

Landward Research

# RECRUITMENT POLICY



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## 1 Purpose

This policy sets out our approach to all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process.

Hiring managers should note that the recruitment process is not just about us identifying the right person for the role, but also about candidates deciding if we are an organisation that they would like to work for. First impressions matter and it is vital that the process is transparent, timely, fair, and consistent for all candidates.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion should be at the heart of every step of the process to ensure that our recruitment supports us to attract a wide range of candidates.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies equally and fully to all employees of the Landward Research; to Landward Research Ltd and to employees of all subsidiary companies of Landward Research Ltd (on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022: Landward Research Teoranta, Landward Limited Liability Corporation and Landward Limited). It is applicable to all recruitment.

## 3 Defining The Role.

Recruitment must be based solely on the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the predetermined criteria for the job. Qualifications, experience and skills are to be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

### 3.1 Job Analysis

Whether the position is new or already exists, the first step is to examine the needs to be fulfilled by the role and the ways in which it will contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of Landward Research. This analysis will be used throughout the recruitment process, including to complete the job specification and person specification.

The analysis should consider:

- The job's purpose
- What duties are involved

- What outputs would be expected
- How that job fits within the wider organisation
- How and where the job could be carried out (with a starting assumption that all roles can be carried out working remotely)

### 3.2 Job Specification

The [Job Specification](#) should be written first. This tells potential candidates about the job requirements and provides a clear overview of the role, it includes:

- a general description of the role
- an overview of responsibilities
- details of any resources managed (including and people and/or budgets managed)
- an indication of the development opportunities that will be available

The Job Specification will also provide clarity during the induction, when setting objectives, and when evaluating performance.

### 3.3 Person Specification

The next step is to complete the Person Specification, setting out the essential criteria for selection. The criteria must be clear, demonstratable, and avoid bias in the wording.

The criteria should be directly related to the job and could include:

- Skills/Aptitudes
- Knowledge
- Experience
- Competencies/Behaviours
- Landward Research Core Values
- Training
- Accreditation
- Qualifications (qualifications should only be included if absolutely necessary and in agreement with HR)

When writing the person specification, it is vital to ensure that criteria used do not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of applicants, and they must be applied equally to all applicants.

Examples that could be indirectly discriminating unfairly against protected characteristics include<sup>1</sup>:

- 'recent graduate' or 'highly experienced' – can discriminate against age
- 'barmaid' or 'handyman' – can discriminate against someone's sex
- clothing requirements, for example wearing a hairnet in a kitchen could discriminate against someone who for religious reasons covers their head in other ways.

## 4 Attracting Applicants

### 4.1 Advertisement of Vacancies

Job adverts should give clear, accurate information about the organisation and the role, providing applicants with sufficient information to make an informed decision about their suitability for the role. Job adverts should include:

- Job description and person specification
- Job location (this will usually be remote working)
- Type of employment offered - is it a fixed-term or permanent role
- Information about Landward Research's activities and values.
- Reward and benefits package (it is our policy to include salary on all job adverts)
- A prompt to ask about flexible working
- Details of how to apply, the deadline, and shortlisting/interview dates (if known)

Before advertising a role, all the above details should be confirmed with HR and the CEO. All documents must be fully accessible.

In most cases, jobs should be advertised on the Landward Research website, on the Government's Find a job service<sup>2</sup>, and on LinkedIn. In certain circumstances it may be more effective to use a recruitment agency and/or to advertise in specific Publications/on specific websites, this should be discussed and agreed with HR.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acas.org.uk/hiring-someone/how-to-advertise-a-job>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/advertise-job>

The job advert should tell candidates what we will need from them, for example:

- Proof that they have the right to work in the UK
- A reference

The job advert should also tell candidates how we'll use their personal information.

## 5 Managing The Application And Selection Process.

### 5.1 Equality, Diversity And Inclusion

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy must be applied at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection must be carried out without regard to an applicant's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, skin colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave, or trade union membership.

Candidates with disabilities must never be excluded, unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role, having taken into account reasonable adjustments. Hiring managers must only ask a candidate questions about their health where this is directly necessary for a particular role and, in any event, only once they have been shortlisted.

To prevent any candidate from being disadvantaged because of a disability, the individual responsible for communicating with applicants should ask each candidate whether or not they require reasonable adjustments to be made, this includes adapting the recruitment processes for neurodivergent people. HR is always available to provide guidance on reasonable adjustments.

