

5 May 2023

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Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka

REF: DOIA-2223-0703

Tēnā koe John

Thank you for your email of 5 April 2023 to the Ministry for Ethnic Communities (the Ministry) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

May I kindly request a full copy of your current recruitment policy and procedure. Also, are you assessing all application together after the job ad closed?

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities (the Ministry) is a departmental agency of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). As such, the Ministry operates within DIA's relevant recruitment related policies and processes. All roles over six-months in duration are required to be advertised through DIA's recruitment policy. A copy of the recruitment policy is enclosed with this response.

In response to the second part of your request, where possible applications will be assessed as they come in, to ensure applications are processed as soon as possible. Applications are assessed together in the sense that they are all reviewed under the same criteria.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of our response to your request. Information about how to contact the Ombudsman's office is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone: 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi

Edward Firth

Director of Ministerial Services

Recruitment policy

Date approved	7 November 2022
Review date	7 November 2025
Policy owner	Human Resources
Cohesion	Recruitment Policy

Policy overview

1. This policy provides the framework to support managers make recruitment and selection decisions that attract and retain people who will contribute to making DIA a high-performing organisation and a great place to work.
2. Our recruitment practices will be consistent, transparent and impartial so that we recruit people who have the skills and capabilities necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the job they are employed to do. These practices support a diverse and inclusive workforce.
3. An applicant's experience through the recruitment and selection process builds our reputation. We will treat applicants fairly, equitably, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that their experience is positive irrespective of the outcome.

Application

4. This policy applies to recruitment for:
 - a) all permanent vacancies
 - b) fixed-term vacancies of six months or more in duration
 - c) internal secondments of more than six months duration
 - d) all external secondments
 - e) casual vacancies.
5. This policy does not apply to:
 - a) the appointment of independent contractors, vendor suppliers, consultants and people from temporary recruitment agencies – however, many of the processes described could be applied to the appointment of these people
 - b) the appointment of events-based staff employed in Ministerial offices where the State Sector Act identifies exclusions e.g. appointment on merit, obligation to notify vacancies, obligation to notify appointments and review of appointments
 - c) fixed-term vacancies and internal secondments less than six months in duration
 - d) in change management situations.

Delegated authorities

6. The delegated authorities that apply, including Statutory delegations, are set out in the [Delegation Policy](#) on the Department's intranet (1840).

Detailed policy

7. Hiring managers are responsible for planning and managing the recruitment process. If a hiring manager needs support, they should talk to their manager or contact AskHR@dia.govt.nz.
8. Appointments are merit-based, giving preference to the person who is best suited to the position. Merit is not a neutral concept – it reflects the values and beliefs of those defining it (e.g. diversity and inclusion are elements of merit). Selection decisions are made using specific selection criteria relevant to the key tasks, person specification and capabilities required for the job. Applicants will be provided with enough information to form a clear and accurate understanding of the job they are applying for and what is required for them to be successful.
9. Selection decisions must not discriminate (either directly or indirectly) on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethical belief, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, political opinion, employment status, family status or marital status.
10. The personal information of all people who express an interest in or apply for a vacancy will be used only for the purpose for which it is collected, disclosed only to people directly involved in the recruitment process and disposed of when it is no longer required for the purpose of recruitment (usually three months after the vacancy has closed).

Link to position management

11. Position management is the approach the Department uses to identify, manage and control the total number of positions that are needed to undertake our core business and complete specific projects.
12. Recruitment should not commence without a vacant position (either established or non-established) being available. If there is no position available, the process for creating a new position should be completed. Position details are found in the [organisational charts](#) on 1840.

