



**Southern Cross
University**



Recruitment and Selection Toolkit



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Introduction

This toolkit has been developed as a resource for selection panel members to support recruitment and selection at the University. Panel members are required to undertake the Recruitment and Selection training and familiarise themselves with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures. The procedures set out the following principals which underpin recruitment at SCU. Essentially:

- Candidates will be assessed on merit and free from bias and unlawful discrimination; and
- Recruitment will promote equity, diversity and the University’s reputation as an employer of choice.

Remember: The more positive experience, the stronger our reputation and appeal to top talent!

Recruitment process



Pre Recruitment	Hiring Manager/Chair engages with HR Business Partner to discuss recruitment need and raises a recruitment request in Acendre to obtain the appropriate approvals.
Advertising	On approval, advertising material is prepared by HR to post on a range of online media, professional associations and journals.
Shortlisting	Applications provided by HR are initially reviewed/screened by the panel to identify who will progress to interview.
Interview	HR schedule interviews for shortlisted candidates to be assessed against the selection criteria by the panel.
References	The Chair or delegated panellist obtains the preferred candidate’s consent and undertakes a minimum of two (2) references.
Offer	The Chair or delegate provides HR selection and referee reports to obtain delegate approval. On approval, the Chair or delegate offers the preferred candidate the role.
Onboarding	The induction program will support the new team member understand the business. Hiring Mangers/Chairs play a key role in ensuring they feel welcomed into the SCU community and understand what is expected from their role.

Roles and responsibilities

Activity	Person responsible
Understand the nature of the position as set out in the position description and the characteristics of the person sought as described in the selection criteria	Chair and Panel
Oversee the recruitment process so that it is professional, transparent, timely and in keeping with the University's Recruitment and Selection policy	Chair
Be available to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortlist applicants; • Agree on the selection methodology; • Participate in the interview process; and • Recommend preferred candidate. 	Chair and Panel
Develop methodology for shortlisting	Chair with Panel and support from HR Services (Recruitment) as needed
Provide shortlisting report to HR Services (Recruitment)	Chair
Schedule interviews	HR Services (Recruitment)
Provide feedback to candidates not shortlisted	HR Services (Recruitment)
Develop behavior-orientated interview questions and rating scale to score interview responses	Chair with Panel and support from HR Services (Recruitment) as needed
Obtain consent to undertake referees	Chair or delegate
Undertake at least two (2) referees reports	Chair or delegate
Provide selection report to HR Services (Recruitment)	Chair or delegate
Progress recommended appointment to delegate approval	HR Services (Recruitment)
Communicate with the preferred candidate and negotiate terms of appointment	Chair or delegate
Provide feedback to unsuccessful interviewed candidates	Chair or delegate



Shortlisting

Shortlisting determines which candidates proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

The Selection Panel determines the most effective selection process for the vacancy. When assessing applications, selection panel members should look at how well the applicant demonstrates their ability to satisfy the selection criteria and their likelihood of success in the job.

Remember, you don't have to interview all candidates who meet the minimum criteria. Refine your short-list even further by looking at the following:

- Quality of application i.e. Has care been taken to present the application in a clear format? Is it easy to read?
- Level of experience i.e. Does the applicant have enough experience in the critical elements of the position? Will it be a stretch for them? Is it a logical step in their career?
- Added value i.e. Does the applicant bring something to the role that would be valuable to the team?

Pre-Screening of candidates

Depending on the size and strength of your applicant pool, you might consider conducting an initial phone screening to narrow down the candidates you wish to interview.

The Chair can use this contact as an opportunity to enquire into the potential candidate's skills and background and start thinking of potential job fit.

Tips for phone screening:

- Is the candidate qualified on paper to do the job? For example: Do you have an Australian Drivers Licence?
- What are the contributions they will bring to this role? Example: What can you contribute to the role of Operations Manager?
- What is their specific knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to the role? For example: Do you have project management experience? If so, please describe your experience briefly.
- Explore salary expectations and willingness to relocate (where applicable).



Example of shortlisting rating scale

Determining a shortlist method can streamline screening and help ensure that the best-qualified candidates make it to the next round. Here's an example of a shortlisting matrix to determine candidates for interviews:

	Essential knowledge, skills and/or experience			Desirable knowledge, skills and/or experience			Total
	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Desirable 1	Desirable 2	Desirable 3	
Candidate 1							
Candidate 2							
Candidate 3							

Rating Scale	Descriptors
3	Exceeds expectations
2	Meets minimum requirements
1	Slightly below minimum requirements
0	Insufficient evidence to assess capability

The Selection Panel should aim to meet via phone, email or face-to-face to reach a shortlist decision as soon as possible after applications close. HR Services (Recruitment) require the signed shortlisting report to support the timely scheduling of interviews. Keep in mind quality candidates are in short supply and we may lose them to another employer if there are delays with the recruitment process.



