

Policy & Procedure – Staff Recruitment and Selection

Date amended:	November 2021
Date of next review:	12/2025
Adopted by:	Chief Executive Officer
Date adopted:	03.12.2021
Responsible officer:	Manager People & Culture
Relates to Policy:	Workforce Management

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Pyrenees Shire Council (PSC) recognises the importance of adopting legally defensible, open, and transparent recruitment and selection practices.

This document provides clear guidelines to uphold the organisation’s commitment to being a merit based and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer by defining the activities associated with the recruitment and selection of employees. By following this policy, the best applicants for positions within PSC will be attracted, selected, and retained.

This document relates to the recruitment and selection of individuals for employment with the Pyrenees Shire Council and affects existing employees who are eligible to compete for vacant positions on merit.

This policy applies to all recruitment processes undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Pyrenees Shire Council.

2 POLICY STATEMENT – RECRUITMENT PRINCIPLES

The Pyrenees Shire Council strives to be an Employer of Choice, attracting and retaining quality employees. To this end, Council will base its recruitment and selection decision-making on the following Principles, in accordance with Section 48(2) of the *Local Government Act 2021*.

Council will -

- a. ensure that all recruitment decisions are based on merit,
- b. support transparency in recruitment processes and the public advertising of positions, and

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- c. have regard to the gender equity, diversity, and inclusiveness measures specified in the Pyrenees Shire Council Workforce Plan 2021.

2.1 Conflicts of interest

Any person involved with the recruitment decision-making process, e.g., interview panels, must declare any knowledge or relationship with an applicant / interviewee. Where a conflict of interest might arise, that person may be excluded from participation in an interview panel.

Where the Officer with a potential conflict of interest is the recruiting manager, that Officer may be allowed to remain on the interview panel, but an additional panel member will be sought to ensure that potential for undue influence is reduced. Where the applicant is a personal family member or close friend of the recruiting manager, they may take part in the interview process but must exclude themselves from the decision-making process in identifying a preferred applicant.

It is acknowledged that many Council Officers know other individuals through interactions or past employment in Local Government and it is not intended that Officers should be excluded simply because they know or have worked with an applicant.

The final decision on action required to manage a conflict of interest related to recruitment will be made by the Manager People & Culture. The management of the conflict of interest must be documented to ensure transparency.

3 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

3.1 Overview

The following provides an overview of what type of recruitment process should be used for different vacancy levels.

Position vacant for up to 2 weeks <i>(e.g., annual leave)</i>	Position vacant for between 2 weeks but less than 3 months <i>(e.g., long service leave)</i>	Position vacant for between 3 months and less than 6 months <i>(e.g., long service leave)</i>	Position vacant for more than 6 months <i>(e.g., maternity leave, new position, or resignation)</i>
No recruitment. May utilise Higher Duties where backfill required. May seek expressions of interest or directly appoint.	Utilise Higher Duties or Secondment processes. Seek expressions of interest.	Utilise Secondment or defined recruitment process.	Must utilise defined recruitment process.
<i>See relevant Policy & Procedure</i>	<i>See Higher Duties Policy & Procedure</i>	<i>Utilise this Policy & Procedure</i>	<i>Utilise this Policy & Procedure</i>

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3.2 Planning for recruitment

Prior to the CEO's consideration of a request to fill a vacant position, the recruiting officer must undertake the following:

- exercise the principles of effective workforce planning, including future workforce needs,
- review the need for the position and determine if it is still relevant to the current structure, or if the requirements of the position have changed,
- assess if the position is suitable for a trainee placement,
- assess if the position is suitable for a secondment opportunity (see 3.2.2. below),
- in consultation with the relevant Director, establish whether the position involves child-related work, and
- analyse and/or develop the skill set and position description to ensure that they reflect the position requirements, are outcome focused and incorporate Equal Employment Opportunities principles.

Complete the 'Recruitment' form with other relevant documentation to support the request and forward to the Manager People & Culture or an Executive Assistant. Vacant positions with a likely duration of **less than three** months may be more appropriately covered using "Higher Duties" arrangements. (see "Higher Duties" Policy & Procedure).

