ACT Government

# Merit and Equity for Selection Panels Fact Sheet

## Overview

Merit is the fundamental principle underpinning recruitment and promotion decisions in the ACT Public Sector.

Merit based recruitment is more than legislative compliance. Selection Advisory Committees and Joint Selection Committees, commonly referred to as selection panels, model ACT Public Sector Values by ensuring that decisions and behaviours throughout a recruitment process align with the ACT Public Sector Employment Framework.

### What this means for panels

Plan the process, apply consistent and relevant assessment methods, compare candidates fairly, keep clear records and make recommendations that can be justified.

## Application of the merit and equity principle

The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* sets out five principles for merit based engagement and appointment decisions. The following pages explain how selection panels can apply them in practice.

**1**

### All eligible people have, as far as practicable, are given a reasonable opportunity to apply for selection.

Directorates and agencies meet this requirement by:

- Advertising vacancies accurately on the Careers and Employment website. Advertisements are archived in the ACT Government Gazette.
- Considering the intended audience, how to maximise attraction, what applicants need to know about the process and who can respond to enquiries.
- Including the duties, required capabilities, eligibility requirements, vacancy duration and remuneration to applicants can present relevant evidence.

**2**

### Selection is made on the basis of a comparative assessment

- Selection is based on comparing each candidate with the other candidates in the same process.
- This applies to a single vacancy, multiple vacancies and processes establishing a merit list or merit pool.

- Before assessment begins, agree on the capabilities, experience and behaviours required and how these will be assessed.
- Record the comparative assessment outcomes. These records form the basis of the Selection Report and recommendations to the delegate.

**3**

### Assess qualities genuinely required for the duties

Assessment must focus on the relationship between each candidate's work-related qualities and the qualities genuinely required to perform the duties.

- Ensure all panel members share an understanding of what the role requires.
- Include the current manager or an appropriate subject matter expert where this will help the assessment reflect the position requirements.
- Use one or more suitable methods, such as a written application, resume, referee comments, interview, practical skills test or another method agreed by the delegate.
- Choose methods that give the panel the best opportunity to determine which candidate is best suited to the position.

**4**

### Consider the full range of relevant qualities

Assess relevant abilities, qualifications, experience, personal qualities and potential for development.

- Consider how each candidate demonstrates capacity to achieve the required outcomes of the position.
- Relevant behavioural qualities may include drive, initiative, judgement and the capacity to contribute diverse perspectives and thinking.

**5**

### Confirm eligibility

The panel must ensure that each recommended applicant meets all eligibility requirements for the position.

- Obtain and verify evidence of mandatory qualifications, licences and visa status before finalising the Selection Report.
- Pre-screening questions identify disclosures of criminal behaviour or misconduct. A disclosure does not necessarily affect eligibility or suitability. However, should be addressed by the panel.
- If disclosed information raises a potential concern relevant to the position, it should be referred to the delegate. Applicant must be afforded procedural fairness.

## When merit and equity applies

Merit and equity supports confidence that the ACT Public Sector is an equitable employer and that employment decisions favour the people best able to perform the work. It is good practice to fill any vacancy in a way that supports these principles and produces an outcome that can be justified

as being in the best interests of government.

**The principle must be applied to:**

- Executive positions available for periods greater than nine months
- Permanent positions
- Temporary positions available for periods greater than three months. Noting vacancies of between three and six months may be limited to ACT Government Officers.

## Panel checklist

✓ The advertisement gives eligible people a reasonable opportunity to apply.

✓ The panel has agreed on the position requirements and assessment approach before assessment begins.

✓ Assessment methods are relevant, consistent and capable of supporting a comparative decision.

✓ Recommendations are supported by clear evidence and records.

✓ Eligibility requirements are verified before the Selection Report is finalised.

**Further guidance**

Refer to the ACT Public Sector Recruitment Guidelines and your directorate's Strategic HR team for process specific advice.