Inclusive Recruitment
SUPPORT FOR RECRUITING MANAGERS
Inclusive Recruitment

Workplace Diversity & Inclusion

At Macquarie, we are committed to ensuring our recruitment process is equitable and inclusive. There is a large body of research showing the effects of bias and the impact of hiring practices that inadvertently advantage some people over others; these issues affect our ability to recruit well. This throws into question our ambitions to recruit on the basis of merit.

We are making a concerted effort to improve recruitment and think differently about how we recruit at MQ. The Executive and HR have committed to a range of initiatives and pilots, and we will track the impact of these activities. To support these initiatives, and improve practice at a local level, this guide outlines research-informed guidance, information and tips for inclusive recruitment.

We are working to embed these examples into our recruitment processes; but in the meantime, we would be keen to hear from you if you have implemented the following recommendations or other innovative approaches to inclusive recruitment.

Please also make use of the support and guidance available through your HR Client Team and refer to the recruitment guidance available online.

DESIGNING THE JOB ROLE:

- **Be critical about criteria:** Are you using vague criteria that can lead to exclusion or bias? For example asking for a minimum number of years’ experience – this doesn’t necessarily equate to skills or expertise. This requirement may exclude younger candidates, those who are highly qualified and skilled but new to the sector, or applicants who have taken career breaks (Reese, 2011). Instead, consider the skills and attributes you’re really looking for. Create job specifications that are based on indicators for job success.

- **Pay attention to the language:** Are you using gendered language? Use the following tool to find out: [http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/](http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/) Research suggests that expectations about who might do the job are inadvertently built into the job design – this could be based on gendered assumptions and stereotypes, or who had the role previously (Gaucher Friesen and Kay, 2001; Stout and Dasgupta, 2011; Askehave and Zenthsen, 2014).

- **Think outside the 9 to 5:** Could the job be part time or job share? If this is something your team can support and encourage, advertising that you’d accept applications for part time or job share options may help to attract a larger and/or more diverse pool of applicants. Also emphasise the opportunity for flexible work wherever this is possible for the role and within your team.

ATTRACTION DIVERSE APPLICANTS:

- **Be creative about where and how you advertise:** How can you reach diverse applicants?
  - Use your networks – ask colleagues to share the job ad with their networks beyond MQ
  - Advertise in external media – consider how you might reach diverse candidates in your discipline or area of work
  - There are some organisations and websites dedicated to promoting vacancies to diverse candidates. One of the following may be of interest, but there may also be similar websites specific to your discipline:

- **Executive search firms:** Do you have a diverse long list for senior or specialised roles? It is part of Macquarie policy that we now give clear guidance to search firms to ensure they provide gender balanced and diverse long lists. This can have positive results as long as firms are held to account on this commitment (Manfredi, 2017). The wording currently being provided to search firms is as follows – please share this with any search firms you are collaborating with:
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Macquarie University’s gender equity strategy requires provision of a diverse and gender balanced long list.

- **Know your pool:** What are the national trends? It can be helpful to understand the national or international data to get a sense of the potential pool of applicants – for example, if the national gender balance for level E academics is 30% female – you should aim for this as a minimum benchmark in your applicant pool. Data on national gender breakdowns for STEMM and non-STEMM academic disciplines and career stages are available here – [http://www.sciencegenderequity.org.au/gender-equity-in-stem/](http://www.sciencegenderequity.org.au/gender-equity-in-stem/)

- **Importance of department culture:** What are you offering applicants in addition to their role and pay? When advertising your role, consider how you promote or describe your department - why would someone want to work for your team/department? Do you promote the department as welcoming and inclusive?

- **Inclusion statement:** What does your department / team offer? MQ will add a statement on job adverts outlying our commitment to diversity and inclusion at the University. If relevant, you could include a short statement to promote the work your team, department or faculty are doing to support and promote diversity and inclusion at a local level.

- **Signals of inclusion:** Have you provided any cues or signals of an inclusive workplace? It’s good practice to ensure any images used representative and diverse – considering gender, cultural background or age for example. Applicants from diverse or underrepresented groups may be looking for signals of inclusion and respect before applying for a new role. A statement along with key logos (such as our Australian Workplace Equity Index silver award logo) will automatically be added to job ads on the MQ website.

**SHORTLISTING AND INTERVIEWING**

- **Anonymous recruitment:** Can you de-bias the selection process? The departments of Biology and Cognitive Science at MQ have been piloting anonymised recruitment – this means removing any information from CVs that could lead to bias when applications are reviewed – for example, name, gender, age, address, nationality, university they received their degree/PhD etc. Research suggests that this approach can be successful in address bias during shortlisting (Goldin and Rouse, 2000; Krause, Rinne and Zimmermann, 2012). HR will be piloting anonymised recruitment using our online recruitment system in 2018 and will share the findings of the pilot. For more information, or to be involved in a pilot of anonymous recruitment, please contact workplacediversityinclusion@mq.edu.au

- **Interview panels:** Who is on your interview panel? While there is evidence to suggest that men and women are just as likely to be biased (Moss-Racusin et. al. 2012; Bagues and Esteve-Volart 2010), ensuring your interview panel is representative and diverse may communicate a positive message to interviewee and help put them at ease (Murphy, Steele and Gross, 2007). **MQ policy** requires that interview panels are diverse.

