

Recruitment policy

Aim and scope

The aim of this policy is to establish how the MS Trust will select and appoint staff with the right skills and competencies for posts, through a methodical selection process that supports the aims of our work and is free from discriminatory bias. It is designed to ensure quality and equality and diversity of staff appointments. This policy does not apply to the engagement of self-employed contractors.

Staff recruitment and selection

The overall accountability for staff recruitment and selection rests with the Chief Executive, with the Recruitment Officer responsible for the day-to-day management of recruitment exercises and processes. If staff members are involved in any way in the recruitment and selection of staff, they must comply with these provisions and seek advice from the Recruitment Officer or Chief Executive where necessary. The Recruitment Officer role is performed by the Office Manager and HR and Payroll Manager.

Job description and person specification

Every post requires a full job description and person specification prior to advertising the role. For new posts, the responsibility for drafting job descriptions rests with the relevant Director. The Senior Management Team (SMT) will agree the correct level and loading of the role and will agree the appropriate salary for the role. For temporary roles, please see the temporary posts recruitment policy.

In the case of recruiting for the Chief Executive's position, the Board of Trustees will agree a procedure for recruitment.

The MS Trust is a Living Wage employer, and salaries must meet the criteria set out by the Living Wage Foundation as a minimum. For existing posts, the job description and person specification must be checked by the line manager, and where necessary updated to reflect any changes that have occurred. The relevant Director must then ensure sign off before the job is advertised.

The job description must give the purpose of the job and full details of the duties and responsibilities of the post, and must be adequate, and clear and free from any type of direct or indirect discriminatory references.

The person specification must clearly set out the experience, skills, knowledge and personal attributes required to perform the duties specified in the job description. Careful consideration must be given to the actual skills and experience required, and to the justification for the inclusion of those requirements. Where academic qualifications are one of the criteria for initial selection, they must not be either unnecessarily high or insufficient for the particular job. Assumptions must not be made about the standard of overseas qualifications.

Criteria contained in the person specification must be strictly relevant to the requirements of the job and not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude

particular groups, since this may constitute indirect discrimination and therefore be unlawful and/or in breach of our equality and diversity policy.

Advertising

There is a general assumption that all posts will be advertised externally, unless otherwise agreed by the SMT. In the event of possible redundancy situations or for other operational reasons approved by the Chief Executive, a temporary internal recruitment process may be applied before the role is advertised externally.

Before advertising, a job pack will be prepared by the relevant line manager, using the standard MS Trust application form template and based on the agreed job description and person specification. The job pack must be made available in an alternative format (for example large print) if requested by an applicant. Decisions on appropriate advertising media to be used for external advertising rests with the relevant Director in consultation with the Recruitment Officer or the Chief Executive. Word of mouth and social media are also appropriate methods of advertising job opportunities, but they must not be the sole sources of advertising. LinkedIn is also a potential option for advertising roles. The Recruitment Officer will be responsible for placing the job adverts online, and for collating the applications and distributing them to the interview panel.

All applicants for every post must complete an application form. All application forms are confidential and will be kept for a period of six months. CVs will not be accepted. The exception to this is if an applicant requests to submit their application in an alternative format, as a reasonable adjustment to accommodate a disability.

Applications will be sent to recruitment@mstrust.org.uk and handled by the Recruitment Officer, who will send out an acknowledgement email to the applicant. The Recruitment Officer will anonymise each application form before they are handed to the line manager for shortlisting, to reduce bias or the perception of bias.

A monitoring form will be supplied to all applicants, and they are encouraged to complete the form and return it with their completed application form. The form includes a 'do not wish to declare option' for applicants to use if required. Monitoring forms will be detached from application forms before the application forms are copied to the recruitment panel for shortlisting. The statistical information extracted from these forms will be used to monitor whether the Trust is attracting applications and shortlisting and appointing applicants from all sections of the community.

Shortlisting and selection

Shortlisting will be undertaken by the line manager and at least one other member of the interview panel (see below for make-up of the interview panel). Short-listing will be based on the information supplied in the application form using the selection criteria in the person specification. A shortlisting form will be prepared by the line manager (aided by the Recruitment Officer) based on the person specification. Detailed scoring for every candidate is not essential where the number of candidates prevents this, provided there is a clear and justifiable reason recorded why a candidate has or has not been shortlisted according to the criteria. The shortlisted application forms will be handed back to the Recruitment Officer, who will contact the

applicants to arrange the interviews. The Recruitment Officer should ask the candidates whether they require any adjustments for their interview, such as an accessible interview room.

