

**BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT PROJECT
RESOURCE TOOLKIT**





National Disability Services

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National Disability Services is the Australian peak body for non-government disability services. Through the provision of information, representation and policy advice, NDS promotes and advances services which support people with all forms of disability to participate in all domains of life.

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INTRODUCTION

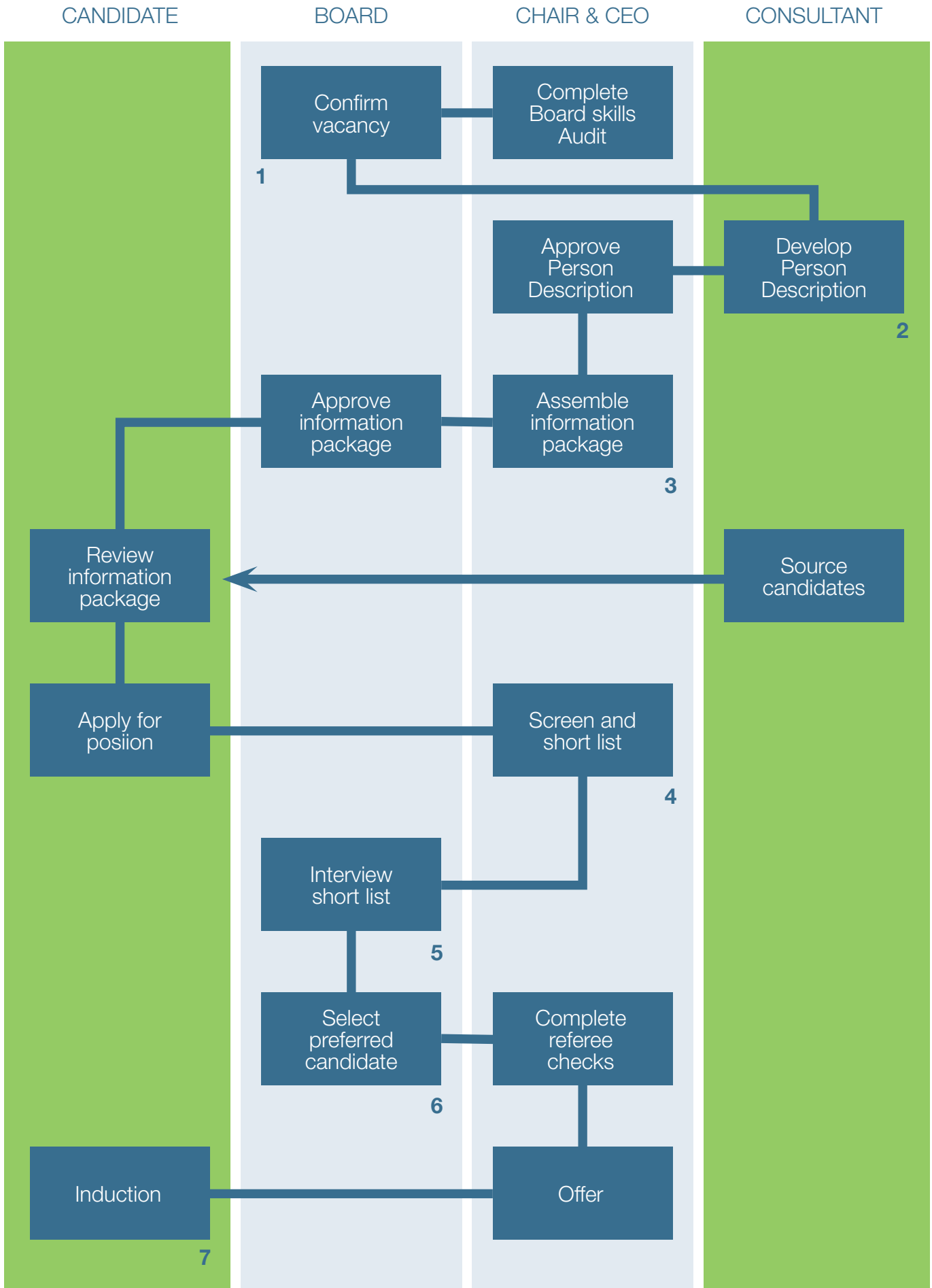
This toolkit was developed by the Nucleus Group for use as part of the IDF funded Board Member Recruitment Service project.

