

PROCEDURE



HR020 Recruitment Procedure

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is:

- to ensure effective human resource management;
- promote equal opportunity;
- ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit; and
- support transparency in recruitment processes and the public advertising of positions; and
- ensure that recruitment decisions give regard to the gender equity, diversity and inclusiveness.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all paid positions at Council. This Procedure does not apply to work opportunities for work placements, volunteers, or internships.

3 Definitions

Act	means <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Business Unit	means various units within Hindmarsh Shire including infrastructure services, corporate and community services.
Council	means Hindmarsh Shire Council
CEO	means Chief Executive Officer of Hindmarsh Shire Council
FWA	means <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>
Internal Applicant	means applicants working at Council who are on Council's current payroll (not labour hire and agency employees).
PD	means Position Description.

4 Responsibility

4.1 CEO

The CEO has statutory authority for all staffing matters, including:

- appointment and dismissal of all permanent and casual staff;

- classification of permanent and casual staff in terms of the industrial instruments to which Council is subject;
- determination and re-determination of conditions of employment; and
- appointment of Acting positions.

The CEO may exercise discretion in the implementation of this procedure in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Manager Governance and Human Services (MGHS)

The MGHS is responsible for the implementation and review of this procedure.

4.3 Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring they comply with the recruitment process as set out in this Procedure.

5 Recruitment process

5.1 New Position Authorisation form

For all positions it is necessary to obtain the required approval prior to initiating the recruitment process. A **New Position Authorisation** form must be filled out by the position's direct supervisor. The form must be approved and signed off on by the positions manager, director and the CEO, in the following order:



5.2 Specialist skills position

Managers can seek approval from the CEO to recruit for specialist skills positions without advertising providing the following criteria is met:

- specialised skills required to meet a business need or project that do not exist within the organisation;
- employment is less than six months;
- at the discretion of the CEO having considered all information available at the time.

All specialist skills positions **must** follow the **New Position Authorisation** form approval process and the Selection Process.

30 days prior to the expiry of the fixed term appointment, the relevant manager must review the requirements of the role to determine if there is a need for extension or if there is a need for a permanent position. Any offer of extension must comply with the requirements of the FWA.

If it is determined that there is a need for the specialist skills position in a permanent capacity, a New Position Authorisation Form must be completed according to section [5.1](#), with the minimum advertising requirements being determined by the CEO in consultation with Human Resources.

5.3 Secondment

Secondment opportunities are encouraged to provide opportunities for employees to experience and gain new skills. The term of a secondment is for 12 months or less and the employee must have their substantive position to return to. The **New Position Authorisation** form process will need to be followed for approval.

In consultation with HR and management, an internal recruitment process will be undertaken. There may be circumstances where an employee is absent or on leave for an extended period of time and their position needs to be filled. In such circumstances, a secondment would be appropriate.

Where an employee has been seconded to a position and the position subsequently becomes vacant and they successfully apply for the substantive position, their time spent backfilling the position, at the CEO's discretion, **may** be taken into account when setting the increment increase date.

The increment increase date will be specified in their letter of offer.

5.4 Position Descriptions (PD)

For all new positions, a PD must be prepared, providing an outline of the main roles and responsibilities of the position. The **PD Template** is available on MagiQ and must be used for all PDs. The PD must not include qualifications, experience or other pre-requirements that are unnecessary or higher than those required to perform the functions of the position.

Where the vacancy is an existing position, it is important that the manager reviews (and amends if necessary) the current PD to determine the following:

- whether the job has changed
- how accurately the PD reflects the job to date, and
- the current requirements of the organisation.

If there are changes made to the PD, the PD must be assessed by HR for banding purposes, prior to the recruitment process commencing.

The CEO and relevant Director must approve all PDs. Where the position is newly created or an existing position has been reviewed, it should be submitted to HR a minimum of 10 working days prior to the internal/external advertising deadlines. This provides sufficient time for HR to evaluate and determine the appropriate banding classification if required.

