

# Recruitment and selection

Summary guide

October 2023



# How to use this guide

Use this summary guide to understand recruitment and selection changes arising from the [Public Sector Act 2022](#) (the Act) and the Recruitment and selection directive (07/23) (the directive). Many aspects of recruitment and selection in the Queensland public sector (the sector) remain unchanged, however this guide gives insight into the most significant enhancements made by the directive.

## At a glance

The primary objective of recruitment and selection remains the same, to find the right person for the job – but with a shift from merit-based recruiting to recruiting the eligible person best suited for the position.

Under the directive, organisations can consider a broader range of attributes when assessing applicant suitability for a role. The panel must consider the functions it fulfils and how the role and successful applicant can contribute to the organisation and its culture. The directive also supports the application of equity, diversity, respect and inclusion which are defined in [chapter 2 of the Act](#).

Instead of relying on merit alone, recruitment processes must holistically assess an applicant’s suitability for a role to select the eligible person best suited to the position. While the directive includes some attributes that a panel may consider, best practice would be for these to be considered in every process.

### Eligibility

#### Must consider

- If the applicant is allowed to perform the role.  
E.g. citizenship or residency requirements, mandatory conditions or qualifications, licences.

and

### Suitability

#### Must consider

- The applicant’s ability to perform the requirements of the role.  
E.g. the extent to which the person has abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience, and personal qualities relevant to the carrying out of the duties in question.

#### May consider

- How the applicant carried out any previous employment.
- The applicant’s potential to make a future contribution to the organisation.
- How appointment would achieve organisational equity, diversity, respect and inclusion obligations.

Although the directive distinguishes between some attributes that must be considered and others that may be considered, best practice is for panels to consistently consider the ‘may consider’ attributes in all recruitment and selection processes.



### Process must be fair and transparent

#### Continues

Recruitment and selection processes should consider how each applicant can take part in a way that is flexible, unbiased, culturally safe, inclusive and accessible. This may not be identical for every applicant.



## Select the eligible person best suited to the position

### Previously based on merit alone

Panels must still consider each eligible applicant's ability to perform the requirements of the position. The shift to selecting the eligible person best suited holistically considers:

Ability to perform

Previous employment

Future contributions

Equity and diversity



## Must reflect obligations relating to equity, diversity, respect and inclusion

### Previously a discretionary consideration

All recruitment and selection processes must actively progress equity and diversity in employment for diversity target groups. These obligations need to be considered before a selection process commences and throughout the entire process.

### Queensland public sector diversity targets for 2023–2026

4%

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

12%

people with disability

12%

culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, who speak a language other than English at home

50%

women in leadership (to be measured at the SO, SES2, SES3, SES 4 and CEO levels, with targets combining both classified and equivalent roles)

**Note:** Your organisation will have its own diversity targets which may differ to these.

# Best practice for recruitment and selection

## Use fair and transparent processes

Fairness in recruitment means everyone has an opportunity to show their eligibility and suitability for a role. Making reasonable adjustments means a process does not need to be identical for every applicant. Rather, it must promote equity so that each applicant can take part in a way that is inclusive, flexible, unbiased, culturally safe, and accessible.

Transparency means being clear about what is expected in a process and what attributes the panel will look for. This should be stated in the role description prior to advertising. It also means providing applicants with information about the progress of a process and giving feedback that is timely, specific and constructive.



## Undertake a holistic assessment to select the eligible person best suited to the position

Identifying the eligible person best suited means holistically considering applicants' suitability.

|                    | <b>Merit alone</b><br>Under the former directive  | <b>Eligible person best suited</b><br>Under the current directive  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Mandatory</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the person has abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to carrying out the duties in question.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the person has abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to carrying out the duties in question.</li> <li>Whether the person is allowed to perform the role (the right to work in Australia, licences, etc.).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>If relevant</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way in which the person carried out any previous employment or occupational duties.</li> <li>The extent to which the person has potential for development.</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The way in which the person carried out any previous employment or occupational duties.</li> <li>The potential of the person to make a future contribution to the entity (including the extent to which the person has potential for development).</li> <li>Contribution to the obligations of equity, diversity, respect and inclusion.</li> </ul> |

Best practice does not look solely at the technical abilities of an applicant to perform the duties, but also considers the applicant's personal qualities and attributes that will assist them to thrive in the workplace and contribute to a positive culture and the overall success of the organisation. This might mean hiring the applicant who best complements the existing team or who brings a new or fresh perspective. Good hiring managers take this approach when recruiting.

