

Guidelines for writing Person Specifications

A Person Specification is a profile of the skills and aptitudes required of the post-holder and is derived from the job description. It lists the criteria that will be used in shortlisting and selecting candidates. It provides:

- A set of criteria against which all applicants can be measured objectively;
- A structured and systematic means for a comparative assessment of the applicants;
- A document to ensure that the basis of decision-making is transparent.

The Person Specification is a live document to be reviewed and amended as appropriate in line with the Job Description.

Creating a Person Specification

The University has a standard format for all Person Specifications that should be used in all instances. If your requirements cannot be met by the use of this format please discuss this with your Personnel Officer. Some groups of posts have a generic Person Specification so it will be unnecessary for another to be created. Please check with your Personnel Officer.

The person specification should include:

Skills / Abilities

- e.g. competence in the use of IT tools including Word, Excel and PowerPoint - someone with an impairment can perform these duties so long as equipment and/or support workers are provided.
- e.g. ability to prepare budgets and annual financial statements
- e.g. able to speak fluent Cantonese

Knowledge

- e.g. up-to-date knowledge of employment law
- e.g. specific knowledge of developments and good practice in teaching and learning techniques
- e.g. understanding of the current issues in Higher Education

Experience (specify the type of experience where possible)

- e.g. line management experience
- e.g. proven experience in managing a teacher education programme or course
- e.g. experience of cash handling and banking

Qualifications (do not insist on paper qualifications unless absolutely essential to the post. Experience and evidence of competence should be viewed as equally valid).

- e.g. NEBOSH Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety or equivalent
- e.g. ILT membership or equivalent

Personal Attributes and Circumstances (only include criteria that the performance of the post depends upon, consider reasonable adjustments that would enable a person with a disability to comply. Standards of physical fitness are permissible but only when they are essential to the post)

- e.g. able to work flexible and unsocial hours including weekends as and when required. Some Bank Holiday shifts will be required.
- e.g. able to lift weights up to 20kg
- e.g. able to work independently

The requirements set out in the person specification should be specific and measurable during the selection process e.g. English to GCSE standard or equivalent. To ensure equality of opportunity all criteria on the person specification should be derived from the requirements set by the job description.

The criteria included in the person specification must be capable of being objectively justified as the minimum requirements to carry out the post effectively. Criteria should not be included if they unfairly discriminate on the grounds of race, religion or belief, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Give careful consideration to reasonable adjustments that can be made.

The person specification should be divided into **essential** and **desirable** criteria. This should be used in the short-listing process to distinguish between candidates. Essential criteria are those that are critical for the satisfactory performance of the job. It is expected that applicants will meet all the essential criteria to be considered eligible for appointment. Desirable criteria are those that enhance a person's capacity to do the job. These are usually not listed as essential because it is expected that they can be acquired once in employment. For example, while specific knowledge of the University and its environment could be of benefit, it can also be learnt. Care should be taken when consideration is given to how the candidate is going to be measured against these criteria. All tests are subject to reasonable adjustment and people with impairments must be allowed to undertake an assessment in a suitable alternative manner.

If you require any further help or assistance in the production of a Person Specification please contact your Personnel Officer.

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