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Recruitment and Onboarding Checklist

A Practical Checklist for Hiring Managers



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This checklist provides practical steps for managers involved in recruitment, selection and onboarding, ensuring that recruitment decisions are:

- Fair and objective
- Legally compliant
- Based on merit and competence
- Free from discrimination
- Supportive of a positive candidate experience
- Focused on long-term employee success through effective onboarding



1. Before You Recruit

- [ ] Has the vacancy been approved?
- [ ] Have you considered whether the role still meets business needs?
- [ ] Is there an up to date Job Description?
- [ ] Is there a current Person Specification with:
  - [ ] Essential criteria (Qualifications, Skills, Experience, License, Technical Knowledge etc.)
  - [ ] Desirable criteria (Additional Experience, Industry Knowledge, Additional Qualifications etc.)
- [ ] Have you agreed the salary or salary range?
- [ ] Is the salary based on objective, gender-neutral criteria?

2. Advertising The Role

- [ ] Is the advertisement inclusive and free from discriminatory language?

  - Avoid phrases such as:
    - "Young and energetic", instead try "Motivated and enthusiastic"
    - "Native English speaker", instead try "Excellent written and verbal communication skills"
    - "Salesman / Saleswoman", instead try "Sales Executive / Sales Representative"
    - "Recent graduate wanted", instead try "Entry level position"

- [ ] Does the advert include:
  - [ ] Job Title
  - [ ] Key Responsibilities
  - [ ] Location
  - [ ] Salary/ Salary Range
  - [ ] Closing Date
- [ ] Does the advert state your Equal Opportunities commitment?
- [ ] Have you chosen the most appropriate recruitment channels?

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3. Shortlisting

- [ ] Assess candidates against the Person Specification only.
- [ ] Use consistent criteria for every applicant.
- [ ] Consider transferable skills where appropriate.
- [ ] Keep notes that are factual and evidence-based.
- [ ] Notify unsuccessful applicants.

4. Preparing For Interview

- [ ] Interview panel confirmed (minimum 2 people).
- [ ] Interview questions prepared in advance.
- [ ] Questions linked directly to the role.
- [ ] Scoring matrix agreed before interviews.
- [ ] Interview packs prepared for each panel member.
- [ ] Avoid questions relating to any protected characteristic under the Employment Equality Acts.
    - Gender
    - Civil Status
    - Family Status
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Religion
    - Age
    - Disability
    - Race
    - Member of a Travelling Community

5. Conducting Interviews

- [ ] Welcome the candidate and explain the interview process.
- [ ] Ask every candidate the same core questions.
- [ ] Probe for examples using behavioural questioning (e.g. STAR – Situation, Task, Action, Result).
- [ ] Score responses consistently.
- [ ] Take professional, factual interview notes only.
- [ ] Explain next steps and recruitment timeline.

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6. Making The Hiring Decision

- [ ] Review interview scores objectively.
- [ ] Base decisions on evidence, skills and experience.
- [ ] Avoid unconscious bias or assumptions.
- [ ] Record reasons for your decision.

7. Pre-Employment Checks

- [ ] Candidate consent obtained for references.
- [ ] Two references received (where possible).
- [ ] Qualifications verified (if applicable).
- [ ] Background checks completed (where required).
- [ ] Explain next steps and recruitment timeline.

8. Making The Offer

- [ ] Confirm:
  - [ ] Job Title
  - [ ] Salary
  - [ ] Hours
  - [ ] Location
  - [ ] Benefits
  - [ ] Proposed Start Date
- [ ] Issue Offer Letter
- [ ] Issue Terms and Conditions of Employment.
- [ ] Provide Employee Handbook and required onboarding documentation.

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9. Before Day One

- [ ] IT equipment and system access arranged.
- [ ] Workspace assigned and prepared.
- [ ] Training plan created.
- [ ] Team notified.
- [ ] Induction scheduled.
- [ ] Uniforms arranged (where applicable).

10. During Probation

- [ ] Induction completed.
- [ ] Health & Safety training completed.
- [ ] Schedule diary reminders for regular probation check-ins and formal interim review meetings (e.g. 3 month and 5 months). Don't wait until the final 6 month review!
- [ ] Provide regular feedback, coaching and support throughout the probation period.
- [ ] Document any performance concerns, agreed improvement actions and support provided.
- [ ] Conduct the formal final probation review before the end of the probation period.

HR Compliance Reminder

- ✓ Recruit on merit and objective criteria.
- ✓ Avoid discrimination at every stage of the recruitment process.
- ✓ Do not ask about previous salary.
- ✓ Remember interview notes may be subject to a Data Protection Request.
- ✓ Keep recruitment records secure for a period of 18 months, and GDPR compliant.



MSS Compliance Tip

Consistency is key! Apply the same recruitment process, selection criteria and interview questions to every candidate to help ensure a fair, objective and legally compliant recruitment process.

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01 887 0690

mssthehrpeople.ie

info@mssthehrpeople.ie