

Appendix 6

To the Teaching Appointments Scheme



**Guide to the Selection Process
for
Teaching Appointments**

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.** This Guide has been designed to provide practical assistance to boards of governors and Education Authority (EA) officers in the use of fair and consistent systems in the recruitment and selection of principals, vice principals and teachers to be appointed to controlled schools. The Guide outlines the various stages of the recruitment and selection process and contains operational guidance where appropriate. It recognises that all aspects of the recruitment and selection process are integrated: from the drafting and issue of the Job Description and Person Specification; to the advertisement and shortlisting stages, through to the assessment stage; and, ultimately to the appointment.
- 2.** This Guide should be read in conjunction with the Authority's Teaching Appointments Scheme (2016).
- 3.** While this Guide does not have legal status; it should be noted that its provisions substantially derive from the provisions of the existing statutory codes of practice, as well as reflecting the Equality Commission's current recommendations on best practice. This Guide recommends measures and, at certain points, presents measures as imperative in the context of compliance with the statutory codes and good practice. If used correctly, this Guide should provide a defensible basis for all selection decisions. It should be noted, however, that this Guide is not a substitute for training.

STAGES IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

4. Identification of a Vacancy

- 4.1.** All recruitment and selection decisions should have a solid and demonstrable foundation. Whenever a post becomes vacant, it should be examined by the board of governors to ensure that there is a continuing need for it to be filled. The process should involve reviewing the job documentation to establish whether the job needs to be undertaken in the same way, or if an appropriate alteration would be beneficial to the school in terms of its current and anticipated needs.
- 4.2.** The Authority has developed a set of standardised Person Specifications for senior posts in all types of controlled schools. The board of governors should begin with the relevant standardised Person Specification, and build upon this as appropriate. Paragraph 9 below entitled 'Preparation of Job Documentation' refers.
- 4.3.** The essential criteria and, if appropriate, desirable criteria for the post should be considered at this stage. The board of governors should take cognisance of guidance provided by the Authority. Consideration should be given as to whether any alternative working patterns would be beneficial to the school.

4.4. Identification of a vacancy in schools with fully delegated budgets

The identification of a vacancy in controlled schools with fully delegated budgets will be the responsibility of the board of governors. The governors must consider the current and future needs of the school and how these needs relate to the requirements of such a vacancy. Where the board of governors determine that a post should be filled, it will do so in accordance with the Authority's Teaching Appointments Scheme.

4.5. Identification of a vacancy in schools with non-delegated or partially delegated budgets

In controlled schools with partially or non-delegated budgets, the Authority shall be responsible for determining that a post at any level should be filled. All posts shall be filled in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme. The Authority will consider the needs of the school as expressed by the board of governors in schools with non-delegated or partially delegated budgets.

5. Appointment of a Selection Panel

- 5.1. Where a board of governors, or the Authority as appropriate, has determined that a vacant post should be filled; a selection panel should be constituted in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme and the Scheme for the Management of Controlled Schools. Selection panels should, where practicable, include persons of different gender. Save in certain unavoidable and exceptional circumstances, the membership of any selection panel should remain constant through each of the stages of the selection process for that appointment.
- 5.2. Where a member of the selection panel has any direct or indirect pecuniary interest or any direct family interest, then that member shall disclose the nature of the interest. In such circumstances, he or she shall not take part in the selection process and shall withdraw from the selection panel. Articles 45, 46 and 48 of the Scheme for the Management of Controlled Schools refer.
- 5.3. The principal of the school, as a non-voting member of the board of governors, will normally act as secretary to the selection panel for teacher and vice principal appointments; though he or she shall withdraw from any meetings at which the appointment of principal is being considered.

6. Appointment of an Assessor/Assessors to a Selection Panel

- 6.1. Where any Assessor is appointed, he or she must be provided with a copy of the Teaching Appointments Scheme. An Assessor's role is to provide advice to the board of governors, as appropriate, on the professional and technical suitability of applicants for appointment to principal posts, and other such posts as the Authority and/or the board of governors determine. **An Assessor shall not have voting rights.** The Authority will provide support for Assessors as appropriate. The role of an Assessor is detailed in Appendix 1 of the Teaching Appointments Scheme.

7. Preliminary Meeting

7.1. The board of governors will normally hold a preliminary meeting in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme (paragraph 5.1 of the procedure refers). The board of governors may prefer to conduct the preliminary meeting as a full meeting of the Board, at which a selection panel will be established to conduct the remainder of the process. Alternatively; the selection panel, once appointed, may conduct the preliminary meeting. The aim of the preliminary meeting will be to agree:

- The Job Description and the Person Specification; with particular reference to the essential and desirable criteria for the post;
- The method(s) of assessment to be used that will serve to select the most suitable candidate for the role;
- The shortlisting criteria that will be applied, and whether or not it is likely that these may be enhanced;
- How each stage of assessment (where the assessment of candidates involves more than a single interview) will contribute to the overall decision in accordance with the agreed marking scheme; and
- A timetable for the recruitment process.