### 5.2 Application Forms

Application forms allow for information to be presented in a consistent way. This makes it easier to collect information from job applicants systematically and objectively assess the candidate's suitability for the job. The Application Form template should be used.

CVs and/or LinkedIn profiles are not accepted alone, but can be used to supplement job application forms. Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted.

Application forms should be offered in alternative formats. For example, a larger print form or a paper form if the application would usually be completed online. All application forms should be readable by text-to-speech software.

### **5.3 Managing Applications**

All applications should be treated confidentially and only shared with individuals involved in the recruitment process.

All applications should be acknowledged promptly, whether successful or unsuccessful.

### **5.4 Selecting Candidates**

The hiring manager should establish a selection panel consisting of two or more people. The same selection panel, where possible, will carry out all shortlisting and interviewing. Windows for shortlisting and interviewing should be agreed at the start of the recruitment and selection process.

Selection is a two-way process: candidates are assessing the role and Landward Research. The image of Landward Research that is conveyed should be considered throughout the selection process.

Notes should be recorded by the selection panel throughout the selection process, protected characteristics should never be mentioned or alluded to in these notes. The candidates may request copies of the notes.

The selection process should be carried out as promptly as possible, with interviews completed within four weeks of the deadline for applications.

#### **5.4.1 Shortlisting**

Short-listing is the stage of the recruitment process where the number of applications received is reduced to a shortlist of suitable candidates for selection



who will be offered interviews. It is at the hiring manager's discretion to decide how many candidates to interview, however, it is advised to invite no more than six applicants for a single post to interview.

The selection panel should rate each candidate against the criteria on the Person Specification to agree who to invite for interview. The Shortlisting Decision Form should be used to record notes and sent to HR.

Shortlisted candidates should be provided with details of the selection process, including all interview questions, in writing giving as much prior notice as possible and a minimum of five working days before the interview.

All candidates should also be asked to if there are any particular arrangements or reasonable adjustments that could be made so that they can participate fully in the selection process.

Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria of a person specification are guaranteed an interview (as a Disability Confident Employer).

### **5.4.2 Interviews**

For the selection panel, the interview is an opportunity to:

- Gauge candidates' potential and ability to perform in the role
- Explain the employee value proposition, including learning opportunities and employee benefits
- Give the candidate a positive impression of Landward Research as a good employer

Landward Research uses structured interviews. The questions must be planned in advance and all candidates should be asked the same questions (although follow up questions may be asked), and the questions should be shared with candidates ahead of the interview to allow them to prepare and reduce any negative influence from any disabilities, neurodiversity and/or mental health conditions.

Interview questions must not be in any way discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive. The interview will focus on the role and the skills needed to perform it effectively. Care should be taken not to make assumptions about applicants based on their subjective views and opinions.

Answers should be scored using a rating system and the selection panel should make a record of every recruitment interview using the Interview Assessment Form and forward this to HR to be retained for a minimum of 6 months following the selection process.

Interviews will be held remotely, usually via online video conferencing; however, they may be carried out via telephone. Video interviews are carried out using Microsoft Teams. The hiring manager should contact all shortlisted candidates to ensure that they are able to attend the interview by video, if any candidate is unable to do so, then all interviews should be carried out by telephone.

The panel should indicate the anticipated date by which candidates will hear the outcome of the interviews, whether successful or unsuccessful, which should be within five working days of the final interview. This will normally be by telephone and confirmed via email. On no account should any job offer be made during or at the end of an interview.

### **5.4.3 Social Media**

Avoid using information that's on someone's social media profile to decide whether as part of the selection process. Doing so may break the law<sup>3</sup>, particularly if either of the following points apply:

- They did not agree to their information being used in this way
- Some applicants' social media profiles were reviewed and not others

Information from jobs websites, or business social networking sites such as LinkedIn can be considered. When posting information on these sites, users will be

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<sup>3</sup> ACAS Example

While using Facebook you discover the profile of someone who has applied to you for a job as a personal assistant. You notice a picture of her with 2 toddlers in a pushchair and think she looks too young to be a mum.

You've now already started making a judgement – even if you did not intend to – about whether she's the best applicant for the job.

If you then decide not to interview her and she discovered you'd seen her profile, she could argue that your decision discriminated against her because of her sex or age.

aware that the purpose is to show their work experience and professionalism. The selection panel must still make sure that this information is not used in a way that discriminates. This information must be used consistently, so if one candidate's LinkedIn profile is reviewed, then the same should apply to all candidates who have reached the same stage in the selection process (if they have a LinkedIn profile).