5.5 Key Selection Criteria

The key selection criteria are an important part of the selection process, facilitating a systematic, objective approach to interviewing and selecting applicants. Between 5 and 7 key selection criteria are required in each PD, one of which must include OH&S relevant to the position.

The key selection criteria will be used as the basis for the questions to be asked during the interview.

5.6 Use of recruitment agencies

It is Council's aim to conduct the recruitment process internally, however there are times when there is a need to engage the resources of an external recruitment agency. For example:

- Where there is an immediate/urgent need to replace or fill a position;
- To meet short term increased workloads;
- To temporarily replace a permanent employee who is absent for a short term or in lieu of employing a maximum term employee;
- During a skills shortage, an agency may be used to access a wider network of suitable applicants.

The use of recruitment agencies for all positions will require the approval of HR and the CEO.

5.7 Advertising

The purpose of advertising is to attract a wide field of suitable applicants. Advertisements are to be kept simple with the focus on applicants connecting with our website to obtain detailed information.

Care should be taken to ensure that application forms, advertisements and processes are accessible.

All vacant positions will be advertised internally and externally unless the CEO, in conjunction with HR, believes there is evidence of the likelihood of a competitive field of appropriately skilled and experienced employees within the organisation to perform the role. In such circumstances, it would be appropriate to only advertise the position internally.

All advertising will be in accordance with Council's advertising standards, the Act, Equal Employment Opportunity legislation and Council's Equal Opportunity Policy.

5.7.1 Internal advertising

All employment vacancies will be advertised internally through various forms which may include emailing all staff or distributing a memo.

For an advertisement to be placed internally, the **New Position Authorisation** form and an electronic version of the PD must be lodged with HR as soon as approved.

All advertisements will remain open for a minimum period of 5 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

For positions **only** advertised internally, the manager and HR will determine a reduced key selection criteria of at least 3 points. Employees will only be required to submit a 1-page concise

application addressing the reduced key selection criteria. This is reflective of the existing working relationship with the applicant and the ready availability of key information.

5.7.2 External advertising

Advertisements will be developed in consultation with HR and the manager and must be submitted to the CEO for approval.

All external job advertisements may be placed in local and regional newspapers. Any other forms of advertising should be discussed with HR.

All advertising is to be done in line with Council's **Advertising Process**.

6 Interview Process

6.1 Recruitment panel

Recruitment panels must be appropriately gender balanced and are required to have completed Act@Work training (or equivalent), and to have been notified of the requirements of Equal Opportunity legislation.

All selection panels must be at least three people, be gender balanced and must include:

- A nominee from the Business Unit where the vacancy exists, usually this will be either the manager or supervisor; and
- A member of the Human Resource team.

The CEO may alter this if necessary.

All recruitment panel members are required to complete a **Conflict of Interest Declaration** prior to the interview process. Where panel members know applicants for positions personally, they must declare this knowledge. Where such knowledge is likely to inhibit the objectivity of a panel member, or be seen as a conflict of interest by others, they must not participate in the selection panel. Where a prospective panel member declares a conflict of interest, their involvement shall be assessed by a human resources staff member and any ongoing involvement must be approved by the Manager Governance and Human Services or Director Corporate & Community Services.

People must excuse themselves from the panel where a family member has applied for a position.

6.2 Shortlisting

After the nominated closing date, HR, in consultation with the manager, will need to complete the **Shortlisting Spreadsheet**.

Factors to consider when shortlisting:

- Where possible, where an applicant meets all of the selection criteria they will be interviewed.
- Local Government experience will be a consideration when shortlisting candidates for interviews.
- If there is only one suitable applicant that meets the key selection criteria, the manager, in consultation with HR, may undertake an appropriate evaluation exercise.

HR will write to all external applicants who are not selected for an interview.

Where no applicants meet the key selection criteria, the recruitment process must be suspended or terminated. HR will advise the relevant Manager and Director and reach a consensus on next steps.