Skills testing

The Selection Panel is encouraged to perform skills testing where appropriate as part of their selection process. This may involve the candidates submitting pieces of previous work, such as peer reviewed journal articles, conference papers, or prepared documents. Candidates can also be asked to perform a specific skills test before shortlisting or interview, such as a word processing or spreadsheet test, preparing a process map, mock lecturing or marking.

It may be beneficial to perform several skills tests for certain positions. For example, if recruiting for a Senior Lecturer, the Selection Panel may ask candidates to submit their top three papers or a recording of themselves delivering a lecture.

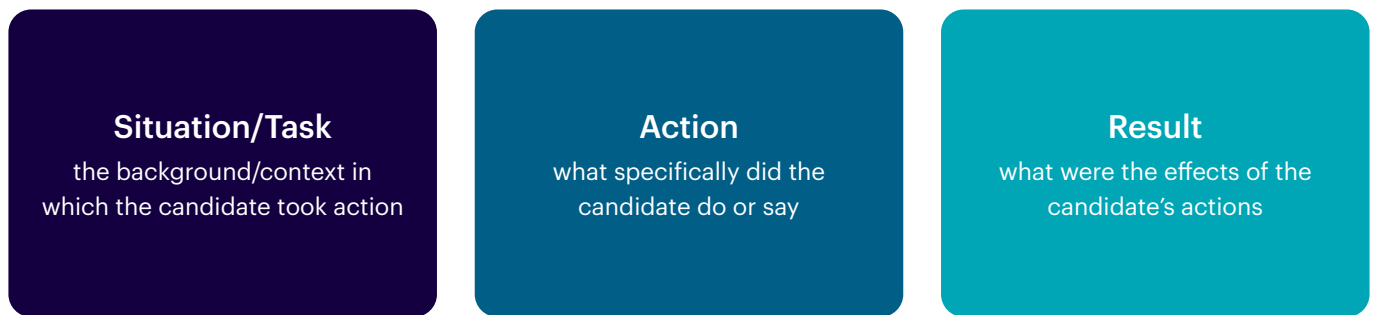


Interview questions

The University encourages behavioural based interview questions, which consists of asking candidates to 'tell me about a time when...'. This method is a predictor of performance and can put the candidate at ease talking about familiar experiences.

The questions should be related to the selection criteria and aim to probe the experiences, attitudes and the work approaches of the applicant.

An easy way to use behavioural based questions is to use the STAR model. When using the STAR method, panellists should look for specific examples in response to the suggested questions that outline:



Interviews should assess candidates using an agreed rating scale such as:

Rating Scale	Descriptors
3	Demonstrated competence above requirements
2	Demonstrated competence at the level required
1	Marginal / entry level
0	Does not meet expectations

Sample behavioral interview questions

- Tell me about a time when you had to analyse information and make a recommendation? What kind of processes did you go through? Was the recommendation accepted?
- Describe a situation when you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time where you experienced conflicting work demands. What were they? How did you respond and what was the outcome?
- Describe how you have improved productivity in your work? How did you identify the opportunity? What steps did you take and what was the outcome?

HR Services (Recruitment) have a library of interview questions depending on the position and level and can assist you with developing tailored interview questions on request.



Conducting the interview

The Interview should be as pleasant an experience as possible for all participants. Selection panel members should be careful to ensure that the interview and the entire selection process are a positive public relations exercise.

Remember the interview is a two-way process. The applicant is also determining if the role and SCU is the right fit for them. As a guide, remember to:

- Greet and welcome the applicant
- Introduce the panel member and their roles
- Outline the purpose and structure of the interview, including that notes may be taken by the panel throughout the interview
- Provide a brief overview of the position and the work unit
- Ask the core questions. Follow-up or probing questions can be asked to clarify issues, obtain further information or to explore relevant areas uncovered in the interview
- Provide the candidate an opportunity to ask questions regarding the position or the University
- Check the context of referees and confirm that referees can be contacted
- Inform the candidate of the next step in the selection process and a time frame in which they would expect to know the panel's decision (normally 1-2 weeks)

For interviews conducted face to face, the environment should support the process and panel members should consider:

- Using a comfortable private room, free from distraction
- Relaxed seating arrangements
- Suitable arrangements for candidates with a hearing/visual/mobility disability
- Present questions in an open, friendly manner and avoid negative or conflicting body language in response to candidates

Remote job interviews

Video job interviews are here to stay, but a seamless candidate experience requires additional preparation. To make a good impression, turn off any alerts, ensure you are well-framed and check your audio. Practice with a colleague to test the interview experience. As you would in a face-to-face interview, use your body language to show genuine interest in the candidate's answers. Before asking each new question, pause to ensure the candidate has finished talking.

