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22 April 2022

Deputy Ivana Bacik
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Dear Deputy Bacik

RE: PQ19218/22 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure that there is gender balance on interview committees and in the conduct of recruitment processes within the health service particularly relating to maternity hospitals.

Many thanks you for your query in regard to the above.

The model of recruitment within the HSE is changing to improve capacity and better support existing and developing centralised and localised recruitment teams. Part of this work includes the establishment of a new Quality, Standards and Advisory Unit within HR Shared Services. This Unit has already developed and made available a Recruitment Toolkit as an early measure of support to all recruiting teams, within which there is a full section of guidance on the composition of interview boards.

It should be noted that there are a number of requirements to be met for the composition of an interview board, these include regulatory and statutory obligations. Achieving a gender balance on an interview board is good practice and recommended for all HSE interview boards where possible.

I have attached the relevant section of the Recruitment Toolkit as this provides additional context to the broader considerations which may affect any case where a gender balance has not been or cannot be achieved.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Eithne Fox
Assistant National Director of HR

Section 10 Selection Boards

In this section of the Toolkit we will address such questions as:

- ⇒ What are the HSE requirements and CPSA expectations with regard to Selection Boards?
- ⇒ How do I manage the sourcing of Board Members and what are the requirements in relation to the composition of a Selection Board?
- ⇒ What are the roles and responsibilities within a Selection Board?
- ⇒ Selection Board Members – in focus: how do I manage factors such as external nominations; geography / service representation; Board Members who are serving in an interim capacity; Conflict of Interest / managing connections between Board Members and Applicants at different stages of the selection process?
- ⇒ How do I source and set up an External Chairperson?

Use the back arrow to return when viewing linked resources throughout the section.

10.1 CPSA Requirements with regard to Selection Boards

It is the policy of the HSE that approaches to recruitment for HSE positions are underpinned by the principles of integrity, impartiality, reliability and ethical conduct, that the selection process reflects relevant legislation, the principles of the Codes of Practice, that the selection criteria being assessed are based on the requirements of the posts as outlined in the Job Specification (thereby ensuring that all candidates are treated equally), that decisions are evidenced based, that recommendations are based on merit and that appointments are made in an open, accountable and transparent manner.

The CPSA has requirements around the make-up and management of Selection Boards and details requirements in relation to their training as per the excerpts below.

Selection Boards

CPSA Expectations

With regard to selection boards, the Commission expects that:

- Systems are in place to ensure that Selection Boards carry out the selection process in an open and transparent manner
- All selection practitioners fully understand their role and have the necessary skills to discharge their responsibilities
- Members of Selection Boards understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to current Freedom Of Information, Data Protection and Employment Equality Legislation
- Members of Selection Boards are fully informed about disability awareness and equal opportunity policy

10.2 HSE requirements - Composition of Selection Boards - Board Member Nominations

A Selection Board must be composed in a structured manner in line with HSE guidelines and circulars. In addition, we must meet our statutory obligations by:

- Demonstrating probity and impartiality in the recruitment process.
- Building public trust in the appointment process through transparent ethical practices.
- Demonstrating consistent standards and practice.
- Facilitating audit and reviews/ complaints under the Commission for Public Service (CPSA) Codes of Practice.
- Supporting a competitive, fundamentally fair recruitment process by ensuring the most appropriately qualified Selection Board Members assess candidates' performance against the needs of the role.

There are a number of responsibilities that recruiters need to be mindful of when in determining Selection Board composition. These include factors such as: clinical / professional competence; seniority; geographical representation; gender balance and a level of demonstrable independence in decision making.

There are a number of parameters that must be met with putting together a Selection Board:

