



Australian Society of Authors

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Adopted 14/03/2005

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 EEO Policy

The Australian Society of Authors is committed to a policy of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). EEO refers to the right to be considered for a job or other employment benefit for which one is skilled and qualified. It is the chance to compete with others and not be denied fair appraisal during this process by rules, practices or attitudes. The ASA is committed to ensuring that our recruitment and selection processes are fair and non-discriminatory.

We aim to choose the best person for the job regardless of:

- race, colour and national origin
- disability, including HIV and AIDS
- sex (including pregnancy)
- marital status (including de facto)
- parental status (being a parent or childless)
- religious or political beliefs, activities or practices
- sexuality
- age

This recruitment and selection policy aims to eliminate both direct discrimination (where irrelevant criteria are applied to exclude people) and indirect discrimination (where rules and practices appear to treat people equally, but are unfair in their effects).

1.2 Positions that require a particular race or sex

The law recognises that certain positions are best done or can only be done by a person of a particular race, sex or age. The requirement for a person to be of a particular race, sex or age is called Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ).

It is possible to claim GOQ for jobs providing a service targeted to people of a particular race, sex or age. The job must involve direct contact with the service users and the ASA must be able to justify why it needs someone of a particular race, sex or age to do the job.

It is not necessary to apply for exemptions from the Anti-Discrimination Board to advertise positions where race, sex or age is a GOQ. These positions are exempted under Section 14 (race), Section 21 (sex), and Section 49 (age) of the

Anti-Discrimination Act. The ad should state that race, sex or age is a genuine occupational qualification and give the relevant section of the Act.

1.3 Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all permanent full time and part time positions. It does not apply to temporary positions (unless it is likely that the position will become permanent) and casual positions or the engagement of consultants/contractors.

1.4 Temporary and Casual Positions not covered

Temporary and casual positions are not covered by this recruitment and selection policy although as far as possible EEO should be taken into account. Temporary positions are defined as up to 26 weeks or equivalent full time hours. If there is a likelihood that a temporary position will become permanent, it should be advertised. Casual positions are defined as up to 13 weeks or equivalent full time hours.

Instead, the following procedures apply to temporary and casual positions and consultants/contractors:

Temporary and casual positions can be filled by a selection panel comprised of the Executive Director and one staff member from the relevant project or work area.

An existing member of staff can be:

- appointed to fill another position in an acting capacity, or
- redeployed to another position to meet short-term gaps, or
- redeployed to short-term funded projects in accordance with this procedure.

Temporary and casual employees will be given a letter of appointment outlining the terms of their employment and job description.

Contractors and Consultants are people carrying on a business who are engaged by the Australian Society of Authors to work on discrete projects or activities. They include computer consultants and technicians; other technology consultants; and project, planning and management consultants.

The terms and conditions of their services will be set out in a separate agreement.

1.5 Existing Employees Facing Retrenchment

An existing member of staff can be appointed to a position similar to their current position or the position they previously held if they are facing retrenchment or have been retrenched within the previous six months.

2. SELECTION PANELS

2.1 Membership

Selection panels will be appointed by the Executive Director under the direction of the Chair and comprised as follows:

Recruitment of Executive Director

- 2–3 members of the Committee of Management
- 1 independent in a similar position in a similar organisation

Recruitment of Business Manager

- Executive Director
- 1–2 members of the Committee of Management
- 1 independent in a similar position in a similar organisation

Recruitment of other full or part-time positions

- Executive Director
- 1 staff member
- 1 independent in a similar position in a similar organisation

Where the selection criteria state that it is essential or desirable that the successful applicant have an ATSI or NES background, or the ability to work with people from such backgrounds, then at least one member of the Selection panel should be a person from the appropriate background.

