

Contemporary HRM

Recruitment and Selection

Dr Kirsteen Grant

K.Grant@napier.ac.uk

Room 2/38, Craiglockhart

Session objectives

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the different perspectives in relation to recruitment and selection
- Critically analyse the different stages of 'best practice' recruitment and selection processes
- Discuss current trends, issues and controversies within the recruitment and selection process

Recruitment and selection

Broad and narrow definitions:

- **Broad** definitions tend to use the terms recruitment and selection interchangeably to mean the whole process, usually based on 'best practice' approaches
- **Narrow** definitions see recruitment and selection as different but interlinked activities

Definitions

‘The terms ‘recruitment’ and ‘selection’ are often considered together, but they are in fact **distinct** activities. While recruitment involves actively soliciting applications from potential employees, selection techniques are used to decide which of the applicants is best suited to fill the vacancy’ (Taylor, 2005:166).



Why is it important?

‘The importance of ensuring the selection of the right people to join the workforce has become increasingly apparent as the emphasis on people as the prime source of competitive advantage has grown’
(Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:189)

‘Nothing matters more in winning than getting the right people on the field’
(Welch and Welch, 2005:81)

Why take a holistic approach?

Recruitment is often seen as a **preliminary** activity for the selection process.

- ‘A process which aims to attract appropriately qualified candidates for a particular position from which it is possible and practical to select and appoint a competent person or persons’ (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010:156). **However:**
- ‘Recruitment supplies the candidates for the selector to judge. Selection techniques cannot overcome the failures in recruitment; they merely make them evident’ (Watson, 1994:203; in Marchington and Wilkinson, 2005:171)

Perspectives in recruitment and selection

- Traditional psychometric approach – we know what we want (organisational perspective) and can set criteria to find it – dominant view in literature – ‘best practice’
- ‘Best fit’ or ‘exchange approach’ (applicant perspective), recruitment and selection is a two-way process (Illes; in Storey, 2007)

Discussion:

- What do you think of the ‘applicant perspective’ – is it apparent in modern R&S? Is it changing?
- What factors might impact on potential applicants’ choices?

Factors impacting upon the recruitment and selection process

- Geographical location; industry; sector; size
- Organisational strategy; HR plans; organisation of HR activities – centralisation and decentralisation
- Economy and labour markets - supply of job applicants with the skills required
- Demographic and social factors
- Employment law
- The nature of the job itself

What UK laws do you need to be aware of when carrying out the recruitment and selection process?

-?
-?
-?
-?
-?
-?