- The Selection Board must be supported by a recruiter who is confident and experienced in administering a standardised process and ensuring recruitment standards are maintained.
- Selection Board Members can be nominated from within the Health Service as Health Service Managers across the disciplines and grades of staff are the experts in their relevant profession and play a key role in selecting staff for jobs in the HSE. Requests for Selection Board participation are usually sent to the Manager grade of that profession.
- Selection Board Members should be representative of all service areas where the profession work e.g. Acute / Primary Care / Social Care – Mental Health / ID.
- No recruitment decision should be made with less than 2 Selection Board Members.
- It is advisable to have a number of decision makers at the different stages e.g. Mr Smith, OT Manager Hospital 1 and Mrs. White OT Manager Hospital 2 carry out the short listing stage. For the interview stage, Mrs White OT Manager Hospital 2 and Mr. Bloggs OT Manager Hospital 3 carry out the interview. The variety in Selection Board Members across the stages demonstrates independence in the decision making process and a lack of bias throughout the selection process. The perception of independence and fairness of the Selection Board is important to demonstrate to candidates that the process is fair and objective. It should be apparent to applicants why individual Board Members were chosen and what they each can bring to the selection process. There should be a clear, documented, rationale for as to why a Board Member was chosen and how they contribute to the selection process as audit, requests for review and complaints may seek the rationale for choosing each Selection Board Member.
- Selection Board Members should not be directly related to any of the candidates applying for a campaign for which they are asked to serve, or have / have had a working or other relationship with any candidate that might challenge, or perceive to challenge, the integrity of the selection process. See more on this and how to manage it later in this Section.
- Selection Board Members must have sufficient time available to them to conduct the process inclusive of training. For reasons of consistency, it is preferable, if not always avoidable, not to have to slot Board Members in and out of Boards to match their availability. Where possible strive for an all-person-consistent Board for each stage of the process.
- There should be a gender balance on Selection Boards. If a gender balance cannot be achieved, the efforts made to achieve a gender balance and the reason it could not be achieved must be documented.

- Each selection decision must be documented i.e. the name, title and grade of who was involved in making the selection decision.
- The role of each Selection Board Member must be tracked to evidence the rationale for their inclusion on the Board. See [Selection Board Participation Sheet](#) which supports this process.

The criteria for nominations of individuals participating in the Recruitment and Selection Process to ensure compliance with the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) Code of Practice are outlined here.

Interview boards should consist of **three people**:

- **Two members** of the Selection Board must be of the discipline being recruited i.e. an internal clinical expert (representing the geographic area where the vacancy exists) and an external clinical expert (external to the location not the organisation). See below for more guidance on what we mean by ‘external’.
 - ❖ Importantly, clinical expert nominees must be currently practicing professionals in the discipline being recruited i.e. nursing professionals make recruitment decisions for nursing posts, physiotherapists make recruitment decisions for physiotherapy posts etc. If a speciality post is being interviewed for, the Selection Board must consist of a member who has the knowledge and experience in that speciality area. This ensures that applications are assessed by those expert in the area in the case of eligibility / short listing and that interviews are carried out by those who are expert in the role they are interviewing for.
 - ❖ Clinical experts must have the clinical competence or professional competence to interview for the clinical / professional area they are interviewing for.
 - ❖ Seniority: The clinical expert nominee’s substantive grade must be at least two grades higher than that of the grade being recruited. However, in the case where it is not possible to secure a nominee two or more grades higher, or where a particular level of expertise is required, it is possible, on specific occasions, to consider a nominee one grade higher than the grade being recruited. Refer to the Job Specification namely “Reporting Relationship / Details Of Service” for further information on the grade of the role. In **exceptional circumstances** a Selection Board Member may be of the same grade as that being recruited where the expertise required for the Selection Board only exists at that level or there are no further promotional grades above that being recruited e.g. Chief Pharmacist. In the case of very specialist senior posts e.g. Medical Consultants, it is acceptable to have suitably experienced selection board members at the same grade.
 - ❖ For Entry Level grades, it is generally acceptable for Selection Boards to be comprised of a clinical expert two grades higher and a clinical expert one grade higher – on the condition that it is what the profession have agreed, and they have been nominated by the Manager e.g. 1 x SLT Manager and 1 x SLT Senior, e.g. 1 x CNM 3 and 1 x CNM 1. Requests to participate as a Selection Board Member are sent to Manager grade only – therefore where they ask Seniors in their Service to participate it is generally understood to be a nomination. The consolidated salary scales show the managerial structures within all professions, as does the grade code listing.
 - ❖ The reason and rationale for using individual Board Members needs to be formally recorded in the recruitment campaign folder so that if a candidate challenges the make-up of the Board as part of the CPSA request for review process, the reason and rationale behind the signing off on that Board composition is readily available, and clearly explained.
- **An independent Chairperson** (someone who has no direct interest in the post being filled. This person may be from within or external to the HSE but needs to be external to the location where the vacancy exists).

