# Step 6: Culling Applications – Longlisting, Phone Screening and Shortlisting

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## 6.1: General Principles

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| **Recommendation** | **Considerations and Actions** |
| Conduct all culling processes with reference to the University’s equity goals and fair processes | * Refer to: [Taumata Teitei,](https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/auckland/about-us/the-university/official-publications/strategic-plan/2021-2030/taumata-teitei-vision-2030-and-strategic-plan-2025.pdf) [Equity Policy](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/equity/equity-policy-and-procedures-.html), [Equity in recruitment, selection and appointment](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/equity-information-for-staff/equity-in-recruitment-selection-appointment.html), [Academic Staff Recruitment Procedures](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/academic-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-procedures.html), [External Recruitment - Professional Staff Recruitment Procedures](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/professional-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-proced.html) * Refer to your faculty or division strategic plan and goals for achieving equity |
| Ensure a robust, structured and consistent process with reference to the pre-determined selection criteria and methods of evaluation, reducing numbers of applications to those who objectively meet the criteria best | * Use an objective an structured process and a pre-determined rating system (*See Appendix 2* for examples and templates and the Star Rating in Smart Recruiters[[1]](#footnote-1)) and rate each applicant against criteria * Criteria is based on the essential criteria already documented in the role description and advertisement * For each criterion determine the evidence and standards required for assessment * Weighting of the most important (or all) criteria can give a more nuanced assessment [[2]](#footnote-2) * Weightings could be a percentage value or numerical, eg, Weight the most important criteria 3, then scale to 2 and 1 for other criteria. [[3]](#footnote-3) * if you wish to recruit a particular demographic, e.g. women, Pacifica, consider reviewing their applications first * If reviewing a very long list, mitigate bias occurring due to tiredness, time pressure etc, and consider having each member of the committee starting at different points of the full list, ie. avoid everyone reviewing applications in the same order. |
| Ensure decisions are made by the whole committee | * [Academic](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/academic-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-procedures.html) and [Professional](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/professional-staff-recruitment--selection-and-appointment-proced.html) Staff Recruitment Procedures require the whole committee to be involved in long/short listing * Group decisions are generally less biased than individual ones, partly because they generate more diverse ideas and partly because we are better at seeing bias in others than ourselves. * Longlisting or phone screening may be undertaken by a subgroup of the selection committee provided there is agreement with the whole committee on the criteria being assessed and the sub-committee document and are fully accountable for their decision-making process |
| Ensure everyone involved with the process is aware of the impact of bias and assumptions  *(See also Step 2: Selection Committee membership)* | See [Unconscious Biases](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/about-equity/unconscious-bias-.html) and [Common decision-making biases](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/about-equity/unconscious-bias-/common-decision-making-biases-.html)  **Research:**  Common gender biases found to occur in the workplace include: men’s performance is overestimated compared to that of women; women’s success is attributed to luck and men’s to skill; men are evaluated on potential while women on achievement; and women are negatively evaluated for exhibiting ambition or assertiveness while these are praised in men.[[4]](#footnote-4), [[5]](#footnote-5) |
| Recognise equivalent qualifications and the value of skills and competencies acquired outside the paid workforce  *See also Step 4: Selection Criteria* | * Recognise different patterns of labour force participation by workers who are undertaking unpaid and/or caring work[[6]](#footnote-6). * Consider [Achievement Relative to Opportunity](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/equity/merit-relative-to-opportunity-policy-and-procedures-.html) in assessing applicants performance where there may be career gaps or periods of reduced work productivity * Women and Māori may have acquired necessary skills and abilities through experiences in caring, voluntary, and community work and mahi aroha * Māori and Pacific applicants are statistically likely to have spent less time than others in higher education which may be reflected in their qualification levels, even though they may have the required experience[[7]](#footnote-7) * Fairly evaluate overseas qualifications; See NZQA [Recognition of Overseas Qualifications](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/international-qualifications/) |
| Identify any conflicts of interest | * Check for any [Conflicts of interest](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/university-organisation-and-governance/legal/conflict-of-interest-policy.html) with committee members, eg, being named as a referee, being an academic supervisor, having close professional or personal associations * Where conflicts of interest are identified the committee member should, depending on the significance of the conflict, either, withdraw from the committee altogether or withdraw from final discussions about the applicant |
| Include more than one person from an un/under-represented group on the list for interviewing | Longer and diverse shortlists increases the consideration and success of female applicants in male dominated domains and in some instances of males in female dominated areas  **Research**   * A study in 2016 found that if there is only one woman being interviewed (along with male applicants), she has statistically no chance of being hired but when there is more than one woman being interviewed, it is 67% more likely the hire will be a woman.[[8]](#footnote-8), * Another study in 2021[[9]](#footnote-9) found that longer short-lists (6 applicants rather than 3) are more likely to include applicants who don’t meet the gender prototype for the role |
| Avoid applicant’s social media accounts | * Avoid searching applicant’s social media; they don’t verify positive job-related information and are used almost exclusively to reject candidates based on a subjective reaction[[10]](#footnote-10) |
| Monitor the outcomes of your process. | * Consider the following questions:   + Does final list result in a gender balance?   + Are the number of Māori and other equity groups represented at least in proportion to their application rate? |
| Contact shortlisted applicants about next steps | * Advise shortlisted applicants of any tests, presentations and interview procedures * Provide clear information and directions regarding venue * Ask if they require reasonable accommodations or [whanau](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/human-resources1/recruitment--appointment-and-induction/interviews-involving-whnau-procedures-.html) or other support people to accompany them * Provide information to shortlisted applicants on the salary range and whether an offer is negotiable |