The Manager People & Culture or Executive Assistant will consult with the recruiting staff member on the approval outcome and recruitment strategy.

3.2.1 Secondment opportunities

Secondment arrangements are an important internal personal development opportunity. All vacancies that are being advertised for a temporary or fixed term period ranging from more than 3 months to 6 months will be offered internally as a secondment opportunity. These positions may also be advertised externally depending on the specific circumstances.

3.2.2 Documentation

The staff member, who is responsible for the recruitment (e.g., Supervisor/ Manager) will need to ensure that all relevant documentation is completed, including a revised position description and skill set, and then provided to the Manager People & Culture or Executive Assistant. Incomplete documentation will be returned.

3.2.3 Approvals

The CEO is the only officer who has delegation to approve recruitment for permanent and temporary positions and to approve changes to a position or its placement within the approved organisation structure.

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3.2.4 Ongoing casual or contracted work

For exiting staff members, e.g., due to retirement, the relevant director or CEO has the discretion to offer casual or contracted work without advertising, if there is organisational need.

3.3 Advertising

All positions will be advertised either internally and/or externally, in accordance with the following:

- All long-term vacant positions (i.e., where recruitment is for 6 months or longer) for a Band 6 or above employee must be advertised both internally and externally.
- Vacant positions of less than 6 months, or for Band 5 or lower, may just be advertised internally, but consideration should be given to whether a better outcome might be achieved through external advertising. This is at the discretion of the recruiting officer.
- Where a temporary or acting position becomes permanent, this must be advertised externally and internally.

Where consideration is available to advertise internally only, the recruiting officer should ask, “who is the best person, can I find them internally or do I need to look outside the organisation?” Some points that might support decision-making include:

	Positive	Negative
Internal advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive • Usually quicker • Good for employee morale (motivation) • Benefits succession planning • Encourages long term staff commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ripple effect / need for further backfilling of roles • Internal politics • Lack of fresh ideas
External advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas / perspective • Unique set of knowledge, skills, abilities • Increase in diversity • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Hurts morale • New staff is unproven

Appropriate advertising media will be chosen that are professional, cost effective, and present the role and Council in an attractive manner to ensure a suitable field of applicants.

The Executive Assistant (EA) will determine the advertising media and consult with recruiting officers for clarification if required.

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The EA will prepare advertisements for internal and external media in line with Council’s branding principles, in consultation with the recruiting officer.

The EA will distribute the internal positions vacant notice.

3.3.1 Child-related work

If the position involves child-related work, this must be included in the advertisement.

3.4 Applications

Applications for positions will be required to be completed and submitted according to Council’s ‘Application Cover Sheet’ form.

Applications must be kept confidential, including the identity of applicants and the information contained within therein.

The contact person for the position should be available during the advertising period and give factual information and the position, informing prospective applicants that the recruitment and selection process is based on merit and Equal Employment Opportunity principles.

Applications will be acknowledged within five working days of receiving the application.

Applicants will be contacted within 20 working days following the closing date. This will take the form of personal contact for an interview, an email or letter to inform the applicant they were unsuccessful, or an email/letter advising of a re-evaluation of the vacancy.

3.5 Interview preparation

3.5.1 Interview questions

Interview questions will be developed by the recruiting officer, who will act as the Recruitment Panel Lead. The EA or the Manager People & Culture can be contacted for advice.

Interview questions should be focused on behaviour, selection criteria for the position, and organisational fit, as well as Council’s values and guiding principles. Questions should be returned to the EA with the short-listing information within 1 week of the application closing date.

3.5.2 Interview panels

The interview panel is selected by the recruiting officer. The panel should be selected from Council employees and must not change during the interview process, unless unavoidable. Advice can be sought from the Manager People & Culture if needed. Inclusion of external interview panel members may be considered where expertise is required that is not available internally.

Unless otherwise authorised by the Manager People & Culture, all interview panels must have gender equity balance and include both male and female members. A single gender panel will only be accepted when all interviewees are of the same gender as the panel.