- ❖ Independent Chairpersons usually bring a wealth of experience to the Board from outside the profession so that while they are not necessarily expert in the profession being selected, they will be suitably experienced in areas such as team management, project management, strategic planning, service development, service improvement etc. This experience serves to enhance the assessment and their presence ensures a level of impartiality in the selection process.
- ❖ Chairpersons may be sourced and trained from recent retiree cohorts, could be an independent person from another service etc. Services may wish to create a panel of appropriately trained Chairpersons from which they can draw to populate Selection Boards. If being put on payroll, they can only appear on one payroll, must be tax compliant and be paid the standard Chairperson rate (see later in this section for more information on sourcing and organising for the payment of Chairpersons)

Notes:

- Selection Boards are usually supported and assisted by HR / Recruiter representative to ensure that everything is running as it should, that the process is being implemented in line with the Codes of Practice and to ensure that any issues arising are addressed as they arise. HR / Recruiter representative will also oversee any quality assurance mechanisms being employed and will evaluate the effectiveness of the process at the end so that improvements and learning can be implemented for the next time.
- In some cases, to ensure there is adequate representation for the speciality, service or location, there may be more than three Board Members.
- A single Selection Board nomination can fulfil more than one criterion e.g. a Board Member can be a subject expert and also represent a different geographical area / the subject expert could also represent the location / the Independent Chairperson could ensure gender balance etc.
- Geography, service areas and gender balance spread are elements of Selection Board composition that may require fluidity where there are not sufficient Selection Board Members.

10.2.1 Sourcing Selection Board Members / Audit / Records

- [Selection Board Participation Sheets](#) must be prepared for each campaign you are recruiting for
- It should show the dates the selection event(s) are occurring so that when people are filling in the form they can assess their availability for the selection event(s)
- Requests for Selection Board participation are sent to that profession only i.e. Physiotherapy to Physiotherapy Managers, Children's Nurses to Acute Hospitals, Mental Health Nurses to Mental Health Services Director of Nursing & Area Directors
- All Selection Board nominations should be documented for audit purposes.

10.3 Roles within the Selection Board

Generally, in the HSE interviews there are 3 persons on a Board, one independent Chairperson and 2 Board Members. Here we describe the role and responsibilities of the Chairperson and Board Members in an interview context but the same broad principles equally apply to, for example, eligibility screening or shortlisting.

Board Members

The Board Members responsibilities include:

- Engage in interview skills training before participating in a selection event
- Adhere to the guidelines and procedures provided
- Engage meaningfully with the process;
 - preparation in advance: reading allocated documentation in advance, preparing lines of questioning,
 - during the interview: represent their profession and ensure that the candidate is assessed appropriately on their knowledge, skills and abilities as relevant to the role being recruited for; using sufficient probing & questioning during the interview to ensure that the information required of the candidate is elicited (without leading the candidate with their line of questioning); actively contribute to the evaluation of the candidate post interview and the generation of good quality Summary Comments. Ensure that all candidates are treated in a fair and consistent manner.
 - after the interview: ensure that the outcome of the process is kept confidential, ensure that documentation is returned / shredded as per guidelines provided (ref Data Protection, FOI etc.), ensure that candidates are directed to HR / Recruiter representative should they seek additional information about the selection process. Be open to feedback on their performance as Board Members and be willing to follow through on any feedback provided.

Chairperson

The independent Chairperson's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the Board runs smoothly and that assessment decisions are made in a fair and objective manner and that a consistent approach is followed with all candidates
- Ensuring that the workings of the Board comply with HSE guidelines for interviewing and the CPSA Codes of Practice e.g. by recording any identified conflict of interest and taking appropriate action in relation to same
- Providing assistance and advice to other Board Members if required (e.g. offering feedback on their approach to questioning, ensuring that good quality Summary Comments are generated for each candidate, keeping the interview running to the time schedule etc.)
- Supporting HR / Recruiter representatives with regard to completing the relevant documentation in support of the recruitment process, ensuring that documents that need to be signed by the Board are signed, promoting the confidentiality of the process / GDPR requirements are met.
- The Chairperson is a key link back to the HR / Recruiter representative and should raise any issues arising that they can't resolve themselves, with HR / Recruiter representative at the earliest opportunity to that issues can be addressed as they arise.