- **Reducing bias:** Can you reduce bias at interview stage? If removing information that might prompt bias isn’t possible, then these are some research-based suggestions to reduce the impact of bias. The key to reducing bias is to reduce uncertainty, and to enable comparative, information-based assessment. Suggested alternatives include:
  - Use structured interviews – agree on criteria and questions before the interview, and ask all candidates the same questions (Bohnet, 2016; Uhlman and Cohen, 2005; Isaac, 2009). Talk to your HR Client Team about creating an interview guide.
  - Score each criteria immediately after a candidate answers – rather than leaving it to the end (Bohnet, 2016)
  - Review candidates horizontally rather than vertically i.e. discuss each criteria at a time not each candidate (Bohnet, 2016; Bohnet, van Geen and Bazerman, 2015)
  - Unstructured interviews and selection methods that rely on ‘gut instinct’ are among the worst predictors of future job performance (Bohnet, 2016; Highhouse, 2008). Consider using job-
related tests or additional selection methods – your HR Client Team can advise on how best to do this.
- Reduce any time or stress pressures on interview panel members - bias increases when panellists are under time/cognitive pressure (Isaac, 2009)
- Ask questions – ask other panel members (and yourself) to justify statements and/or assumptions being made about candidates.

- **Interview questions:** Are you avoiding discriminatory questions? There are some questions or topics you should avoid in interviews and may be unlawful. For example, asking about someone’s family situation, whether they have children or plan to have children, or questions about their age. Don’t ask personal questions, or questions that are not related to candidates ability to succeed in the role.

- **Interview locations:** Have you considered accessibility? For example:
  - Ensure the interview is located in an accessible location for applicants who may have a disability
  - Before the interviews take place, ask all interviewees if they have any accessibility requirements or need any adjustments (such as an Auslan interpreter)
  - Consider whether there are accessible and/or gender-neutral toilets nearby

- **Subtle cues:** Have you considered the interview environment and inclusive cues? For example, if members of your panel are Ally members they could wear their Ally lanyards & pins. Studies have shown that subtle messages/cues can impact on candidates, and the experience a candidate has at an interview can affect their decision to take up a job offer if they feel the organisation wouldn’t be inclusive or welcoming (Stonewall 2008; Cheryan et.al. 2009; Murphy, Steele and Gross, 2007).

- **Irrelevant information:** What do you need to know before making an offer? Keep in mind the information you need to appoint the best candidate. Don’t ask for information that simply isn’t relevant to job performance and/or could make someone feel uncomfortable – for example, questions about someone’s relationship, family or caring commitments.

- **Be critical about ‘fit’:** What do we mean by ‘fit’? Be aware that ‘fit’ can be used as an explanation for biased decision – for example, assuming someone won’t ‘fit’ in the team because they are different from the rest of the team in some way (Manfredi, 2017). Think carefully and be critical about what you and the interview panel mean by ‘fit’.

- **Respecting identities:** How can you act respectfully and inclusively? Some people use personal pronouns that you might not be familiar with, for example They/ Hir/ Ze rather than She/He. If someone has stated their preferred pronoun, use it. If you’re unsure, mirror their language or ask them what they prefer.

**APPOINTING**

- **References:** How do you use references? Research suggests that, just like job adverts, references can also contain bias – for example, using more ‘stand-out’ words for male applicants, and more ‘communal’ words to describe women (Schmader et.al. 2007; Madera et. al., 2009). Ask the referee for information relating to the specific criteria and skills needed to perform the role. If you’re asked to write a reference for a colleague in future, please see this guide for avoiding bias in your reference letters - [http://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf](http://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf)

Please also be mindful that some people who have affirmed their gender identity / transitioned may not want to provide references so that they are not forced to come out to either their old or new employer. If someone says they cannot provide references, have a respectful conversation about alternative options.

- **Negotiation:** Is negotiation conducted fairly and free of bias? Research suggests women are likely to be offered lower salaries, and in some instances, women who do negotiate can face a backlash and labelled as ‘difficult’ (Bowles and Badcock, 2013; Benard and Correll, 2010). If you are considering entering into negotiation with the successful candidate, please talk to you HR Client Team for advice on doing this fairly and equitably.
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- **Induction**: *How do you welcome new members of staff into your team and department?* Ensure there is an induction process that supports and welcomes new members of staff into your team or department so that they feel supported not excluded.

- **Workplace Adjustments**: *How can you support staff to work to the best of their ability?* With any new member of staff, have an open discussion about whether they would require any workplace adjustments. This might include access requirements for those with a physical disability, support and resources for those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia or working flexibly to accommodate caring commitments or to support health and wellbeing. Discuss any requirements with your HR representative so that appropriate support can be arranged.
Bibliography


The Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Team support the university in progressing towards an inclusive, respectful and diverse workplace.

FIXING THE SYSTEM
We are tackling inequality at its core by changing the systems, processes and culture that underpin and reinforce inequality. This means working with university leaders, addressing policies and practices that may be creating or sustaining inequality.

EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH
We interrogate our own workforce and recruitment data and metrics, and we listen to staff at Macquarie to understand their experiences and perspectives.

EMPOWERING OTHERS
We work with colleagues across the university to help provide guidance and information, supporting and enabling them to work towards our shared goal of inclusion and equality.

COLLABORATIVE
We are informed by sector leaders and the research of our own academics at MQ. We also hope to contribute back to academic research as case studies - this enables us to identify what works, and to stop doing the activities that yield no results.

FIND OUT MORE
Workplace Diversity and Inclusion
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