Choosing the right selection activities

Once you have identified the competencies you are looking for in graduates, the next step is to test them. Some of the most common selection activities are explained in the table below, but it is not expected – or advised! – that you use all of them. When deciding what activities to use, you should consider:

➢ How effective that activity will be at identifying the competencies you are looking for
➢ The time between each stage and the length of the overall process
➢ Practical details for your organisation, such as any cost involved and the people, space and resources required.

Selection activity	Description
CVs and cover letters	This is the simplest application method and is a good first stage in the recruitment process as it allows you to immediately filter out candidates who don't have the required skills/experience.
Online application forms	Online application forms are easy to create and are a good alternative to traditional CVs and cover letters as you can include any questions at the first stage. This type of application is more objective than comparing different CVs as candidates answer the same questions and the scoring is consistent.
Video interviews	In video interviews, such as those on Shortlister and HireVue, candidates have a few seconds to read a question set by the employer and then have a short amount of time to record their response. Video interviews are becoming used more frequently because they are relatively inexpensive and allow businesses to "see" a larger number of candidates than would be practical in traditional interviews.
Work-based tasks	These are tasks based on a real task they might encounter in the role. They can test virtually any technical skill, are inexpensive and allow businesses to see the candidate's skills in action. If there is one particular skill that is vital for the role, then work-based tasks are a perfect way to test it. We cover work-based tasks in more depth in section 4.
Assessment centres	Assessment centres can either be hosted at the company's offices or online, and test candidates on various tasks typically over a ½ a day or a full day. For example, an assessment centre schedule could include an interview, a written task and a candidate presentation. They are an efficient way to assess multiple candidates across different activities and are a good predictor of which candidates will be successful in the role. They are, however, resource-intensive for the business.
Interviews	Interviews provide you with an opportunity to assess candidates' behaviours when asked various work-based questions. They are easy to organise, low-cost and allow you to get to know the candidate better. We will cover interviews in more depth in section 3.

When designing your recruitment process, you should aim to measure each competency at least twice. Utilising a three-stage process, such as CV and cover letter, interview and a work-based test, will provide a suitably robust recruitment process that is not overly onerous for the business or the candidates.

You can display your recruitment process in a recruitment matrix like the one below.

Competency	Test through CV and covering letter	Test in interview	Test in work-based task
Teamwork			
Attention to detail			
Commercial awareness			
Motivation and drive			

Build your own recruitment matrix

Competency	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3
A			
B			
C			
D			

It would be time-consuming and expensive to put all applicants through each recruitment stage, so you should design a process where candidates are filtered out at each stage and the more resource-intensive activities are used during the latter stages. You can visualise this in a recruitment funnel:

Stage	Count
Total applicants	30
After CV screening	15
After work-based task	5
After interview	1
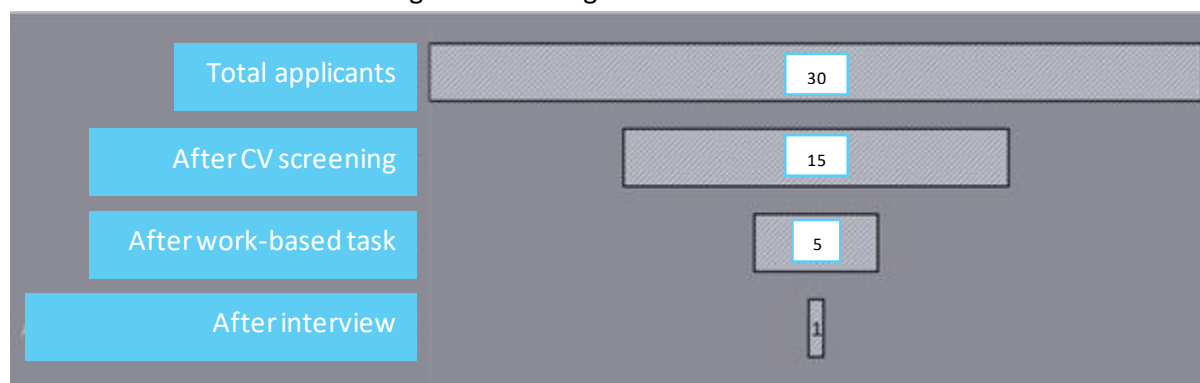
When you plan your recruitment funnel, consider how many applicants you expect to receive for your role. If your role requires a specific course, experience or technical knowledge, it would be wise to shorten the process. If you are unsure as to how many applicants you should expect, talk to the universities you are working with, and they will be able to provide guidance and context.

Reasonable adjustments

Whatever selection methods you choose, to avoid discriminating against candidates based on a protected characteristic (age, disability, marriage/civil partnership, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment), you should ask whether they require any reasonable adjustments at each stage of the recruitment process.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Changing the timing of an interview for a candidate who has to drop off children on the way before they can attend for interview

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✓ Giving a candidate with dyslexia 25% extra time to complete a written task
✓ Providing candidates with a computer, rather than pen and paper, to complete tasks
✓ Providing written instructions, rather than verbal instructions.

During your recruitment process, you can ask candidates if they require reasonable adjustments as part of an email to candidates who have been successful with their initial application and are moving onto the next stage:

If you have a disability (including things like autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia or a mental health condition), need assistance or adjustments to be made for you throughout the application process to help you perform at your best, please let us know as soon as possible. We are very happy to help. Some examples of the adjustments we can offer may include:

- *Having a telephone interview as an alternative to a video interview*
- *Extra time to read the questions on your video interview*
- *Additional time for the written task at the assessment centre*

Please know that any information you disclose will be confidential and separate to the rest of the application (unless the adjustment is about the process). We do not inform employers of any disclosed disabilities, needs or adjustments, without a candidate's explicit request or consent.

Receiving applications from international graduates - VISA sponsorship

It is quite possible when you advertise a graduate role that you may receive applications from graduates who studied in the UK and require a visa to stay. There are now two visa options (these now include EU nationals): the Graduate visa route or the Skilled Worker visa sponsorship. Accessing the global talent market can bring many benefits and desired skill sets to an organisation, however, it is important to know that the Skilled Worker visa sponsorship does incur a significant cost. The Graduate visa route, on the other hand, allows you to hire without sponsorship for two or three years with no employer fees.

It is recommended if you are interested in finding out more to read a guide put together by the ISE who have collaborated with the International Student Employability Group (ISEG) on Recruiting International Graduates – A Guide for Employers. Furthermore, if you are interested in hiring an international graduate unsure on the process, get in touch with the Careers & Enterprise service at the University of Lincoln and they will be able to help you explore this option.

What to do if you can't afford VISA sponsorship?

- The new Graduate visa route allows you to hire a graduate for two to three years without any employer fees and no long-term commitment, so this is a great option!
- If you have received job applications from international graduates for your role, best practice is to screen and consider the applications in the same way as you would for other graduates.
- This means that the graduate is treated fairly, and depending on the scoring of their application, the graduate can progress through the recruitment stages and gain experience from the process.

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- If the international candidate impresses, you could then consider hiring through the Graduate visa route and then apply to switch to the Skilled Worker visa sponsorship after you've seen how the graduate performs in the role.