

# How to recruit diverse talent

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Culture Change Guide



## 2 HOW TO RECRUIT DIVERSE TALENT

The cultural sector is taking steps to attract a more diverse pool of individuals and this section outlines what you can do to recruit more diverse talent and a range of good practice case studies showcasing what others have done successfully.

### What can you do to recruit diverse talent?

- diversify-proof HR policies and procedures
- advertise posts including freelance roles
- advise recruitment companies of your ambition to diversify your organisation
- reach diverse candidates by communicating opportunities in different methods such as partnering with suitable educational institutions and/or local communities
- consider creating job entry roles with a defined career path
- determine relevant experience required for the role and remove timeframes for work experience from person specifications
- place further emphasis on transferable skills within person specifications and consider non-degree holders
- remove bias from the shortlisting and selection process
- provide fair pay and remuneration and consider additional rewards such as lunch or childcare vouchers
- become transparent in advertising salary levels

### Current situation

A survey of employers undertaken by the University of the Arts London (UAL, 2009) reported that the recession has had an impact on employers' placement and recruitment practices, with an increase in the number of unpaid placements. Employers increased their use of cheaper recruitment methods such as word of mouth and used expert advice less frequently. Time pressures to recruit individuals to start projects limits engagement with diverse networks and communities to raise awareness of job opportunities. These methods of recruitment reduce the ability of employers to attract a diverse pool of candidates.

Job descriptions and person specifications may also exclude potential talent by overprescribing the qualifications, skills and level of experience required to undertake a role. Many person specifications require candidates to be degree qualified and may not highlight other equivalent training and/or experience. Disabled people and people from Black and minority ethnic groups are more frequently engaged in other training and development routes into the sector and are therefore less likely to meet specifications with rigid criteria. The sector competes with other industries where the starting salaries for transferable skills may be higher and individuals are offered the national minimum wage for work experience opportunities. The outcome is a lack of diverse role models to attract a diverse talent pool.



## 2.1 BARRIERS TO OVERCOME AND AREAS TO EXPLORE

**According to our survey the key challenges to overcome in order to enter the cultural workforce are:**

- financial position (62.6 per cent)  
‘I volunteered for a year, but only because my partner has a steady job and tenants. Had I been single that would have been impossible’ – 59 per cent of survey respondees used volunteering opportunities to prepare for employment
- where you live (55.1 per cent)  
‘[There is] limited opportunity where I live with not enough salary to travel for’
- age (39.3 per cent)  
‘Now that I am older and also direct, there is a certain amount of ageism around that new ideas are being looked for and sometimes people don’t think that as being able to come from all ages’
- perceived social class (34.6 per cent)  
‘Drama school is a very middle class experience and quite excluding to difference’  
‘Coming from an economically deprived family background and a family where nobody worked in the arts, I did not have access to the facilities, knowledge and expertise that would have helped me in getting the best tuition and support that was available’
- your level of education (32.7 per cent)  
‘Most jobs require a Masters degree or experience’ – 82.7 per cent of respondees took a degree or equivalent in a cultural subject to prepare for employment

## Opportunities

The three most important factors to people when deciding to apply for jobs (according to our survey) that are worth exploring and reviewing when thinking about recruiting are:

- job descriptions and person specifications (91.5 per cent)  
‘It is very important to me to have a job I find interesting’
- organisation’s reputation (72.3 per cent)
- salary (71.6 per cent)

## 2.2 GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

These case studies show what other organisations, both within and outside the arts and cultural sector, have done to enhance the recruitment of diverse applicants.

### Unlimited Impact

Works with young and emerging disabled artists to support their development and greater visibility within the arts and cultural sector. The work is centred around engagement with artists to determine their development needs in preparation of receiving or creating commissions. Artists are also able to access grants to develop their work and a mentoring programme where artists are paired up with industry professionals.

Training events and workshops provide participants with the steps they need to get further into the arts and the skills required to make cultural change for themselves.

## Blind Recruitment

Women musicians are 5 per cent more likely than men to be hired when symphonies use blind auditions. A study of 11 orchestras showed how a simple change made a huge impact.

In the 1970s and 1980s, major symphony orchestras in the US changed their recruitment practices to a more open and formal process that used blind auditions. These assessments involved the applicant sitting behind a screen, playing assigned music for the evaluating panel who can only hear the music.

