

Recruitment & Selection Policy

Owned and maintained by:	Human Resources
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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. Over time recruitment and promotion decisions, if made properly, can have a significant impact upon organisational capability and capacity.

This policy and procedure cover all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process. It is applicable to all applicants seeking employment or promotion with Audit Scotland. In order 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 Principals

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

- Adhere to the principals of high quality, objective, transparent and professional recruitment.
- Maintain the principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment.
- Seek to recruit the best candidate for the job based on merit. The recruitment and selection process will ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job and Audit Scotland.
- Encourage the recruitment of staff with disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments to all stages of the recruitment process and subsequent role, as required, in order for a successful candidate with a disability to undertake the post.
- 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 in order to meet this core principle.
- Treat all candidates fairly, equitably, efficiently, and with respect, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.

- Promote best practice in recruitment and selection. We will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow new ideas and approaches to be incorporated.
- Ensure that its recruitment and selection process is cost effective.
- Ensure all documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

There are a number of roles in the recruitment process, each with their own responsibilities:

4.1 Recruiting Managers 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.
- 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.
- Discuss potential difficulties in recruiting with the HR & OD team, e.g. jobs where the labour market is tight and skills are in high demand etc.
- Prepare the job description, person specification, draft advert and further particulars, as appropriate.
- Ensure that any agencies or external consultants who assist in the recruitment process adhere to Audit Scotland's recruitment policy.
- Produce short-list criteria on behalf of the selection panel.
- Keep a written record of all short-listing and interview decisions.
- 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.

4.2 Human Resources will

- Coordinate, facilitate and chair 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 reviewing the recruitment process and supporting policies / guidance.

5. Equality of Opportunity in Employment

- Provide training on recruitment and selection, including equality issues and e-Recruitment system.
- Manage the e-Recruitment system, candidate management and correspondence (e.g. invitation's 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 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.

4.3 Applicants will

- Submit job applications before the deadline date (including any supporting documentation, performance appraisal and references). For guidance, please refer to the [e-Recruitment Guide for Applicants](#) and [Employee Reference Guide](#).
- Ensure applications are completed to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure availability to attend selection centres and / or interview as required.

4.4 Internal Line Managers will

- Complete accurate¹ and comprehensive 'employee references' for internal applicants and share this information beforehand with the applicant. For further guidance, please refer to the [Employee Reference Guide](#).
- Ensure that applicant's 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.

5. Equality of Opportunity in Employment

Audit Scotland, through the actions of its managers and HR professionals, promises that that all employees or 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. Audit Scotland is committed to eliminating discrimination and valuing and promoting equality and diversity amongst our workforce and will work towards increasing the diversity of our staff. This approach is embedded within our corporate values which we seek to demonstrate in all we do.

¹ Line managers will be held accountable for the quality of 'employee references' (i.e. the right of the panel to discuss disparity or ambiguity with the manager).

Audit Scotland will promote good practice in this area. Audit Scotland will not condone any form of discrimination against an employee or job applicant on any grounds including gender, race, age, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital / civil partnership status, ethnic origin and disability or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. 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 identities, dignity and culture.

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

- Audit Scotland will sample, monitor and audit its 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 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;
- Candidates will be sought from a wide a pool as possible through advertising all jobs externally, except as otherwise provided for in this policy.

5.1 Positive About Disabled People – Disability User symbol (Two Ticks)

Audit Scotland is committed to the principles and objectives of the disability user symbol. The "Two Ticks" Symbol is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to take action to meet five commitmentsⁱⁱ 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. Recruiting managers must 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.

5.2 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

A robust system of monitoring ensures that our recruitment and selection practices not only meet our legal requirements but also actively promote equality of opportunity. Data is collected separately by the HR team for equal opportunities monitoring purposes.

We collect information regarding candidate's age, disability, gender, race and religion or belief as part of our recruitment process. The HR team collates this information and produces reports showing the number of applicants at each stage of the recruitment process, broken down by each

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(1) Guaranteed invitation to a selection centre and/or interview for all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum essential criteria on a person specification and consider them on their abilities, (2) ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time (but at least once a year) with disabled employees what can be done to ensure that they develop and use their abilities, (3) make every effort when an employee becomes disabled to ensure that they stay in employment (4) take action to ensure that all employees develop an appropriate level of disability awareness to make these commitments work, (5) review the commitments each year to assess what has been achieved, plan ways to make improvements and to let staff and the Employment Service know about progress and future plans.

protected characteristic. Progress in this regard is reported annually and enables continuous improvement.

6. Attraction Process

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

6.1 Vacancy Review

The HR & OD team require approval to recruit from the business group director and the HR & OD manager before any permanent or temporary/fixed term recruitment can take place. It is the business group's responsibility (recruiting manager) to seek and obtain Director and HR approval.

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^{III}.
- 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). Occasionally temporary or fixed term vacancies arise (e.g. maternity/secondment cover) and 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 conflict with the principles of this aspect of Audit Scotland's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity. For more details on this, please refer to our [Fixed Term Contract Policy](#)

If a manager believes that there may be potential difficulties in recruiting to a post they should contact the HR & OD Team for advice, guidance and discuss options for appropriate action.

6.2 Preparing the Advert

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

Upon Director/HR & OD Manager's approval to proceed, a designated HR Consultant will work with the Recruiting Manager to draft a concise advert for the role including reference to whether or not relocation expenses will be offered and decide which media should be used.

HR will produce a timeline for each recruitment cycle to ensure that our internal customers are aware of the key dates to be met. All adverts must be placed through the HR & OD Team, except where alternative arrangements have been formally agreed in advance

^{III} 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.