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Responsibilities of an interview panel will be confirmed by the recruiting officer but should include:

- be impartial and unbiased in the selection process (consider any unconscious bias that may present),
- declare any conflict of interest prior to applications being reviewed in detail,
- declare whether they have been nominated as a referee for any of the applicants,
- maintain confidentiality throughout the recruitment process, including disclosing applicants or outcomes of interviews, and
- the recruiting officer will keep all panel members informed throughout the recruitment process.

Interview panel composition should be:

- preferably a minimum of three panel members,
- female and male representation,
- if possible, one panel member should be from a different department than the one which is recruiting.

Shortlisted applicants who are invited to an interview will be informed about the panel members in the lead up to the interview.

The EA will arrange all aspects of the interview, including organizing the venue, preparing interview packs, and scheduling the interviews with the shortlisted applicants.

The EA will notify Council office reception staff of interviews that are being conducted in the Council offices.

3.5.3 Conflict of interest declarations prior to shortlisting

Prior to the shortlisting process, the EA will provide applicant names to the interview panel members.

After reviewing the list of applicants, all panel members must declare in writing to the Manager People & Culture, or nominee, of any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest they may have prior to the commencement of the shortlisting process, in accordance with section 2.1 of this document and Council's Conflict of Interest Procedure.

Any documentation relating to conflicts of interest will be stored on the position file. Clarification on declaring conflicts of interest as they relate to the recruitment process can be obtained from the Manager People & Culture.

When completing the conflict-of-interest declaration form, panel members should consider whether there could be an actual or perceived conflict and, if so, should they remain as part of the process.

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3.6 Shortlisting

Shortlisting must be conducted by at least two panel members within five working days of applications closing. A person who will work closely with the position may also be included in the shortlisting process, even if not part of the interview process, but must ensure confidentiality regarding the process.

It is recommended that shortlisting be undertaken separately and then scoring amalgamated to achieve the shortlist for interview.

Applications must be shortlisted against the selection criteria and based solely on the application. It is an essential requirement that applicants address the key selection criteria in their application, should that be required.

Applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islanders on the application cover sheet will be granted an interview without their application being assessed against the key selection criteria, subject to submission of a full and appropriate / adequate application.

Unsuitable applicants should be excluded after comparing all applications, taking into consideration the essential qualifications criteria, relevant work history, and if there is a reasonable fit to the position and organisation.

Selection of applicants to be interviewed must be logical, transparent, legally defensible, and ensure that gender equality and equal employment opportunity principles are met.

It is recommended that a maximum of five applicants are shortlisted for interview. This number is wide enough to give the organisation a fair view of the applicant pool and narrow enough to ensure resources are not wasted. If a large number of applications meet the selection criteria, it may be decided to carry out shortlisting on the basis of the **most competitive** applications. The **onus is on applicants** to prove they meet the specific requirements of the job (selection criteria).

The shortlisting form must be completed, and this information is referred to if an applicant questions why they were not successful for an interview. If the shortlisting form is returned with insufficient information, the documentation will be returned for completion. If all applicants are unsuitable, the recruitment strategy will be assessed by the Manager People & Culture in consultation with the recruiting officer.

The recruiting officer is responsible for arranging a face-to-face meeting with internal applicants who have not been shortlisted for an interview and provide feedback, including information on their application and potential areas for development. The recruitment process will not continue until this has occurred and the Manager People & Culture notified.

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3.7 The interview

Interviews will be conducted in a structured and professional manner, with the same questions asked of each applicant, with probing or clarifying questions being asked as required. Confidentiality must be maintained regarding applicant identity and information.

Applicants identifying as Aboriginal will be offered the opportunity to bring along an Elder or other support person to ensure and allow for a culturally safe environment.

Should any interviewee request a support person for the interview, this should be permitted.

Individual panel members should ensure that their scoring rationale is consistent for all applicants. It is **not** necessary for all panel members to score applicants the same. Panel members are able to discuss applicant responses prior to determining the appropriate score.