Panel discussion

Following the interviews, each panel member should independently assess each interviewee's performance against the selection criteria and job requirements and create an order of merit of interviewees who are suitable for appointment. Each panel member is to be given the opportunity to provide their recommendations to the panel and explain their decision.

The Chair should coordinate discussion with the view to achieving consensus on the appointable candidate(s) in rank order, the reason they are appointable, and the reasons why the unsuccessful candidates were not appointable in terms of the selection criteria.

The Chair or their delegate is to call or email the preferred candidate(s) to obtain permission to contact their referees. Once permission is granted, the Chair or their delegate can proceed to contact references.



Selection report

The Chair is responsible for ensuring the Selection Report is complete. Where applicable, a ranking of candidates considered suitable for appointment should also be included.

The finalised selection and referee reports are to be emailed to HR Services (Recruitment) to be presented to the delegate approval authority.

Recruitment records are to be kept confidential and information regarding the panel decision should be retained for two years and made available to HR Services (Recruitment) on request.

Referee reports

At the conclusion of the selection process you will hopefully have a standout candidate who meets the requirements of the role. Verbal reference checks are the preferred method for reference checking where possible. This method is often quicker and allows the Chair or delegate to ask follow-up questions or for clarification.

Obtain consent to contact their referees (at least two) listed on their application. Let them know that you are looking to take their application to the next stage and would like to contact their referees. Do not verbally offer them the role at this point but keep them warm and engaged in the process.

Who is a good referee?

The best referees are those that have recent, first-hand experience of the candidate and their performance on the job. Current or previous supervisors are best placed to provide feedback about the person's performance and experience related to the selection criteria. It is important to always clarify the professional relationship between the candidate and referee. A colleague, subordinate or friend is not a suitable referee for these purposes.

Follow up phone calls with referees may be useful in clarifying issues, for example, the degree of an applicant's involvement in a project mentioned at interview or to check the level of communication skills, if an applicant appeared nervous at the interview.

The Verbal Referee Template provided will guide these conversations and are to be sent to HR Services (Recruitment) for record keeping.



Offer approval

Be conscious of the use of terminology around advising the applicant that they are the preferred candidate. Please do not offer the position verbally or in writing as this may be considered binding. When advising the preferred applicant, consider using the following language: “I am pleased to advise that we are looking to progress your application to next stage of the process pending referee reports and internal approvals”.

Following approval by the appropriate delegation, the Hiring Manager is able to make a verbal offer of employment to the preferred candidate.

The preferred candidate guide on the next page are negotiable items which may be addressed in the conversation between the Hiring Manager and the candidate. It is beneficial to address all negotiable items at this stage in order to expedite the appointment process.

It is important to consider the timeframe for the offer approvals to take place to manage candidate expectations. So that you can best manage the preferred candidate’s expectations, please see below a guide only, of the timeframe in which an offer of appointment can be generated and sent by HR Services (Recruitment):

- Delegate approval: Allow approximately 72 hours
- Offer letter to be generated and issued: Allow approximately 48 hours

Preferred candidate guide

Notice Period

Mutually agreed start date

Salary expectations

Please note: New staff are normally placed at step 1 of the advertised classification level unless approval has been sought.

For Part-time positions only:

For part-time positions, does the preferred candidate have a preferred work pattern?

Preferred campus

Is relocation support required?

Does the preferred applicant have a partner or any dependents that will be relocating with them?



Notifying unsuccessful candidates

After the successful has accepted the offer, the Chair or a delegated panel member is required to notify and provide feedback to the unsuccessful interviewed candidates in a timely manner. This step is important for a few reasons; for the candidate to understand specific improvement areas to assist in their job quest and for our reputation as a University to remain as professional and positive as possible, helping build a future pipeline of talent.

The feedback should be constructive, factual and fair, and if appropriate, encourage them to apply again in the event of other opportunities. This can be a difficult conversation to approach. It is recommended the Chair thanks the candidate for their interest and time, stresses the positive attributes of the application and interview, and provides a potential area of development.



Recruitment checklist for Chairs

Task	Yes / No
Ensure that nominated panel have confirmed their ability to attend shortlisting and interviews	
Based on the position description, prepare pre-screening questions (optional), skills tests (optional) and interview questions	
Review and shortlist applications	
Send signed shortlisting report to HR Services (Recruitment) to schedule interviews	
Conduct interviews and skills tests if applicable	
Obtain consent to undertake referees for the preferred candidate only	
Undertake referee reports (minimum 2)	
Send selection and referee reports to HR Services (Recruitment) to progress to delegate approval	
On approval, contact the preferred candidate to share the good news and confirm the appointment details	
Appointment details confirmed and sent to HR Services (Recruitment)	
Provide HR Services (Recruitment) with appointment details to inform the employment contact	
Once the employment contract has been accepted by the preferred candidate, contact unsuccessful interviewed candidates	
Prepare for onboarding and induction of new employee	