



This Guide provides key information on the recruitment, selection and appointment of employees to vacant positions across the Public Sector. This Guide should not be used as a substitute for the Recruitment Policy. All template and associated documents are listed in the Recruitment Policy.

Government is an equal opportunity employer, men and women are equally eligible to apply for positions. Recruitment is based on merit, but if two applicants are ranked equally, then preference will be given to Cook Islanders.

Exclusions

This Policy does not apply to:

- Recruitment of Heads of Public Sector Agencies
- Constitutional posts
- Diplomatic posts under the Foreign Affairs Act 1984
- Employee transfers due to redundancy
- Engagement of independent contractors

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

- Every job must have a Job Description (JD) that has been evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee (JEC) and be on the approved organisational structure.
- All job vacancies must be advertised over a 14 day period.
- Advertisements must include information on the Agency, vacancy, JD, closing dates and contact details.
- A Recruitment Panel must be set up to assist with the selection process and provide a recommendation for the preferred candidate.
- Recruitment Panel members must declare any conflict of interest.
- Under the Fair Trading Act 2008 no person shall, in relation to employment engage in conduct that is misleading or deceptive, or is likely to mislead or deceive, as to the availability, nature, terms or conditions, or any other matter relating to that employment.

SHORT-LISTING APPLICANTS

- Applicants who meet the minimum criteria of the job and the application requirements, including the Employment Application Form, can be shortlisted for interview using the Shortlisting Assessment Template.
- All applications must be acknowledged in writing within one to two working days after receiving the application and within 3-5 days after the closing date, for confirmation of an interview or an unsuccessful application.
- Applicants must not be disqualified from the selection process on the grounds of: age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliations, social or family affiliations, health status or disability.
- Applicants cannot be disqualified on account of a previous criminal conviction, unless there is clear evidence that the nature of the offence committed is relevant to the job applied for.

INTERVIEWS AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

- Interview questions should be prepared by the Recruiting Manager and circulated to Panel Members prior to the interview.
- All interview questions should be the same for all applicants and can be in Cook Island Maori or English.
- Panel Members use the Interview Question & Scoring Template to record their observations and ratings for each section of the interview.
- Candidates can respond in Cook Island Maori or English.
- Unsuccessful interviewee's must be notified in writing within three working days after the selected candidate has accepted the role.

REFERENCE CHECKS

- Reference checks must be completed for all preferred candidates.
- At least 3 referees must be provided by the applicant, two work related and one character.
- Reference checks should be completed by a phone call whenever possible, using the Reference Check Form Template.
- Responses must be summarised by the Recruiting Manager in the Appointment Recommendation form.
- Verification of qualifications through awarding institutions may also be required, including obtaining a police or medical clearance.

RECRUITMENT RECOMMENDATION

- The preferred candidate must be recommended to the employer by the Recruitment Manager/Panel in writing, supported with the rationale for the selection.
- Crown Law advice may be sought to ensure the recruitment process is fair and consistent.
- If the employer does not agree with the recommendation they must provide a rationale as to why they do not agree and the recruitment would then be deemed an Unsuccessful Recruitment.

EMPLOYMENT OFFER

- The Employer must make an employment offer in writing using the Offer or Employment Letter template and the Employment Agreement template.
- Employers are required to consult with the Public Service Commissioner before appointing expatriate (S30) or specialised skilled (S31) employees.
- If an Agency decides to recruit an expatriate to a job, they must show a clear plan to progress a Cook Islander into that job.

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

- Once an employment offer is accepted, the employer must complete a Notice of Appointment (NOA) to establish the employee on the Government centralised payroll system.
- An NOA must have all sections completed and submitted to OPSC with any required supporting documents.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- This is a time period that begins from the start of employment and lasts for three months and no longer than six months, to allow for extensions.
- During this time the employer and employee shall participate in completing a Probation Period Management Plan within the first week of employment and then reviewed at the 30, 60 and 90 day check in points.
- For further information refer to the Probation Period Guide.

STREAMLINED RECRUITMENT

- This is a shorter recruitment process to fill vacancies or Agency requirements.
- A streamlined approach can only be used to recruit existing public servants to secondments and acting posts and for external recruitment for unsuccessful recruitment vacancies, casual positions and internships.

UNSUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT

If the recruitment process has been exhausted and a suitable candidate is not appointed, the employer may:

- Re-launch a new recruitment process and change the format of the advert or advertising medium to reach a different pool of potential applicants.
- Continue to advertise the role using free and/or paid media platforms.
- Directly approach an individual known to meet the selection criteria.
- Re-advertise the position if it is not filled after three months.

PROMOTIONS

- Promotions can be used when there is only one suitable candidate.
- Promotion is only applicable to employees who have completed their Probation Period and not facing a disciplinary action or under a performance improvement plan.

INTERNAL RECRUITMENT

- Internal recruitment is used when there are multiple suitable internal candidates.
- Advertising can be within the Agency or across the Public Sector.

ORIENTATION

- Once appointed, any new employee to the Public Service must complete the Agency's Orientation Programme and the PS Orientation Programme within the first 6 months of their employment.

For policy queries or issues in the administration of this Policy, Contact the Office of the Public Service Commissioner on (682) 29 421 or email: opsc.policy@cookislands.gov.ck