The composition of the selection panel should not change during the recruitment and selection process.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Selection panel are to:

- a) design/revise job description (in consultation with relevant staff)
- b) set selection criteria
- c) Update the information kit for applicants
- d) Place advertisements and circulate to relevant organisations
- e) Arrange meeting to:
 - i) shortlist applicants
 - ii) write and agree on interview questions
 - iii) finalise interview arrangements (time and place)
- f) Offer interviews to shortlisted applicants
- g) Interview shortlisted applicants. Interviews should be scheduled to allow time for applicants to prepare beforehand and for the panel to confer afterwards.
- h) Determine the successful applicant by comparing each panel member's scored selection criteria table.
- i) Contact the successful applicant and make a salary offer (in accordance with the salary range for the position)
- j) Notify unsuccessful applicants as soon as possible after the successful applicant has accepted and this has been confirmed in writing.

k) Ensure that EEO principles are followed in all areas of recruitment and selection.

2.4 Time lines

The selection panel should draw up a time line for advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants.

2.5 Conflict of interest

Members of the Selection panel who have a strong personal relationship with any applicant (for example, the applicant is their partner or a member of their immediate family) should step down from the panel immediately.

Other conflicts of interest should be declared to the other members of the Selection Panel. Whether the member remains on the Selection panel is discretionary. In deciding this, the Selection panel should consider whether the person can be unbiased, as well as what to do if the person has the deciding vote. It is preferable for the person not to remain on the panel. The Selection panel may ask one of its members to step down from the Selection panel due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Potential conflicts of interest that should be avoided include situations where a panel member is likely to be supervised by the successful applicant or where, in future, the panel member is likely to compete with the successful applicant for positions within the organisation.

Applicants who give Selection panel members as referees should be asked to nominate alternative referees if they are short-listed for interview.

2.6 Decision- making

The Selection panel should determine the successful applicant by consensus. The Panel has the authority to decide which applicant to appoint to the position. In the event that the Selection panel is unable to reach a decision, they may consider re-interviewing or seek an alternative resolution from the Committee of Management.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria should be based on the job description and should focus on the qualifications, experience and skills needed to undertake the position.

The selection criteria should be split into essential and desirable. Essential criteria are those without which it is impossible to perform the job. Desirable criteria are those which enable the job to be performed more effectively.

Essential criteria for all positions should include:

- provision for recognition of prior learning (e.g. on-the-job experience, overseas qualifications, and life experience)
- the ability to work positively with people from diverse cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds

Essential and desirable criteria should not include requirements which disadvantage particular groups. For example, requiring a knowledge of the **local**

geographic area will exclude recent arrivals. Requiring tertiary qualifications which are not essential for the position will often exclude applicants from more diverse backgrounds.

The selection criteria should be specific enough to permit the Selection panel to choose between applicants, but broad enough not to rule out good applicants.

4. ADVERTISING

4.1 Where to advertise

Positions should be advertised as widely as possible. All positions should be advertised in the *Australian* and / or the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Weekly Book Newsletter*, the *ASA Newsletter*, on the ASA website and on ArtsHub and similar we sites.

Positions may also be advertised through:

- internal advertising (encouraging existing employees and ASA members to apply for positions)
- other relevant organisations, such as writers' centres, government arts bodies and other arts organisations including Indigenous arts organisations.

Positions which require that the successful applicant have an Indigenous background, or the ability to work with people from Indigenous backgrounds, should be advertised in the Indigenous media and through Indigenous arts organisations.

4.2 Writing and placing advertisements

Advertisements should be placed three weeks before the closing date to give potential applicants a full two weeks to apply. The advertisement should specify:

- The Society's full name
- position title (including whether full time or part time)
- brief summary of the duties of the position
- essential and desirable criteria, or a summary of these (optional)
- that applications should address the selection criteria
- details of who to contact for an information kit and selection criteria
- salary range
- the closing date for applications
- the address to send applications and to whose attention they should be marked

4.3 Handling enquiries

A contact person should be appointed to handle initial inquiries from prospective applicants and send out information packages. It is important that all prospective applicants be given the same information as far as possible. The

contact person should not be a member of the Selection panel and not be the person leaving the position advertised.