Chairperson's role before the interview:

- Ensure that they have been trained on interviewing skills and the role of the Chairperson before serving on a Selection Board and be prepared to support less experienced Board Members on the selection event day
- Ensure that all Board Members are familiar with the Job Specification, Candidate Information Booklet and other recruitment documentation as it applies to a given campaign
- Facilitate a discussion on and agreement of the assessment criteria to ensure that all Board Members have the same understanding of what is being assessed and how it can be assessed consistently across candidates
- Agree on the order of questioning with the Board Members and who will take notes when
- Ensure that there are no conflicts of interest and address the matter / seek input from HR / Recruiter representative if an issue arises
- Meeting the candidates in the waiting area and verifying candidate ID (where required). Ensuring Application Forms submitted by electronic means are signed (where relevant)

Chairperson's role during the interview:

- Complete the Chairperson's introduction including; welcoming the candidate and introducing the Board Members, providing an overview of the interview format / areas to be questioned / time available, inviting candidates to provide examples from their direct involvement / experience, informing candidates that decisions will be made on the information provided during the interview, there will be a note taker to take notes of the interview, other Board Members may ask follow up questions at the end of each question area and that they will have an opportunity to ask questions / add information at the end of the interview
- The Chairperson generally settles the candidate into the interview: clarifying any details from their Application Form e.g. if they have moved to a different role since applying or if there are gaps on the Application Form; reviewing the candidates work and education history etc.
- Manages the timing within the interview to ensure that it runs to schedule
- May question on a competency area(s) depending on the role
- Intervene if an appropriate question is asked or if an unusual event occurs. Manages that process and ensures that a note is made of any issues arising and how they were resolved so that they will be available in the case of a candidate request for a review / appeal
- Wrap up the interview and invite any questions from the candidate

Chairperson's role after the interview:

- Ensures that the evaluation and scoring process is completed in accordance with the training and guidelines provided
- Ensures that a consensus agreement is reached by the Board; that they base their scoring on the assessment of the extent to which what the candidate said at interview maps onto the competency behavioural indicators for the role and deciding on a score accordingly
- Manages the scoring process to ensure that there is rotation in the presentation of the initial scores of each individual Board Member – so as to avoid any one Board Member dominating the opinion of the Board
- Ensures that a good quality, meaningful Summary Comment is generated for each candidate
- Quality assure the scoring process e.g. reviewing score profiles over time to ensure that all candidates are being treated fairly and consistently
- Ensuring all relevant documentation relating to the interview process is signed by all Members of the Selection Board. Ensuring all documentation is returned in full to HR / Recruiter representative including duplicate documentation and all notes taken during the process. If an incident occurs during the interview e.g. the candidate faints, the Chairperson will take appropriate actions and will follow up with the completion of an Incident Report Form.



10.4 Selection Board Members – *in focus*

External nominations as Selection Board Members:

There are different types of “external” in the HSE selection processes. It can be external to the site, external to the Community Healthcare Organisation / Hospital Group / National Office or external to the HSE. The seniority of the post, the remit of the post (local remit or national), speciality knowledge needed and the background of the post will all need to be considered when deciding on the appropriate level of “external independence” on a Selection Board.

External nominations contribute to the selection process in the ways / for the following reasons:

- To demonstrate impartiality in the recruitment process.
- To ensure appropriate seniority on the Selection Board.
- To ensure there is sufficient expert knowledge on the Selection Board to adequately assess the area of speciality. It may be necessary and more appropriate to seek this from outside the organisation. This is especially relevant in the area of new service developments.
- To represent client user groups e.g. Mental Health organisations.
- To represent key stakeholders e.g. Department of Health.
- To act as independent Chairperson.

Geography or Service:

- The location or service division can be represented by a Selection Board Member who may represent the site / Community Healthcare Organisation/ Hospital Group/ National Function. This Board Member may also be an expert in the role itself.
- It is essential there is demonstrable independence in the selection board decisions i.e. there must always be a representative from outside the location/ service to demonstrate impartiality in selection decisions.

Interview Board Members Who are serving in an interim capacity:

If nominations are received for Selection Boards Members serving on an interim capacity, you must establish:

- how long they are in the post.
- if they are being paid at the grade for which they are serving in the interim capacity - if not, they are not considered interim.

Conflict of Interest / managing connections between Selection Board Members and applicants:

In keeping with the spirit of the Codes of Practice it is important that procedures regarding management of connections between Service Managers, Selection Board Members and applicants are followed to ensure that any potential conflict of interest between Service Managers, Board Members and applicants are identified and managed appropriately.

Here we outline the responsibilities of HR / Recruiter representatives, Health Service Managers and applicants in managing connections and mitigating against conflict of interests between Service Managers, selectors and applicants during the recruitment process.