8. Timetable for Recruitment

In agreeing a timetable for the recruitment process the following points should be considered:

- Plan the dates for shortlisting and assessment of candidates to take account of an assessment process that may run over a number of days.
- Ensure sufficient time is allocated between shortlisting and assessment to ensure a minimum notice period for candidates of 7 days for each assessment. Where the various methods of assessment will be conducted over a number of different days, several dates can be notified together, provided these dates are notified at least 7 days before the first date.
- Confirm the availability of all selection panel members for all the planned stages in the process that they will be expected to attend. (Note that, where candidates are required to participate in any assessment activity facilitated by an external body, selection panel members will not necessarily be expected to attend; although they will be provided with a report).
- Ensure that sufficient time is built into the timetable to provide for the necessary administrative process that includes the preparation of letters to candidates as well as the preparation of all panel documentation required for each stage of assessment. The Authority has developed templates for each stage in the process.

8.1. When inviting candidates to interview, boards of governors should enquire with candidates as to whether they have any specific requirements; so that adequate preparations can be made for any reasonable adjustments that may be required to facilitate the interview arrangements for candidates with a disability.

9. Preparation of Job Documentation

9.1. It is important to distinguish the Job Description from the Person Specification. The Job Description identifies what the job entails, while the Person Specification identifies what an applicant must have, or be able to do, in order to effectively perform the job as it has been described. **These are the most important documents in the selection process.**

9.2. **The Job Description** will be a clear, written statement of the purpose and scope of the post. It will provide a summary of duties and responsibilities involved and should:

- clarify the role that the post-holder will have in the school;
- provide the basis for defining essential and desirable requirements, which will in turn be reflected in the Person Specification;
- accurately reflect the duties based on realistic and genuine job requirements;
- reflect the school's needs as defined in key publications such as school development plans and inspection reports.

9.3. *Job Descriptions for leadership posts:* it will be important to consider the Job Description for principal and vice principal posts and make appropriate amendments to reflect the specific duties and responsibilities of the post in the school. The full range of professional duties and responsibilities for principal and vice principal posts is set out in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (NI), 1987 as amended.

9.4. *Job Descriptions for teaching posts:* the full range of professional duties and responsibilities for all teaching posts is set out in Schedule 3 of the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (NI), 1987 as amended.

9.5. The Person Specification

9.6. The Person Specification describes the qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, and personal qualities that are considered essential or desirable in a candidate, in order to perform all the duties in the Job Description satisfactorily. Those criteria must not be discriminatory and one of the best ways of avoiding discrimination claims is by ensuring that any necessary or desirable criteria can be justified for the particular job in question.

- 9.7. The development of a Person Specification is the process of establishing the competencies that the successful candidate will be required to demonstrate. This involves translating the Job Description into a structured list of personal requirements and competencies. The Authority has developed a set of standardised Person Specifications for senior posts in all types of controlled schools. It is recommended that the board of governors should begin with the relevant standardised Person Specification, and should build upon this as appropriate.
- 9.8. The development of a Person Specification is a crucial stage in the recruitment and selection process as it establishes the criteria that will be used to attract and select applicants, and sets out the requirements to be met by the successful candidate. It may include educational standards, qualifications, previous experience, knowledge, skills, personal qualities, and any other requirements as appropriate to the post.
- 9.9. The Person Specification must not contain unnecessary and unjustifiable conditions or requirements. For example, it should not imply that the post may be more suitable for women or for men¹.
- 9.10. The Person Specification will form the basis of the advertisement, the shortlisting criteria and the assessment of candidates. It is essential, therefore, to take time to think through exactly what is required. The requirements listed in the Person Specification should be reviewed each time a vacancy occurs.
- 9.11. Based on the relevant standardised Person Specification, and taking account of advice from the Authority and any Assessor appointed as appropriate; the selection panel must agree criteria as follows:

Essential Criteria	Shortlisting criteria	The essential criteria that can reasonably be assessed from a structured application form.
	Further essential criteria	The remaining essential criteria that will be tested through other methods of assessment which commonly include at least one interview.
Desirable Criteria	Criteria which, while not <u>essential</u> for the role, are nonetheless directly relevant to the role.	The desirable criteria may be applied at shortlisting to reduce the number of applicants to a manageable number for assessment.

¹ There may be certain very specific exceptions where the Authority and the board of governors may consider that being a man or a woman is a genuine occupational qualification for the job and therefore it is justifiable to specifically appoint a male or female teacher. In the event of such exceptional circumstances, the Board of Governors **must** seek advice from the Authority before placing an advertisement.

