



Select Personnel for Activities

■ *Scope*

This unit explores the need for managers to carry out proper human resource planning, in order that they might have enough skilled people to carry out the activities designed to achieve organisational goals. This requires analytical and diagnostic skills from the manager who seeks to calculate short, medium and long term manpower needs, and forms a crucial part of planning and control – two major aspects of the manager's role. The general cost of human resources will provide every manager with a very clear and tangible indication of the importance of getting the HR planning and resourcing right first time, every time.

The unit further looks at the processes of attracting and selecting the right people through its two elements:

- C8.1 Identify Personnel Requirements
- C8.2 Select the Required Personnel

Points to Ponder

Recruitment is the first part of filling a vacancy: it includes the examination of the vacancy, the consideration of sources of suitable candidates, making contact with and attracting applications from them. If the vacancy has resulted from increased activity, thus making it essential to have additional personnel, it is likely that a suitable job description and job specification have been established. The majority of vacancies, however, happen as a result of people

leaving the organisation or as the final event in a chain of promotions or transfers. In these cases the following need to happen prior to deciding whether or not there is a vacancy:

- **It might be possible to reallocate some or all of the tasks to the existing team with increased rewards and development opportunities; this could increase employee morale and motivation**
- **It might be filled by a different kind of employee, a junior person or a part-timer**
- **The vacancy might be filled from internal applicants**
- **Do the workload predictions justify recruitment?**
- **Is the impact of the vacancy short, medium or long term?**

If at the end of these deliberations, the manager feels that there is a need for looking for the right applicant externally, then it is time to design a job description incorporating the need for any extra responsibilities, skills and expertise. This really should be carried out through a job analysis as the need to take into account any changes in the organisation or technology is high. According to the Department of Employment, a **job description** is a broad statement of the purpose, duties and responsibilities for a particular job.

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The **person specification** is an interpretation of the job description in terms of the kind of person suitable for the job. It contains a series of desired attributes against which the applicants for a job are judged. **Competency** framework is a contemporary term used to define the competency requirement that includes all the tasks within an organisation. They are put together into what is often called a 'job family'. Such frameworks will usually comprise what are known as 'generic competencies' – they apply to all individuals who work within a specific occupation. A **competency profile** is a written specification which details the competencies which are required for a specific job.

A **person specification** might include:

- **Skills and knowledge specifically relevant to the job as contained in the job description**
- **Experience necessary to carry out the job effectively**
- **Education and training essential for satisfactory job performance**
- **Criteria covering personal qualities and circumstances which are directly related to the job itself and applied to all groups regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, marital status or sexual orientation**

Characteristics can be divided into essential and desirable criteria or as threshold level or superior level of competence. Person specification can open up a whole avenue for prejudices, subjectivity and arbitrary criteria thus seeking super-human candidates or disbaring perfectly competent people.

There are two very well-known classifications for personnel requirements: the Seven Point Plan developed by Professor Rodger and the Five Point Plan by Munro Fraser, both in the 1950s. Whilst these provide a framework for a general profile of candidates for selection, recent legislation will question the appropriateness of assessment categories relating to 'bearing', 'disposition' and 'circumstances'.



A reasonable layout for a specification is shown below:

	Essential	Desirable
Formal qualifications		
Knowledge		
Experience		
Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual • Technical • Social • Other 		
Interpersonal skills/motivation		
Interests/drive/physical requirements		

Job descriptions and person specifications need to be reviewed regularly to ensure accuracy and relevance and reflect the ever changing needs of the organisation as well as addressing legislative requirements.

Once the job descriptions and person specifications are sorted, the manager can plan where to advertise the vacancy – internally or externally and the advertising/recruitment method.

- **Press advertising (local, regional, national, specialist journals)**
- **Other advertising (radio, TV, internet, vacancy boards)**
- **Waiting lists/holding files/speculative CVs**
- **Employment agencies/recruitment consultants/job centres**
- **University milk round**

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Best practice in advertising demands the following:

- **Advertising should be genuine in that there is actually a vacancy and there is a serious intention to consider all applicants with a view to appointing the most suitable person**
- **The person specification should be the key to outlining the job requirements**
- **The advertisement should clearly indicate the location, salary and other benefits of the job**
- **Further procedures should be specified – how to apply, how to access information/application packs, where to return them, the closing date and potential interview date**
- **Advertisements should not discriminate except in specific circumstances where positive discrimination becomes lawful**

Remember, the advertising process is an ideal opportunity to market the organisation and the quality of applicant response will be linked to the quality of the advertisement. A discerning candidate will choose an employer who applies a professional, thorough approach to recruitment.