## 6.2: Longlisting

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| **Recommendation** | **Considerations and Actions** |
| Committee involvement | * If it is not possible for the whole committee to be involved in the longlisting process, it may be undertaken by a subgroup of the Selection Committee provided they assess against clear pre-agreed long-listing criteria and provide transparent records and accountability to the whole committee of their decision-making   **See 6.1: General Principles** |
| Reduce very large numbers of applications to a more manageable list with a robust, structured and consistent process | * Longlist criteria are based on the objective criteria that are inherent to the job and clearly documented in the role description and advertisement * The committee uses a (pre-determined) criteria *(see Appendix 2)* where applicants are assessed and rated against the criteria   **Examples**  A common rating scale is: 0 = doesn’t meet criteria; 1= meets criteria; 2 = exceeds criteria  SmartRecruiters has the option of using a star rating (with 1\* being 'strong no' through to 5\* being 'strong yes') [[11]](#footnote-11)   * Selectors add comments which would refer to evidence and quotes from the documentation to support their rating * Assessment can only be based on the information on the applicant’s qualifications and experiences in the application materials; Attributes and competencies can only be assessed in an interview, presentation or work task, not from a CV. |
| Anonymised CVs can reduce bias in the selection process | There is significant evidence[[12]](#footnote-12),[[13]](#footnote-13),[[14]](#footnote-14) that anonymised applications, (that is removing information that could lead to bias such as name, gender, age, address, nationality, university attended, etc.) reduces biases in selection.  **Case Study 1:**  The Centre for Ethical Leadership, University of Melbourne undertook interventions with three Victorian Government departments and found women, overseas born applicants and applicants from lower ranked socio-economic suburbs were more likely to be shortlisted and hired after CV de-identification[[15]](#footnote-15).   * However, there is also evidence[[16]](#footnote-16) that anonymizing CVs may be counterproductive, if efforts are being made to see membership of an equity group as a positive characteristic; Or, if not done in a structured context. Additionally, there is concern that it may not take the whole person into account[[17]](#footnote-17). * Check with faculty/division Kaiarahi as to whether CV anonymised recruitment is culturally inappropriate for Māori[[18]](#footnote-18).   **Case Study 2:**  In 2018, Macquarie University trialled anonymised longlisting for recruitment in the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Initially done manually, a computerised system is being piloted in 2019-2021. |

## 6.3: Phone Screening

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| **Recommendation** | **Considerations and Actions** |
| Phone screening is sometimes used instead of longlisting when there are fewer numbers. | * Phone screening may be useful for checking on non-negotiables or deal breakers as well as clarifying factual information on application documents * Phone screening can lead to biased judgements if not managed well, particularly as it is usually conducted by only one person. * Mitigate assumptions and biases based on accent, voice quality, language choice, use of silences and differences due to hearing or speech impediments by:   + Checking in advance for any accessibility needs   + Assess against very clear pre-agreed objective criteria, usually only the non-negotiables   + Phone screening cannot assess attributes, competencies or fully assess motivation   + Ensure transparent records and accountability to whole committee |