Before concluding an interview, the recruiting officer should confirm the applicant's referees, including that they have as referee their most recent supervisor in employment or study. If an internal applicant has provided a referee who is on the interview panel, at least one other referee must be provided.

At the conclusions of all interviews for the position, the panel will determine a preferred applicant using the results of the interview scoring. The preferred applicant must be that with the greatest merit and will provide the best fit for the position and organisation. The questionnaire form will provide details on the applicant's performance in the interview and justification on the decision by the panel.

Before progressing the recruitment process further, the recruiting officer must contact any internal applicant not selected as the preferred applicant and provide face-to-face feedback on why they were unsuccessful.

After all reference checks have been completed, the recruiting officer must contact the other panel members and advise of the results to ensure that the panel agrees on the preferred applicant. All the panel members must agree on the preferred applicant before the recruitment process proceeds to the next stage. The completed questionnaire form should be returned to the EA or Manager People & Culture.

If a panel cannot decide on a preferred applicant, and a second interview is unlikely to determine an outcome, the recruiting officer should consult with the Manager People & Culture.

A second interview may be appropriate if the panel agrees that a second interview is necessary to further investigate one or more applicants to determine a preferred applicant.

The panel for a second interview must consider of the recruiting officer and one of the other original panel members.

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3.8 Reference checks

Reference checks on the preferred applicant should be conducted by the recruiting officer. Factual information should be obtained from past employers about the applicant's work experience, performance, and behaviours. This information will confirm the applicant's suitability to the role.

Two recent work-related referees must be supplied by the applicant. At least one of the referees must have supervised or managed the applicant in recent employment or study. The referee is not to be given any information or impression that the person may be a preferred applicant.

An internal preferred applicant must provide at least one current referee from the Pyrenees Shire Council, other than any referees who comprised part of the interview panel.

If two or more applicants perform similarly in the interview and a decision cannot be reached, referee checks should be undertaken for all of these applicants to assist in the decision-making process.

Information from the referee checks must be recorded on the Reference Check Form and provided to the EA or Manager People & Culture.

3.9 Unable to decide

If a preferred applicant cannot be agreed upon, panel members should record their choices on the recommendation form. At this stage, it is critical to consult the Manager People & Culture to determine the next stages in the process.

If the position requires re-advertising, the following:

- whether the advertising strategy needs review,
- whether the rate of pay or conditions need reassessment,
- any other matters that would increase the job attraction,
- workforce planning issues, and
- job content and scope.

An appointment should not be made if no suitable applicant is available.

3.10 Additional recruitment tools

The Manager People & Culture can arrange services in addition to compulsory assessments that can be used as part of the recruitment and selection process. Additional assessments / checks may be determined by the recruiting officer in consultation with the Manager People & Culture.

The following assessments or services may be used as part of the overall recruitment strategy to assist in better hiring decisions:

- Qualifications checks,
- Behaviour checks (e.g., Myer Briggs, Disc Profile), and/or

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- Criminal records check.

Where considered appropriate to enhance the recruitment process, additional assessments and checks will be arranged by the Manager People & Culture. All associated costs from assessments and checks will be funded by the recruiting business unit.

3.11 Approval

All relevant recruitment documentation will be submitted to the EA or Manager People & Culture, by the recruiting officer.

All recruitment proposals must be considered and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

3.11.1 Remuneration

Employees will be appointed at Level A of the position's Band, unless otherwise negotiated. If the applicant or recruiting officer wants to negotiate the remuneration, the Manager People & Culture must be consulted prior to any negotiations.

The following issues should be considered when determining if remuneration negotiations should be conducted with a preferred applicant:

- The job evaluation process only reflects grade relativities within Council and does not consider external or market trends.
- The grade of the position reflects the level of authority, responsibility, and skills required for the role within Council.
- Any fringe benefit tax implications need to be considered and minimised where practicable.
- Each situation must be treated on its merits to ensure no precedents are created.
- The use of incentives or benefits must only be used to secure an outstanding job applicant in those areas where supply/demand and external market forces have a significant impact.