#### 5.4.4 Deciding Who To Hire

The selection panel should meet after all interviews have been concluded to discuss their separate ratings and agree who to offer the role to. Insights from the interview should be supported by other data in the candidate's application pack when the panel makes their final decision.

The Hiring Manager should complete a separate Interview Assessment Form to capture the ratings agreed on by the selection panel and to confirm the successful candidate. This should be sent to HR, with the individual forms before the candidate is offered the role.

HR will then contact the successful candidate in writing to make a provisional offer, to obtain documentary proof of any necessary qualifications and consent to obtain two written work references (if applicable).

Unsuccessful interview candidates should be dealt with courteously and sensitively and will, as a minimum, receive telephone or written notification of the outcome of the selection process.

Candidates may request feedback about their performance in the selection process, this should be given by the Hiring Manager, with a focus on helping them to succeed in future applications for similar roles. No reference to protected characteristics may be made when giving feedback.

### 5.5 Recruitment Driven By Project Start Date

In exceptional circumstances, for example, if we are successful in bidding/tendering for a project that necessitates new staff starting in a time scale that will not allow the recruitment process to be followed, then the steps in section **4: Attracting Applicants** and **5: Managing The Application And Selection Process** may be skipped or shortened.

In this case, the hiring manager should talk to the CEO and any other staff members who may know suitable candidates to establish if anybody in the wider Landward Research network may be able to fill the role.

If multiple people who could potentially take up the role are identified, then the hiring manager should reach out informally to discuss the role with them and invite those who are interested to interview. The process from section **5.4.2: Interviews**, onwards, would then be followed (timescales may be shortened).

If only one person is identified and the hiring manager is confident that they are suitable for the role, then – with agreement from the CEO and HR – that person may be offered the role.

## 6 Making the appointment.

### 6.1 References

It is not Landward Research's policy to seek references, as these are likely to be subjective and could disadvantage those candidates with less social capital.

Up to two satisfactory work references may be sought once a conditional offer is made, following discussion with the CEO and HR.

In some cases, these would not need to be work references. This may apply to school-leavers, or returners to work after a long career break. Where this is the case, a character reference can be accepted instead. Character references will not be accepted from relatives.

HR will contact the referees and ask for written confirmation of the length of past employment and the job title. Verbal references will not be accepted.

Recruitment decisions will never be based solely on references, as they provide a limited perspective of an individual's suitability for a role.

### 6.2 Right To Work Checks

#### 6.2.1 Right To Work In The UK

Landward Research Ltd only recruits individuals with a legal right to work in the UK. All offers of employment by Landward Research Ltd will be subject to the candidate providing the required original documents or the organisation being able to carry out a check on the Home Office online right to work checking service confirming their right to do the work in question.

The requirement to provide evidence of the right to work in the UK applies to all new recruits, regardless of their race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

### **6.2.2 Right To Work In The Republic of Ireland**

Landward Research Teoranta only recruits individuals with a legal right to work in the Republic of Ireland. All offers of employment by Landward Research Teoranta will be subject to the candidate providing the required original documents confirming their right to do the work in question.

The requirement to provide evidence of the right to work in the Republic of Ireland applies to all new recruits, regardless of their race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

## **6.3 Employment offer**

Once satisfactory references have been received (if applicable), the right to work in the UK/Ireland has been confirmed, and checks of qualifications (if necessary) have taken place, then HR will send a written offer of employment with a written statement of terms and conditions of employment.

## **7 Induction**

Induction is the final stage of the recruitment process. Once the successful candidate has accepted the offer of employment and a start date has been agreed, HR will support the line manager to prepare an induction programme for the new employee to enable them to become fully operational quickly.

## **8 Documentation And Data Protection**

Documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In particular, data collection

as part of the recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment process effectively to decide who to offer the job to.

Employees should report immediately any inappropriate access or disclosure of job applicant data in accordance with Landward Research's data protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under Landward Research's Disciplinary procedure.

HR will carry out equality monitoring in the recruitment and resourcing process. This includes monitoring the diversity of applicants, from the initial stages through to a person being appointed. Action will then be taken to address any issues.

## 9 Other Related Documentation

Where necessary, this policy should be read in conjunction with other Landward Research Policies, such as:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

Relevant Legislation:

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Data Protection Act 2018

The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 No. 419

## 10 Review

Landward Research will review this policy on an ongoing basis and carry out a formal review not less than every 3 years. Such review shall take into account the operation of the Policy since the last formal review, any legal or regulatory developments, an assessment of current best practice and any other relevant information.