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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Luimnigh agus an Chláir
*Limerick and Clare
Education and Training Board*

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

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Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

Policy

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) is committed to the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre, those who will provide the best quality teaching, learning opportunities and support services for all its learners in the fulfilment of their individual aspirations and objectives.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that LCETB:

- recruits, inducts and retains the most suitable candidates to match its culture and strategic operational requirements in terms of learning and personal development.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees (temporary and permanent, whole-time and part-time) irrespective of length of service.

Selection of staff is, for the most part, by means of competency-based interviews. Additional methods of selection may be included when necessary.

The role of the Human Resources (HR) Department is to ensure that LCETB's Mission, Vision and Values are supported in the recruitment and selection process. With the growth in legislative provisions in the regulation of employment, new approaches to recruitment and selection are required to reinforce the principles of equity, fairness, transparency and accountability.

It is now generally accepted that effective recruitment and selection procedures are key pre-requisites to the development of an effective workforce.

LCETB has a comprehensive code of practice for employment of persons with disabilities. The principles set down in the Code of Practice are incorporated in these procedures.

The procedures will be continually reviewed and monitored to ensure that they continue to meet the needs and objectives of LCETB.

1. Vacancy – Job Analysis

- 1.1 The need for recruitment and selection may arise in a number of ways. It may come about as a result of promotion, retirement, resignation or the creation of a new post.

A vacancy, when it occurs, should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the composition of a service or Department in so far as this is possible within the confines of the individual positions.

- 1.2 In the case of a newly created post, consideration should be given to the future focus on how the job will evolve in line with LCETB's strategic service objectives and service plan.

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

- 1.3 Centre Managers¹ involved in preparing job descriptions should be cognisant of the qualifications, experience and attributes required for the job. It is important to note that the job description for recruitment and selection purposes is a tool to facilitate the evaluation of potential applicants.

2. Vacancy - Considerations

- 2.1 *Can the vacancy be used to assist redeployment?*

The vacancy could be of use to accommodate a member of staff who requires redeployment for reasons of service improvement, personal or professional development or other reason. It may be advisable to ascertain if there are staff within the organisation who could benefit from a transfer and which would allow for the filling of the post in a most cost effective way.

- 2.2 *Can the vacancy be used to improve the diversity of the team?*

Examining the composition of the service staff or workgroup could reveal a limited range of backgrounds and experience. The job/person specification may have elements which could be better delivered by someone who can bring a different perspective to the service. This potential benefit can be written into the person specification and selection criteria.

Centre Managers should be vigilant in guarding against discrimination in recruitment which might arise from prejudice, misconception, assumptions and stereotyping, any of which could interfere with the proper consideration of an individual's skills, abilities and experience.

- 2.3 *How will the job evolve?*

It is advisable to consider the future needs of the service as well as the present ones and to be mindful of how the job is likely to evolve in the context of the strategic direction of the organisation. The capacity to adapt and take on new challenges may be just as important a characteristic as being capable of meeting the immediate needs of the post.

3. Procedure for Recruiting Staff

- 3.1 *Employment Control Procedure*

The filling of all posts, whether new posts or replacement posts, must be approved by the Head of HR and the Chief Executive.

The '*Request to Recruit*' form is the document that must be used when putting forward a post for recruitment for the consideration and approval of the Head of HR and the Chief Executive.

¹ Centre Manager refers to the Principal/Manager/Director/Co-ordinator/Officer as appropriate
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Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

3.2 *New Posts*

New posts will normally be identified in the Education Plan or will arise from the Department of Education and Skills approving a new service or the extension of an existing service. The relevant DES documentation authorising such services or posts should be referenced on the '*Request to Recruit*' form.

When the recruitment is authorised, the Centre Manager will, with assistance from the HR Department where necessary:

- review the existing panel of suitable candidates if one is in place, and if not,
- request the HR Department to proceed with the recruitment
- prepare a '*Job Description*' and '*Person Specification*'

3.3 *Replacement Posts*

When a vacancy occurs in an existing post, the Centre Manager should review the:

- requirements of the post in light of the needs and prospective developments within the Centre or Service
- overall objectives and service needs of LCETB

When it is ascertained what arrangements are required regarding the replacement, the Centre Manager, in liaison with the HR Department, will:

- complete a '*Request to Recruit*' form
- review existing panel of suitable candidates if one is in place, and if not
- prepare the '*Job Description*' and '*Person Specification*'

4. **Job Description & Person Specification**

4.1 Writing a Job Description is an essential part of a fair recruitment and selection procedure. The Job Description outlines the purpose of the job and should reflect the main functions and tasks of the post. The Job Description should be written in clear and neutral language and free from taint of discrimination.