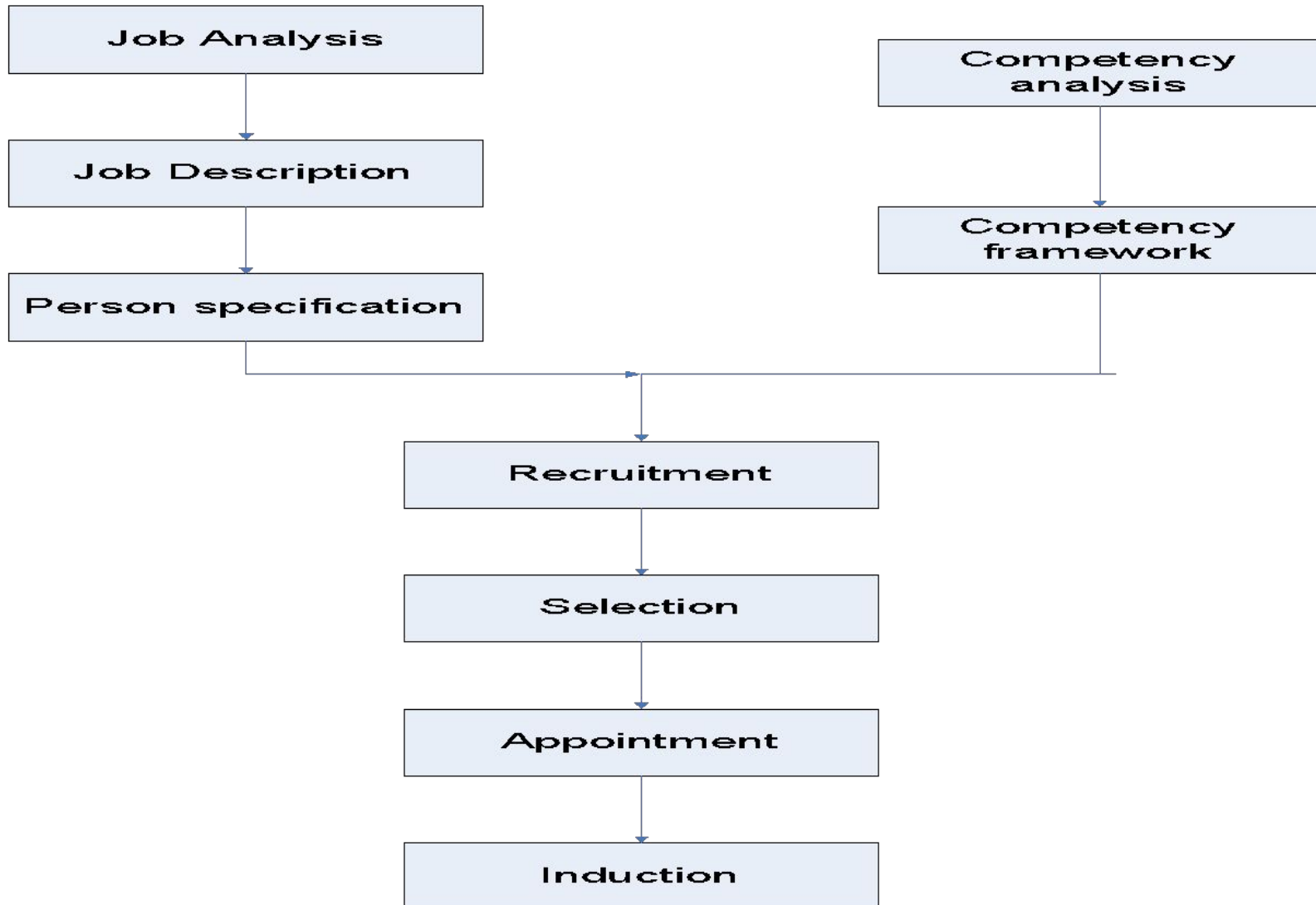


Potato
Boy

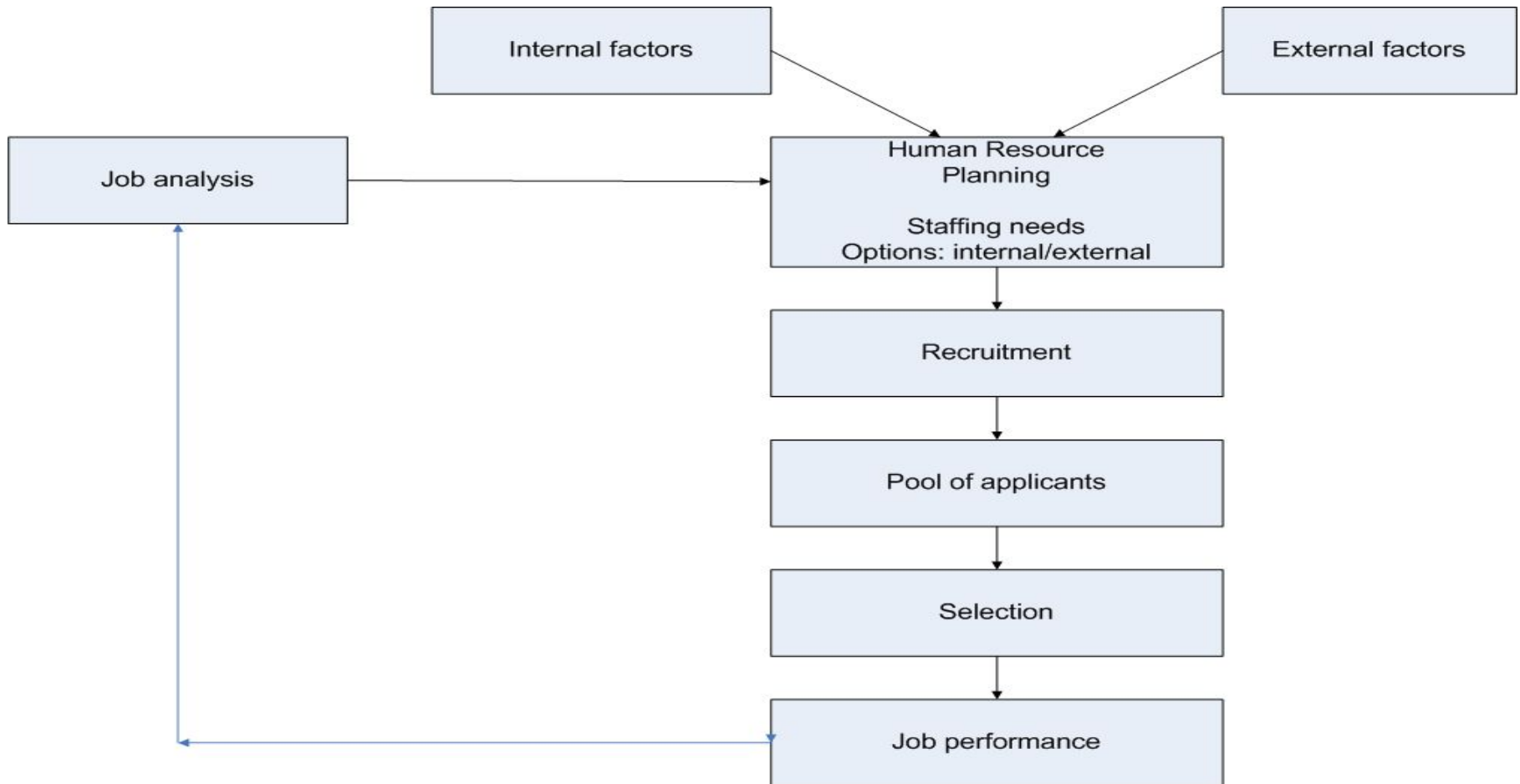
REQUIRED.

Apply within

Stages in 'good practice' R&S (Taylor, 2005:145)



Stages of recruitment and selection (Bratton and Gold, 2007:241)



Recruitment – job analysis

Traditional ‘**best practice**’ approach:

- Identifying the nature of the job and the personal qualities that will be required of the job holder
- An alternative approach – **competencies**

(Competencies are ‘**soft skills** that are associated with **underlying characteristics of individuals** (such as motives and traits) which are evidenced through sets of intentional behaviour patterns which people input to a broad organisational context’ (Boyatzis, 1992; in Taylor, 2005:156))

Job analysis

- ‘ A systematic procedure for obtaining detailed and objective information about a job, task or role that will be performed or is currently being performed’ (Pearn and Kandola, 1993:1)
- ‘... while essentially being a technical administrative task, job analysis can be convincingly characterised as a process that adds value to an organisation’s activities’ (Taylor, 2005:143)

Job analysis methods

- Observation – work study techniques
- Interviews: individual/ group/ structured/ unstructured
- Interview with manager
- Critical incidents (Flannigan, 1950s) – focus on specific events and associated behaviours for success or failure
- Questionnaires
- Panel of experts
- Worker logs/diaries



Each method has advantages and disadvantages.

Typical Job description

- Job title
- Grade/rate of pay
- Main location
- Supervisor's name/post
- Details of any workers for whom responsible
- Summary of the main purpose
- List of principal duties

(Foot and Hook, 2005:80)

Person specifications

Majority of respondents use:

- Qualifications
- Skills and knowledge
- Experience
- Personal attributes

(IRS, 2003b:47; in Taylor, 2005:153-4)

Job description and person specification activity...