Recruiting should not be approached with an administrative mentality and is not a tick-the-box process. No two applicants will be identical, and each applicant will have differing skills, abilities, experience, potential and diversity. Recruiting requires panel members and delegates to exercise discretion and make good decisions by weighing up and comparing all these differences, and then deciding on balance which applicant is best suited to the position.

The focus on equity, diversity, respect and inclusion is about setting organisations up for success to deliver on the governments' priorities and objectives for the community. It promotes this by supporting safe and inclusive cultures and a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve. Organisations that have a diverse workforce are more likely to

have better organisation culture and better performance — research confirms that this is true. We can innovate more and benefit from the different perspectives and experience of a workforce drawn from a range of diverse backgrounds.

Good recruiting practice will weigh up all the following factors in a holistic assessment when deciding who to offer a role to:

- the extent to which the person has abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to carrying out the duties in question
- the way in which the person carried out any previous employment or occupational duties
- the potential of the person to make a future contribution to the entity (including the extent to which the person has potential for development)
- contribution to the obligations of equity, diversity, respect and inclusion.

## Planning for equity, diversity, respect and inclusion

Under Chapter 2 of the Act, equity, diversity, respect and inclusion should be demonstrated in recruitment and selection processes when deciding the eligible person best suited to the position.

HR practitioners and hiring managers should:

- consider how everyone involved in a recruitment and selection process will ensure accessibility, inclusion and cultural safety throughout the entirety of a process
- give applicants confidence to self-identify their attributes throughout a process
- consider the selection panel's diversity as a key factor for successful recruitment, with appropriate gender balance, cultural competency, and addressing the panel's unconscious bias and affinity bias
- refer to data sources that highlight under-representation of the four diversity target groups to inform decision-making about equity, diversity, respect and inclusion obligations. These can include minimum obligatory HR information (MoHRI), Working for Queensland survey, workforce profile and team composition as identified in your organisation's Equity and diversity action plan.

# Applying the directive in practice

The directive applies throughout the recruitment process. However, the way in which each step is carried out will differ slightly between organisations, depending on their policies. HR practitioners and hiring managers should use these steps to guide their organisation's recruitment and selection practice under the directive.

| Step (clause)   | Explanation   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>Workforce planning</b><br>Directive clause 7                        | Recruitment and selection must occur within the context of broader workforce planning in accordance with section 81 of the Act in relation to employment being on a permanent basis. Item 7.4 of the directive outlines workforce planning considerations.  |
| 2. <b>Role design, description and evaluation</b><br>Directive clause 7.7 | Role design should be informed by workforce planning considerations and practices, including any determination about requirements of the position, and whether it is an identified role and/or has any mandatory conditions or qualifications. Role descriptions should be designed for accessibility and inclusivity and must reflect the holistic set of skills, qualities and attributes required to undertake the position. |
| 3. <b>Attraction and advertising</b><br>Directive clause 8.5              | Item 8.5 sets out advertising requirements and considerations. 8.16 covers ability to limit advertising or employ without advertising. Recurring vacancies are covered in 8.19.<br>Item 8.11 and 8.12 address inter-agency advertising (e.g. advertising multiple policy officer vacancies across two departments to maximise the potential pool of applicants).  |
| 4. <b>Selection panels</b><br>Directive clause 9.5                        | Selection panels and strategies for the process should be determined prior to the advertisement of a vacancy and the panel must comprise at least two people. The diversity of the panel should be considered a factor for successful recruitment.  |
| 5. <b>Assessment of person</b><br>Directive clause 9.10                   | Assessing applicants takes into account the whole-person contribution to a public sector entity and requires holistic and concurrent evaluation of eligibility and suitability attributes. This includes the ability to perform the role, past employment performance, potential contributions, and achievement of equity objectives.   |
| 6. <b>Referee checks</b><br>Directive clause 9.12                         | At a minimum, referee checking must be conducted for the applicants determined to be best suited to the position, including where this process is used to fill a recurring vacancy.   |
| 7. <b>Documentation</b><br>Directive clause 9.17                          | High standards of governance in recruitment and selection, including determining suitability for employment, maintain the integrity of the public sector workforce.   |
| 8. <b>Post-selection</b><br>Directive clause 12                           | All applicants are to be advised that they may request feedback from the selection panel. In cases of graduate program applicants, this requirement only extends to the applicants who were interviewed. Policies and/or processes should also be in place within your organisation to handle appeals and reporting.  |

## Preparing for a recruitment process

To apply the directive, sector HR practitioners can support the selection of the eligible person best suited before recruitment begins by:

- ensuring workforce planning, role evaluation, equity and diversity data, and the organisation's equity and diversity action plans are up to date and available to hiring managers
- understanding the sector's diversity target groups and the organisation-specific targets for:
  - Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - people with disability
  - women in leadership.

