

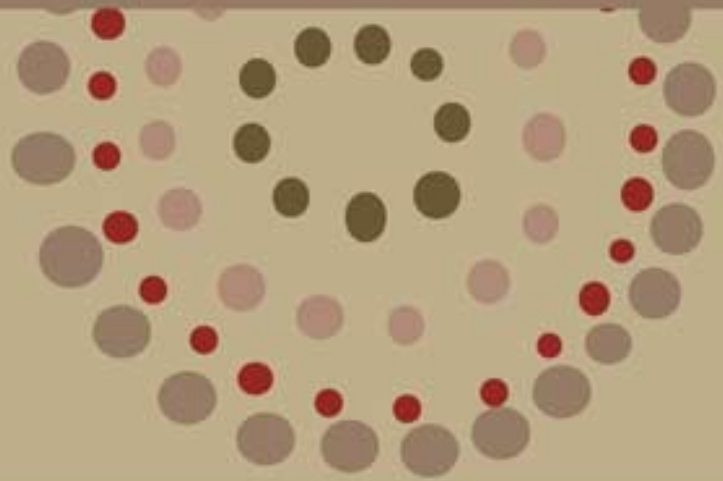


Australian Government  
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations



# Recruitment process

—a guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations



**HELP FOR  
CORPORATIONS**

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# Recruitment process guide

This guide is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations and outlines how to go about:

- establishing a selection panel
- outlining the characteristics and strengths of your ideal candidate
- short listing applicants
- interviewing applicants
- conducting telephone interviews
- checking references.

## Establishing a recruitment panel

Directors are usually responsible for recruiting senior employees and for any staff reporting directly to them. They usually delegate responsibility for recruitment of other staff to the corporation's CEO, who is responsible for day-to-day management.

For the best recruitment result you may want to consider including on the panel:

- someone with knowledge of the recruitment process for new employees
- a gender mix
- at least one person with a detailed understanding of the job.

## Recruiting to senior positions

When recruiting senior staff it is important for selection panel members to have a clear idea about the type of person they're looking for and the experience required for the position.

Decide at a directors' meeting who will be part of this panel. Some corporations may want all directors to be part of the selection panel but having more than five directors makes it difficult to reach agreement and can also be intimidating for applicants. It might be more efficient for the chairperson, vice-chairperson and one other nominated director to form the selection panel. The directors may also decide to invite an independent person—for example, a human resources specialist or an ORIC staff member.

## Recruiting junior positions

Usually the recruitment of junior staff is the responsibility of the CEO, general manager or business manager. It is still beneficial to have a selection panel. Additional members might include directors, the position's supervisor and another manager.

## Outlining the characteristics and strengths of your ideal applicant

It is a good idea, as a member of a selection panel (for both senior and junior positions), to create a list of characteristics, skills and experience you would like your ideal candidate to possess. The list should be put together by the whole selection panel, not just one panellist.

Creating such a list will give you a better idea of how to rate applications—although be open minded. It is unlikely that you will receive an application that ticks every item on your 'ideal applicant' list. Some applications may also highlight strengths and experiences in other areas which, when you think about it, could bring a fresh approach to the role.

When developing your ideal applicant list you may wish to consider:

- the strengths of the person currently in the position (if applicable)
- the personal qualities and interests an applicant should possess
- Indigeneity, or demonstrated history of working with Indigenous communities/people/issues
- experience in a not-for-profit organisation in a field similar to the corporation's activities.

## Short listing applications

The short-listing process should be undertaken separately by each member of the selection panel. Once each panellist has rated all applications, the panel should come together to discuss them and arrive at a decision—ideally a consensus—about which ones to short-list.

The aim of short listing applications is to decide which applicants to invite to interview. There are several ways to do this. One way is to rate each application by giving a score, such as:

Excellent	5
Good	4
Acceptable	3
Marginal	2
Poor	1

Further information about these five classifications are given in Definitions at page 9.

When carrying out your ratings consider the whole application—that is, the resume, selection criteria and covering letter (if included).

**Tip:** If you receive a large number of quality applications and it's hard to distinguish between them, it may be worth conducting preliminary interviews by telephone. This can be a screening process and may help you to decide who to invite to face-to-face interviews.

# Interviewing tips

## Introduction

The panel as a whole should decide on questions before the first interview. Consider also who will ask the questions. Will it be just one panellist or will you take turns?

Questions should build on the selection criteria.

## Conducting the interview

### Steps to follow for introducing the session

- Welcome the applicant.
- Introduce the rest of the selection panel. Explain your roles in the organisation as well as in the selection process.
- Explain the structure of the interview.

### Questions

Asking an open question about the applicant's current work or educational activities helps to break the ice—for example, 'Tell us about the main responsibilities in your current job (or your most recent job)?'

Use the selection criteria to put together your questions for the interview. As a guide, develop one question per selection criteria. Depending on the applicant's responses, you may want to ask follow-up questions.

Target your questions to find out the applicant's capabilities. You want to know, for example:

- the opportunities the applicant has had to gain skills
- specific examples of the applicant's past or present work experience (or education, if more appropriate).

**Tip:** Try to remain objective. Decisions must be made on the basis of concrete evidence rather than simply your opinions as an interviewer.