All persons engaging with a recruitment process should be fully appraised of their duties and responsibilities with regard to the protection of the confidentiality and integrity of the process before they engage with it. It is appropriate to ask such persons to complete a [Confidentiality Agreement](#) and [Managing Connections Disclosure Form](#) before they engage. If a Board Member indicates that a candidate is known to them on the Managing

Connections Disclosure Form then they should be asked to complete and [Conflict of Interest Declaration Form](#) for each applicant known to them. You will find more on Managing Connections and Conflict of Interest later in this section.

Health Service Managers across all disciplines and grades of staff are the experts in their relevant profession and play a key role in selecting staff for jobs in the HSE. They are supported in the recruitment process by HR / Recruiter representative. While Health Service Managers play a key role in the recruitment and selection of staff, it is important to ensure that any connections between Service Managers, Selection Board Members and applicants, and any Conflicts Of Interest in the recruitment process, are addressed and managed appropriately. This means that each stage of the recruitment process must be assessed, monitored and documented to demonstrate probity and transparency with regards to connections and Conflicts Of Interest.

Some scenarios are presented below to illustrate where Service Managers might have access to / engage with the selection process or indeed with potential applicants / candidates, and how such interactions should be managed in relation to potential conflicts of interest.

- *Contributing to the Design of / supporting the Selection Process:*

Recruitment processes are designed to assess the criteria needed for successful performance in roles in Health and Social Care Services. As the subject experts, Health Service Managers are involved in each stage of the recruitment process including; development of the Job Specification; being an “informal contact” so that any potential applicants can discuss the role in an informal manner with the Service Manager, serving on Selection Boards, contributing to the development of professional knowledge questions etc.

For example, in a scenario where a Selection Board Member might also be listed as the ‘informal contact’ person on the Job Specification for enquiries about the role, they need to be aware that any such contact cannot be viewed as being part of the assessment process - is solely to support the applicant in making informed choices about the role. Similarly, the Selection Board Member cannot *bring* information that might arise *about* a contact as a result of an informal enquiry into selection decisions. The informal contact and Selection Board Member roles are two independent and discrete roles and need to be managed as such.

Another example might be where Health Service Managers might be named as referees by candidates from a professional or educational perspective. This ensures that professionally qualified and experienced managers of suitable seniority make an independent evaluation of the candidate’s performance at work / education in line with the HSE reference criteria. Again, the Service Managers’ contribution here needs to be objective and specific to the role that they are fulfilling i.e. whether they are serving as a Selection Board Member v’s serving as a referee. If serving as a Selection Board Member, and as a referee, the roles cannot cross-over and must remain objective, distinct and confidential.

This means that Health Service Managers involved in any or all stages of the recruitment process must treat each stage as an independent part of the process and cannot carry information from one stage to the next.

- *Selection Board Members knowing an applicant(s)*

A connection between a Selection Board Member and an applicant arises when the selector and applicant are known to each other, either professionally or personally. The implications of this connection must be identified and assessed at the outset of the selection process.

It is possible that Health Service Managers involved in the recruitment process may know the applicants for the role. This in itself does not preclude a Health Service Manager from participating in the selection process. Any connections between Health Service Managers involved in the selection process and applicants for the role should be assessed and documented to demonstrate probity in the recruitment process. Furthermore, HR / Recruiters must evidence that any connections between applicants and Selection Board Members are managed appropriately and that any Conflicts Of Interest are assessed and action taken when necessary.

What is important is that Service Managers, and especially those serving as Selection Board Members, adhere to the principles of fair and equal treatment and that it is not appropriate for them to share any information either *about* the selection process *with* potential applicants / candidates, or *about* potential applicants / candidates in the selection process decision making stages, where they are involved in them. Service Managers and Selection Board Members need to be fully aware that they are being made privy to information about the selection process to enable them to support the design / delivery of the selection process, and that that information is strictly confidential and cannot be shared with anyone outside the management of the recruitment process.



10.5 Conflict of Interest

A Conflict Of Interest arises when an individual has two different interests that overlap. A conflict of interest involves a conflict between the public duty of a Selection Board Member and the private interest of the Member in which the Member's private-capacity interest could improperly influence the performance of his/her official duties and responsibilities. A conflict of interest can also be perceived. A perceived conflict of interest exists where it could be perceived, or appears, that private capacity interests could improperly influence the performance of a Selection Board Member's official duties and responsibilities.