## 6.4: Shortlisting including video screening

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| **Recommendation** | **Considerations and Actions** |
| Committee involvement to ensure a robust, structured and consistent process | * Shortlisting should be done by the full committee; if this is not possible, a sub-committee assesses against very clear pre-agreed objective criteria, ensures transparent records and accountability to whole committee |
| Shortlisting reduces the number of applications to those who demonstrate that they meet the advertised or longlisted criteria best and are suitable for interview | * Shortlist criteria is based on the objective essential criteria already documented in the role description and advertisement * Use a criteria matrix *(See Appendix 2)* ranking (and weighting) agreed criteria in order of importance (before viewing any applications) * For each criterion determine the evidence and standards required for assessment. * If assessing from documents alone, this must be based on the information in the application materials and the applicant’s qualifications and experience and not assumptions, particularly about gaps. * Attributes and competencies cannot be assessed from a CV.   **See also Step 4 Selection Criteria** |
| Having a longer shortlist and shortlisting more than one female or member of an equity group can result in more equitable outcomes | * Strategies such as shortlisting more than one member of an equity group and having a longer shortlist (eg, 6 rather than 3) increases the number of under-represented groups success. (*See above under Key Principles 6.1)* |
| When shortlisting by video, take care to mitigate any possible biases | * Involve the whole committee or if by sub-committee, they assess against very clear pre-agreed objective criteria, ensuring transparent records and accountability of decision making to whole committee * Check in advance for any accessibility needs * Ensure in advance that technology is appropriate and working * Have a Plan B for technology failure * Avoid distractions by encouraging (providing) use of plain (digital) backgrounds * Be aware of the biases of first impressions [[19]](#footnote-19)and appearance [[20]](#footnote-20) * Be aware that it takes a higher level of energy for everyone to keep attention and for the applicant to remain confident and authentic over video * Use a criteria matrix for assessment as described under Key Principles above   ***See also Step 7: Interviewing and virtual interviews*** |

1. [Short Listing in SmartRecruiters](file:///C:\Users\cwal774\AppData\Local\Temp\Advertised%2002%20Review%20and%20shortlist%20candidates.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Fenchurch. The importance of weighting selection criteria](https://www.fenchurch.com.au/resources/How-to-weight-selection-criteria.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca › gov › careers › weighting\_guide](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/for-hiring-managers/resources-for-hiring-managers/weighting_guide.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Gender and Racial Bias in Engineering J Williams 2016](https://research.swe.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/10/16-SWE-020-Work-Study-10_20_16-CP.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Searching for Excellence and Diversity](https://wiseli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/662/2018/11/SearchBook_Wisc.pdf) University of Wisconsin 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Recruitment Guidance](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/Workforce-and-Talent-Management/Implementing-the-Gender-Pay-Principles-and-removing-gender-bias-in-recruitment-processes.pdf) Public Service Commission 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Recruitment Guidance](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/Workforce-and-Talent-Management/Implementing-the-Gender-Pay-Principles-and-removing-gender-bias-in-recruitment-processes.pdf) Public Service Commission 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Johnson, S.K., Hekman, D.R., & Chan, E.T. 2016. [If There’s Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There’s Statistically No Chance She’ll Be Hired](https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired). ***Harvard Business Review***. April 26, 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-01033-0> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [Sullivan, J. 2018](https://www.ere.net/the-top-10-reasons-why-social-media-background-checks-are-a-dumb-idea/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [Short Listing in SmartRecruiters](file:///C:\Users\cwal774\AppData\Local\Temp\Advertised%2002%20Review%20and%20shortlist%20candidates.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Steinpreis, Anders & Ritzke (1999) *Sex Roles*, 41, 509 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Moss-Racusin *et al* [www.pnas.org/content/109/41/16474](http://www.pnas.org/content/109/41/16474). 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [M Wilson, 2005 University of Auckland](http://www.uabr.auckland.ac.nz/files/articles/Volume11/v11i2-a-rose-by-any-other-name.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. [Recruit Smarter Victoria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328280923_Recruit_Smarter_Technical_Report_Victorian_Government_Melbourne) 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [Krause et al 2012](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256044092_Anonymous_Job_Applications_in_Europe)  [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [People management UK 2019](https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/blind-recruitment-secret-perfect-hire) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [Recruitment Guidance](https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/Workforce-and-Talent-Management/Implementing-the-Gender-Pay-Principles-and-removing-gender-bias-in-recruitment-processes.pdf) Public Service Commission 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <https://hbr.org/2020/11/reinventing-the-leader-selection-process> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140214111207.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)