The toolkit is not intended to prescribe a set process, however contains templates and processes that organisations may wish to adapt to suit their individual organisational needs.

This kit includes the following elements (as numbered in the process chart on facing page):

- 1. Board Skills Assessment** – to determine if additional skills are required on the Board.
- 2. Person Description** – the key skills and qualifications sought in a new Board member.
- 3. Information Package** – to be sent to prospective applicants for a Board position.
- 4. Screen and Short List** – assessing information provided by the candidate against selection criteria.
- 5. Interview Short List** – to assess candidate potential.
- 6. Select Preferred Candidate** – how to make decisions in a structured and systematic way.
- 7. Board Induction** – how to ensure new Board members are up and running quickly.

BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT PROCESS



PART 1: BOARD SKILLS ASSESSMENT

A strong Board has a good mix of skills (such as legal, financial, marketing) and competencies (such as timely and effective decision-making, commitment of members and ability to get work completed). Reviewing your Board's function can help achieve the right mix of skills and competencies by:

- Identifying areas where the Board is performing well
- Identifying areas where the Board needs to improve (this can include gaps in knowledge, skills or behaviours that limit the effective functioning of the Board)
- Helping to identify the best people when recruiting new members to the Board.

RESOURCE 1.1

Who does your Board need?

The following checklist will assist to identify the skills and competencies you may require on your Board. Results will direct your search for new Board members.

Each Director should rate their competency against the key Board skills using a 0-3 scale (0=lowest and 3=highest). The final table is reviewed to identify skills missing from the Board as a whole.

BOARD SKILLS ASSESSMENT MATRIX								
KEY BOARD SKILL	CHAIR	VP	TREAS	SEC	1	2	3	4
CEO or enterprise leadership experience								
Industry/sector experience								
Governance/Board experience								
Financial/accounting/audit								
Advocacy/communications								
Fundraising								
Community Relations								
Diversity (eg gender, culture balance)								
Geography (knows our local area)								
Government/public sector relations								
Human resources management								
IT/e-commerce								
Legal/regulatory								
Marketing and sales								
Stakeholder relations								
Risk and controls								
Operational/service delivery experience								
Project management								
Strategic planning								

PART 2: PERSON DESCRIPTION

The decision to recruit a new Board member should begin with an analysis of the position to be filled and types of skills and experiences sought.

A 'person description' is an extension of the traditional position description, appending elements specific to each individual search. Having clear search criteria makes it easier to recruit and ensures an appropriate match of the person to the position.

The Person Description also provides potential new Board members with a clear indication of the duties, accountabilities and outcomes expected of them; it can also form the base for later performance review.

RESOURCE 2.1

Sample Board Member Person Description

[ORGANISATION NAME AND LOGO]	
Position	Board Member
Function	Assist to lead the organisation, optimise performance and ensure compliance with legal requirements Board members are not usually required to be involved in day-to-day operations but should be aware of the activities, services and programs the organisation runs
Term (optional)	X years commencing on (date of AGM or date appointed by Board)
Date of Person Description	
Review	(to be reviewed every two years)

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

A time commitment of approximately [X] hours per month This includes attending Board meetings (held frequency and location) at (time), the annual AGM, relevant sub-committee meetings and commit to (e.g. social functions, travel requirements, personal contributions etc)
Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of governance: policy, programs, finance and/or HR
Willingness to serve on at least one sub-committee and participate actively in its work
High level of commitment to the work of [organisation]
Willingness to invest in developing his/her own governance skills
Be informed of the services/projects undertaken by [organisation] and support them publicly
Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
Be aware of and abstain from any conflict of interest