It should reflect the essential and desirable criteria necessary to fulfil the requirements of the post, that is:

- leadership role
- areas of specific accountability
- general accountability
- qualifications
- finance
- information technology
- staff management
- health & safety issues

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

The Job Description should be drafted in consultation with the HR and have the approval and authorisation of the Chief Executive or designated officer.

4.2 Person Specification

A Person Specification is essentially a description of the qualities and personal attributes which the ideal person to fulfil the post should have. It should include details of qualifications, knowledge, skills and aptitudes, experience, physical and personal characteristics and any other personal qualities considered desirable in the performance of the duties of the post.

The Person Specification is drawn up on the basis of the job description. Criteria such as qualifications and experience should be examined carefully, and should only be stated in the Person Specification if they are essential requirements in order to do the job properly.

When drafting the Person Specification the following questions could be asked:

- what education standards are required?
- what work experience is necessary?
- are any special aptitudes necessary e.g. manual dexterity, language, verbal or numerical skills?
- what personal characteristics are needed e.g. (leadership, motivational skills, maturity, dedication, creativity)?
- are any specific requirements required?

The Person Specification should enable the identification of key selection criteria for use in choosing the best candidate.

It is impractical to test for more than a limited number of criteria in an interview situation; however, if a candidate performs satisfactorily against the principal criteria, it is reasonable to assume s/he would perform well in other areas of work.

- 4.3 The Job Description and Person Specification should be realistic and capable of being justified as reasonable on objective grounds. If challenged, LCETB must be able to demonstrate that the required competencies or qualifications are justified and required for the proper performance of the job and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

5. Interview Board

- The interview board consists of individuals nominated by LCETB to assess the skills, abilities and knowledge of applicants and to make recommendations based on their assessment.
- Wherever practicable, the board should be mixed as to gender and disciplines.
- Adjustments to the proposed board may be made by the Head of HR or the CE.

6. Advertising

- 6.1 The advertisement of a vacant post is an important element in the recruitment process. While its main purpose is to attract interest in the post from high

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

quality applicants, it can also perform a public relations function for LCETB both at a service and corporate level.

For such reasons it is important that all recruitment advertising is of a standard and consistency that it enhances the image and reputation of LCETB. It is the function of the HR Department to co-ordinate recruitment advertising.

- 6.2 Each advertised position will be assigned a specific title or number that is an identification code which should be quoted in all references to the competition. A closing date and time for receipt of completed on-line applications will be stated on the advertisement and will be strictly adhered to. Late applications, those received after the closing date, will not be included in the selection procedures.
- 6.3 Applications for posts will be accepted in electronic form only using the application form specified for the post
- 6.4 Appropriate posts are advertised on www.educationposts.ie and www.educationcareers.ie and on the LCETB website www.lcetb.ie. Internal posts will be advertised on the appropriate noticeboard and on StaffCONNECT within the school or centre, as appropriate.

7. Shortlisting

- 7.1 The HR Department is responsible for co-ordinating recruitment. A member of the HR Department will co-ordinate and facilitate shortlisting and interviews ensuring procedural and legislative requirements are adhered to and advising the interview board on best practice and the avoidance of other potentially contentious issues.
- 7.2 Shortlisting is the process through which a number of applicants are chosen from the total of applicants for further assessment before making a final selection decision. It involves the members of the interview board reviewing the applications and selecting those who will be called for interview on the basis of pre-determined criteria.
- 7.3 All relevant documentation will be available to the board.

8. Establishing Shortlisting Criteria

- 8.1 The criteria for shortlisting must be decided at the beginning of the process before any of the applications are viewed. This is to ensure that the shortlisting is conducted in a manner that is objective, consistent, transparent and free from bias or taint.
- 8.2 The criteria used for shortlisting are derived in the main from the Job Description and Person Specification and will be those criteria on which candidates can be evaluated from their applications.
- 8.3 Where a large number of applicants have applied for a post, the essential criteria may be supplemented by reference to desirable criteria and this will be determined by the shortlisting board. It is essential that the desirable criteria are

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

agreed before the applications are viewed. They should usually be criteria identified as desirable in the advertising of the post.

9. Reviewing Applications

- 9.1 The interview board will then proceed to shortlist the applicants i.e. select a number of applicants who will be called for interview based on the pre-determined shortlisting criteria.
- 9.2 It is essential that members of interview boards are able to justify the initial shortlisting of candidates so as to avoid the recruitment and selection process being challenged. In examining applications, it should be borne in mind that an applicant with a known disability has considered the job requirements and feels able to perform them, with the assistance of special treatment or facilities. Assumptions should not be made about the possible future impact of a disability unless there may be potential health and safety risks.