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) the following criteria apply in judging excellence in advertising:

- **Visual impact**
- **Typography and balance**
- **Clarity of message to the target audience**
- **Promotion of the job vacancy**
- **Projection of a professional organisational image**
- **Focus on workplace diversity**

It must be remembered that increasingly the importance of job descriptions and person specifications is declining as documents solely for guiding in the selection process; these are being seen as rather static documents in an ever-changing organisational environment. To promote flexibility, organisations are looking to hire for organisational need rather than job-specific needs. Organisations want their permanent employees to be able to do a variety of jobs and move smoothly from one team to another. In such a climate, it is natural for them to look for employees who in addition to job-specific skills have personalities and attitude that fit with the organisation's culture.



Selection is the process which involves the application of appropriate techniques and methods with the aim of eliminating unsuitable candidates; assessing, choosing, and appointing a suitably competent person and converting that person to an effective employee.

Application forms, interviews, employment tests, background checks and personal letters of reference all have one thing in common – each is a device for obtaining information about a job applicant that can help the organisation determine whether the applicant's skills, knowledge and abilities are appropriate for the job in question. Surplus labour markets generate a high volume of applications; so candidates have to be screened or sifted through the written information they provide and sometimes through telephone or personal contact. Effective screening involves applying job criteria which are predetermined and consistent; these criteria should be in tune with the job description and person specification.

The removal of personal information such as age, gender, marital status and ethnic origin, from the application form prior to screening will reduce the opportunity for personal prejudices and assumptions. Only candidates who match the person specification should be considered for the shortlist.

Unstructured interviews – short in duration, casual, conducted by an untrained panel or by a single person and made up of random questions – has been proven to be an inefficient selection device, not to mention falling foul of the legislation. The data gathered from such practices are typically biased and seldom relate to future job performance.

Without structure, a number of biases – interviewers favouring candidates who share their attitudes, giving weight unduly to a particular piece of information, interviewers making decisions in the light of their own personal prejudices or values – can distort the results. By having interviewers use a standardised set of questions based on the needs of the job and the organisation; and by providing them with a uniform method of recording information and standardising the weighting of the candidates' qualifications, the variability in results across applicants is reduced and the validity of the interview as a selection device is greatly enhanced.

The main reasons why so many poor interviews are carried out are two-fold:

1. Lack of training in interviewing techniques
2. Lack of adequate preparation for interview

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In order to be able to carry out successful interviews, managers need to be trained in **illustrated discussion/talk and practical interviewing exercises as a learning method**. The following are issues which busy managers need to know about if they are to make optimum use of their own and the candidates' time in the short period available for the interview:

- **Be prepared, this is the crucial bit but the one often neglected!**
- **Welcome candidates**
- **Encourage candidates to talk**
- **Control the interview**
- **Supply necessary information**
- **Close interview**
- **Final steps**

Asking questions:

- **Open**
- **Closed (few of these!)**
- **Probing ('Could you give an example of when you have...?')**
- **Hypothetical ('What do you think you would do if....?')**
- **Capability ('What do you know about...?')**
- **Motivation (career, achievements, spare time)**
- **Continuity ('Can we move on to your next job?')**
- **Career ('What did you learn from...?'; 'What skills did you use when...?')**
- **Work focused (absence)**

Avoid questions based on race, gender or disability



Supplementing the interview:

- References – the candidates choose their own personal referees and the referees are bound by a duty of care to the candidate and the future employer. Attaching the job description and person specification whilst sending for the reference; giving concise background information for the referee's use; indicating the nature of the response required and the time limit; providing an easy-to-complete reference form and a reply-paid, addressed envelope and addressing the request to the named individual will warrant a speedy and useful reference.
- Criminal checks – **Police Act 1997**. Recruiters will need to check the criminal record of an applicant and three types of certificates are available from the Criminal Records agency.
 - A Criminal Conviction Certificate (CCC) which will detail convictions that are not legally spent. Issued at a small cost
 - A Criminal Record Certificate (CRC) that details spent and unspent convictions and police cautions, issued at a small cost in exempted occupations such as teaching, health, legal and care
 - An Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate (ECRC) detailing a full criminal check of all convictions, cautions, acquittals and police intelligence available in special circumstances such as in occupations as judges, magistrates, those working unsupervised with children and where a betting or gambling licence is required.
- **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996**. This imposes a requirement on employers to ensure that they do not employ anyone who is not legally entitled to live and work in the UK. Employers must obtain documented evidence of an applicant's legal right to do this and retain it for six months after the employee has left; failure to do this punishable by prosecution and a fine up to £5,000. This evidence can be through scrutiny of passports, work permits, birth certificates or national insurance numbers.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that these documents are inspected and in order to avoid claims of discrimination it is strongly advised that each candidate is treated the same through every stage of the selection process.

