria to be used at the start of the recruitment process. It will be the responsibility of the Appointing Officer to ensure that this is achieved.

Job Related

There must be a clear link between the criteria and the job description in order to determine the person's ability to do the job.

Ability Based

The criteria must be expressed in terms which describe the abilities being sought, e.g. 'must be able to communicate clearly and effectively both verbally and in writing.'

Clearly Defined

The criteria should be clearly expressed in terms which allow for as little scope for individual interpretation as possible, e.g. phrases like 'a good level of typing' should be avoided. A more specific statement would be 'must be able to type to a standard of (state the number) words per minute'.

Measurable / Observable

The criteria must be measurable and / or observable to avoid subjective decisions being made.

Justifiable

It may be necessary to refer to genuine occupational qualifications or relevant experience but care must be taken to ensure that such criteria are really necessary and are not potentially discriminatory.

Consistently Applied

The identified criteria should be consistently applied throughout the selection process and remain unchanged. It is advised that all person specifications are drawn up by using the information contained in the job description, which should describe the knowledge, skills and other attributes that are **essential** to

perform the job. If during the process it is found necessary to change any of the criteria, all candidates will need to be reconsidered in accordance with the new standards.

Sections:

Qualifications / Training

Define the level of education and examination standard that the job requires, including professional and technical qualifications. Consideration should always be given to other qualifications of an equivalent level e.g. overseas qualifications or NVQ's. Although some jobs do require a particular qualification, care must be taken not to define higher qualifications than are actually necessary as this may be seen as discriminatory. Similarly, relevant experience may be considered in place of a qualification e.g. a person may have substantial experience of management but may not possess an MBA.

Always reflect on why you require a particular qualification. Qualifications are not necessarily an effective measure of competence, and thus may exclude some able applicants. Not only is it important to indicate the exact level of education required such as GCSE, A Level, Degree but also the level within the qualification; such as 'GCSE Grade C or above in English Language' or 'a first class Management Degree'

Experience

Define the experience, not necessarily just work related, that it is necessary for a person to have to perform the job in question.

Avoid specifying an arbitrary number of years' experience. Instead state the quality and range of experience rather than the length of experience; For example "2 years' experience as a band 5" is not an accurately indicator of proficiency; two individuals quoting the same length of experience can have markedly different levels of competency and abilities. Instead, state "demonstrable experience at Band 5" and test this through probing / scenario questions at interview.

Remember, experience may not always have been gained at work; valuable experience may have been gained through voluntary activities, hobbies, carers responsibilities etc.

Skills / Knowledge

This relates to the specific skills and knowledge the person is required to bring to the role and describes the behaviour needed for effective performance.

Examples include the need for 'presentation skills' or 'report writing skills'. If someone requires skills in the use of IT software packages then it is important to list these e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint etc.

In terms of knowledge it is important to identify the levels needed and so for instance the phrases 'a **working knowledge** of disciplinary procedures' or 'a **detailed knowledge** of employment law' should be used.

Personal Qualities

This area should refer to the particular values behaviour that is essential to the post but is often the most difficult to test objectively and care should be taken to avoid assumptions or stereotyping. It is essential that NHS employees are able to demonstrate the NHS Constitution Values.

It is recommended that you include phrases such as ‘an ability to maintain effective working relationships’, ‘ability to work to and meet deadlines’, ‘ability to work on own initiative’. These are all qualities that can be tested at interview through probing / scenario questions.

The Recruitment team can provide examples of value based interview questions.

Other Job Requirements

This is to be used to list any criteria that do not fit neatly into any of the other categories. However, be careful about listing particular physical or health related requirements as they may be seen as discriminatory if they cannot be shown to be a genuine requirement for the job. If there are physical requirements associated with the job then be specific e.g. ‘must be able to move patients using appropriate lifting aids’ and avoid broad statements such as ‘must be fit and healthy’.

The Template person specification includes standard clauses on attendance, DBS (formerly CRB) which **must** be included

Examples of potentially discriminatory requirements:

- Age limits (i.e. women with family responsibilities, mature students educated outside Europe, delayed academic attainments for candidates with disabilities).
- Present employment status, seniority, experience rather than knowledge (unemployment / underemployment because of gender, ethnicity or disability)
- Unnecessary or unjustifiable educational or training standards (women with family responsibilities or people who were educated outside Europe)
- Clothing policies (may offend religious dress codes).

Examples of potentially discriminatory criteria:

Examples of potentially discriminatory criteria:	Replace with:
2 years’ experience as a Secretary	Able to demonstrate competent typing, filing, diary management, use of Microsoft applications and telephone skills
Good communication skills	Ability to prepare & present reports / care records
Able to lift heavy loads	Able to undertake all manual handling duties using appropriate aids
Ability to drive (Unless a driving job / there are no other forms of transport that would be able to get the candidate to other destinations)	Able to travel
Well-Presented / smart	Conscious of appropriate image and self-presentation

Examples of criteria not to be used:	
Good sense of humour Honest and Trustworthy Good health Single pronouns – he / she Enthusiastic	<i>These are not measurable at interview.</i>

Motivated (can use self-motivated if post requires a demonstration of this) Cheerful and friendly disposition	
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Template Person Specification

POST: XXXX
DEPARTMENT: XXXX
BAND: XXXX

Job Requirements	Essential Requirements	How assessed
Qualifications / Training	Specify minimum qualification e.g. a particular qualification or equivalent. Consider if relevant experience can be substituted for qualifications.	e.g. Certificates
Experience	Specify type Not length of experience needed	e.g. Application Form Interview References
Skills / Knowledge	<p>E.g. Any particular knowledge or necessary training already undertaken: and / or must be prepared to attend training courses appropriate to post e.g. health and safety training.</p> <p>NB - Particular attention should be paid to the practical aspects of training to ensure indirect discrimination does not occur e.g. in planning the location, facilities and timing.</p>	e.g. Application Form Interview Certificates
Personal Qualities	<p>E.g. Polite, telephone skills; understand and carry out instructions accurately: particular level of written and spoken communication skills; able to relate to the general public; team working skills.</p> <p>NB - These are examples only.</p>	e.g. Application Form Interview References Assessment / Tests Records of achievement
Other Job Requirements	<p>E.g. Able to work occasionally outside office hours, any physical attributes like climbing ladders, pushing trolleys etc.</p> <p>NB - In all instances requirements must be expressed in specific terms, Generalisations such as 'physically fit' should not be used.</p> <p><u>Standard Clauses</u></p> <p>A Disclosures and Barring Service check will be</p>	Health Assessment Disclosure / DBS check Interview

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carried out where the position is eligible for a Disclosures and Barring Service Check in accordance with the 2012 Protection of Freedom Act and the guidance issued by the DBS.

All posts working with children or vulnerable adults are required to have an Enhanced DBS checked including checking against DBS / ISA Vetting and Barring lists.

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Person Specification Interview Assessment Form

POST: _____
BAND: _____
NAME: _____

Job Requirements	How Assessed	Shortlist Criteria met (// x)	Interview Assessment - Score	Comments
Qualifications / Training				
Experience				
Skills / Knowledge				
Personal Qualities				
Other Job Requirements				