

Language and tone checklist



The language and tone of any job advert can unintentionally restrict diversity. This checklist has been designed to help you design an inclusive job description and advert by outlining some typical criteria. The following criteria are often not crucial factors for success in the role and will significantly narrow the talent pool:

Criteria	Adverse Impact	Potential Groups Affected
Prescriptive years of experience. e.g. '10 years' experience'.	This is now illegal due to age discrimination legislation and cannot be justified as essential to someone's ability to perform in the role. Very few people would intentionally apply for a role that was significantly beyond their current level of experience.	All candidates but especially women and disabled people because they are more likely to have had career breaks and would find it harder to evidence the required length of service.
Full driving license.	This criterion is often included, even when driving is not a key component for the role, or when the role could just as easily be carried out via alternative modes of transport.	This has particular adverse impact on people with certain disabilities who cannot drive but can still travel independently.
Educational Grade Qualifications that can't be easily defended. e.g. A* grades, Upper class Degree/ Masters degree/ PhD.	Whilst this can be a way of sifting high volumes of applications, unless the qualification is essential to the role, it can lead to a very narrow diversity of candidates from a limited social demographic and does not allow for those with transferable skills/experience to come through.	Tends to sift out people from less privileged backgrounds and favours those from top schools and universities.

Criteria	Adverse Impact	Potential Groups Affected
<p>Specifying named degree subjects. e.g. Law degree/ Science etc.</p>	<p>Linked to the point above, this potentially squeezes out suitable candidates who have studied a different subject or have transferable experience. By unravelling the skills and experience required for the role it will often remove the need for this qualification.</p>	<p>Subject choice, particularly at school/undergraduate level is often influenced by family-background and the types of role models that they have been exposed to. Access to high education is often determined by family income therefore, there are some subjects that will exclude, or limit those from less privileged backgrounds.</p>
<p>Technical, or Professional skills that either aren't relevant, or needed immediately. e.g. Presentation skills for a position that does not involve giving presentations or could easily be acquired via in-role training, e.g. PowerPoint skills.</p>	<p>Beware of including skills that aren't required in the role because many people will self-select out if they feel they cannot evidence all the things you are looking for. Think carefully about the types of assessment methods you can use to test these skills.</p>	<p>Research indicates that women are the most likely to count themselves out of applying for a role if they don't exactly match the criteria.</p>
<p>Restrictive working hours that rarely apply. e.g. 'Must be available to work unsociable hours/ work away from home'.</p>	<p>If a role genuinely requires unsociable hours and considerable travel away from home, then it is appropriate to say so, but if these are occasional requirements, this can be covered off with a conversation as most candidates can put adjustments in place to cope with limited demands of this kind. Consider including extra information such as information about expenses, opportunities for childcare and being as specific as possible about locations, dates and times to support the candidate in their application.</p>	<p>Criteria like these are more likely to be off-putting to women, some cultures (where the need to take care of the family is a cultural expectation) and those with carer commitments, or certain disabilities.</p>

Criteria	Adverse Impact	Potential Groups Affected
<p>Implied, or stated requirement to be involved in Extra-Curricular activities. e.g. 'Socialising with the team'.</p>	<p>Some role briefs inadvertently use descriptions and language that subliminally paint a picture that the successful candidate will be expected to take place in team activities outside normal working hours and some people may self-select out because they feel they won't 'fit', or because their personal circumstances don't allow for extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>As above, criteria like these are more likely to be off-putting to females, some cultures/faiths and those with carer commitments, or certain disabilities.</p>
<p>Full time Working Hours. e.g. Stating the role is Full time when it could be done as a job-share, flexi time, or split between home and office.</p>	<p>Explore any opportunities for the role to be delivered in a different way. This will open up the talent pool to diverse talent.</p>	<p>Will impact on those with caring responsibilities, those who supplement their income elsewhere, disabled candidates that require more flexibility.</p>

If you have any questions regarding anything covered in this document or anything else, please email enquiries@theclearcompany.co.uk or call **01925 407400**

The Clear Company have been working to bring about positive change for 16 years and are recognised as global leaders of inclusive talent management insight, training and technology. Established in 2003 clients such as Lloyd's of London, Highways England, Ofcom, The Civil Service, Co-op and PageGroup have taken significant steps on their inclusion journey, becoming leaders in their sectors around hiring and ongoing talent management.

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