- 9.12. The selection panel will agree the relative weightings to be allocated to the criteria in accordance with the agreed marking scheme.
- 9.13. All agreed weightings must be objectively justifiable, and must directly and clearly correspond to the criteria contained within the Person Specification.
- 9.14. The selection panel should agree a manageable number of essential criteria in total for any post, in order that all candidates can be fully assessed against each essential criterion.
- 9.15. Each criterion should be designed to clearly articulate what the successful candidate must be able to do when appointed to the post. For a candidate to meet an individual criterion, he or she should be required to demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills and personal qualities, and cite a range of relevant examples from his or her own past experience. The selection panel should consider any terms that could be subject to interpretation; such as 'senior', 'significant' or 'relevant', and agree what the panel will expect by way of evidence in order to shortlist applicants. All clarification and interpretation should be recorded.
- 9.16. For every teaching appointment there will be at least one criterion that articulates the professional, academic, vocational attainment or specific training that is deemed necessary or desirable to undertake the job. This criterion (or criteria where appropriate) will form part of the shortlisting criteria and can easily be measured from a structured application form. Criteria relating to qualifications can easily be enhanced, if required, though enhancements must be justifiable in the context of the role.
- 9.17. Criteria relating to experience are usually expressed in terms of type or relevancy and length of work experience. They may also include reference to the standard or level that an applicant should have attained within their field, profession or organisation. For example; experience at Key Stage 1 or 2; experience of teaching to 'A' level standard in a specific subject(s); and/or leadership experience.
- 9.18. Where an experience criterion is expressed in quantitative terms (for example a minimum 3 years' experience as vice principal or principal) this will form part of the shortlisting criteria as this can easily be measured from a structured application form². Criteria relating to length of experience can easily be enhanced if required, though **enhancements must be justifiable in the context of the particular role, and consideration should be given to the need to avoid indirect discrimination; for example, on grounds of age and/or gender. Criteria relating to specific length of experience should not normally be enhanced beyond 5 years.**

² It should be noted that a requirement for continuous experience could indirectly discriminate against women who have taken time out from work for reasons related to maternity or childcare, unless the requirement can be objectively justified.

- 9.19. The selection panel must agree whether the required length of experience must be held, by the candidate, by the date of application or in exceptional circumstances³ (for example where the closing date for applications falls within the last few weeks of the school year) by the specified date of taking up appointment. Whatever date is chosen must be clearly stated in the advertisement.
- 9.20. Certain criteria may express experience in qualitative terms that the selection panel will need to assess fully through interview and through other assessment methods. Such criteria seldom articulate experience in isolation. Rather, the candidates will be required to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that they have developed and applied to be successful in their experience to date. The Person Specification should detail the key areas around which experience, knowledge and skills will be required.
- 9.21. The Person Specification should outline the personal qualities associated with the role. Selection panels should however, carefully consider how any personal qualities might reasonably be assessed, before expressing any such personal qualities as essential requirements.
- 9.22. **Desirable Criteria:** where the selection panel anticipates a high level of interest in a particular post, it may be prudent to specify additional criteria, over and above the essential criteria. These should be defined as “desirable” criteria. Desirable criteria are additional requirements of the applicant that further demonstrate their ability to carry out the particular job effectively, and they must relate directly to the Person Specification. Once it has been determined that desirable criteria should be set, then these should be clearly defined and a decision taken as to the order in which they will, if required, be applied.
- 9.23. **The Application Form**
- 9.24. An application form will be used for all posts to ensure not only that relevant, objective, structured and standardised information is sought from applicants; but also that, as far as possible, irrelevant information is excluded from the selection process. The contents of the completed form will be used to select those candidates who will be shortlisted for assessment and to gather information from all candidates regarding how they meet the criteria for the post.

³ For example, where a post is being advertised very close to the end of a school year, for example; the selection panel may agree that the defined length of experience should be completed before the specified date of taking up appointment. This will allow applicants to include experience gained during the current school year. The job documentation must clearly state either way.

