

**UNIT 9**

**Recruitment Manual – step by step guide**

**SHORT-LISTING GUIDANCE**

* 1. What are the principles for short listing candidates for interview?

The short-listing of applications should follow a process that is clearly open and fair and ensures that only candidates who, at least, appear to meet the essential requirements set out in the Person Specification are selected for interview. It is a waste of the candidate’s and your time and effort to interview anyone who does not meet this minimum requirement.

Using a form and matrix for analysing the applications received for the post of Clerk to the Council, which focuses attention on the key requirements, will ensure consistency in your approach and judgement and help eliminate any prejudice or possible discrimination and thereby not only ensure that you only interview good candidates but also enable you to show and justify the reasons for short listing one candidate against another if challenged.

* 1. What process should the Council adopt to short-list candidates for interview?

Short-listing should begin soon after the advert closing date and/or all applications have been received and should be undertaken by members of the Selection Panel (as agreed by the Staffing Committee) along with, if required, the Council’s Clerk and/or their professional adviser.

Like all of the selection process short-listing can impinge on many aspects of employment and equality law. To help avoid a successful challenge and head for the right appointment your short-listing should be based solely on the information contained in the application form compared primarily against the essential requirements in the Person Specification and the skills and experiences you need. On no account should any prejudices or prior knowledge of a candidate influence the short listing exercise or assumptions made about the candidate’s abilities and all applications, whether internal or external, should be considered in exactly the same fair and transparent way.

One way in which you can avoid some of the discriminatory pitfalls is to delete the names and any personal details from all the applications. In any case any ethnicity or other monitoring data requested, as discussed earlier, should have been removed and kept well away from the shortlisting process.

In essence short-listing involves weeding out and rejecting candidates who do not appear to have the essential attributes required by the Person Specification. Arbitrary decisions based on other factors can present a potentially serious risk of challenge to the Council and so the following process to screen applications and short-list candidates for interview is recommended therefore:-

* enter the key essential and desirable criteria from the Person Specification that

can be measured from the application form into a short-listing application analysis matrix

* allocate a value and weighting if appropriate to each criteria e.g. 15 points for the critical criteria, 10 for the next most important etc and a lesser score for any key desirable criteria
* determine the minimum points total from the essential criteria to allow a candidate to proceed to interview
* number every application form as they are received and record them on your applications received record form
* analyse each application against the short-listing criteria in the matrix
* look primarily for evidence of the essential qualifications, training, skills and experience required which can be further tested as part of the selection process
* do not make assumptions – if something is not stated assume it does NOT exist and score the candidate as nil
* do not make judgements or decisions on irrelevant information
* check for gaps in employment which can be explored at interview if in all other respects the candidate is sufficient to go forward to interview
* do not be affected by points raised in the application that simply match or interest you personally or your career pattern
* determine the candidates to proceed to interview that meet the **essential** criteria minimum total
* if there are too many potential candidates for interview at this stage, then you could measure them up against the **desirable** qualities you are also looking for
* ensure that you eliminate candidates who do not have the basic requirements for the job
* notifying candidates who are not being invited for interview quickly after completing the short-listing.

The criteria for short-listing must be applied consistently to all candidates and the exercise should be undertaken by more than one person e.g. the selection panel and/or their adviser, to avoid possible bias including agreeing the composition and interpretation of the short-listing matrix and criteria.

Where academic qualifications are one of the criteria for short-listing it must not be assumed that qualifications obtained overseas are of a lesser standard than comparable qualifications from the UK.

You must make sure that you do not discriminate against applicants on the grounds of any protected characteristics.  Where a disability or a medical condition becomes known for example if the candidate has disclosed it – this should be excluded from the selection decision but questions may need to be asked at or after the interview (if the person is to be appointed) about for example any necessary adaptations as long as there is a justifiable reason under the Equality Act.

The Council should have a reason(s) for progressing or rejecting candidates for interview in case of challenge and the use of a Short-Listing Application Analysis Matrix will assist in identifying them in line with the above guidance. The completion of the form following analysis of the applications will highlight the key criteria in the Person Specification the candidate does not meet and therefore if challenged the Council should be able to demonstrate sound reasons for rejection. The completed matrix form should be retained for future reference in case the Council is challenged within the period allowed by law.

All candidates who meet the agreed short-listing criteria and total should be called for interview and/or selection assessment. Where applying the short-listing criteria produces an unmanageable shortlist after considering the essential and desirable criteria you should consider holding initial interviews and/or tests or assessments to examine say technical areas and/or finalise a reduced shortlist for full assessment. On the other hand if only one candidate meets the criteria minimum level the interview should still proceed. You should not seek to artificially produce a shortlist just to meet a preferred number of candidates for interview.