10. Reasons for Shortlisting & Not Shortlisting

- 10.1 The objective reasons for selection or non-selection of applicants for interview should be recorded on the shortlisting sheet. This record should be retained and forms an integral element of the competition file.
- 10.2 The following are acceptable reasons for not shortlisting a candidate:
- failure to match the shortlisting criteria
 - application withdrawn by candidate
 - incomplete applications where it is not clear if the applicant meets the minimum criteria for shortlisting without assumptions being made.
- 10.3 All candidates successful at shortlisting are called for interview while those candidates not successful at shortlisting are notified as soon as possible that their application was not successful.
- 10.4 Candidates personal data (Curriculum Vitae / Application Forms) should be retained for a period of twelve months following completion of a recruitment competition but will not be retained any longer than is necessary or for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was obtained. LCETB will implement such procedures as are necessary so as to avoid the unauthorised disclosure of personal information, the destruction of data or other improper use or processing of personal information.
- 10.5 Shortlisting and interviews will be facilitated by a member of the HR Department. The role of the facilitator is to:
- ensure the process is fair and equitable and that it is compliant with Equality Legislation
 - advise the interview board of the procedures to be followed including dealing with matters of a confidential nature
 - ensure that the process is free from bias
 - assist the interview board in the development of the selection criteria/competencies and areas of questioning for panel members.
 - agree if a presentation is to be made and wording of same (if applicable)

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

- agree marking system
- complete the documentation supporting the recruitment process e.g. shortlisting criteria sheet, recommendation sheet, reference requests.
- coordinate the recruitment process, including liaising with applicants, panel members and candidates.

11. Interviews

- 11.1 A job interview is essentially a conversation with a purpose. The interviewer is trying to establish if the applicant is suitable for employment in the post for which he has applied while the interviewee is assessing his prospective employer to establish if he or she wants to work for that employer.
- 11.2 The selection criteria / competencies are already identified in the Job Description and Person Specification. The criteria/competencies are grouped and distributed amongst the panel members who will structure their interview questions around the areas allocated to them.
- 11.3 Each member of the interview board should prepare 3-4 questions based on the particular criteria or competency area of questioning allocated to them.
- 11.4 There is a variety of ways to phrase questions but for the purposes of recruitment interviewing it is best if the questions asked are of the following type:
- open questions: questions which require full responses and do not lend themselves to simple or short answers, questions that draw the candidate out to talk about their achievement, their successes, what they learned from particular situations.
 - probing questions: how they reacted to particular situations, what they might do if confronted by a particular set of circumstances.
 - asking for specific examples: how they reacted to situations in the past, to highlight any particular successes in their current or previous roles.
 - situational questions: how they would respond to specific difficulties.
 - follow on questions to clarify answers or ambiguities.
- 11.5 The objectives of the selection interview are to:
- select the best candidate for the position where that candidate is deemed appointable
 - provide additional information about the job to the candidates as required
 - conduct the interview in a fair, equitable and professional manner.
- 11.6 The interview board will be provided with the following information in addition to the documentation provided for the short-listing session:
- copy of the curriculum vitae for each candidate to be interviewed
 - copy of criteria assigned to each panel member
 - time table for interviews

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

12. Role of the Chairperson

12.1 The role of the Chairperson is to coordinate the work of the interview board to find the right person for a particular job:

Their functions may be broken into four sections:

- preparation
- interview
- assessing and marking
- deal with disagreement/matters of protocol between other interview board members.

12.2 In terms of preparation, the Chairperson should:

- discuss and agree with the panel the format and structure of the interview
- decide on the role of each individual panel member and the areas of questioning allocated to each member
- check that all the documentation necessary is available to each member of the panel.
- ensure that the job description available is discussed by the interview board prior to the interview with a view to obtaining and ensuring a clear understanding of what personal attributes are required for the job.
- duration of overall interview.
- assessing the interview - marking etc.

12.3 During the interview, the Chairperson should ensure that the interview room is quiet and free from interruption. S/he has a role in ensuring that the interviews are conducted with fairness and equity.

12.4 When the candidate enters the room, the Chairperson should introduce the panel, confirm that the interviewee and the invited candidate are the same person. S/he should explain the format of the interview and make clear how and when the decision of the panel will be communicated to the candidate.

12.5 The Chairperson should set the tone by endeavouring to put the candidate at ease. Among the ways in which this can be done is by asking candidates to talk through their application with particular reference to those aspects of the application that are most relevant to the post.

12.6 The Chairperson must also observe the candidate during the interview and make a general assessment of their suitability for the position to be filled.