The contact person should keep a record of people who have inquired about the position.

A second person or persons should be nominated to answer more detailed enquiries about the position. They can be a member of the selection panel, but again should not be the person leaving the position advertised.

5. INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

5.1 Information kits

An information kit, containing the job description, essential and desirable selection criteria and information on the Australian Society of Authors should be made available to all potential applicants.

Applicants should be provided with the ASA's organisational plan and/or other relevant material on request.

The information kit should include an information sheet advising applicants to address the selection criteria in their application, or risk not being considered for the position. The sheet should also provide information on the ASA's recruitment and selection procedure.

5.2 Visits/calls from potential applicants

Prospective applicants should not be discouraged from visiting the workplace and discussing the position with the contact person. Information given to applicants must be consistent.

5.3 Internal applicants

The selection panel should take all reasonable steps to ensure that an internal applicant is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by the recruitment and selection process. In particular, the selection panel should ensure that internal applicants are not privy to any information that is not available to other applicants.

6. RECEIVING APPLICATIONS

6.1 Handling applications

Applications should be kept in a secure place and viewed only by members of the Selection Panel. A list of all applications received should be kept with the applications. This list can be used as a ready reference for short listing, timing of interviews and other tasks.

6.2 Late applications

Late applications received before shortlisting should be accepted if the person has contacted the Society before the closing date and indicated that they intend to apply for the position. Late applications received after shortlisting may be

accepted if the selection panel has sufficient time to assess the application and include the applicant in the schedule for interviews, if appropriate.

Late applications received after shortlisting will not be accepted if there was no indication prior to the closing date that the applicant intended to apply for the position.

Late applications which are accepted should be given equal status with all other applications.

7. SHORT LISTING

7.1 Short listing process

Applications should be short listed against the selection criteria, looking first at the essential criteria and then the desirable criteria. Applicants should be excluded in the following order:

- those who do not meet all the essential criteria
- those who do not meet any of the desirable criteria
- those who do not meet all the desirable criteria
- those who do not meet the essential and desirable criteria as well as other applicants

7.2 Re-advertising

If there are not at least two applicants who qualify for interview (i.e. who meet all the essential criteria) the position should be re-advertised. The advertisement should state that previous applicants need not re-apply as their applications will be considered.

7.3 Applicants not shortlisted for interview

Applicants not shortlisted for interview should be notified in writing as soon as possible and before interviews are held.

Their applications should be returned or destroyed.

7.4 Notification of interview

The convenor should make arrangements to interview shortlisted applicants. Local applicants should be interviewed in person. Interstate applicants should generally be interviewed by teleconference (not that in this case interview questions will be provided to all candidates in advance.

Interviewees should be contacted by telephone and given at least a week's notice.

Interviewees should be asked to arrive 15–30 minutes before the interview.

8. DISTANCE APPLICANTS

8.1 Interviews

Distance applicants should generally be interviewed by telephone or video conference. For telephone interviews the panel should use a conference call so all

members of the Selection panel can hear the applicant and ask questions.

Whenever there is a distance applicant, all applicants should receive a copy of the interview questions twenty-four hours in advance of the interview. If faxing is not possible, attempts should be made to phone the questions through to the applicant. If it is impossible to do either, no interviewee should be given the questions beforehand.

Consideration should be given to paying for distance applicants to be given a second interview in person if a first interview by teleconference ranks them as successful.

8.2 Relocation expenses

The Australian Society of Authors acknowledges that new employees may have to relocate to Sydney for employment with the Society and that this relocation is in the interests of the Society in terms of attracting and retaining quality staff. Therefore, the ASA will contribute to relocation expenses for new employees, subject to the Committee of Management's approval.