In making the arrangements you should consider including in the interview session only the number of applicants you will have time to interview - usually no more than six people a day having allowed time for preparation and discussion before and after each interview.

Candidates who are not being forwarded to the relevant interview stage should be informed as soon as possible.

* 1. **Specimen Short-Listing Application Analysis Matrix**

You should consider advising candidates not being forwarded to interview as quickly as possible and a specimen letter is enclosed at **Appendix 9 (a)** for your adaptation.

A specimen Short-Listing Application Analysis Matrix for the post of Clerk to the Council is enclosed at **Appendix 9 (b)** based on the requirements of the specimen job description and person specification. This will ensure that you can identify the reasons and justify including or rejecting candidates if challenged. The short-listing criteria suggested may be varied to reflect your Council’s priorities and the specific job.

A specimen matrix for the post of Responsible Financial Officer is enclosed at **Appendix 9 (c)** for your adaptation. If your post of Clerk to the Council is also the Responsible Financial Officer then some of the key items from the latter may be included in a combined matrix form.

Essentials criteria should be considered in the first instance. In the event that either too few, or too many, candidates are identified, desirable criteria should then be taken into account.

* 1. **Further Help**

If you require training, help or any other assistance with your recruitment and selection processes or have any questions on anything in the Recruitment Manual please email your county association.

Updated September 2022

**Appendix 9 (a) - Rejection letter following short listing and no interview**

## Xxxxxxxxxx

## Xxxxxxxxxx

## Xxxxxxxxxx

## Xxxxxxxxxx

## xxxxxxxxxx

## Date

Dear **enter name**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council**

### Appointment of Clerk to the Council

The Council received many applications that have now been considered carefully.

Unfortunately, on this occasion, it has been decided not to take your application further.

I am sorry to disappoint you. The Council would like to pass on its thanks for your interest in the post and the time spent in applying.

With all good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

**Name**

**Post Title**

**On behalf of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 9 (b) - Short-Listing Application Analysis Matrix for the post of Clerk to the Council**

**XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL - APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL**

**EXAMPLE SHORT-LISTING APPLICATION ANALYSIS MATRIX**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **APPLICANT REFERENCE NO.** | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **COMMENTS/EVIDENCE e.g. examples given, documents, certificates** |
| **SHORTLISTING CRITERIA** | **Value** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Essential Criteria (“E”)** |
| **Attainments** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Qualifications and training | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Organisation and administration | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff management | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Committee work, agenda preparation and minuting | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Policy development and strategy advice | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project management | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Budget preparation/control and financial management/accountancy procedures | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| IT Literacy | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local government systems and procedures including planning | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Governance, operation and legal framework in which Council operates | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total “E” Score **(Minimum score to proceed = 80)** | **100** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Desirable Criteria (“D”)** | **Value** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Attainments** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local government/public sector working experience | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Experience of working with the public/working on own initiative | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Knowledge of local area | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Employment and health and safety law | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Public relations experience and raising profile in community | **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total ‘D’ Score **(Minimum score to proceed = 15)** | **25** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **RECOMMENDED TO SHORTLIST** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Note: Short-listing Criteria and Value** = The above short-listing criteria and values are only suggestions and may be varied by the Council to reflect their particular post, priorities and key responsibilities in the area.

**Appendix 9 (c) - Short-Listing Application Analysis Matrix for the post of Responsible Financial Officer**

**XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL - APPOINTMENT OF RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

**SHORT-LISTING APPLICATION ANALYSIS MATRIX**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **APPLICANT REFERENCE NO.** | | | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **COMMENTS/EVIDENCE e.g. examples given, documents, certificates** |
| **SHORTLISTING CRITERIA** | | **Value** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Essential Criteria (“E”)** | |
| **Attainments** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Qualifications and training | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Financial experience in a structured environment | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Local government/public sector financial systems, controls and procedures | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Financial forward planning | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Budget setting, audit and monitoring processes | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| It Literacy | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accounts and payroll systems and procedures | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Working knowledge of procurement processes in public sector setting | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Insurance cover and financial risk management | | **10** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total “E” Score **(Minimum score to proceed = 70)** | | **90** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Desirable Criteria (“D”)** | | **Value** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Attainments** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Experience of committee work | **5** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Governance and legal framework in which Council operates | **5** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Council operating environment | **5** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total ‘D’ Score **(Minimum score to shortlist 10)** | **15** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **RECOMMENDED TO SHORTLIST** | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Note: Short-listing Criteria and Value** = The above short-listing criteria and values are only suggestions and may be varied by the Council to reflect their particular post, priorities and key responsibilities in the area.