A perception of a conflict of interest can be just as significant as an actual conflict of interest. The key issue is whether there is a risk that a fair-minded outside observer, acting reasonably, would conclude that there is a real possibility of bias. The interest in question need not be that of the Selection Board Members themselves. It can also include the interests of close relatives or friends and associates who have the potential to influence the Selection Board Member's behaviour. As a benchmark a 'close relative' would usually refer to the individual's spouse or partner, children (adult and minor), parent, brother, sister, in-laws and the personal partners of any of these. For other relatives it is dependent upon the closeness of the relationship and degree to which the decisions or activity of the public entity could directly or significantly affect them. A 'friend or associate' should be considered as someone with whom the individual has a longstanding and/or close relationship, socialises with regularly or has had dealings with which may create a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests. Such competing interests can make it difficult to fulfil his or her duties impartially. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical or improper act results from it.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest include:

- ❖ Nepotism: a close relative applies for a position. In the HSE the interviewer will be required to excuse themselves from the interview.
- ❖ Close working relationship over many years: An applicant has worked closely with a Board Member and has developed a close friendship which could influence a decision at interview. In this case HR / Recruiter representative would advise on whether it was prudent to exclude themselves from the Board or put safeguards in place at interview.
- ❖ An interviewer might have a religious or political alliance with the applicant which could be affected depending on the outcome of the interview.
- ❖ The interviewer could benefit financially through the outcome of the interview.
- ❖ The interviewer has previous knowledge of the applicant that could influence other Board Members or the outcome of the interview.
- ❖ The interviewer is under instruction from other parties which could affect the outcome of the interview. This pressure could be from inside or outside the organisation.



10.6 Procedure for Managing Connections and Conflicts Of Interest

The following process enables Selection Board Members and applicants to identify and raise any concerns about connections and conflicts of interest in a timely manner and through a standardised procedure.

The following process should apply:

- The published campaign documentation (advertisement stage) will document the process of managing connections and conflicts of interest, from an applicants' perspective. This will include definitions of connections and conflicts of interest; processes in place for assessing and managing same and appeal mechanisms.
- HR / Recruiter representative informs all Selection Board Members of their obligations which includes their responsibilities under managing connections / conflict of interest.

There are a number of steps that can be taken pre-event to manage connections / potential conflicts of interest. The safe guard guidelines are presented here by selection event.

10.6.1 Eligibility Sift / Short listing:

- HR / Recruiter sends a list of applicants for the role (post campaign closing date) to the Selection Board. The Health Service Manager can indicate if they know an applicant by completing the "Managing Connections Disclosure Form"
- The Health Service Manager completes the "Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form" Form for the campaign.
- The Health Service Manager returns both forms to HR / Recruit representative.
- HR / Recruiter assesses the "Managing Connections" and "Conflict of Interest" forms for each campaign. Dependent on the outcome from that process, HR / Recruiter may replace the Health Service Manager with another Manager who is professionally qualified and experienced to assess for the role.
- A copy of eligibility sift / short listing forms are sent to each applicant to inform them of the decision made on their application by the Selection Board Members.
- Each form details the name and title of each Selection Board Member who made a decision on their eligibility/ short listing. In this way applicants will be made aware of which Health Service Manager has assessed their eligibility / short listed their application.
- Applicants can declare any concerns over connections / conflict of interest at that stage through the appeals process.



10.6.2 Interview:

- Selection Board Members will be sent a list of candidates invited to interview. The Health Service Manager can indicate if they know a candidate and the level of connection by completing the “Managing Connections Disclosure Form”
- The Health Service Manager completes the “Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form” for the interview process.
- Pre interview, the Health Service Manager returns both forms to HR / Recruiter.
- HR / Recruiter assesses the “Managing Connections” and “Conflict of Interest” forms for each interview process.
- Dependent on the outcome from that process, HR / Recruiter may replace the Health Service Manager with another Manager who is professionally qualified and experienced to assess for the role.
- Candidates will be informed of who is on the Interview Board with their call to interview invite (normally 2 weeks pre interview) or at least 3 days before the interview.
- This allows time for the candidate to raise any concerns about individual Board Members.
- Any concerns raised by candidates can be assessed and decided on by HR / Recruiter.
- The applicant may appeal a decision made by HR / Recruiter following the normal appeals process.
- Any concerns raised and the rationale for decisions made on that concern should be documented in the campaign file.
- It is understood that Board Members can change due to unforeseen circumstances, in these cases the HR / Recruiter should inform the candidates as soon as possible and should ask the replacement Board Member to complete the relevant forms.
- Due to the nature of healthcare there may be incidences where Board Members have to be replaced at very short notice. Therefore, included in the interview board information sent to candidates will be a disclaimer that Interview Board Members can change at short notice and efforts will be made to inform candidates, however interviews will proceed even if candidates have not been informed of last minute changes.
- In the case of a short notice Interview Board Member replacement, the candidate can raise any concerns through the appeals process.
- Any concerns raised can be assessed and decided on by HR / Recruiter as per the normal appeals process.
- Any concerns raised and the rationale for decisions made on that concern should be documented in the campaign file.
- Candidates may also choose to follow the appeals route to address their concerns.