6.2.1 Preliminary background investigations and assessment

For some criteria, it may be more appropriate to determine merit by means other than questions at interview. Where appropriate, preliminary investigations or assessments may be used to verify relevant information contained in the written application such as academic qualifications, training and employment history.

The data collected will assist in the decision-making process and will not replace the interview process.

The use of any assessment will be determined prior to the commencement of the selection process. Information on the nature of the assessments and any preparation requirements to be made available to prospective applicants prior to conducting the assessments. No preliminary assessments or investigations are to be carried out without prior approval from HR.

6.2.2 Screening applicants prior to interview

Telephoning screening prior to interview provides a good opportunity to ask the applicants some basic questions and decide if they are suitable for interview. It can also be used where there is a large quantity of strong applicants to shortlist the applicants to interview down to a workable size of 3-5.

When conducting this process, the person conducting the telephone screening must ensure a consistent process is conducted and each applicant is asked the same series of questions.

6.2.3 Late applicants

Generally, late applicants will not be included in the selection process. However, there may be instances where the late applicant meets a substantial percentage of the key selection criteria and the manager wishes for them to be included in the recruitment process. If this is the case, HR must submit in writing to the CEO a request for the person to be considered in the recruitment process. The CEO has discretion to approve or deny this request.

6.3 Preparing questions

Interview questions are to be developed by HR in consultation with the recruitment panel to relate to the key selection criteria and position requirements. It is important that all questions meet Equal Employment opportunity legislation and Council policies, and do not discriminate in any way.

There are a number of questioning techniques that can be used:

- Open ended questions are often effective as they allow the applicant to demonstrate their knowledge.
- Behavioral questioning can reveal how applicants have handled situations in the past that are similar to those they might encounter in the position. Past performance is a key indicator of future performance.

There must be questions which will help to ascertain whether the applicant would have difficulty performing any part of the role. For example, “*do you believe that there are any reasons why you would not be able to perform the physical duties of the role as described*”. If the applicant responds “yes”, the recruitment panel should read through the list of duties and ask for clarification against each selection criteria. The interview questions must relate to the specific job. Questions about protected attributes as defined by the Fair Work Act are unlawful and impermissible.

6.4 Conducting interviews

The interview provides the opportunity to gain an understanding of an applicant’s communication style, behavioral characteristics, confirm their technical qualifications and expand on their previous experience.

Face to face interviews are strongly preferred. Where this is not possible, a Skype / Zoom / Microsoft Teams interview may be undertaken. For band 6 positions and above, virtual interviews must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

The panel chairperson is responsible for ensuring interviews are kept to the time allocated. If it appears the interview will run overtime, a member of the recruitment panel should let customer service know so the message can be passed on to the waiting applicants.

During the interview, applicants should not be given assurances of early promotion, any type of loading, allowance, salary increase or continuing appointment beyond any fixed term period except where explicitly stated in the advertisement and relevant award provisions.

Key points on conducting interviews:

- Put the applicant at ease;
- Build a rapport with the applicant;
- Consider whether they would fit in with the culture of the team;
- Ensure all applicants are asked the same questions by the same recruitment panel member;
- Where appropriate ask further questions to allow the applicant to clarify or expand on their answers.

6.4.1 Options for interviewing

It may be appropriate in some cases to change the standard interview process. To do this, the recruitment panel chairperson must ensure the process is consistent with all applicants and approval is obtained from HR.

Some options are:

- Provide all applicants with the key selection criteria questions at the time of their application or prior to the interview. This will enable applicants to further explain their answers at the interview.
- Depending on the position, the applicant may request or be offered to bring a support person to the interview.
- Ask applicants to prepare a short presentation or undertake other tasks, such as a practical task-based demonstration of the inherent requirements of the role, in order to demonstrate their skills or aptitude. No practical task-based demonstrations are to be conducted without prior discussion and approval from the Director or CEO.

- Group interviews may be appropriate for first round interviews for a large number of applicants for the same position. Group interviews must be approved and monitored by HR.
- Conduct some Skills Assessments.