Depending on the vacancy duration, Audit Scotland will advertise as follows:

	Internal	External
Vacancy (restricted transfer) Temporary transfers of the same grade (e.g. secondment) advertised to a particular grade group so that applications are ring-fenced. Vacancy (up to 6 months)	Yes*	No
Temporary/fixed-term promotions (e.g. acting-up and additional responsibility). Vacancy (6 - 18 months)	Yes*	No
Temporary/fixed-term promotions (e.g. acting-up and additional responsibility). Vacancy (more than 18 months/permanent)	Yes	Yes **
Long-term temporary/fixed-term promotions (e.g. acting-up and 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). Care should be taken to ensure that the needs of the business and the opportunity to offer staff career development opportunities are carefully balanced. In some circumstances it would be better to advertise temporary opportunities so that staff can express an interest in developing their career through experience in the new role.
- 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 & OD 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 HR & OD Manager requesting deviation from the standard recruiting policy, providing:

- that the vacancy has, within the last two years, been previously advertised on an external basis such that potential candidates from outside Audit Scotland could have applied;
- 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 employees 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 our commitment to equal opportunity & diversity, cost and operational advantages.

Where the HR & OD Manager 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 Management Team.

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

6.3 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 the ishare recruitment homepage, e-recruitment portal and notified to staff via an all staff email.

Internal candidates complete an on-line expression of interest form detailing why they are interested in applying and what skills and qualities they could bring to the role. Previous appraisal PAD documents and an 'Employee Reference'^{IV} from the applicant's current line manager will be considered as part of the selection process.

6.4 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 aim is to deliver best value from Audit Scotland's media spend by carefully selecting the appropriate media, timing of advertisements and clustering of job vacancies within advertisements.

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

^{IV} References relate to your manager's view as to the applicant's suitability for the vacancy. The content is available for applicants to read.

External candidates complete an on-line application form detailing previous employer information, qualifications and experiences and why they are interested in applying.

7. 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 competencies and requirements of each role. The lead recruiting manager will work with the HR Consultant to agree a balanced, appropriate and fair approach in this respect.

In order to ensure consistency, comparability, transparency and fairness, internal and external candidates will be subject to the same or comparable selection tools. The range and degree of selection tools used depends upon the vacancy duration. Please refer to Appendix A.

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 direct with HR and/or recruiting managers, as appropriate.

7.1 Short-listing

Short-listing is completed on-line through the e-Recruitment portal. The first stage selection criteria will be based on an agreed set of key essential 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.

Candidates, at this stage, will only be assessed based on their expression of interest and supporting documents (internal candidates) or application form (external candidates).

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, they will quality check the application against the essential criteria. Where a candidate who is declared as having a disability meets the criteria, 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. 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. Please refer to the separate [Short-Listing Guidance](#) document for more information.

7.2 Supplementary Selection Tools

Audit Scotland may choose, in certain circumstances, to ask candidates to undertake supplementary exercises in relation to their application, for example, on-line profile/personality, judgement tests or additional competency based questions.

If such an exercise is included in the recruitment process, Audit Scotland will strive to ensure that the competencies and skills being examined are essential for the job; are being examined in an objective and non-discriminatory manner and that reasonable adjustments are available, where feasible.

7.3 Selection Centre

Candidates who meet the initial short-listing criteria may be invited to attend a selection centre to participate in further selection tools.

It is recommended that a range of selection methods, that are suitable for assessing both the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification are established as this will enhance objective decision making which is difficult through interview alone.

In most cases this will also include the standard competency based interview to form a 'one-stop shop' selection process. The level of selection tools used will be suitable for that type of post and grade. Selection tools can include, but are not limited to, group exercise, written exercise, fact finding exercise and role play/simulation exercises.

7.4 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 18 months.

Candidates who were deemed appointable from campaigns less than 18 months old will not be asked to attend 'repeat' selection centres. Instead, with the applicants consent, they will be automatically fast-tracked to interview stage.

7.5 Interview

The Recruiting Manager will select a panel of representatives from the business^V. Only employees who have received up to date formal training in competency-based interviews are authorised to take part in interview panels^{VI}. In some instances, the interview panel will include a representative from HR.

Interviews are carried out using competency based questions. These questions ask the interviewee to give examples of a situation in their past where they have demonstrated that they had found a solution to a problem or carried out a specific task.

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.

Please refer to the separate [Interview Guidance](#) document for more information.

8. 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.

8.1 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^{VII}.

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

^V 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.

^{VI} 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.

^{VII} 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

8.2 Reserve List

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 the event that 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 confirm 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 methods.

8.3 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 exceptional circumstances. This should be done in consultation with HR. For more information, please refer to the separate guidance document relating to [Starting Salaries Policy](#).

8.4 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 or the Recruiting Manager, although he or she may delegate this to another member of the panel where appropriate.

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

8.5 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. See the separate guidance on [References](#).
- 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 Basic Disclosure Scotland check where applicable

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

9. Induction

Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. Once the successful candidate has accepted the offer of employment and a start date has been agreed, the line manager is responsible for preparing a comprehensive induction programme for the new employee. For more information, please refer to [Induction Policy](#).

10. Recruitment Records

To ensure that 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. 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 for the purposes of the recruitment process.

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 shredded. All appointment related documents will be held in the employees personnel file within HR.

11. Related Documents

- [Job Evaluation Policy](#)
- [Fixed Term Contract Policy](#)
- [Redeployment Policy](#)
- [e-Recruitment Guide for Applicants](#)
- [Employee Reference Guide](#)
- [Short-Listing Guidance](#)
- [Interview Guidance](#)
- [Job Offer Form](#)
- [Starting Salaries Policy](#)
- [References](#)
- [Induction Policy](#)

Appendix A