10.6.3 Multiple concurrent Interview Boards:

For some campaigns, given the volume of candidates to be interviewed, for example, in 'National Campaigns' there are other options available.

- Candidates in a multiple concurrent interview board process can be interviewed by any individual Board Member within a multiple-board recruitment process.
- Due to the nature of these types of campaigns which typically involve frequent changes of Board Members (dependent on clinical speciality/ availability of Board Members over extended interview days) it is not possible to pre-inform applicants of Board Members.
- In these types of campaigns, candidates will be offered an opportunity immediately post interview to raise any concerns regarding connections between Board Members and conflicts of interest.
- This will form part of the "post interview" questionnaire offered to all candidates post national campaigns / multiple board campaigns.
- Any concerns raised in this way will be assessed and decided on by HR / Recruiter.
- Any concerns raised and the rationale for decisions made on that concern should be documented in the campaign file.
- Candidates may also choose to follow the appeals route to address their concerns.

In certain circumstances it mightn't become apparent until the selection event that someone is known to a Board Member. In these instances the following options apply:

10.6.4 Knowing the Applicant / Candidate (Eligibility/ Short listing & all types of campaign interviews):

- On the day of the day of the selection event, as soon as it becomes apparent, the Board Member should make known to the other Selection Board Members any candidate that they know for any reason. This should be recorded by the Chairperson of the Board.
- If the candidate is well known to them, once the candidate has left the room and the evaluation is taking place, the Board Member should assess the candidate after all other Board Members have given their opinion and assessment of the candidate's performance at interview.
- No outside information regarding the candidate can be brought into the process and it is the role of the Chair and all Selection Board Members to monitor this throughout the interview.
- If a Board Member brings outside information into their assessment then the Chair or other Board Members should interrupt them and remind them that each element of the selection process is discrete and confidential with no outside information is to be included.

10.6.5 Selection Board Members who are named as referees by applicants:

Selection board members are frequently named as employment or educational referees by an applicant for the role. The aim of this guideline is to ensure selection board members are cognisant of the discrete and separate responsibilities they hold as selectors and as named referees:

- Each element of the recruitment process is independent, discrete and confidential.
- The personnel managing the recruitment campaign should remove the sheet detailing referees' names from the copies of the application forms being assessed by the selection board members. This is to protect the integrity of each distinct part of the selection process. Do they ever do blind shortlisting / eligibility sifting??

If a selection board member is named as a referee by an applicant, the selection board member must view each element as distinct parts of the recruitment process:

- He/ she should not allow his/ her personal and professional knowledge of the applicant to influence other parts of the selection process such as the interview.
- No additional/ external information can be brought into consideration for each discrete selection decision e.g. during the scoring stage at interview the board member cannot offer knowledge/ opinion on the candidate's ability or performance beyond that which was presented at interview and in the application form.
- Only evidence brought forward by the candidate for that stage of the process can be assessed at that step in the process.
- If the candidate is to be offered a job, referees will be contacted by the recruitment team at that point. The named referee can give his/her assessment of the candidate's performance in their role and their suitability for the new job at that stage of the recruitment process.

In fulfilling their role, each stage of the recruitment process must be treated as discrete steps by the Selection Board Members.



10.7 Chairpersons - *in focus*

The inclusion of high quality, appropriately experienced and trained Chairpersons is important to supporting the smooth running and impartiality of the selection process. Depending on the volume and frequency of recruitment campaigns being undertaken on your site, it might be worth considering building a panel of suitable people that could serve as Chairpersons on Selection Boards.