The ASA will offer to contribute up to \$1000 towards a new permanent employee's relocation expenses. Items to be considered for reimbursement will be negotiated by the Selection panel with the employee, and may reasonably include the following (depending on the distance of the move):

- removalist's fees
- petrol for relocation of the employee, their furniture and belongings
- accommodation expenses for up to three nights (depending on distance of move)

The employee will need to provide evidence of expenses incurred (for example receipts, invoices) to receive reimbursement.

If the employee terminates their employment within three months, relocation expenses paid by the ASA will be negotiated with the possibility of the Society requiring reimbursement of such expenses.

9. INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS

9.1 The Interview Setting

Interviews should be conducted in an appropriate place which is comfortable, free from interruptions and accessible to all people. Seating should be arranged so that the interviewee and members of the Selection panel are on an equal basis.

9.2 Interview Questions

Prior to interviewing, the Selection panel should write and agree on interview questions based on the selection criteria. All applicants should be asked the same core questions, but applicants will only receive copies of the questions in advance where there is a distance applicant. The interview questions should relate directly to each of the essential and desirable selection criteria and be designed to test whether the applicants meet the criteria. They should be open-ended and non-discriminatory.

Questions should be distributed to members of the selection panel before the interviews. All members of the selection panel should participate in asking questions.

9.3 Interview Process

Candidates should be asked to arrive 15–30 minutes before the interview starts so they can be given a copy of the questions to read and make notes.

The convenor should introduce the candidate, be welcoming and try to put everyone at ease. The convenor should also describe the interview process (for example, we will ask you questions in turn and have time at the end for you to ask us questions or clarify anything that isn't clear). The interview process should be as comfortable as possible and conducted in a relaxed but professional manner.

While all candidates should be asked the same core questions, it may be necessary to ask supplementary questions or comment on their response (e.g. we understand that you did a six month bookkeeping course, but we're interested in finding out the extent of your experience in using computerised accounting systems).

Each member of the selection panel should record their comments and scores for each question on an interview sheet. Comments should relate to whether the criteria against each question are met or not.

In recording scores and comments panel members may need to consider external factors such as the environment of the interview, the extent to which the candidate interview performance matches their written application and cultural differences.

Answers should be rated on a scale of one to five.

After all the questions have been asked the candidate should be invited to ask questions and/or to clarify anything they feel was not clear during the interview.

During the interview, the convenor should confirm with the candidate that it is okay to contact their referees.

At the end of the interview, the interview questions should be retrieved from the candidate.

9.4 Selecting the successful candidate

The candidate who best meets the selection criteria should be offered the position.

After all the interviews are completed, selection panel members should compare their comments and scores of each candidate. Each panel member should state why, in accordance with the selection criteria, they have selected a candidate. This may produce an outcome, or there may need to be further discussion of interviews, again in the light of the essential and desirable criteria.

If the panel is unable to reach a unanimous decision, they should consider re-interviewing, re-advertising or seeking a resolution from the Committee of Management.

9.5 Contacting referees

It is essential to contact referees to confirm the successful candidate's skills and experience. Contacting referees may also be useful if the selection panel is unable to reach a decision or if there is some doubt about a candidate's application or performance at the interview.

Referees should be checked carefully. Only those referees nominated by the candidate should be contacted. It is important that there is at least one referee from the most recent workplace. If there are insufficient referees permission should be sought to contact other people nominated by the applicant.

The selection panel member who contacts referees should only ask questions that are relevant to the duties of the job.

Selection panel members should beware of being drawn in by any prejudice of the referees, or using information they provide in a discriminatory way. If in doubt, the panel should prefer its own assessment of the candidate, and re-interview if necessary.

Information from referees should be regarded as confidential.

9.6 Eligibility lists

Unsuccessful candidates who meet the selection criteria and would be able to do the job can be placed on a six month eligibility list (see 10.3). If the successful candidate resigns within this period, the position can be offered to people on the eligibility list, in the order in which they have been placed by the selection panel.