Job descriptions and job evaluation

13. The job description outlines what the person doing the job will do, how we know when they have done it successfully, and the skills, experience, and knowledge (capabilities) needed to do the job.
14. The job description should be reviewed and an up-to-date job description available before the recruitment commences. If there is no job description one should be written – see the [Guide: Job descriptions](#) for more information.
15. Job descriptions should be written in plain English, avoiding highly technical terms, acronyms, jargon and exclusive language, e.g. gendered language.
16. If a job description is new or has significantly changed, the job is evaluated before recruitment commences. Job evaluation is the process of determining the size of a job and enables the comparison of jobs both internally and externally for salary purposes.

Job requisition in Rehutai

17. To commence recruitment the hiring manager completes the job requisition process in Rehutai. This includes approval from a manager with delegated authority as well as the HR and Finance Business Partners before recruitment commences. DCE approval is required for new positions.

Selection panel

18. The hiring manager determines the selection panel. The selection panel should be two or three people and wherever possible be diverse (both gender and ethnicity) to minimise biases.
19. The selection panel is involved in all selection activities, such as long-listing, short-listing, interviews. The panel should remain consistent for all selection activities.

Selection criteria

20. Selection criteria are the key skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and capabilities determined from the job description that a person needs to have to do the job effectively. Where appropriate this should include the capabilities and outcomes needed by our leaders identified in the Leadership Success Profile, the leadership framework for the public sector.
21. Selection criteria should be determined prior to a vacancy being advertised. Wherever possible the selection criteria should be agreed by the selection panel, signed off by the approving manager.

Advertising vacancies

22. Vacancies should be advertised as a minimum internally and externally at the discretion of the hiring manager.
23. Vacancies of six months or more in duration should be advertised sufficiently to enable suitably qualified people to apply, wherever practicable.

Using a recruitment agency

24. By exception, where repeated advertising for a vacancy has been unsuccessful or a vacancy requires a limited specific skill set, it may be appropriate to engage a recruitment agency to support a manager in searching for suitable candidates.
25. The Department participates in the All-of-Government (AoG) External Recruitment Services contract managed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. This is a panel of providers who provide recruitment services:
 - for permanent, temporary and contractor placements
 - for jobs classified within the common administration, common corporate and common information technology job families
 - in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.
26. Only providers that are on the panel may be used, unless a vacancy falls outside of the common administration, common corporate or common information technology job families. To use a provider not on the panel a business case must be written and approved – see External recruitment services on 1840 for more information.

Selection process

27. At least two people should be involved in making selection decisions. Applications are reviewed independently prior to the panel meeting to discuss.
28. Interview questions are prepared in advance, directly linked to the selection criteria, ideally using the [DIA Recruitment and Selection Tool](#). All applicants interviewed are given the same opportunity to present themselves and their capabilities by being asked the same questions.
29. Interviews are conducted by a panel of two or three people. The panel should remain consistent for all interviews.

Whānau/support people

30. Applicants are encouraged to bring a whānau/support person(s) with them to an interview.

Disability support

31. Where it is appropriate arrangements are made to accommodate applicants with a disability.

Conflicts of interest

32. Impartial decision-making is crucial for ensuring sound and appropriate selection and appointment decisions are made. Managing the risk of conflicts of interest in decision-makers, including unconscious bias, is a critical part of ensuring impartiality is achieved.
33. Conflicts of interest declarations must be advised when the hiring manager or a panel member knows someone who has applied for the vacancy being recruited. This is done by identifying the conflict on the 'Shortlisting Summary Form'.
34. The hiring manager or the approving manager (the hiring manager's manager) will determine and agree how to manage any conflicts of interest.
35. Applicants are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest they are aware of (for example a friend, partner, family or whānau member works at DIA, or they are known someone with a connection with DIA) by completing the conflicts of interest question in the online application form.
36. Managers should check the application form for any conflicts of interest and if identified discuss these with the applicant during any interview.
37. Preferred applicants must complete a conflict of interest declaration form at the time reference checks are being completed before any offer is made. If any conflicts are declared the hiring manager must contact the applicant and agree how the conflict will be managed should the applicant be offered a job at DIA. A conflict of interest should not be a reason for not offering an applicant a job they have applied for.