The study found that blind auditions during the preliminary round increased a woman's chances of moving to the next round by 50 per cent. Almost all US orchestras use blind preliminary auditions today. When blind auditions are used for all rounds of auditions (preliminary and final) women are 5 per cent more likely to be hired than men. Thirty per cent of the change in demographics of orchestra members is due to blind auditions. Another 30 per cent is due to the increased number of classically trained female musicians and the open audition model, which increased the number of candidates.

Prior to the switch to blind auditions, the music director hand picked new members.

## Broadway

It is essential to increase the diversity of cinema audiences in order to remain sustainable. One of the most effective ways to diversify the audience is to diversify the workforce to breakdown invisible barriers. Recruitment through existing channels was not attracting diverse applicants and levels of applications were also decreasing.

Broadway employed a HR consultant in an advisory capacity to act as an honest broker on behalf of the staff and the organisation and give impartial advice. They are currently reviewing where they advertise jobs. A diversity advisory group will also provide specific focus on diversity within the organisation.

## 2.3 DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES AND FURTHER RESOURCES

### Downloadable resource:

Designing a person specification

How to diversify proof your policies

Removing bias from shortlisting and selection process



# Designing a Person Specification

- ✓ Include reference to equalities e.g. 'ability to work with diverse customers'.
- ✓ Has 10 or less criteria
- ✓ Clear on why particular knowledge and/or qualifications are being sought e.g. "must have GCSE math" could mean "ability to operate a till and enter book keeping data accurately".
- ✓ Relate the specification to 'essential' and not 'desirable requirements' – desirable requirements may exclude candidates who do not fit a post's traditional profile.
- ✓ Distinguish between skill (proven ability to do something) and ability (having the capacity to do something) to include people with less formal work experience.
- ✓ Criteria to be precise and explicit.
- ✓ Describe what is meant by experience. Do not ask for a number of years' experience. Experience can include that gained outside of work.
- ✓ Be clear about the level of skill or experience needed. Candidates may under-estimate the level required unless you state it.
- ✓ Show candidates how each criteria will be assessed e.g. at interview, practical exercise. Make sure you say whether they are weighted differently at different stages.

- ✗ Do not use personality traits e.g. 'bubbly personality'
- ✗ Do not unnecessarily exclude disabled people
- ✗ Do not ask for criteria which cannot be assessed/measured.

**All posts must have a person specification, created with reference to the job description.**



- Ability to design information materials such pamphlets and draft press briefings
- Excellent communication skills



- Ability to travel to various locations
- Holds a driving licence

## Summary

**Job description** = list of tasks and activities involved in the job

**Person specification** = list of qualities, skills, abilities, qualifications, knowledge or experiences that are needed to do the job

**You must be able to measure the list of criteria at the point of selection.**

### Key categories for person specifications:

Qualifications / training

Experience

Knowledge, skills and competencies

General attributes (avoid stereotyping)