Job title:	Reporting to:
Location:	Nature/Purpose of job:
Main duties/ tasks/ KRAs or outcomes:	Hours of work:
	Salary:
Essential Criteria	Desirable criteria
Qualifications:	
Knowledge and skills:	
Experience:	
Personal qualities and attributes:	



Employer branding and the psychological contract

- Organisational perspective – research in this area suggests that employers are using employer branding as a competitive advantage strategy (CIPD, 2016).
- Applicant perspective - realistic job previews (Taylor, 2005) and the **psychological contract**

An employer brand is a set of **attributes and qualities** – often intangible – that makes an organisation **distinctive**, promises a particular kind of **employment experience**, and appeals to those people who will thrive and perform their best in its **culture**' (Walton, 2008:3)

Attracting candidates through branding

Occupational group	All respondents	Private services	Not-for-profit	Public services
Organisational values	50	46	68	52
Career development opportunities	37	43	18	34
Organisation's pay and benefits	37	39	31	32
Working practices, for example flexible working, performance	35	34	33	43
Perception of organisation in the marketplace	26	29	21	19
Organisation's goals and strategy	24	23	28	27
Perception of organisation in society	17	10	37	29
Physical workplace	16	17	14	16
Leadership	12	12	12	12
Employee communications and involvement	9	11	7	6
Corporate social responsibility agenda	7	6	13	7
Use of technology	6	9	1	2
Diversity and inclusion agenda	5	4	5	7
Other: (please specify)	3	3	0	1

PLEASE, JUST CALL ME MARIO.
WE LIKE TO KEEP THINGS
INFORMAL AROUND HERE.



search ID: pton117

© Original Artist
Reproduction rights obtainable from
www.CartoonStock.com

PIERO
TONIN

Recruitment – attracting candidates

Internal sources	External sources

What are some of the sources, and advantages and disadvantages of using them?

Table 11: Effective attraction methods, by sector (% of respondents)

	All respondents	Manufacturing and production	Private sector services	Not-for-profit	Public services
Own corporate website	74	59	73	83	82
Professional networking sites, for example LinkedIn	60	55	73	40	50
Commercial job boards	58	51	67	53	46
Recruitment consultants	52	68	59	44	30
Social networking sites, for example Facebook	40	31	43	45	38
Apprenticeships	29	35	27	23	34
Specialist journals/trade press	28	22	20	38	45
Links with schools/colleges/universities	28	27	30	27	25
Encourage speculative applications/word of mouth	27	31	31	29	16
Professional referral schemes	26	24	36	14	13
Local newspaper, online or in print	21	17	12	34	39
Search consultants	20	20	20	17	22
Jobcentre Plus	15	15	11	22	22
Secondments	14	8	14	15	19
National newspaper, online or in print	12	2	4	25	32
Alumni (previous employment)	10	8	13	10	6
Links with local organisations making redundancies	8	13	9	8	3
Local Employment Partnership (LEP)	3	3	3	1	4
Other	5	4	4	7	5
Base	820	143	396	106	175

Evaluating recruitment

- ACAS (2006) recommends that evaluation is carried out using the following headings:
 - Effectiveness
 - Efficiency
 - Fairness



Case study

Group activity – case study 3.1



Answer the questions in relation to e-recruitment at **Mercado Supermarkets** (Redman and Wilkinson, 2013:105).

Social media



Recruitment – some conclusions

- ‘Best practice’ and the law
- Can there be a best practice approach?
- Need to consider recruitment from both an organisational and candidate perspective
- Need to evaluate recruitment activities



Selection

‘A process which involves the application of appropriate techniques and methods with the aim of **selecting, appointing** and **inducting** a competent person or persons’ (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2006: 143)

The selection process

Effective selection procedures are the foundation of any successful HR strategy!

- The selection decision is always subjective, but the choice of selection method and the way in which the process is carried out can make it much less of a lottery
- In the UK ‘the frequency of a methods use is inversely related to its known validity’ (Robertson and Makin, 1986)
 - Organisations use the *most straight forward* and *least expensive* methods
 - These tend to be the methods that are *expected and accepted* by prospective employees

The classic trio

‘When applying for a job, most people expect to have to fill in an **application form**, attend one or more **interviews** and then receive an offer of employment subject to satisfactory **references** being provided by the referees they have named’ (Taylor, 2005:199).

