

Essential Tools for Workforce Development

Hiring for diversity Guide and Checklist

This resource is part of a series of resources in the online Diversity in Disability Toolkit.

For further information, see:
diversityindisability.org

What are the risks?

Hiring or promoting staff is a renowned diversity 'hot spot'.

Due to unconscious bias, there can be a tendency to hire in your own image, or hire people who have a 'cultural fit'.

We all have some degree of unconscious bias. Our unconscious is:

"the part of the mind that a person is not aware of but that is often a powerful force in controlling behaviour"*

How do you manage your talent pipeline to reflect diversity and inclusion?

The best way to minimise the potential or impact of unconscious bias is to have a solid focus on performance and capability. Flexible and informal hiring practices are high-risk.

1. Define the role
2. Define the selection criteria
3. Advertise
4. Interview

1. Define the Role

In order to appropriately define the role required, don't forget to revisit your business case for diversity. It's often tempting to 'dust off' an old job description and use it again rather than write a new one, but is that description appropriate for your needs in the future? Make sure you're checking in with the people who are setting the strategic direction for your service.

- The role has been clearly and simply defined
- The job description focuses on capabilities and knowledge and only requests qualifications pertinent to the role
- The job description is specific and gives reasons for a required skill - e.g. good communication skills are required for negotiating agreements

- Salary and benefits payable have been objectively determined to avoid bias - e.g. men and women being paid the same rate for performing the same role

2. Define the selection criteria

What do you need the person to actually do and how are you going to assess their capability to do it? Make sure cultural capability or experience is on your list.

- The selection criteria are objective, quantifiable and have been developed prior to receiving applications
- The selection criteria facilitate clear comparison of candidate capabilities
- The selection criteria are directly linked to job performance and allow you to shortlist applicants on merit
- Tools and assessments used in candidate selection are role focused, objective and do not deliberately exclude people e.g. a physical test for a sedentary position or written test for a labouring role
- The shortlisting process has been clearly defined and will be completed without disclosing personal details to minimise potential bias e.g. no names, gender or indicators of ethnicity shown to selection panel

3. Write the advertisement

It's important to think broadly when recruiting staff. What do people in your community read? What channels of communication can you use to reach a broader audience?

Often job ads are written in bureaucratic language which can be daunting for speakers of English as a second language to understand and respond to.

Sometimes it's helpful to take a long-term approach to your talent pipeline and think broadly. If you hold an information session about your service in a local community event, you could also have information about jobs available.

Making internships, volunteering, school and university outreach a part of your service can also be a way of targeting and engaging with culturally diverse young people.

- The advertisement and application process are written in plain English
- The advertisement promotes aspects of the job that are likely to attract applicants with diverse backgrounds and abilities e.g. local community focus
- The advertisement promotes aspects of the organisation that are likely to attract applicants with diverse backgrounds and abilities e.g. diverse team environment
- The role has been advertised in publications representing the diversity of the local community
- The role has been advertised via multiple channels to attract a broader range of applicants e.g. Community radio, local newspaper and websites

4. Interview Process

In one of the most famous unconscious bias case studies, the Boston Symphony orchestra instituted blind auditions to assess potential musicians. It was* shown that under blind audition conditions, the likelihood of a female musician advancing from the preliminary rounds of an audition increased by 50%. Other studies of Labour market discrimination found that call-backs after review of identical resumes can be up to 70% higher for applicants with non 'foreign-sounding' names.**

Are you testing capability in a way that eliminates or minimises the potential for bias? Behavioural interviewing where people's 'performance' at interview is the key criteria for being hired can be problematic. Interview performance is often highly language dependent, and not so easy for speakers of English as a second language. It also focuses on rewarding people who are good at interviewing, not necessarily people who will be strong performers on the job.

Actively manage the composition of recruiting teams to ensure diversity on both sides of the interview table.

*published in 1997 by Princeton professor Cecilia Rouse and Harvard professor Claudia Goldin <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2013/10/22/arts-cover-women-in-classical-music/>

** <http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2014/06/labour-market-discrimination>



The selection committee has gender balance and culturally diverse representatives



The selection committee have been briefed and are aware of different cultural approaches to non-verbal communication - e.g. Silence, eye contact, rigorous questioning or assertiveness vs humility



- All candidates have the same, predetermined preparation time and interview duration
- Interview questions specifically address the selection criteria and are used consistently with every applicant
- Participants who speak with a non-Australian accent are not being marked down for 'poor communication skills'
- Additional measures of capability are determined prior to the interviews and are applied to all candidates
- A consistent scoring or assessment method has been defined and panel members will use it in the same manner
- All referees are asked the same set of consistent job-related, performance focused questions
- Panel discussions and deliberations are objective
- The panel's final decision is fair, objective and avoids unconscious bias

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