- 9.25. An application will be valid only when received on or before the advertised closing date and time (See Paragraph 9.26 below regarding a possible exception). Where it is necessary for a candidate to hold a specified qualification, then it should be made clear if the qualification must be held by the closing date, or if it will be acceptable for a qualification to be pending at the point of application. Either way, the specified qualification **must** be held by the date of appointment.
- 9.26. Care should be taken to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in the way in which applications are dealt with. It may be a reasonable adjustment, in particular cases, to allow a candidate with a disability to request and submit an application form in a different format to that prescribed for candidates in general. Where there is a delay in providing job documentation to a prospective applicant in a suitable alternative format; it may be a reasonable adjustment to extend the closing date accordingly for this particular applicant.
- 9.27. The Authority has a set of standardised application forms, which should be used by all schools.
- 9.28. **The Advertisement**
- 9.29. The Authority does not at present routinely advertise job vacancies through local or national papers. All jobs vacancies in schools are advertised through the Job Opportunities section on the Authority's website, and on JobCentre Online NI.
- 9.30. Where, in exceptional circumstances, a vacancy is to be advertised in the press; advertisements should be kept as direct and brief as possible, consistent with conveying information effectively and attracting suitable applicants. The board of governors will submit the advertisement to the Authority for placement in the press in accordance with the Authority's advertising arrangements. Appropriate sources of advertising generally are newspapers reaching all communities and both genders and/or the Department for Employment and Learning's Job Centres.
- 9.31. Advertisements will normally contain:
- name of the school(s)/information about the school;
 - job title, job purpose and salary;
 - number of hours per week – full-time/part-time;
 - an Equal Opportunities Statement;
 - details of any special features; for example, job share or fixed term;
 - closing date and time; and
 - where and how to apply.

9.32. Those who respond should be provided with an electronic⁴ information pack, which will normally include:

- the structured application form;
- clear details of the closing date and closing time for applications;
- details of how the closing time will be applied when receiving application forms; and, electronic forms in particular;
- the contact details of named individuals who will provide reasonable adjustments to applicants who may require them;
- copies of the relevant job documentation; most importantly, the Job Description and the Person Specification;
- all criteria for the post, including details of the shortlisting criteria that will be applied, and whether or not it is possible that these will be enhanced;
- a summary of the general conditions applicable to the post;
- a summary of the Authority's /the School's Equal Opportunities Statement; and
- an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire.

9.33. Late applications **will not** be accepted and applicants should be advised that it is **their** responsibility to submit the application on time. The only exception may be where a reasonable adjustment has been made Paragraph 9.26 refers). No other circumstance will be considered.

10. Shortlisting Procedures

10.1. Following the closing date for the receipt of applications, a meeting of the selection panel will be arranged for the purpose of shortlisting. The Authority will forward all eligible applications to the school, by email where possible, and a selection panel shortlisting meeting should be organised by the secretary. At the shortlisting, selection panel members should be supplied, by the secretary to the panel, with copies of the following:

- Job advertisement, which will generally be the relevant extract from the Authority's website;
- Job Description;
- Person Specification;
- A copy of all completed application forms; and
- Equal Opportunities Statement.

10.2. In order to ensure that a systematic and objective process is applied, the completed application forms **must not** be examined by panel members before the selection panel has agreed the shortlisting criteria (see 10.3 below) and, if necessary, any enhancements that will be applied and the order in which they are to be applied.

⁴ Application packs will be made available in other formats upon request.

- 10.3. For high volume recruitment exercises, it **may** be appropriate for the secretary (who is a non-voting member of the panel) to carry out a preliminary inspection of the applications to identify the number of applicants that would potentially be shortlisted if the shortlisting criteria were to be enhanced. No names should be attached to any information shared with the selection panel at this stage. The selection panel can agree whether or not the criteria should be enhanced before examining any application forms. This is only possible where criteria and enhancements are easily quantifiable and do not require the secretary to make a subjective decision; for example, enhancing 1 year of teaching experience in primary schools to 2 years' experience teaching in primary. Panel members should be advised that once a decision has been reached to apply any enhancements to criteria, the decision cannot be reversed in the event that too few applicants meet the enhanced criteria.
- 10.4. The selection panel will normally agree a manageable number of applications to be shortlisted for assessment.
- 10.5. The selection panel should discuss the shortlisting criteria to ensure a consistent interpretation of the shortlisting criteria. The notes of the preliminary meeting, at which the Person Specification and the criteria for the post were discussed, may be useful to reflect on, in terms of the decision to incorporate terms such as 'senior' or 'significant' into the criteria.
- 10.6. Where the selection panel agree to enhance any shortlisting criteria, there must be a demonstrable link between the enhancement and the essential criteria with such enhanced criteria being highly relevant to job performance. Where criteria are enhanced, this will be done by means of a graduated approach aimed at reducing the number of applicants to a pre-determined manageable number for assessment. The selection panel must agree the order in which any enhancements will, if required, be applied before any application forms are examined.
- 10.7. Once the shortlisting process has been agreed and recorded, (including any enhancements to be applied), and a manageable number of applicants for assessment has been agreed, the application forms should be provided to panel members for examination. The Authority has prepared shortlisting documentation that must be completed by every selection panel member as an individual record of the defined shortlisting criteria as applied to all applicants.
- 10.8. The selection panel will consider each applicant, in turn, fairly and consistently against the shortlisting criteria; and will agree whether or not he or she should progress to the next stage of assessment. The Chair will invite each selection panel member to comment on their individual assessment of each candidate in the context of the shortlisting criteria. Applicants must meet all shortlisting criteria (including any agreed enhancements) to be shortlisted.