It is expected that shortlisting will narrow the field to up to five applicants to be interviewed, although the exact number of candidates to be shortlisted should be agreed between the interview panel.

The MS Trust is committed to internal staff development, and therefore an automatic interview should be offered to an internal applicant where that applicant can demonstrate, via a completed application form, that they meet the minimum essential criteria of the person specification for a role.

Applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum essential criteria of the person specification for a role will be automatically shortlisted. The Recruitment Officer will liaise with the interview panel to ascertain whether an applicant with disabilities has met the minimum essential criteria of the person specification.

Interview process

There should be a two stage interview process, with at least two members of the interview panel being present at each stage. As such, the interview panel will have two opportunities to assess the candidate, and the applicant should be able to get a feel for the MS Trust as a place to work. At the second stage of the interview process, a written and/or verbal task should by preference be set by the line manager, which may help to ascertain the candidate's skills and knowledge, and differentiate between two candidates on an otherwise equal footing. The line manager will make the decision as to whether such a task is required, in conjunction with the department Director. All members of the interview panel will ensure that they input into the tasks and questions to be asked.

Interviews will consist of a series of set questions asked by the panel as appropriate, at both stages of the interview process. The MS Trust has an interview question template that should be used for interviews, with questions drafted by the line manager and agreed with the rest of the panel. All members of the interview panel will keep adequate notes of the interview in order to be able to make a fair comparison between candidates. These will be kept for six months.

The panel must also ensure that they record the reasons for selection or non-selection of each candidate and the line manager should use this to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates who request information.

The aim of the interview is to elicit information from the candidate as to his/her suitability to do the particular job. Interviewers must not imply discrimination by asking questions about personal circumstances which are unrelated to the requirements of the job, or those designed to test more vigorously on the basis of sex, race or disability. In determining whether to reject a candidate, interviewers must only consider factors relevant to the job.

To show our commitment to equality and diversity, we expect candidates to have an understanding and appreciation of equal opportunities, and the interview panel must therefore include a question on this as part of the questioning (please refer to the interview question template for an example).

Interview panel

The interview panel will comprise three to four staff members at the same or higher grade than the post being advertised. The panel will include the line manager and department Director, and should normally be a mixed gender panel. In some cases e.g. for a Director or 'Head of' level appointment, a Trustee may form part of the panel. An external partner may also make up one of the panellists if agreed by the relevant Director. The line manager should attend both stages of the interview process as a point of consistency, and should be accompanied by one other member of the interview panel at each stage. It may be appropriate for a member of a different team to make up part of the interview panel, to bring a different perspective to the process, and to allow the candidate to speak to a staff member that works in a different area to what they are applying for.

Outcome

The outcome of the interview will hopefully result in at least one appointable candidate. Candidates that are considered not to be appointable should be told verbally or via email by the line manager that they have been unsuccessful, with suitable feedback provided. The successful candidate should be notified as soon as possible via phone and followed up with an offer pack that will be sent from the HR department. The interview panel should discuss if there are other candidates that are alternatives if the first choice of candidate declines, doesn't provide suitable reference, or another suitable position becomes available.

All employment offers should be made subject to satisfactory references, eligibility to work in the UK, and being able to start within the agreed timetable. In addition, any unspent criminal convictions must be declared, and some roles may be offered dependent on being able to complete a basic disclosure with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in line with our safeguarding policy. Once a return email has been received confirming acceptance of the role, remaining appointable (though unsuccessful) candidates can be told of the decision of the panel. Appointable candidates details may be kept on file (with their prior permission) and will be contacted again if the position subsequently becomes available, or another suitable position arises. The HR team will follow up references, draft the employment contract and set up a personnel file for the successful candidate.

If no appointable candidates are identified, the interview panel should refer the recruitment back to the SMT to discuss the next steps, which may involve re-advertising the role, or a review of the job description, person specification, and job grade. SMT may also decide at this point to advertise through an agency, if one has not already been used.

If a candidate is not considered to be appointable for the role interviewed for, but may be suitable for an alternative role, the matter should be referred to the SMT for further discussion.

Document retention

All application forms, recorded criteria and documentation related to short-listing or interviewing (question sheets, task sheets etc.) should be handed to the HR department once the interview process is complete. All documentation will be retained for six months from the appointment of the post. Documentation relating to unsuccessful candidates will then be destroyed (unless as agreed otherwise). Documentation relating to the successful candidate will be kept by the HR department on their personnel file.

Signed off / reviewed by:	Date:	Comments:
RemCo	November 2019	
Next review:	October 2022	