6.4.2 Second round interviews

In some instances, there will be a requirement to do a second round of interviews. This may be due to some applicants scoring very closely, a need to ask different, more detailed questions, or a need to do a practical assessment or skills-based test with the applicant.

The recruitment panel for the second interview may be the same as the first interview or could be varied depending on the purpose of the second interview.

The decision to do a second round of interviews must be made by the CEO.

6.5 Feedback to applicants

HR will contact all unsuccessful applicants interviewed, via telephone, as soon as possible following the interview. HR will then notify the unsuccessful applicants in writing. Feedback will be provided upon request.

7 Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)* impacts on the entire recruitment process. Applicants are able to request copies of all documents relating to their application and the selection process. (Referee reports are exempt from release under the FOI Act as they are classified as confidential information.)

Accurate and professional records relating to the recruitment process need to be maintained. All records from the recruitment process are to be forwarded to HR to be kept for the appropriate length of time as stipulated by the *Public Records Act 1973*.

The personal information of applicants will be made available outside the Freedom of Information process for viewing by that person for 6 months by arrangement with HR. An applicant can only view their own personal information and not the personal information of all other applicants.

8 Selection process

At no point during the recruitment process should an offer of employment be made.

8.1 Previous employees of Council

Where the preferred applicant has previously worked for Council, no offer of employment shall be made without approval in writing from HR and the CEO.

If the preferred applicant has been made redundant from a position with Council, they cannot be employed until the end of their severance period.

8.2 Verification of qualifications

Where a specific qualification is required to undertake the role and is listed in the position description in “Key Selection Criteria”, HR must request that the applicant produce the original or legally certified copy of the qualification prior to any offer of employment.

8.3 Reference checks

Applicants should be asked for referees, such as a current supervisor or manager.

Reference checking aims to provide the recruitment panel with more information on applicants and must be completed by a recruitment panel member using the relevant **Reference Check Form** available from HR.

No offer of employment can be made without at least 2 verbal reference checks (written references will not be accepted). If the applicant is unable to provide suitable work referees, character references may be considered.

References for internal appointments are to be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

8.3.1 Risk of collusion

In the event that an applicant is considered for a position in a unit where a relative or close friend is already employed, the recruitment panel chairperson should consult with HR to ensure a transparent process.

8.4 Visas

Applicants are asked to declare whether or not they are an Australian citizen. If the applicant indicates they are not an Australia citizen, but hold a visa to work in Australia, then the recruitment panel chairperson is required to ask the applicant to provide a copy of their visa. It is an offence under the *Migration Act 1958*, to knowingly or recklessly allow a worker to work in Australia without a valid visa.

All permanent employees of Council are required to be either an Australian citizen or permanent resident. If the applicant has a visa which gives them unlimited rights to work in Australia, they can be appointed to a permanent position. It is the applicant’s responsibility to advise HR if their visa status changes.

Casual positions can be offered to applicants with working visas as long as the terms of the visa are strictly adhered to. It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure the employee does not work outside these parameters. HR will assist with checking the visas are current.

8.4.1 New Zealand citizens

There may be exceptions to working visa requirements for New Zealand citizens. This should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

8.5 Formal Recommendation

Human Resources will draft a Formal Recommendation summarising the recruitment process, interview performance of all candidates and reference checks of preferred candidates. Each

member of the interview panel must review and approve the recommendation, prior to Director and CEO approval.

8.6 Offer of employment

An offer of employment can only be made once the Formal Recommendation has been signed off by the CEO. HR will contact the preferred applicant via phone to offer them the position. This phone call will include discussions relating to preferred start date, required pre-employment checks and how to accept the position. HR will follow the phone call with a written letter of offer and position description, either by email or hardcopy. The offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks and 6-month probationary period.

8.7 Pre-employment Checks

HR will coordinate the pre-employment checks with the successful applicant.