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in establishing and reviewing [organisation] mission and values • Participate in the strategic planning process • Participate in establishing and reviewing organisational policies • Review and approve the organisation's budget annually
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Board succession including recruitment/ induction of new members • Participate in Board performance review
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor performance against policies and strategic plan • Provide candid and constructive criticism, advice and comments • Participate in major decisions such as program changes and capital expenditure
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor financial performance • Ensure that published reports properly reflect the operating results and financial condition of the organisation • Review compliance with relevant legal requirements • Ensure appropriate risk assessment and management procedures are in place
Advocacy and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the organisation's interests actively within the broader community • Represent the organisation to key agencies and sectors such as government, funding bodies, the community sector and the media

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS	
ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Tertiary qualification in any behavioural science	

EXPERIENCE	
ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Management accountant in large organisation	

PERSONAL QUALITIES AND BEHAVIOURAL TRAITS	
ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Written and verbal communication skills	

Board member Person Descriptions can go a long way to minimise risks, conflicts and uncertainty for the Board as a whole and for each member. If a Board member has a Board-approved Person Description, they have a clearer understanding of their role and responsibilities, more accountability to the position and generally are more comfortable knowing their expected contribution to the Board.

PART 3: INFORMATION PACKAGE

Anyone interested in a position with your organisation should be provided with an information package (as soon as possible after their enquiry). A well-crafted information package can make the whole exercise much more efficient and leads to better quality placements.

The information package should contain:

- What your organisation is all about, what it does, why it exists (this may include an annual report and copy of the strategic plan)
- What the position of Board member entails (this should include the Person Description and may include an annual program of Board meetings, Board training opportunities, Board code of conduct and any key governance policies)
- An overview of the recruitment process including a statement on how the decision to accept a candidate to the Board will be made
- A cover letter from the Chair, thanking the person for their interest and providing application requirements, key deadlines and a confidential telephone number for further information or discussion.

Overall, the information package should be a succinct and easy to read outline on what it means to be a Board member of your organisation. Makes sure it's clearly structured (not just a bundle of papers). Ensure that the cover letter highlights how rewarding it is to oversee an organisation that is making big differences in people's lives.

Applicants should be asked to provide the following documents:

- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae
- Any other supporting documents e.g. transcript, list of publications.

The Person Description contains selection criteria, however applicants should not be asked to address selection criteria directly in their application. For very senior positions, this is considered tedious and may deter some highly skilled candidates from applying.

Similarly, while the decision-making process will require referee information at some stage, many candidates prefer not to provide referees unless they have been shortlisted.

All contact that potential candidates have with your organisation contributes to their views about the organisation. Response to enquiries should always be prompt. Some of the best candidates will only want to discuss their interest with the Chair (or a recruitment consultant), so appropriate arrangements should be in place to ensure calls are returned as soon as practicable (and people are informed if the process is delayed).

RESOURCE 3.1

Sample Board Code of Conduct

The Board should ensure and actively promote ethical behaviour and decision-making as set out in this Code of Conduct. Board members are expected to act with integrity to ensure that the reputation of (organisation name) is managed, protected and enhanced.

Directors are required to meet the following legal obligations:

- Act in good faith and for a proper purpose
- Exercise due care and diligence
- Ensure the organisation does not continue to carry on business if insolvent
- Meet all other requirements of applicable federal and state laws relevant to the structure and operations of the organisation.

Directors are expected to act honestly and in the best interests of the members as a whole and not to represent individual constituents.

Directors are expected to disclose actual/potential conflicts of interest.

Directors are expected to behave responsibly particularly regarding confidential information.

Directors are expected to review Board papers before Board meetings and acquaint themselves with the issues confronting the Board.

Directors are expected to contribute to a positive Board behaviour and culture by showing respect for other Board member's opinions and allowing each member a fair and equal opportunity to contribute to discussion and decision-making.

The Board recognises the importance and value of Board diversity. The Board and its members are expected to promote and encourage equity and inclusiveness throughout the organisation and consider age, gender, cultural background and people with a disability in decision-making.

PART 4: SCREEN AND SHORT LIST

Boards require established screening processes in order to ensure the best match can be obtained. Shortlisting is conducted to determine which applicants should proceed to the next stage of the selection process. Shortlisting is done by assessing the information provided by the candidate against the essential criteria in the Person Description.