Sourcing Chairpersons:

- Chairpersons can be sourced from by a number of means e.g. through direct contacts to your office; former staff members; word of mouth recommendations; recently retired HSE or TUSLA staff members, or those about to retire, might express an interest in the role.
- Recent retirees from, for example, County Councils, Institutes of Technology and other state, semi-state and former semi-state bodies may be interested as may recent retirees of Voluntary bodies (e.g. Dublin Academic Teaching Hospitals, Dublin Rape Crises Centre, Teagasc etc).
- Once people are identified that might be interested in the Chairperson role, a communication can issue to them, outlining the role and requirements of a Chairperson. A CV could be requested at this stage, seeking an overview of their career history. This can be screened for suitability of previous experience and overall suitability for the role.
- Former HSE employees should be requested to confirm if they retired under an Early Retirement / Voluntary Redundancy Scheme - individuals responding 'yes' to this will need to be counter checked with Pensions to ensure that there is no prohibition to their "working" in the HSE post retirement.
- It may be appropriate to have a screening meeting with individuals to talk through their CV, determine their interest and motivation for the role, their availability and any other interests that they may have might conflict with the role. Assess the information provided in the CV particularly e.g. previous management experience – review the number and types of people reporting to them, budgetary responsibility, working with different professions, complex organisation experience; experience of HR / interviewing; will comply with CPSA Codes of Practice; are comfortable using ICT / engaging in online video calls etc. It is a useful opportunity to describe the requirements of the role to the person and to answer any queries that they may have.
- If found to be suitable arrangements should be made for the individual to receive training in both interview skills but also specifically on the role and responsibilities of the Chairperson. They could be facilitated to shadow a Chairperson on an interview board before 'going live' themselves. This is particularly the case if they are using online video interviews for the first time. It might be suggested that they serve on a trial basis initially to see how they get on in the role.
- Suitable individuals can thus be added to a Chairperson database.
- When new Chairpersons are being used for the first number of times it can be useful to have an experienced HR team member / Recruiter at hand to review the quality of interview notes, marking sheets and Summary Comments coming out from each interview. Feedback and support can be given to the Chairpersons and Selection Board Members and any issues arising can be addressed early to ensure that the workings of the Board comply with the CPSA Codes of Practice from the outset.



Payment of Chairpersons:

Where the Chairperson is someone external to the HSE, then there are a number of steps that need to be taken should they require payment for their services in support of recruitment. Some more information about this process, and things to be aware of, are presented below.

- Although not employees, there is a requirement that all Chairpersons are paid via Payroll to comply with Revenue instructions.
- Chairpersons are paid a fixed rate professional fee as defined by the HSE. Currently the daily professional Chairperson fee is Euro 220 with expenses (set rate) as per HSE HR Circular 009/2007/ Euro 110 for a Half day.
- All payments are made in compliance with financial regulations.
- Chairpersons should be informed:
 - that in compliance with an instruction from the Revenue Commissioners, all fees for participating as an External Interview Board Member must have PAYE/PRSI deducted as appropriate – hence they are required to be set up on the SAP system, which has a facility to deduct as appropriate PAYE/PRSI from fees. The Chairperson will need to provide a Certificate of Tax Credits and Standard Rate Cut-off Point from the Revenue Commissioners. On return of completed SAP documentation a SAP number will be assigned to the Chairperson.
 - that External Interview Board Members are considered self-employed and at no time should payment of a professional fee and / or expenses be considered a salary
 - individuals submitting travel claims and professional fee claims are obliged to fully comply with the National Financial Regulations (NFR), particularly NFR 5 – Travel and Subsistence. The National Financial Regulations including those regarding Travel and Subsistence are available at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/financial%20regulations/>
 - that other documentation may need to be supplied by Chairpersons to facilitate their set up on various systems including; Travel Authorisation Form, Vehicle Licensing Certificate, copy of car insurance certificate and a letter from their insurers confirming that the HSE is indemnified
 - that all travel undertaken must comply with current HSE policy and be mindful of financial constraints. Public transport should be used in all possible incidences. Kilometers should be calculated using AA Route Planner at <https://www.theaa.ie/routes/#/r/>
 - that Chairpersons are paid taxable expenses:
 - reimbursements will be made for expenses incurred for which there is a receipt, therefore when claiming for expenses such as train tickets, Luas tickets, parking charges, motorway tolls, postage, a receipt must be attached
 - that subsistence claims for meals / food can only be claimed where <NAME SITE / SERVICE> did not provide them. Where a Selection Board Member choses to eat an evening meal in a location other than the location organised by <NAME SITE / SERVICE> (if they are entitled to charge an evening meal) a receipt must be provided.
 - that overnight subsistence claims cannot be submitted where an individual has availed of the accommodation provided by <NAME SITE / SERVICE>
 - of arrangements for the submission of Travel and Professional Fee claim forms, and most recent claim rates.

Useful email template

[Follow up email individual expresses an interest in serving as a Chairperson](#)