- **Health checks**
- **Scoring and ranking of interview decisions**
- **Offering the position and details of appointment**
- **Confirming details in writing**
- **Initiating the new employee process**
- **Feedback to unsuccessful candidates**
- **Induction**
- **Monitor performance**

General evidence indicates that interviews are most valuable for assessing a candidate's applied mental skills, level of conscientiousness and interpersonal skills. When these qualities are related to job performance, the validity of interview as a selection device is increased. For example, these qualities have demonstrated relevance for performance in upper managerial positions. This is why applicants for senior management positions undergo various interviews with executive recruiters, board members and other organisational executives before a final decision is made. Other interview techniques can form part of the selection procedure too such as **assessment centres** and **psychometric testing**:

- **Attainment tests**
- **General intelligence tests**
- **Specific cognitive ability tests**
- **Trainability tests**
- **Personality tests**

■ *The Legislative Framework*

Equality of opportunity and valuing diversity must be considered by every organisation to remain efficient in employee resourcing. The pieces of legislation here aim to protect vulnerable groups of people from unfair discrimination as well as to protect the employer from unfair accusations:

- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974** – some criminal convictions to be regarded as 'spent' after a prescribed length of time determined by the type of offence and sentence. *However Occupations such as legal and medical professions as well as jobs involving the care of young people and work in social services are exempted from this Act.*
- **Sex Discrimination Act, 1975** – makes it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of gender or marital status except in cases where gender is a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ). The Act applies to both men and women. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is an independent body set up to monitor and enforce the application of SDA.
- **Race Relations Act, 1976** – makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, except in cases where race or ethnic origin becomes a GOQ. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was established to monitor and enforce the application of the RRA.



- **Disability Discrimination Act, 1995** – provides statutory rights and limited protection to people with disabilities. It requires employers to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to employment arrangements and work places to resolve problems facing disabled people. Currently, DDA does not apply to employers with less than 20 employees or to occupations such as the armed forces, the police, prison officers and fire fighters. This is about to change, however. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) was set up to monitor, advise, and enforce the DDA.
- **The Equal Pay Act, 1970**, amended by the **Equal Value Regulations, 1983**, implies a pay equality clause into the contract of employment. Men and women are entitled to the same pay for the same work and it is illegal to differentiate between terms and conditions of men and women on:
 1. like work
 2. work rated as equivalent under a non-discriminatory job evaluation scheme
 3. work of equal value even where the jobs are totally different

New legislation covering discrimination on the grounds of **sexual orientation** and **religious beliefs** came into force in December 2003. This is called Employment Equality Regulations and makes unlawful both types of discrimination mentioned above.

Discrimination can be **direct** or **indirect**. **Direct** discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of race, marital status, gender or disability. This is rather easy to detect. **Indirect** discrimination is subtle and rather more difficult to prove. It arises when a job requirement is applied to all applicants or employees, but in effect disadvantages certain groups as the number of people from these particular groups able to meet the criteria is rather small.

Investigate

1. ***Critically evaluate the components of the recruitment and selection procedure in your organisation, paying attention to job analysis, job description, person specification, choice of recruitment methods, selection process and decision making. Either justify your system or make recommendations for improvement.***

If you can provide documented evidence to support this exercise from your workplace, you will be able to gain most of the performance criteria for this unit as well.

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■ *Guidance for Gathering Evidence for this Unit*

All elements call for a personal narrative from you explaining how you Identify Personnel Requirements. You should also clearly indicate where you have provided supplementary work evidence.

Possible Sources of Supporting Evidence		
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<i>Possible Source of Evidence</i>	<i>Used</i>	<i>Location in Workplace/Portfolio</i>
Document, business case or a memo explaining your requirement for additional staff and how the requirement has come about		
A job description, person specification and job advertisement you have devised or at least modified		
Documents showing how you have identified financial and physical resources for such a post		
Evidence of how you have taken into consideration the diversity aspect whilst planning to add to your team		
Rationale behind your decision to apply particular selection methods		
Evidence of how you have set up a shorting listing and interview panel		
Evidence of score sheets, interview questions you have designed		
Evidence of you having taken the lead role in the interview panel		
Records of selection decisions and how you have communicated this to both successful and unsuccessful candidates		
Witness testimonies from candidates, team members or manager on your performance in selection		
Candidate's Signature		
Assessor's Signature		