- 10.9. Where a shortlisting criterion specifies experience that is time-bound; the relevant date for measuring the length of experience will normally be the closing date for applications. The length and recency of experience required must be justifiable; as any such time-bound criteria could have the potential to indirectly discriminate against certain groups.
- 10.10. Where the application of any particular enhancement reduces the number of applicants to (or below) the pre-determined manageable number; no further enhancements should be applied. The selection panel will normally invite, to the next stage of assessment, those applicants who meet the enhanced criteria. Where the selection panel reasonably deem the number of candidates shortlisted to be insufficient, the selection panel may agree to re-advertise. In any event, once the decision has been taken to apply enhanced criteria, the decision cannot be reversed.
- 10.11. Shortlisting decisions should be reached solely on the basis of information contained in the application form.
- 10.12. The secretary will record the shortlisting decision of the panel; and the Authority has prepared the necessary shortlisting documentation templates. The secretary should also record any panel discussion regarding the criteria - including any definitions or clarification provided. Where applicable, the panel's decisions to enhance criteria and, where appropriate, apply any desirable criteria, should be recorded. The documentation completed by the secretary, also serves as a central record of the outcome of the shortlisting exercise; in terms of specifying those applicants to be invited to the next stage of assessment.
- 10.13. The secretary to the panel will be responsible for bringing the application forms, or copies thereof, to the shortlisting meeting of the selection panel, and he or she will normally collect all forms at the end of each meeting. The selection panel may agree that panel members will retain the application forms after shortlisting has taken place, until the next meeting of the selection panel, in order that they can read the application forms in full. Where this is agreed, panel members will be required to sign a data protection 'Statement of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure' to confirm that they accept responsibility for the security of the documents and the information contained therein, and undertake not to disclose such information to any third party not involved in the recruitment and selection process. A sample statement is included at Appendix 1. This document control process is an important step in managing the secure and confidential storage of personal data.
- 10.14. Candidates must be registered with, or be in a position to be registered with, GTCNI by the agreed date of taking up duty.

11. Seeking References

- 11.1. References form part of the pre-employment checks, and will only be required in the event that a candidate has been recommended for appointment. Where timescales permit therefore, the selection panel should only seek references for the recommended candidate(s) once a decision to recommend has been reached. In exceptional circumstances where references are sought at an early stage to avoid any delay that may arise if references are not sought until after a decision is reached; these must not be provided to panel members until after a decision to recommend has been reached. In any event, references will be sought for all recommended candidates.

12. Assessment of Candidates

- 12.1. This stage in the process involves assessing the competence of all shortlisted candidates in depth against the criteria, and ultimately reaching agreement on the candidate(s) most suitable for appointments to the post. Selection panels may choose to include a number of different steps in the assessment process, and they may wish to utilise a number of different assessment methods in the process.
- 12.2. Selection panels commonly include at least one interview in the assessment process; therefore, specific guidance on conducting an interview in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme is included in paragraphs 13 below.
- 12.3. Guidance for administering other assessment activities is included in the Appendices to this Guide. The Authority will, from time to time, issue further guidance on utilising a range of other methods of assessment in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme.

13. Conducting Interviews as a Method of Assessment

- 13.1. The procedure for conducting an interview in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme is detailed in the Teaching Appointments Scheme. Paragraph 5.20 of the procedure refers. The paragraphs that follow provide additional practical guidance on the interview process.
- 13.2. **Preparation:** it is essential that adequate preparation is made for the interview process. Prior to the interview stage, the selection panel will have agreed how the selection process will be conducted, and how the interview will contribute to the process. For example, the selection panel may have determined that the selection process will involve an interview, a presentation, and an in-tray exercise.

- 13.3. Where the selection process involves a number of assessment components, the secretary should ensure that selection panel members are clear about how the interview will contribute to the overall decision in accordance with the agreed marking scheme.

The secretary should ensure that selection panel members are clear about the relative weighting of the criteria that will be assessed through the interview, as agreed at the preliminary meeting.