Psychometric and skills assessments

38. Psychometric and skill assessment tools can provide more information about an applicant's potential performance in a job. Any assessments used during the recruitment process must be relevant to the selection criteria for the vacancy.

39. If assessments are used, all applicants who have completed any tests/assessments should be given feedback by either the test provider or hiring manager.

Pre-Employment Checks

40. The following mandatory pre-employment checks are completed prior to a successful applicant commencing employment wherever possible. All appointments remain provisional until the results of all pre-employment checks have been completed. This also applies when engaging contractors/consultants through the Procurement Policy.

Reference checks	<p>At least two reference checks must be carried out by the hiring manager for preferred external applicants, one reference check for internal applicants. At least one reference should be completed with the person's current manager.</p> <p>The reference checks will include questions on whether the applicant has ever, to the referee's knowledge, had a serious misconduct investigation, upheld or currently occurring, or has been dismissed from employment.</p>
Serious misconduct check	<p>Serious misconduct is conduct that can have the effect of destroying or undermining the relationship of trust and confidence between an employee and employer. Without this trust and confidence an employment relationship can't continue.</p> <p>At the reference checking stage, a serious misconduct check is undertaken by HR. HR checks if the applicant has been subject to a serious misconduct investigation, concluded and upheld or currently under investigation with any State service employers the applicant has worked for in the last three years.</p> <p>Prior consent of the person being assessed is required for each screening activity.</p> <p>Serious misconduct checks must be completed, wherever possible, before a verbal offer is made</p>
Conflict of interest	<p>A conflict of interest form must be completed by the applicant before an offer is made. If there are any conflicts of interest declared the management of these must be agreed with the applicant before an offer is made.</p>
Criminal Conviction check	<p>A Ministry of Justice Criminal Conviction check must be completed for all provisionally appointed applicants – both new and existing employees.</p> <p>Applicants eligible under s7 of the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 are not usually required to declare convictions.</p>
Qualification check	<p>Verification of professional qualifications is required where the qualification is essential for the job, e.g. a law degree for a solicitor. The original or a verified copy of the qualification must be viewed by the hiring manager with a copy placed on the personal file.</p>
Identity	<p>Where required, verification of identity, with the original or a verified copy of a current form of identity which includes a photograph, e.g. a current passport or drivers' licence is to be sighted and copied by the hiring manager for new employees, with a copy placed on the personal file.</p>

Right to work	Verification of the right to work (and duration of any visa where applicable) must be sighted and copied by the hiring manager, with a copy sent to AskHR@dia.govt.nz and placed on the personal file.
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41. Other pre-employment checks are discretionary and depend on the nature of the job including:

Citizenship	Verification of citizenship – only where necessary for the job (e.g. a certificate and/or Passport). Passport to be viewed and copied by the hiring manager, with a copy placed on the personal file.
Credit and Bankruptcy check	Required for jobs dealing with money, accounts or financial administration.
NZ Police vetting	Required for jobs that work with vulnerable members of society, e.g. National Library Advisors who deal with students online.
NZSIS Security Clearance vetting	Required for jobs with access to national security classified information, or material requiring a NZ Government Security Clearance. Applicants eligible under s7 of the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 are not usually required to declare convictions. For jobs requiring NZ Security Intelligence Service clearance, applicants must declare all convictions, as the clean slate scheme does not apply for security clearances. Applicants cannot undertake any work that requires a security clearance until the clearance has been granted.

42. Current employees who are appointed to a new position that requires a credit check or security clearance are required to undergo the appropriate employment check before being confirmed into the job.

Criminal Convictions

43. If an applicant declares a criminal conviction in their application, they may still be invited to attend an interview, depending on the nature of the offence, the relevance to the job, and the time that has elapsed since the offence was committed.
44. If the applicant becomes the preferred applicant, the situation must be discussed with the Approving Manager and HR before an offer of employment is made. The final decision to make an offer will be made by the Deputy Chief Executive.