Additional methods

- Psychometric tests:
 - Aptitude and ability (e.g. verbal, numerical, spatial, abstract reasoning)
 - Personality and interests
 - Biographical
 - Performance-based
- Mixed methods:
 - Assessment centres
 - In-tray exercises

Common selection methods

Table 13: Selection methods, by survey year (% of respondents)

	2017 survey	2015 survey	2013 survey	2011 survey*
Competency-based interviews	78	77	82	70
Interviews following contents of CV/application form	74	83	71	63
Tests for specific skills	53	52	55	49
General ability tests	41	47	45	23
Assessment centres	39	38	43	35
Literacy and/or numeracy tests	38	45	45	38
Personality/aptitude questionnaires	35	36	42	35
Group exercises (for example role-playing)	24	27	28	21
Online tests (selection)**	23	24	22	n/a
Pre-interview references (academic or employment)	16	22	22	9
Tools to enable self-selection***	4	3	0	0
Gamification***	2	1	0	0
Analytical algorithms to match people to roles***	1	1	0	0
Other	2	5	6	3

Base: 691 (2017); 505 (2015); 460 (2013); 605 (2011)

*This question was not included in the 2012 survey. **This response option was added in 2013. ***This response option was added in 2015.

Choosing appropriate selection methods

- Validity
- Reliability
- Acceptability
- Appropriateness
- Abilities of the staff involved
- Administrative ease
- Time factors
- Accuracy
- Cost

(Torrington *et al.*, 2005:144)

Validity

Does the method measure what it purports to measure?

- **Face validity** - how relevant the method appears to be for the particular job/type of work?
- **Content validity** - are the assessed factors relevant to the job/organisation?
- **Empirical validity** - has the method been shown in practice to predict job suitability?
- **Predictive validity** - study the performance of employees *after* they have been recruited. Which predictions of their performance, made on the basis of the interview or test, are confirmed in practice?

Reliability

Does the method used give consistent results over time?

- The extent to which different interviewers agree in their evaluation of a candidate
- Would two skilled interviewers have obtained the same relevant information?

Trends in selection practice

- More valid and reliable assessment tools
- Greater use of high validity assessment tools
- Increasing importance of assessing non-cognitive qualities (**emotional intelligence**)
- Increasing use of bespoke simulations
- Online delivery of assessment

(Redman and Wilkinson, 2009:98-9)

What do organisations actually do?

- In spite of their relatively low validity, interviews are still the most popular selection tool
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of organisations use structured interviews around competency-based questions (CIPD, 2007)

Interviews

Types:

- On-to-one
- Panel
- Group

Structure:

- Unstructured
- Semi-structured
- Structured

Questioning

- Situational questions (Latham, 1980)
- Behaviour patterned descriptive interviews
(**behavioural interview**) (Janz, 1996)

Situational interviews

- Instead of past behaviour, this interview focuses on **hypothetical situations** and explores candidates' potential or future behaviour (Latham, 1980)

Example:

You are the new HR manager in the manufacturing plant and the boiler is not working properly. The temperature has dropped below the legal minimum and the shop-floor workers are threatening to walk out. Production is already underway for the week. What would you do?

Behavioural patterned description interviews (BPDI's) (Janz, 1986)

- Past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour
- Rich detail re. what was done and underlying motivations – asking the how and why questions
- Usually developed through job analysis and critical incident technique to uncover which critical categories of behaviour underpin effective performance
- Shown to have high predictive reliability and validity (Anderson and Shackleton, 1993)

Example:

'Tell me about a time...'



Group discussion

- What types of selection processes and interviews are you familiar with?
- What types of questions are used?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches?
- How do you think organisations could improve their selection processes?
- Think about selection techniques for the job description and person specification you drew up earlier.

Some conclusions

- Recruitment and selection are different, but linked activities

Two main approaches:

- Psychometric approach – measurement of pre-defined attributes – ‘best practice’
- ‘Best fit’ approaches – person-organisational fit
- Internal context and external environments affect organisational recruitment and selection decisions