9.7 Re-advertising

If the successful candidate does not accept the offer of appointment, the selection panel may agree to offer the position to the second highest scoring candidate. If the panel does not agree to do this, the position should be re-advertised.

10. AFTER THE INTERVIEW

10.1 Starting salary

The selection panel will determine the starting salary level to be offered to the successful candidate based on their qualifications, skills and experience in similar positions and/or their familiarity with similar organisations. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring consistency and fairness in the application of this policy.

10.2 Informing the successful candidate

The selection panel should nominate one of their members to offer the position to the successful candidate. In this way the process can be standardised so that the person can be advised of all the necessary details, terms and conditions etc.

If the successful candidate wishes to negotiate the salary offer or the starting date, the selection panel should reconvene to determine if this is possible.

10.3 Letter of appointment

Once the position has been accepted, the successful candidate should be sent a letter of appointment. The letter should:

- confirm their appointment to the position
- confirm the agreed starting date and salary level
- contain a draft of the ASA employment contract
- confirm any additional conditions that have been agreed (eg relocation expenses)
- request them to confirm in writing their acceptance of the offer of appointment

10.4 Notifying unsuccessful candidates

The same nominated person should notify all the unsuccessful candidate by telephone after receiving a definite acceptance from the successful candidate. This telephone call should be followed up by a letter.

Unsuccessful candidates should be offered constructive feedback agreed to by the panel. Feedback should include comments on particular strengths the candidate demonstrated as well as focusing on selection criteria that they may not have met to the same extent as the successful candidate.

Unsuccessful candidate whom the panel has agreed to place on an eligibility list should be offered this opportunity.

10.5 Selection Panel Report

A member of selection pane; should be nominated to write a brief but comprehensive report which includes:

- membership of the selection panel and the name of the convenor
- brief description of where and when the position was advertised and the closing date
- how many people enquired about the position
- how many applications were received and, if there were any late applications, whether these were considered
- the date when the selection panel shortlisted and how many applicants were shortlisted for interview
- the date when unsuccessful applicants were notified that they weren't selected for interview
- the date when interviews were held and how many candidates presented for interview
- the reasons why the successful candidate was appointed / recommended for appointment
- the starting salary the successful candidate was offered, any additional conditions (e.g. relocation expenses) and the agreed starting date

- the date when unsuccessful candidates were notified and whether they were offered constructive feedback

10.6 Appeals

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the decision of the selection panel, or any aspect of the recruitment or selection process, should be asked to outline their concerns in a letter to the Chair of the Society.

The Management Committee should deal with the complaint and/or advise the person that they may wish to pursue the complaint through the Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB) or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

In general, appeals to the ADB must be lodged within 6 months, and to HREOC within 12 months.

It is not necessary to keep applications in case there may be an appeal. Instead the selection panel should ensure its report contains detailed information on its processes and the reasons why the successful applicant was appointed/recommended for appointment.

10.6 Applications- what to do after the selection process

At the end of the selection process, the successful candidate's application should be attached to their personnel file.

If unsuccessful candidates have agreed to be placed on an eligibility list, their applications should be kept for six months. After six months they should be destroyed or returned to the applicant.

The applications of unsuccessful candidates who are not placed on an eligibility list should also be destroyed or returned to the applicant.

10.7 Induction/ Orientation

Prior to the new employee starting work, the Executive Directors should design an orientation program which is spread over a period of at least one week.

The Executive Director should prepare an orientation program for the new employee. The orientation program should include:

- office procedures (phones, fax, copiers, modem, back-ups, stationery, post, courier, cleaning and recycling)
- expectations of the position- the main roles, the expected outcomes and resources available
- strategic, operational and individual work plans
- management structure and accountability (management structure and staff meetings)
- ASA policies
- any recent staff memos, staff meeting minutes and any information specific to their position
- identify the employee's accountability

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Australian Society of Authors is committed to maintaining confidentiality of any information obtained through its recruitment and selection processes.