- updating organisation role descriptions to:
  - best reflect the attributes that will be used to attract and assess diverse applicants
  - include simple, accessible and inclusive language, that actively expresses encouragement for people from diverse groups to apply.
- forming selection panels that are diverse
- ensuring recruiting managers and panel members are supported with information and resources to ensure accessibility, inclusion and cultural safety are provided to candidates and applicants throughout the entire recruitment and selection process
- considering if the role is an identified role due to genuine occupational requirements, or whether targeted recruitment is appropriate through limited advertising under the provisions of clause 8.8 (b) to increase representation of a diversity target group(s) (subject to evidence of underrepresentation, such as an equity and diversity plan or audit).



Selection panels must document in advance which attributes will be considered and include this in the role description before commencing a process.

## Ensure cultural safety

Consideration must be given throughout the recruitment and selection process, to the responsibilities under [section 21](#) of the Act for supporting a reframed relationship with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:

- promoting cultural safety and cultural capability at all levels of the public sector
- ensuring the workforce and leadership of public sector entities are reflective of the community they serve
- promoting a fair and inclusive public sector that supports a sense of dignity and belonging for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- supporting the aims, aspirations and employment needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Cultural safety includes shared respect, shared meaning, and shared knowledge. It also encompasses shared experience of learning, living and working together, doing so with dignity, and truly listening. Cultural safety must not be considered optional, nor should it be established on an as needed basis. Rather, it is an essential element to be embedded into all recruitment and selection processes.

## Consider an identified role

The directive allows vacancies to be advertised as identified roles. An identified role is one where an employer deems that a person with a particular attribute is required to fill the role due to a genuine occupational requirement. Usually, this is due to the way in which the person undertaking that role is required to interact with members of the community with that attribute, and/or delivery of content, services or programs specific to members of the community with that attribute.

For an identified role, the role description must reflect:

- a clear statement of the mandatory attribute(s) the candidate must possess to be considered for the role
- if any evidence of the attribute(s) may be requested or required, and the nature and timing of that evidence
- that people without the attribute will not be considered.

The vacancy advertisement should clearly state in the advertisement's title that it is an identified role (e.g. Policy Officer (identified role: persons with lived experience of disability)).

## Consider targeted recruitment

The directive allows vacancies to be filled through a targeted recruitment process, where the delegated officer decides to limit a vacancy's advertising, and therefore an applicant pool, to people with a particular attribute.

Unlike identified roles, this should not involve specific duties connected to a person with that attribute. Delegates and hiring managers may target recruitment at one or more of the four diversity target groups.

Where it is reasonable and proportionate as required by anti-discrimination legislation, it is lawful to:

- remove barriers to employment opportunities
- address under-representation of a diversity target group
- assist in meeting diversity targets within an entity.

These factors should be considered and documented by the chief executive or delegated officer prior to advertising.

For a targeted vacancy, role advertisements should contain details of the targeted recruitment process:

- a clear statement that it is a targeted vacancy for a diversity target group
- if any evidence of the attribute may be requested or required, and the nature and timing of that evidence
- that people without the attribute will not be considered.

The vacancy advertisement should contain information stating in the advertisement's title that it is a targeted role (e.g. Policy Officer (targeted role: persons with lived experience of disability)).

There can be confusion between identified roles and targeted recruitment. Entities may consider making it clear to applicants in the advertisement as well as prior to interview, whether the position will have limited, or no duties specifically tied to being from that diversity group or having those attributes. This will ensure an applicant has a realistic job preview and can properly understand how this might differ from an identified position.



Even when a vacancy is not advertised as an identified role or through targeted recruitment, a panel must still be accessible, culturally safe, and consider applicants' attributes holistically. All recruitment and selection processes consider each applicant's suitability by concurrently considering their ability to perform the requirements of the role, how they carried out previous employment, their potential to make future contributions, and achieving equity objectives.



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