12.7 The Chairperson should note in particular any unexplained gaps:

- between leaving school/college and first job or between jobs
- progress of candidate in organisation
- duties and responsibilities in previous jobs
- reason for leaving employment (where applicable)

12.8 The Chairperson will ensure that each candidate is asked the same basic questions.

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

- 12.9 S/he should also ensure candidates are given an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions or to make the panel aware of any other relevant information that s/he has not had the opportunity to discuss in the interview.
- 12.10 The Chairperson should also refer to any gaps left by the individual interviewers at the end of the interview.
- 12.11 Once all candidates have been interviewed, the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring a consensus is reached on who should be appointed.

13. Assessment and Marking

- 13.1 The Chairperson should not take the lead in suggesting marks but should ensure that each candidate is assessed independently by each panel member.

The Chairperson must ensure:

- that each candidate is assessed and marked fairly by the panel
 - that the candidate receiving the highest mark is recommended for the job
 - if a panel is required that each candidate is placed on the panel in order of merit
 - that all recommendations and selections are signed by each individual member of the board.
- 13.2 At the end of the selection process, each board member will have scores that s/he has allocated to criteria or questions in relation to each candidate interviewed. The scores should be totalled and this will identify the candidate with the highest scoring. These scores will be recorded by the secretary on the marking form and the form signed by the members of the board. This form will be filed on the competition file. The secretary will also complete the recommendation form and have it signed by the interview board.
- 13.3 The post should be offered to the top scoring candidate with an acceptable level of suitability i.e. if the highest scoring candidate does not reach the standard demanded, no appointment will be made.
- 13.4 The reasons for rejection or appointment must be recorded so that information is available should the decision of the interview board be challenged.

14. Recommendation Sheet

- 14.1 Each member of the interview board will sign the recommendation sheet setting out its recommendations. This recommendation sheet will form part of the competition file.
- 14.2 Candidate(s) who are considered suitable for appointment will be advised that the recruitment process is continuing and requested to undergo pre-employment medical and provide evidence of their qualifications and teaching council registration. At the same time the process for obtaining consent for Garda Vetting and reference checking should be commenced. It is important that candidates are made aware of the status of their application at this time.

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

- 14.3 Candidates who are not successful should be advised in writing as soon as possible.
- 14.4 If it has been decided in advance of the competition that a panel of suitable candidates should be formed from which vacancies occurring over a specified period will be filled then candidates who are deemed suitable for employment should be advised the recruitment process is continuing and requested to submit evidence of their qualifications, teaching council registration and to complete the Garda Vetting process. When the result of this is to hand the candidates should be advised they will be considered for other suitable vacancies arising in the organisation over a stated period, which is normally twelve months from the date of interview.

15. Medical

- 15.1 No offer of employment can be made or contract issued until the HR Department receives notification from the Occupational Health Service that the candidate is in a state of health such that s/he will be able to give regular and reasonable service, has been vetted by Garda Central Vetting Office and whose references are satisfactory.

16. References

- 16.1 Reference checking is an important part of the assessment process as it will help to validate information already received, will give an assessment of previous performance and some indication of suitability and future potential.
- 16.2 Successful candidates are requested to complete a reference consent form and to nominate two referees, one of which should be a current or most recent employer. Reference checking will take place post selection, i.e. the candidate has been assessed and recommended for appointment by the interview board.
- 16.3 The HR Department will be responsible for taking up references on all new employees. The HR Department will write to the referees nominated by the candidate and request a written reference from them. In cases where a verbal reference has been taken up, this must be followed up with a request for a written reference.
- 16.4 Referees are advised that their reference is confidential and will not be disclosed to the candidate without prior consent.
- 16.5 In requesting a reference from a nominated referee, it may be useful to provide the referee with an outline of the post being offered so that the referee can give an accurate report on the person in terms of the post that they have applied for

17. Garda Vetting

- 17.1 Garda Vetting is required for all new appointments prior to any offer of employment being made.
- 17.2 All candidates successful at interview are requested to complete the Garda Vetting form and to return this to the HR Department for processing

Recruitment and Selection: Policy & Procedures

- 17.3 The HR Department will complete the Vetting process by referring the relevant documentation to the Garda Central Vetting Office.
- 17.4 The HR Department will ensure that all Garda Vetting procedures are dealt with confidentially and that records pertaining to Garda Vetting are securely stored.

18. Offer Letter

- 18.1 All offers of employment (including transfers and promotion of internal candidates and appointment of external candidates) represent a contract of employment between the employer (LCETB) and the employee.
- 18.2 Authorisation to issue an offer of employment is reserved to the Chief Executive and s/he alone is empowered to make an offer of employment.
- 18.3 All written offers of employment will be issued by the CE through the HR Department who will ensure that all documentation is in place before any offer is made.