- 13.4. The selection panel must ensure that the assessment process is designed to fully explore the extent to which each candidate meets all the essential criteria for the post; in order that it can be satisfied that every candidate, whom it recommends for appointment (including reserve candidates), has adequately demonstrated that they meet each essential criterion.
- 13.5. The selection panel will agree and record the core questions that are to be asked of all candidates. The panel may agree suggested supplementary questions designed to explore, clarify and expand on the candidates' responses. Where appointed, the Assessor(s) will provide a list of suggested questions that take account of any guidance from the Authority. A pro-forma for recording core questions has been prepared by the Authority. Questions should relate to the Job Description and Person Specification and should be designed to assess candidates' suitability in relation to the pre-determined criteria. When devising core questions, it is recommended that 'model' or suggested responses should be prepared to ensure that differing standards are not applied. Where two Assessors are appointed to support the selection panel, the Assessors will work on a collaborative basis.
- 13.6. The selection panel members will agree as to who will put the questions to the candidates and in what order; and whether the Assessor(s), where appointed, may be asked to put one or more of the questions to the candidates.
- 13.7. In establishing the practical interview arrangements the selection panel should consider:
- the time at which interviews will take place;
 - the suitability of the venue;
 - the length of time for each interview, ensuring that all candidates are given the same opportunity to perform;
 - any other assessment methods that may be incorporated into the interview; such as delivering a presentation. The panel will need to consider the time required to prepare for and administer other assessments, and any additional personnel that will be required outwith the panel;
 - the time required for panel assessment and completion of records, both between interviews and once all interviews have completed; and
 - any reasonable adjustments that may be required, and how these can be arranged.

- 13.8. **Conducting the Interview:** the selection panel for the interviews should, excepting certain unavoidable circumstances, comprise those persons who constituted the selection panel for shortlisting. Only in exceptional circumstances should a substitute be appointed; for example, where a selection panel member is unable to attend due to ill health and the panel is no longer quorate. In such circumstances the change and reason for it must be recorded and the substitute must be fully briefed on decisions taken by the selection panel during shortlisting.
- 13.9. Interviews should be conducted in a structured and systematic way, and the agreed marking scheme for teaching appointments must be followed for all appointments.
- 13.10. Prior to the commencement of the first interview, the secretary to the panel will ensure that each member of the selection panel is provided with a copy of the selection documentation; including application forms, Person Specification, Job Description, assessment sheets and the agreed questions. The secretary will normally collect all application forms at the end of each selection panel meeting, unless otherwise agreed by the selection panel, in which case a Statement of Confidentiality must be signed by panel members. Paragraph 10.13 above refers.
- 13.11. The chair should make the candidate welcome, introduce the panel, and describe briefly the format of the interview; including how any other assessments to be conducted during the interview (such as delivering a presentation) will be incorporated into the process. The chair should indicate the maximum time that will be allowed and should state the number of questions to be asked. It is important to advise candidates that panel members will be taking notes throughout the interview; especially as this will result in panel members maintaining less eye contact with the candidates as they provide their responses.
- 13.12. All candidates should be asked exactly the same core questions and each member of the panel should make an individual note of each candidate's responses. Supplementary questions can and should be asked as appropriate, though these do not need to be the same for each candidate. The purpose of supplementary questions is to provide each candidate with the best possible opportunity to demonstrate how they meet each criterion, using examples from their past experience where possible.
- 13.13. **Where appropriate, supplementary questions** may be used to:
- redirect a candidate who has deviated from the question;
 - seek clarification a point that a candidate has made;
 - seek expansion on an example that a candidate has given; or
 - challenge or clarify the role that a candidate has played in a project that they have cited in their response.

- 13.14. The selection panel may agree some general supplementary questions to be used as appropriate; such as asking “What specifically was your role in...?” or “How did you evaluate the effectiveness of...?”. Additionally the panel may use further supplementary questions to clarify or explore the candidates’ responses. Most importantly, selection panel members must ensure that supplementary questions serve to probe the candidate’s response to a core question, and **do not in any way prompt** the candidate to provide a certain response.
- 13.15. All interviews should be conducted in a fair and consistent manner and, in particular, the panel should:
- give all candidates the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities;
 - give all candidates the same length of time at interview, so far as is reasonably practicable;
 - not apply different standards to any of the applicants, subject to occasions when reasonable adjustments are being made for disabled applicants;
 - assess each candidate against the selection criteria in accordance with the marking scheme and agreed weightings; and
 - record their individual assessment of each candidate’s performance, in accordance with the agreed marking scheme.
- 13.16. The chair must manage timings carefully for each interview. The selection panel should before the first interview commences agree the manner in which this can most effectively be done. The selection panel will agree a maximum time for each interview, and the candidates will be informed of this during the chair’s introductions. The chair must ensure that interviews are kept within the maximum time to ensure that no candidate is given an unfair advantage.
- 13.17. Some candidates may provide very brief responses to the core questions and, while supplementary questions should be used to encourage the candidate to respond more fully, the selection panel should avoid over-use of supplementary questions, as this may give rise to an unfair advantage.
- 13.18. Any significant gaps in employment history, which have been established from the candidate’s application form, should be explored with the candidates. As well as being good practice, this is a requirement relating to Child Protection. Where a panel is not satisfied with the explanation provided on the form relating to a gap in employment; a panel member, who has been appropriately trained, should ask a candidate for further detail or specific information. Such clarification should be sought at the end of the interview. For further information on Child Protection requirements see Appendix 4 of the Scheme.

