Guidance on
Disability considerations in recruitment and selection

1. Introduction

1.1 No job applicant or employee should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which are not relevant to good employment practice.

1.2 In this respect, one important consideration when recruiting to a post is how you can avoid discriminating against candidates with a disability.

1.3 A disability, in law, is defined as ‘a physical or mental impairment’ which ‘has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [the applicant’s] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

2. Recruitment

2.1 Job descriptions should, to the extent that it is possible:
   • be kept under review and avoid tasks that the postholder will not, in practice, need to perform
   • focus on the outcome, not how the task is carried out
   • provide flexibility in working hours and/or pattern.

2.2 Person specifications should:
   • include criteria that relate directly to the duties of the job description
   • contain the minimum requirements essential to do the job effectively
   • avoid criteria relating to health, fitness or physical characteristics, including sickness record (unless this can be objectively justified).

2.3 Job adverts should:
   • accurately reflect the requirements of the job
   • be worded carefully to avoid any suggestion that the College may discriminate
   • be communicated externally, unless there is a good reason not to
   • be communicated to all existing employees, including those absent from work on maternity or other leave.

Note that it is legal to advertise a job as being open only to disabled applicants.

2.4 The application process should:
   • be standardised and enable you to assess each applicant objectively and consistently against the criteria in the person specification
   • be adjusted, as reasonable, where required (see section 4 – Reasonable adjustments)
3. **Selection**

3.1 Selection panels
Only staff who have completed the College’s recruitment and selection, Unconscious Bias (online) and Equality and Diversity Essentials (online) training, should be on a selection panel.

3.2 Shortlisting
As part of Birkbeck’s commitment to being a Disability Confident Employer, the College guarantees an interview to all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the job, if they opt in to this arrangement, subject to any limits on the overall number of interviews.

3.3 Job interviews
- Interview questions should remain focussed on the behaviours, skills and experience listed in the person specification – not on questions relating to person circumstances or health, or any other unrelated matter.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required (see section 4 – Reasonable adjustments).

3.4 Selection tests
- Only administer tests that can reasonably be considered to provide relevant, reliable and valid assessments.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required (see section 4 – Reasonable adjustments).

4. **Reasonable adjustments**

4.1 The College must offer reasonable adjustments to all stages of the recruitment and selection process if the job applicant has indicated a disability in the application, the College becomes aware of it, or the applicant asks for reasonable adjustments.

4.2 The purpose is to remove barriers created by the disability, so the individual can work and apply for a post in the same way as someone without a disability.

4.3 The College must only ask a disabled applicant what reasonable adjustments are needed:
- for any part of the recruitment process and, once those are in place, whether they are suitable; and/or
- to determine whether the applicant could carry out a function essential/intrinsic to the role with the reasonable adjustment in place.

All recruiting managers should work with their HR Business Partner to help them ensure a fair and non-discriminatory recruitment exercise is undertaken for every post, including advice on reasonable adjustments and the Disability Confident guaranteed interview scheme.

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