
Equal Opportunities during the Interview Process

DO:

- ✓ Only ask questions which relate to the applicant's suitability for the job and which are directly relevant to the requirements of the job.
- ✓ Tell applicants if a job has unsocial or irregular hours or involves lots of travel or staying overnight and:
 - ask each applicant the same question in the same way i.e. give the same emphasis and prominence in each case, e.g.
"You will occasionally be required to work until 7.00pm. Will you be able to do that?" is more satisfactory than "What arrangements would you have to look after your child if you had to work late?".
- ✓ Be aware that it is not necessarily true that asking the same question of everyone ensures non-discrimination. The **use** to which the answers are put may still be discriminatory (and unlawful) in itself.
- ✓ Only ask disabled applicants about their disability if it is likely to affect their job and take notes about any special requirements/equipment that would help them do their job. Ensure you check on the feasibility of these with Personnel/your manager.
- ✓ Check with Personnel about the suitability of selection criteria you are using if you are unsure whether they are directly job-related or potentially discriminatory.
- ✓ Be aware of personal bias you may have and try to guard against it.
- ✓ Prepare questions in advance of the interview and check they are relevant and non-discriminatory regarding intent and/or terminology.
- ✓ Ask neutral questions about health e.g. "Do you suffer from any medical condition which might affect your performance at work?" or "How many days have you had off/been absent in the last 12 months?".
- ✓ Make appropriate notes to refer back to and record reasons why applicants were not successful.
- ✓ Allow each assessor to form an independent view.
- ✓ Pause and formally check whether any biases have influenced the proposal to reject an applicant.

DO NOT:

- ✗ Ask questions about personal circumstances which have nothing to do with the job.
- ✗ Ask questions about marital status, plans for children, spouse's job, trade union activities, political or religious beliefs. (Refer to next handout for more details.)
- ✗ Ask questions like "How do you react towards a racially prejudiced supervisor?" or "How would you react towards sexist comments?", or "Are you a feminist?".
- ✗ Make hasty or pre-conceived judgements about people in the first few minutes.
- ✗ Be influenced by a colleague's apparent prejudices or subjective bias.
- ✗ Discuss preferences in advance regarding the outcome of the recruitment process.
- ✗ Discriminate on the basis of postal code or address.
- ✗ Allow people who are not trained to take part in the interview process.
- ✗ Make assumptions about "men's work" and "women's work", e.g.
 - ✗ - we need someone with a caring disposition and that means a woman.
 - ✗ - this is a dirty job, quite unsuitable for a woman.
 - ✗ - women can't work under the pressure this job demands.
 - ✗ - this job needs mobility, women aren't as keen to travel as men.
 - ✗ - the job is too physically demanding for a woman.