8.7.1 Pre-employment medical

All preferred applicants must satisfy the prescribed Pre-employment medical examination, as specified by Council's **Pre-Employment Medical form**.

All medical examination details are strictly confidential and are viewed only by HR. The medical report provided to Council indicates whether the preferred applicant is capable of performing the work described in the position description.

If a medical check comes back detailing an applicant is unfit to perform the duties, Council will not enter into any discussion with the candidate. The candidate will be referred to the medical practitioner for any clarification.

Where an existing employee is appointed to a position with duties requiring different physical demands to those they are currently employed to do, they will be required to undergo the prescribed medical examination.

Where any disability is disclosed, Council will make every effort for reasonable adjustments to be made.

8.8 National Criminal History Checks (Police Check)

A police check is required for all positions with Council. Some positions also require police checks to be renewed every 3 years.

Employment should not commence with Council until a satisfactory result for a police check has been received.

Existing employees applying to another position within the Council will be required to undergo a police check and/or a working with children check (if this has been specified in the position description), and a previous security check has not been undertaken within the past 6 months. If the employee refuses, the recruitment will not proceed.

8.9 Working with Children Checks

A working with children check is required for all positions with Council as per the Working with Children Check and Police Check Policy and the Child Safe Standards Policy.

8.10 COVID-19 Vaccination

Council has implemented a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Relevant provisions relating to requirements for employees will be coordinated by Human Resources and the appropriate manager.

8.11 Probationary period

A probationary period of six months applies to all external appointments. Ongoing employment is subject to satisfactory performance of the employee during the probationary period.

8.12 Unsuccessful but suitable candidates

Where more than one potentially suitable candidate is identified, and the position becomes vacant within 6 months of advertisement, the CEO has the discretion to direct HR to return to the identified applicants for further consideration. At this point any pre-employment checks and referee checks should be carried out prior to any offer being made.

9 Records

Unsuccessful applications, interview guides and selection assessment documentation of all applications will remain the property of Council and managed by HR. Where possible, Council's electronic record management system MagiQ will be utilised for the management of documents pertaining to the recruitment process.

10 Use of labour hire agencies/ contractors

Where labour hire agencies/contractors are required, approval must be sought from the relevant director and the CEO.

11 Providing References

As an employee of Council, if you are asked to give a reference check, no written references are to be provided. As a manager, if you are asked to provide a verbal reference, always assume that the details of the check will be made available to the applicant.

12 Compliance responsibilities

12.1 Supervisors/ Managers

All Supervisors and Managers are responsible for ensuring the recruitment and selection procedure contained in this document is complied with.

12.2 Manager Governance and Human Services

Responsible for:

- providing advice about this Procedure;
- circulating this Procedure;

- evaluate the Procedure and its implementation; and
- review and update this Procedure annually or as otherwise required.

13 Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this Procedure is compatible with the relevant human rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (VIC).

14 Related documents

Internal documents	Legislation
Hindmarsh Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement Hindmarsh Shire Council Induction Form Hindmarsh Shire Council New Position Authorisation form Hindmarsh Shire Council Conflict of Interest Declaration form Hindmarsh Shire Council Conflict of Interest Policy Hindmarsh Shire Council COVID-19 Vaccination Policy HR008 Working with Children and Police Check Policy	Victorian Legislation <i>Disability Act 2006</i> <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> Commonwealth legislation <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>

15 Document Control

Recruitment Procedure		Policy Category		OPERATIONAL
Version Number	1.4	Policy Status		APPROVED
Approved/Adopted By	CEO	Approved/Adopted on:		15 August 2023
Responsible Officer	MGHS	Review Date		15 August 2026
Version History	Date	Version	Description	
	June 2018	1.0	Initial Procedure	
	September 2019	1.1	Reviewed	
	July 2020	1.2	Reviewed – inclusion of reference to backfilling positions	
	December 2021	1.3	Reviewed – per <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>	
August 2023	1.4	Reviewed – timeline of offer of appointment and pre-employment checks swapped as well as other minor changes		