### Closing the interview

Towards the end of the interview, give the applicant an opportunity to add any further points—for example, you might say, 'I think we've covered the areas that we wanted to ask you about but is there anything you feel is relevant and would like to add?' Be open to this information.

Close the interview by:

- inviting (and answering) any questions
- repeating information about the next steps in the selection process—for example, clarify referee contact details and a timeframe for your decision
- thanking the applicant for attending.

After the applicant has left, write up your notes as soon as possible (see the sample template at page 7).

## **Note-taking and evaluating responses**

### **Note-taking during interview**

Each panellist should take notes during the interview.

Write down key words relating to what the applicant says and the examples the applicant gives to support their claims. Your notes must be accurate, factual and directly related to the role.

Suspend your judgment about the applicant's responses until after the interview.

### **Evaluating applicants' interviews**

Once each panellist has formed an opinion about the suitability of each applicant, the selection panel as a whole should come together to make a decision.

Read through your notes and decide which evidence best supports each capability. Having clear descriptions of the capabilities, selection criteria and numerical ratings (if applicable) encourage you to evaluate specific aspects of the interviewee's performance. It also prevents you from making generalised judgments like, 'I liked that person'. Ratings should be completed after each applicant's interview together with a written summary of evidence to support the rating.

See the five-point rating scale under 'Definitions' at page 9.

## **Conducting telephone interviews**

Telephone interviews can be a cost-effective way of interviewing and are particularly useful for corporations recruiting in remote communities. The tips provided for general interviews also apply to telephone interviews but there are a few extra points to note.

Phone interviews obviously lack the face-to-face interaction of a standard interview so take care to give the applicant sufficient information about the structure of the interview.

Not being able to read the body language of the interview panel can also be a disadvantage. Interviewees can't tell, for example, whether their responses to questions are going over well, are too long or are not sufficiently detailed.

When asking questions during a phone interview, give specific direction in the questions you ask. This will allow interviewees to target their answers more appropriately and it will not matter so much that they are unable to pick up on body language cues.

## **Checking references**

One of the last stages in the recruitment process is checking references. After interviews have taken place the selection panel will want to follow up references of the strongest two applicants.

The selection panel—or one nominated member—generally calls or emails the applicant's previous managers, peers or clients.

The process of checking references is extremely important because it provides an opportunity to explore an applicant's past work performance and experience. Further,

this information is provided by a third party who knows the applicant's work history and can also attest to their personal qualities.

When making contact with an applicant's referees, state the reason for your call/email. Briefly describe your organisation. Ensure that the referee is genuinely in a position to comment in depth about the quality of the applicant's work and experience. The questions you ask the referee should help you to clarify or confirm your initial impression in terms of skills, personal qualities and knowledge.

**Sample template**

**Job:**

**Applicant name:**

<b>Questions and notes</b>					
<b>Criteria/capability 1</b> [Write in capability/selection criteria here.]					
<b>Evidence:</b>  (List points, qualities, skills experience you are looking for here)	1. [Write the interview question here.]  <i>Use this section to record the evidence gathered against each question.</i>  <i>The evidence gathered should support the applicant's claim against the selection criteria/capability.</i>				
	<b>Rating:</b> <b>(Refer to Definitions on page 9)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>



**Example**

**Job:**

**Applicant name:**

**Questions and notes**

**Criteria/capability 1 Initiative**

**Evidence:**

- ✓ **Acting on own initiative without being prompted**
- ✓ **Working well autonomously**
- ✓ **Adapts work style to suit changing circumstances or new demands**

**1. Give us a recent example of a time where you showed initiative.**

*Answer:*

*Project situation at work.*

- *What were the circumstances?*

*Manager suddenly ill in hospital—couldn't contact. Project that needed to be completed within week—manager not back for month. Project still needed to be finished.*

- *In what way did you show initiative?*

*Let her manager know about project. Checked what had been done (already scoped and documented). Suggested to manager could still make deadline if work divided equally among team. Volunteered to be project coordinator.*

- *What was the outcome?*

*Candidate pleased. Made deadline. Client not affected. Received thanks from own manager and the senior manager.*

**Rating:**  
**(Refer to definitions on page 9.)**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

## Definitions

RATING	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	
5	Excellent	Meets or exceeds almost all of the selection criterion definition.	Marked strengths on most dimensions of the selection criterion.
4	Good	Meets about two-thirds of the selection criterion definition.	Marked strengths on some dimensions of the selection criterion and acceptable on others.
3	Acceptable	Meets about half of the selection criterion definition.	Acceptable across the range of dimensions. There may be some marked strengths and limited limitations in specific areas.
2	Marginal	Meets about one-third of the selection criterion definition.	Strong limitations across some areas and some limitations on the rest.
1	Poor	Meets almost none of the selection criterion definition.	Strong limitations across most of the dimensions of the criterion definition questioned.

In addition, the following codes may be useful:

**WE** Weak evidence—either little opportunity or only a small amount of the behaviour displayed. Be cautious about the rating assigned.

**NE** No evidence—since no opportunity exists to assess the participant on this capability no rating can be assigned. This would be an appropriate rating if, for example, one of the capabilities is 'presentation skills' and the interviewee for one reason or another has missed out on gaining experience in this area.