Offers of employment

45. When a provisional selection decision has been made, and prior to making any verbal or written offer of employment, the hiring manager must gain approval for the appointment from their Approving Manager. Offers of employment are only to be made to individuals who can obtain and maintain the legal right to work in New Zealand for the duration of the job they have applied for.
46. An Approval to Appoint form is completed for the Approving Manager's sign-off. This includes information on:
- any identified conflicts of interest either within the panel or by the applicants
 - the gender and ethnic diversity, where it is known, of the applicants
 - the proposed starting salary and rationale using the [Starting Salary Tool](#).

47. An acceptance of a verbal offer of employment, provisional on the satisfactory outcome of any outstanding pre-employment checks, constitutes a binding contract with the Department.
48. A written offer of employment is sent once employment terms have been agreed.

Notification of appointment and review period (promulgation)

49. On return of the signed letter of offer, the provisional appointment to the job will be notified on 1840. At the hiring manager's discretion, notification may commence on receipt of an emailed acceptance from the appointee.
50. All permanent and fixed-term appointments greater than six months in duration must be notified for a period of seven days (one week).
51. Existing employees have the right to seek a review of a notified appointment within seven days of its notification – see the [Appointment Review Policy](#).
52. All appointments remain provisional until the end of the notification period and until the results of all pre-employment checks have been received. Employees should not begin in their job until the notification period has ended, or until any appointment reviews have been resolved.

Secondments

53. Secondments provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills, knowledge and experience in a supportive learning environment as well as encouraging the transfer of skills and working relationships within and across the Department and other Public Sector agencies. They are a way of resourcing projects and initiatives and managing skill gaps across the Department.
54. While on secondment the employee retains their substantive position and it is expected that they will return to this position at the end of the secondment. The substantive position cannot be filled permanently but may be backfilled.
55. During the secondment, the employee remains on their terms and conditions of employment. An employee's remuneration remains unchanged while on secondment. However, where appropriate a secondment allowance may be paid to acknowledge any additional responsibilities being undertaken and the skills, experience and capability of the person to perform the job.
56. If the secondment is to an external organisation, the Department will continue to pay the employee, recovering the money from the external organisation. The employee remains an employee of the Department. The reverse applies to secondments into the Department from an external organisation.
57. Secondments are temporary/acting appointments and are not subject to appointment review.

Relocation/transfer assistance

58. If an employee moves to a new location that is outside their local area (e.g. moves from Wellington to Auckland) supported by the Department they are deemed to be relocating.

59. An employee's local area is the town/city/region in which the employee currently resides. In large urban centres "local area" may include more than one city. For example, the Wellington region would include Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua cities and extend out to Waikanae/Otaki and Carterton/Masterton areas.
60. Transfer assistance is not usually provided when an employee has instigated the transfer/relocation, for example where an employee applies for a position outside their local area. At their discretion a manager may consider providing some transfer assistance – see the [Transfer Assistance Policy](#) for further information.

Documentation

61. Each recruitment process must be appropriately documented to provide a record that can be used in an appointment review, or if subsequent questions arise about the appointment.
62. A Cohesion vacancy folder is created for each vacancy and the hiring manager is expected to file the Request to Recruit, Approval to Appoint and documents pertinent to the recruitment process.
63. Documentation associated with each recruitment process must be kept for three months and then disposed of securely.

Related policies, procedures, standards, guidelines, legislation, and/or websites

64. The following supporting resources are relevant to this policy:
 - [Guide: Job descriptions](#)
 - [Job Evaluation Policy](#)
 - [External recruitment services on 1840](#)
 - [DIA Recruitment and Selection Tool](#)
 - [Appointment Review Policy](#)
 - [Transfer Assistance Policy](#)
 - [Recruitment guide: Prepare](#)
 - [Recruitment guide: Attract](#)
 - [Recruitment guide: Select](#)
 - [Recruitment guide: Offer](#)