Shortlisting may be conducted by a sub-group of the Board or selection panel and generally will involve the Chair and the CEO (although the participation of the CEO is at the discretion of the Board). If participants believe that none of the applicants should be shortlisted, the person description should be reviewed and the market tested again. Applicants should not be shortlisted for the sake of it.

People involved in shortlisting should be provided with all applications including any supporting documents, the Board member Person Description and a selection grid (see resource on facing page).

Applicants who prima facie meet all of the essential criteria should be shortlisted. If a large pool of applicants meets the selection criteria, the panel will decide upon strategies to shortlist a reasonable number of applicants to interview based on the degree to which the applicants meet the criteria and the weighting of each criterion.

It is appropriate to make reasonable adjustments to the selection process to accommodate candidates who have a disability.

Applicants who have not been shortlisted should be notified as soon as possible.

RESOURCE 4.1

Sample Short Listing Record

APPLICANTS	MEETS ESSENTIAL CRITERIA (TICK OR CROSS)			
	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4
Candidate 1				
Candidate 2				
Candidate 3				
Candidate 4				
Candidate 5				
Candidate 6				
APPLICANTS	MEETS DESIRABLE CRITERIA (TICK OR CROSS)			
	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4
Candidate 1				
Candidate 2				
Candidate 3				
Candidate 4				
Candidate 5				
Candidate 6				
APPLICANTS	NOTES			INTERVIEW (YES/NO)
Candidate 1				
Candidate 2				
Candidate 3				
Candidate 4				
Candidate 5				
Candidate 6				

Note: essential and desirable criteria should be transferred to this form from the person specification

PART 5: INTERVIEW SHORT LIST

The interview is a two-way communication between panel members and the candidate. It allows the panel to assess the candidate's potential and enables the candidate to assess the proposed position and environment.

Wherever possible, shortlisted candidates should attend an interview in person. Where this is not possible the selection panel may agree to an alternative, such as telephone interview or videoconference (although this is not optimal).

Each interview should allow sufficient time, be kept similar in structure and ensure the same core questions are asked of each candidate. However, this should not prevent the panel from exploring particular areas of the candidate's experience in relation to the key selection criteria.

Interview questions should be developed, approved by the Chair and forwarded to panel members prior to interviews. Questions should relate to the essential criteria listed in the Person Description.

If you have a large number of candidates to choose from, or are having trouble separating the top one or two, then a second interview may be useful (although this will add to the selection timeframe).

At the start of an interview candidates should be:

- Introduced to the panel members
- Explained the structure of the interview
- Advised they are able to clarify any question at any time.

Before concluding the interview, the candidate should be provided with the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any issue relating to the position or terms and conditions. The panel should advise on the timeline for decision-making and notification of outcome.

RESOURCE 5.1

Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing

DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the introduction period to relax the candidate to gain the most from the interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask competency-based questions to candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be consistent when asking questions. Ask the same core questions of all candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up with probing questions to determine actual behaviour/performance outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend more time on analysing recent events rather than earlier experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phrase questions positively rather than negatively
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the organisation to the candidate where appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a second interview to get more information from the candidate, if required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek information from the candidate relevant to the essential criteria of the Person Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask for specific examples to find out the actual skills and experiences of the candidate

DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the candidate waiting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask long, complex questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask direct or closed questions when you require more information than yes or no
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask leading questions (you will only get the answer the candidate thinks you want)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions already answered in the CV or application (unless verifying information)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Express value judgements or personal opinions in questions or observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask discriminatory questions about age, pregnancy, family responsibilities, sexuality, race, disability, political or religious belief
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be affected by bias, stereotypes, or prior involvement with the candidate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk too much – the candidate should do most of the talking to confirm their qualities and attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make decisions too quickly

RESOURCE 5.2

Question Bank

Refer to the Person Description and list the essential competencies you are looking for. Select questions from the bank below (or construct your own) to test whether the candidate has the relevant competencies.

ASPIRATIONS

- Can you describe the most enjoyable role you have ever had and why?
- Could you please describe an ideal role for yourself?
- What are your short and long term career plans?
- Why did you apply for this role?
- What do you see as your role on a board?

TECHNICAL SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE

- How have you developed your [technical] skills?
- How do you stay current in your area of expertise?
- What have you done in the last year to improve your knowledge?

