

SEVEN STEPS TO
**INCLUSIVE
RECRUITMENT
AND WORKPLACE
DIVERSITY**



SUPPORTING YOUR ORGANISATION

Manchester Met is committed to widening participation and supporting diversity and inclusivity in its degree apprenticeship programmes and cohorts, in partnership with employers.

The business case for more diversity in your teams and workplaces has never been clearer and stronger. This guide will support you when recruiting the best possible candidates for your degree apprenticeship vacancies and ensure your recruitment process is unbiased and inclusive.

Here are seven simple recruitment strategies for diversity and inclusion you can implement today.

STEPS

- 1 Inclusive job descriptions
- 2 Broaden candidate reach
- 3 Inclusive application process
- 4 Open-minded shortlisting
- 5 Reasonable interview adjustments
- 6 Inclusive interviews
- 7 Set the right tone and ask the right questions



STEP 1

Write inclusive job descriptions

When writing a job description, consider the following:

- Have you clearly defined what the job role is and the skills needed?
- Could an external candidate easily understand what the essential requirements are?
- Is your essential criteria creating unnecessary barriers?

All organisations develop their own language. For those already operating in your industry or sector this may make sense to them but, if you want to attract fresh talent, they need to understand what is expected from the outset and not be deterred from applying due to unnecessary jargon.

The criteria should be clear and reflect the skills and competencies needed to be a degree apprentice. Consider looking at strengths, future potential and transferable skills, rather than previous experience and be clear about the location of work and working patterns to avoid any misunderstandings about what the role entails.

STEP 2

Broaden candidate reach to include diverse groups and talent pipelines

When advertising a vacancy, consider:

- Where are you placing the adverts?
- Are you being considerate to different groups who may want to apply?

Working with local and/or national charities, community organisations and training providers can help to promote your apprenticeships as widely as possible and reach under-represented groups in the community.

Useful links

Key referral agencies:

Jobcentre Plus (find nearest)
Jobcentre Plus (help for recruiters)
Further education colleges
Local Connexions offices

Vacancies for individuals with disabilities:

Maximus

STEM sector vacancies:

WISE

Apprenticeships (general):

Manchester Met

Find an Apprenticeship (government)

STEP 3

Inclusively design the application process

When designing the application process, consider how simple you can make it for a diverse range of candidates to apply for the degree apprenticeship vacancy.

The messages and instructions displayed throughout the application form-filling process should be welcoming, inclusive and not overly formal. The design of the application process should be simple.

Also, it is necessary to consider your organisation's policy or commitment on inclusion and diversity as this will be of significant importance to candidates with a diverse background.

STEP 4

Open-minded shortlisting

Shortlisting applicants should be an easy step if your set criteria has been clear. Best practice dictates that at least two people should shortlist for a formal interview, they can then actively challenge any assumptions made by the other.

An effective approach to remove bias or prejudice is to assess CVs without including any personal information. This involves a colleague not involved in the shortlisting process ensuring the panel does not see names, schools, locations and date of birth. As a result, the hiring managers' decisions only account for the skills and experience of the candidate – the key attributes that matter.

STEP 5

Reasonable adjustments at interview stage

Prior to the interview-taking place, enquire if the candidate needs any reasonable adjustments to be made for them to participate in the interview. Once implemented, communicate this to the interviewee, ahead of time.

STEP 6

Prepare for an inclusive interview

Ensure your chosen panel plays an integral role in the recruitment process, communicate expectations clearly to candidates, and maintain diversity within your panel to reduce bias. Your panel's composition often offers candidates their first impression of your organisation. When forming a diverse panel, consider both visible and invisible diversities, strive for a balanced approach, and ensure each member adds genuine value.

To increase your chance of making an evidence-based decision and reduce the possibility of making a biased decision, preparation prior to the interview is key. Agree in advance:

- the individual roles of your panel members;
- the set interview questions you will be asking;
- how you will assess each interviewee's answers;
- whether you will be asking additional questions; and
- the potential impact of unconscious bias.

Preparation like this will give you the time you need to concentrate on the important factors during the interview:

- setting the right tone;
- finding the best means for candidates to demonstrate their capabilities;
- asking questions;
- listening to candidates demonstrating their abilities; and
- writing notes.

When scheduling interviews, be sensitive and flexible to prevent candidates being disadvantaged due to religious beliefs, or caring or family responsibilities.



STEP 7

Inclusive interviews: set the right tone and ask the right questions

An aspect of setting the right tone is to have as diverse an interview panel as possible. This is an opportunity to display that you are an inclusive organisation and reassures candidates that you employ people like them.

When asking questions, focus on the candidate's motivation as well as the specific criteria of the degree apprenticeship. Actively listen and only evaluate the interviewee's suitability for the post once the interview has finished. This will enable you to keep the tasks separate, ensuring you avoid overloading your brain, which can lead to biased decision-making.

When conducting online interviews, consider the following:

- Prior to the interview, test that the technology works for both the candidate and the panel.
- Check whether the applicant can hear you.
- Ensure you make any online reasonable adjustments.

Further support

If you would like more support with your recruitment of apprentices, please contact us:

apprenticeships-employer@mmu.ac.uk



INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST

Job descriptions

- Clearly define job roles and skills
- Avoid organisation-specific jargon
- Assess essential criteria

Candidate reach

- Advertise role in a range of places and promote widely

Application process

- Simplify processes
- Use inclusive messaging
- Align with diversity commitments

Shortlisting

- At least two people shortlisting
- Follow clear criteria
- Use anonymous CVs

Reasonable adjustments

- Ask about and provide adjustments
- Communicate adjustments to candidate(s)

Interviews

- Build a diverse panel
- Set expectations and roles
- Address unconscious bias
- Schedule interviews sensitively
- Actively listen and evaluate later
- Focus on candidate motivation and job criteria

Get in touch

Our growing portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate apprenticeships include programmes in the following areas:

- digital and technology
- digital marketing, creative design and UX
- health and social care
- leadership, management and HR
- science

If you think one of our programmes could work for your organisation, please get in touch. We will be happy to provide further information and guide you through the next steps.

Contact us

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