# Interrupt bias during recruitment

Unconscious bias is, simply put, our tendency to believe that some people, ideas etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly. Bias interrupters are steps to change process that interrupts bias going forward.

To reduce gender bias from your next recruitment process, try introducing some of the suggested activities below. Not all of the activities are suited to every recruitment process.

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| **Recruitment stage** | **Bias interrupter activity** |
| Identification | [***Plan and prepare***](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/plan-and-prepare) early on to identify what the right person for the role looks like and how to attract them.  |
| ***Look at diversity***within the team and target the difference that is lacking. For example, people with disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, women, multicultural, and young or older people.  |
| ***Consider all suitable*** [***flexible work arrangements***](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/flexible-work-arrangements) for the role as this will increase the pool of potential applicants for recruitment and higher duties arrangements.  |
| For short-term opportunities while recruitment is underway, ***target high potential and high performing talent*** with diverse backgrounds and experience for higher duties to build capability in more senior roles. |
| ***Review the position description to ensure gender neutral language*** and inclusive themes are present. Women can place different values than men on job description cues when making decisions on potential fit. Gendered language is contained not just in job titles, but throughout the job description, such as ‘dominate the market place, aggressively meet targets, or drive teams to achieve results’. Research shows female applicants make decisions on whether they would belong in an organisation based on gendered wording in job descriptions-irrespective of qualifications and skills match. Recruitment agencies or specialist organisations can review the role description and provide gender neutral wording recommendations for consideration.  |
| To demonstrate the organisation’s inclusive processes and behaviours, ***identify a suitable and capable panel***. Look for panel members that will challenge thinking and bring different perspectives.  |
| Panel members (who have not already) undertake ***unconscious bias training***. Unconscious bias or hidden beliefs are attitudes beyond our regular perceptions of ourselves and others, and underlie a great deal of our patterns of behaviour about diversity. Education in this area assists leaders to better manage and attract diverse teams effectively. It is not necessary that this training is undertaken before every recruitment process.  |
| Attraction | Use ***non-traditional advertising*** avenues in addition to SmartJobs, including:* diversity-focused employment organisations, such as the [National Disability Recruitment Coordinator](http://www.workfocusgroup.com/ndrc/)
* engage with specialist organisation, such as the [Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships](https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/be-involved/cultural-awareness/naidoc-week) to advise the best mediums and process to target diverse demographics in the related location, field or discipline
* networks and forums, such as [QG Women](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/qg-women), [Women in Technology](http://www.wit.org.au/), and research-related networks in the role specific industry/profession
* social media and professional networks, such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Yammer
* print media targeted at the diverse demographic.
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| ***Promote benefits that attract a wide and diverse pool of applicants*** and include items in the job description and advert, such as:* [flexible work arrangements](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/flexible-work-arrangements)
* [superannuation](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/superannuation)—QSuper provides specific support and advice for women to counteract the difference in women and men’s super.
* [return to work program](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/what-return-work-plan)
* [White Ribbon Accreditation](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/workplaces)

[Find out how to write a role description](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/develop-role-description). |
| If a recruitment agency is engaged, request they actively ***promote the*** [***flexible work arrangements***](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/flexible-work-arrangements) during the initial screening stage.  |
| ***Request only a resume and a one to two page letter*** outlining your interest in the role in the initial application as this will increase the overall pool of potential applicants from outside of the public service.  |
| Ensure the ***contact person is available and knowledgeable*** about the role, its flexibility and the diversity sought. |
| Track the number and ***ratio of diverse applicants*** and extend or adjust the attraction campaign to increase low representation in diverse groups.  |
| Selection  | Prior to commencing the recruitment and selection process all panel members should undertake an [***Harvard Implicit Association Test***](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html) which is a short (five to eight minute), online exercise to highlight unconscious bias and thus make it conscious at this critical point in the recruitment process. It is recommended to take at this point in every/each recruitment process undertaken.  |
| ***Blind shortlist*** (removing names or gender/background specific information) when selecting applicants to progress.  |
| ***Use*** [***selection tools***](https://www.qld.gov.au/gov/design-selection-process) ***that suit the role.*** Interviews are not always the best indicator of performance. Other options include work samples, presentations, assessment centres, psychometric testing, and in-tray exercises.  |
| If there is little to no diversity in the schedule for interview ***identify at least one capable and suitable diverse candidate (e.g. female) from the shortlist for an interview*** and note this as a diversity initiative in the selection report. If no capable and suitable candidate is there, consider reviewing, adjusting and completing the attraction process again. |
| ***Review interview questions***:* ensure they are not in favour of a particular gender or exclude diverse backgrounds
* ensure they use gender neutral language
* include a values based diversity question to ask applicants to ensure you are recruiting people who value diversity
* structure as a two-way discussion which focuses on potential and transferable skills rather than pre-determined words or phases.
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| Track the number and ***ratio of diverse applicants throughout the process***, identify significant ratio shifts at different selection points and consider the underlying cause/s to address. For example, if 50 per cent of applicants were female and only 10 per cent of those interviewed were female the shortlisting process requires review and adjustment.  |
| Appointment  | Undertake an **evaluation process** with the successful candidate to determine if expectations of role and department were aligned. Or survey all shortlisted candidates to understand individual perceptions of the recruitment process.  |