13.19. The “close” of the interview provides an opportunity for the chair to:

- clarify arrangements for any further stages of assessment, as appropriate;
- indicate when the applicant might reasonably expect to be advised of the outcome either verbally and/or in writing; and
- advise the candidate of the next stage in the process; notably, that the selection panel is a recommending panel, and that any recommendation for appointment will be subject to the Authority’s consideration and approval, as well as a satisfactory outcome to the necessary pre-employment checks.

13.20. Throughout the interview, panel members should make notes on candidates’ responses to the questions, so that they can justify their evaluation and the marks given on the assessment form. Notes of candidates’ responses must be taken and retained. Interview notes will be discoverable in the event of a complaint to a Tribunal or other appropriate investigative body. A sample pro-forma has been prepared by the Authority.

13.21. Panel members must refrain from discussing each candidate’s performance until each panel member has considered their individual assessment of each candidate.

Candidates should be assessed against the selection criteria and not against each other. An assessment template has been prepared by the Authority.

13.22. **After the Interview:** after the final interview, the chair should invite the Assessor(s), where appointed, to report on the competence of each candidate and on how they did or did not meet the criteria specified.

13.23. The chair will ensure that panel members give due regard to the report provided by the Assessor(s), where appointed.

13.24. The Chair will ask panel members to complete their individual assessment of each candidate against each criterion assessed, in accordance with the agreed marking scheme, before inviting each panel member to give his or her assessment of each candidate interviewed. If, following the discussion, a member wishes to amend their individual assessment of any candidate; he or she should record the amendment, together with the reason(s) for the changes.

13.25. The chair will invite discussion on each candidate in turn.

13.26. Following discussion, the secretary will record the outcome of the interview process in accordance with the agreed marking scheme. Where the selection process involves a range of assessments, the secretary will compile the information accordingly.

13.27. The secretary will record either:

- a) details of those candidates who have met the essential criteria and should be invited to proceed to the next stage of assessment; or
- b) where the interview is the final or only assessment; the most suitable candidate to be recommended for appointment to the post as agreed by the selection panel in accordance with the agreed marking scheme.

13.28. The chair should ensure that the selection of the most suitable candidate reflects the selection documentation completed by panel members, that all decisions reached are recorded, and that all appropriate documentation is signed, collected and passed to the secretary for submission to the Authority, as appropriate.

14. Considering References

14.1. References should only be considered after the panel has made a recommendation to appoint, as these form part of the pre-employment checks and are not part of the selection process.

14.2. Details of two referees must be provided on the application form, one of whom should be in a position to comment upon the professional competence of the candidate in his or her current or most recent employment; and on his or her suitability to work with children/young people in an educational setting.

14.3. It is not essential that the candidate should nominate his or her present employer as a referee. However, where the candidate does not nominate his or her present employer or the most recent employer who can comment upon his or her suitability to work with children/young people in an educational setting, the board of governors must seek a reference from the candidate's most recent employer who can comment on their suitability to work with children/young people, before the candidate can be recommended for a post. The application form must specify that, by signing the application form, the applicant will be indicating his or her agreement to this reference being sought.

14.4. Where the applicant has not been in paid employment with an employer who can comment upon his or her suitability to work with children/young people in an educational setting, University tutors or employers, where teaching practice or voluntary service has recently been undertaken, may also be acceptable.

15. Post Interview Processes

- 15.1. Pre-employment Checks: where the appointment is conditional on satisfactory references, confirmation of qualifications, a medical examination⁵, or other pre-employment checks, this should be made clear to the successful candidate.
- 15.2. Disclosure of Criminal Records: posts involving work in educational institutions are subject to the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. The successful applicant will require an enhanced disclosure check. The Education Authority will carry this out on behalf of the Board of Governors.
- 15.3. Processing of the Appointment: in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme, Boards of Governors will submit recommendations regarding the most suitable candidate, and reserve candidate(s) as appropriate, for consideration by the Teaching Appointments Committee.
- 15.4. The Authority will be responsible for appointing all teachers to controlled schools.

16. Reserve Candidates

- 16.1. A recommendation from a selection panel may include a list of reserve candidates in order of suitability, in accordance with the Teaching Appointments Scheme. Reserve candidates will normally be included on a reserve list for the school for up to 12 months. It is acceptable to appoint reserve candidates from the reserve list to the school in accordance with the definitions provided below:
 - a vacancy within the school that is regarded as “same” is one that has an identical Job Description, Person Specification and salary scale.
 - a vacancy within the school that is regarded as “similar” is one that has a generic Job Description i.e., a Main Professional Grade Teaching Post, with the same Person Specification and salary scale. The nature of a generic Job Description is such that the core duties and responsibilities are the same but a particular emphasis may be placed on an area of work in order to meet the current and anticipated needs of the school.