3.11.2 Following approval by the CEO

After approval by the CEO, all recruitment documentation will be returned to the recruiting officer. The recruiting officer will then contact the preferred applicant and verbally offer the position to the applicant, gain acceptance, and determine a start date and starting salary.

As soon as possible after receiving verbal agreement from the preferred applicant, the recruiting officer will contact the unsuccessful applicants from the interviews and verbally advise of the outcome. If requested, the recruiting officer must provide constructive feedback on their application and interview.

Once the process is complete, the recruiting officer must return the completed selection report, interview paperwork, and other documentation to the EA or Manager People & Culture.

3.12 Offer of employment

The offer of employment (verbal and written) is a legally binding contract between an employer and employee and this stage of the recruitment and selection process is critical.

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The Manager People & Culture or EA will prepare all related correspondence to successful and unsuccessful applicants and obtain required copies of licences and qualifications from the successful applicant, if not already obtained.

Copies of relevant licences and qualifications relating to the position must either be certified copies, or the originals sighted by the Manager People & Culture prior to commencement.

Recruitment commencement is also subject to satisfactory police checks for all positions and Working with Children checks where the role will be working with children or young people under 18 years of age.

The supervisor of the position will begin preparations for the arrival of the new employee and familiarize themselves with the responsibilities outlined in Council's Induction Program.

3.13 Difficulty in filling a vacancy

On some occasions, it may be identified that there has been, or is likely to be, a difficulty in recruiting for a specific position. In such circumstances, discussions will be held between the recruiting officer, CEO or relevant director, and the Manager People & Culture regarding the options available in terms of alternative recruitment strategies and/or incentive packages.

The services of a specialised employment agency may be engaged in situations involving recruitment challenges. This decision will be made by the relevant director / CO in consultation with the Manager People & Culture.

3.14 Candidate feedback / appeal

Unsuccessful applicants have five working days to lodge an appeal, after being notified that they are unsuccessful. The appeal must be based on the process being unfair with demonstrated evidence, not upon the person's disappointment at being unsuccessful.

4 DEFINITIONS

Recruitment	The process of attracting people to the organisation to fill an employment vacancy.
Recruiting officer	The person who is the recruiting manager and the lead in the recruitment and interview process.
Merit Based Selection	An open and transparent process where applicants for the position are assessed according to their abilities, qualifications, experience, and work performance as they relate to the duties of the position.
Permanent employee (full-time or part-time)	An employee engaged on an ongoing basis and guaranteed set hours each week with continuity of service.

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Temporary employee	An employee engaged in employment that is for a finite or fixed term period.
Casual employee	An employee engaged on a day-to-day basis.
Internal applicants	Employees, who are already employed by Council.
Selection	Reviewing applicants and selecting a suitable applicant who best meets the requirements of the position.
Secondment	The temporary transfer of an existing PSC employee to another position within the organisation whereby at the completion of the temporary period, the employee would return to their substantive (former) position.
Child-related employment	Employment in a role which is primarily in the provision of services to children where there is significant, direct interaction with children which is not directly supervised.
Senior staff	Positions designated as such in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

5 REFERENCE & RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Conflicts of Interests Declaration Procedure
- Recruitment Form
- Position Description
- Advertisement Council's website
- Advertisement media
- Application Cover Sheet
- Application Questionnaire
- Acknowledgement of Application
- Short Listing Form
- Offer of Interview
- Interview Timetable
- Interview Questionnaire
- Reference Check Form

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- Appointment Recommendation Form
- Unsuccessful Applicant (Interviewed)
- Unsuccessful Applicant (Not Interviewed)
- Letter of Appointment

6 CONSULTATION AND IMPACT

Pyrenees Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and its employees. Development of this policy and procedure was conducted in consultation with relevant officers and consultative committees prior to approval.

It has been assessed that this procedure does not impact negatively on the rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2007 or the Gender Equality Act 2020.

7 VERSION HISTORY

Version Number	Issue date	Description of change
1.0		Initial release
2.0	November 2021	Review and revision to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Gender Equality Act 2020.

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