Other (for any criteria not

# How to Diversify Proof Your Polices

What do you want to find out?	What info do I need to collect and review?	Who do I need to get this info from?	How will I get it?	What do I do about gaps in the info I have?	What is the information telling me?	What actions will I take?	How & when do I tell people about what we have done?	What differences did our actions make?
<p>Are we reaching diverse people when we recruit?</p> <p>Are we shortlisting diverse candidates?</p> <p>Are we hiring diverse candidates?</p>	<p>Where do we advertise our posts?</p> <p>Word of mouth</p> <p>Websites</p> <p>Agencies</p> <p>Characteristics of applicants (age, gender, ethnicity, disability) during each stage of the process.</p>	<p>Diversity and equal opportunities monitoring information at each stage of recruitment e.g. shortlisting, hires.</p>	<p>Candidates via monitoring forms as part of recruitment and people responsible for hiring at each stage of the process.</p>	<p>Do not worry. Review the data you have and start to collect the information you are missing.</p> <p>Continue to use the information you have and fill the gaps by talking to those affected by the policy i.e. consult. This can be via a survey or group discussions.</p>	<p>Your policy and how do things is fair – there is no potential for discrimination.</p> <p>You will need to adjust how do things to make your policy more fair.</p> <p>Continue your policy or aspects of it although it has adverse effects as they do not unlawfully discriminate.</p>	<p>What is the issue?</p> <p>What is the action?</p> <p>Who will take it?</p> <p>When will they do it?</p> <p>e.g. We are not hiring diverse people although they are being shortlisted. We will look at our interview process to see if there is any bias. We will work with HR advisor within the next three months.</p>	<p>Keep people informed of what you have done at key points in your review.</p>	<p>Monitor your actions to see what difference it has made. You can do this annually.</p> <p>Tell people and celebrate your achievements.</p> <p>Let people know you value diversity.</p>
<p>Are we giving everyone opportunities to access training and development?</p> <p>Who are we promoting?</p>	<p>Information on the people who access training and are promoted (age, gender, ethnicity, disability)</p>	<p>HR/responsible person/directly from those accessing training.</p>	<p>If you do not have this, you could carry out a brief survey of people who have been trained over the last 1-3 years.</p>	<p><b>REMEMBER!</b></p> <p>Keep responses anonymous. Small data is less usable but can give an indication.</p>	<p>Stop and remove your policy because your policy discriminates and it cannot be justified.</p>			
<p>Do people feel like they are being treated fairly whilst at work?</p>	<p>Feelings of being treated fairly from different people e.g. part-time, full time, level</p>	<p>From employees.</p>	<p>Staff surveys. Conversations with staff.</p>					

# Removing Bias from Shortlisting and Selection Process

Assess against indicators – the evidence you are looking for.

## Shortlisting

Decide which selection criteria can be assessed from the application form and those which you might need to test e.g. through performance.

Separate personal detail and information from application forms before shortlisting.

Ask candidate to provide evidence for each selection criteria.

Decide who will be shortlisting the candidates and ensure the shortlisting list is agreed by the whole panel.

Disregard information which is not related to the selection criteria.

Use the indicators for each selection criteria to assess those candidates that best meet the selection criteria.

Shortlist disabled applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria (decide in advance what this will be).

Remember good evidence may come areas beyond volunteering and paid work.

Allocate enough time for shortlisting.

## Interview

### Beginning:

Welcome candidate and introduce yourselves. Indicate who might work with the candidate if they are appointed.

Use positive body language e.g. make eye contact, smile.

Give a clear outline and plan of the interview.

### During the interview:

Ask questions related to the selection criteria.

Make sure your questions are clear and relevant.

Ask appropriate supplementary questions.

Elicit specific information.

Do not interrupt the candidate.

Follow your outlined plan.

Rephrase questions if necessary and encourage the candidate.

Score each question against the criteria.

Give the candidate opportunity to ask questions.

### At the end:

Bring the interview to natural conclusion.

Let people know what will happen next.

## Hiring

### Agree in advance:

Your scoring

How you will record answers

Confidentiality

### The process:

Each person makes up their own mind about each candidate.

Collect evidence on each candidate from the whole panel.

Eliminate candidate who do not meet the selection criteria.

Choose the candidate determined by the majority view of the panel.

Record your decision.

Feedback your decision to the candidate.

### Remove factors affective judgment:

Stereotyping

Remembering the negatives

Personal liking bias

Power difference between panel members

Reading too much into nervousness at interview

Use a diverse panel if possible

Raise awareness of unconscious bias

## Example

**Criteria** = ability to communicate effectively with clients and local communities

**Indicators** = Evidence of communicating the same message to a diverse range of people. Examples of communicating effectively both in writing and verbally. Ability to assess the impact of communicated information.

### Scoring

Fully met

Partly met

Not met

**Indicators are descriptions of the behaviour you need – they are not the right answers but a guide.**

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### Further resources:

- Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues Gold Equality Standard – working as a consortium <http://ngcv.tv/news/going-beyond-gold>  
Creative Industries Federation 'How to Diversify' guide
- Shape Arts <https://www.shapearts.org.uk/making-your-organisation-inclusive>
- Unlimited/London Theatre Consortium <http://www.unlimitedimpact.org.uk/its-time-to-change-the-status-quo/?source=image>
- DASH Cultivate Mentoring – disabled visual artists <http://www.dasharts.org/projects/cultivate.html>

**In conjunction with ewgroup**