ACCOUNTABILITY/RESULTS

- In your career, what has been your biggest success?
- What would you say your strongest point was?
- How do you improve the quality of your results?
- What kinds of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me how you solved them?

HANDLING CONFLICTS

- What has been the most difficult situation you have had to deal with at work?
- How do you think you handled the situation and, given the opportunity, would you do anything differently?

DECISION MAKING

- Tell me of a difficult decision you have had to make quickly in recent times.
- How do you normally make decisions in the workplace? Give an example.

LEADERSHIP

- Can you describe a time where you've noticed a way something could be done better and worked to implement the change? How did you get people on board?
- Tell me about your leadership contributions?
- Give me an example of a team performance issue that you resolved?
- Have you ever had to terminate an employee? How did you feel about it?
- Describe your management style?

TEAMWORK

- Tell me how you increased teamwork in a previous group you worked with?
- Tell me about the best team that you have worked in and why it stands out?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to rely on others to achieve your outcomes. How did it make you feel?

QUALITIES

- Can you describe your strengths to me (character and professional)

INDUSTRY AWARENESS

- What experiences have you had working with people of different ethnicities or abilities?
- What do you believe are the biggest influences in the disability sector at the moment?

PART 6: SELECT PREFERRED CANDIDATE

Decision-making is most effective when the collection of candidate information is structured and systematic and carefully evaluated against predetermined criteria (as detailed in the Person Description). A decision-making matrix that can be used by members of a selection panel is attached.

All members of the selection panel have equal rights in participation and discussion. The panel should aim for a unanimous decision, however, if this is not possible, a consensus should be reached. Steps towards consensus include:

- Each panel member should complete the assessment independently (after each interview) and then place the candidates in order of merit
- Each panel member in turn then explains their decision to the rest of the panel (citing evidence where appropriate)
- Differences of opinion should be used for a more thorough consideration of all information.

Panel members should express their own opinions and not change their minds just to avoid conflict and to reach agreement; reasons for the disagreement should be thoroughly discussed. If a panel is unable to reach a consensus, additional information should be discussed to assist in reaching a decision. This should include an additional interview or meeting with the Chair for particular candidates and if a consensus decision is still unable to be reached, the Chair should make the final determination.

The Chair should advise candidates of the outcome as soon as possible. Unsuccessful candidates should be provided with the opportunity for feedback. Feedback should be provided in verbal format only, by the Chair or CEO giving attention to:

- Specific reasons for the decision, having reference to the selection criteria
- Providing examples of where the panel saw experience or skills gaps
- Guarantee of maintenance of confidentiality
- Providing constructive information that may advantage the candidate next time.

If the candidate is the second preferred candidate then it is appropriate to tell them so. Any candidates deemed appointable but ranked second should not be told they are unsuccessful until such time as the successful candidate has accepted.

References are a critical component of the recruitment process and it is important to undertake a thorough checking of the preferred candidate. Reference checking should be conducted by the Chair. It is wise to critically appraise and validate any written or verbal referee statements as referee reports can have limitations.

RESOURCE 6.1

Decision Making Matrix

Note: The Chair should collate the scores from each member of the selection panel

Candidate Name: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Candidate Assessment Process

1. Determine your key selection criteria (see question bank)
2. Determine your weighting for each selection criteria (eg 1 to 5 rating)
3. Distribute matrix to selection panel to score during interviews
4. Total scores = each score x weighting

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA (KSC)	KSC#	SCORE*	WEIGHTING	TOTAL
KSC description	1			
KSC description	2			
KSC description	3			
KSC description	4			
KSC description	5			
KSC description	6			
KSC description	7			
KSC description	8			
KSC description	9			
KSC description	10			
TOTAL				

* Score: 0 = does not satisfy; 1 = partially satisfies; 2 = fully satisfies

RESOURCE 6.2

Referee Report

Candidate Name: _____

Referee Process

1. Develop a set of questions aligned to your Key Selection Criteria (KSC)
2. Use this form to record answers from the referees.

REFEREE NAME		
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT		
RESPONSES		
POINTS TO FOLLOW UP		