⁵ A person with a disability can be asked to attend a pre-employment medical only if this is required of all candidates. The fact that a person has a disability is unlikely in itself to justify singling out that person to have a health check, although such action might be justified in relation to some jobs. If the Authority insists on a medical check for a person with a disability and not for others, without justification, this may constitute unlawful discrimination.

17. Records Management

All information relating to teaching appointments will be handled and stored in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 17.1. **Interview documentation** - The Authority will ensure that interview documentation is retained for at least three years. However, where a complaint is made about a recruitment exercise, then the documentation shall be retained until the conclusion of the matter.
- 17.2. The documents retained should be a complete file, from the drafting of the Job Description, Person Specification and advertisement through to the decision to appoint. It should include hand written notes of the members of the selection panel and marking sheets as well as the formal documents. Where applicants are required to provide personal information, it shall be made clear to them how the Authority will use the information.
- 17.3. **Monitoring documentation** - It is recommended that monitoring information on applicants should be retained for a period of three years from the date of receipt of the application, and the Authority will carry out monitoring on behalf of controlled schools and will retain the records accordingly.
- 17.4. All documentation will be disposed of in accordance with the relevant schedule for disposal of records

18. Employment Monitoring: it is important that “monitoring” questions are not included on the application form. As part of the recruitment exercise “monitoring” information for equal opportunities monitoring purposes, must be collected. A standard monitoring questionnaire has been developed; a copy of which is available from the Authority. The monitoring questionnaire, once completed, should be returned, with the Application form, and will be separated from the application form, by officers within the Human Resources Directorate, before the application is forwarded to the school for consideration. Equal opportunities monitoring forms **should never** be provided to the members of the selection panel. The Authority will carry out monitoring on behalf of controlled schools.



Sample Statement of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure – Teaching Appointments Selection Panel

This form should be signed by any selection panel member who is accepting possession of any candidate application forms, after shortlisting has been completed, in order to prepare for teaching appointments interviews.

In my capacity as a member of the board of governors and a selection panel member

for the post of _____ (“the post”)

at _____ school, I acknowledge receipt of copies of the candidates’ application forms (“the application forms”) for the post.

I undertake not to use the application forms for any purpose other than for the consideration of them in order to prepare for the interviews for the post.

I undertake to keep the application forms secure and not to disclose them or any of their contents to any third party not directly involved in the recruitment and selection process for the post.

I will, on request from either the board of governors or Education Authority, return to the relevant officer all copies of the application forms held by me and will not retain any copies or records of them.

While in my possession I accept the responsibility delegated to me for the security and confidentiality of the documentation, in compliance with the **School’s duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 and Employment Practices Data Protection Code 2011 issued by the Information Commissioner’s Office.**

Signed _____
Selection Panel Member

Dated _____

Please note:

The selection panel member must sign and date this form before any applications can be released to the selection panel member. He or she must return all applications to the secretary on or before the day of the interviews.

Presentations

Where the selection panel agrees that candidates will be assessed delivering a presentation, the following guidance should be followed:

- Panels should ensure that each candidate is given the same opportunity to complete each stage of the assessment. This will involve each candidate being afforded the same resources, the same time, and the same clear instructions.
- Where the presentation is 'unseen' until they arrive on the day of interview, candidates should be provided with a quiet space to prepare their presentation where they can be assured of no interruptions; and each stage of their activity should be timed. This will require an additional member of staff (not on the panel) to oversee the process for each candidate.
- In the event that preparation for an unseen presentation is being completed by candidates in advance of their interview, **and** where the interviews run behind time, the candidate undertaking the presentation preparation must be stopped at the end of the allocated time, to ensure that they do not receive an unfair advantage.
- Panels need to agree in advance what resources will be available to candidates, and whether or not candidates will be permitted to bring any of their own information or materials to the preparation room and/or into the interview.
- Candidates should be advised, in the letter inviting them for interview, of the details of the assessment activity; including what to bring or not to bring.
- Candidates may be asked to prepare a presentation, on an agreed topic, in advance of the interview; and then to deliver the presentation to the selection panel. Where this approach is taken, candidates should be provided with clear information regarding the topic, the time allowed, and the equipment that will be available on the day of interview.
- Any assessment activity used must be clearly linked to the selection criteria, and must be justifiable in the context of the role for which the candidates are applying.
- The panel need to agree, in advance, how the assessment activity will be assessed and how the assessment of the presentation will contribute to the overall assessment outcome.
- The Assessor(s) may be asked for advice on presentation topics.