# Inclusive Hiring Resources

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## Inclusive Job Descriptions and Adverts

Part of St Mary’s commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is to ensure all of our job descriptions are welcoming and inclusive, and not inadvertently off-putting or exclusionary to specific groups (i.e. female candidates or candidates with disabilities). Here are some tips to ensure your JD is inclusive:

* **Consider language carefully - ask yourself:**
  + Is there any wording that might unnecessarily dissuade candidates from specific groups from applying?
    - Examples: young, mature, active
  + Is there any *gendered language* that might dissuade candidates from other genders from applying?
    - Can you use the pronoun ‘they’ instead of ‘he’ or ‘she’?
    - Other examples: serviceman, repairman, cleaning lady
    - Try using the [Gender Decoder](https://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/) to find any subtle gendered language in your JD or advert
    - Learn more:Watch [‘Gendered language to avoid’](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/search?keywords=gendered%20language&u=90562354) (3-minute watch) and read [Inclusive Language: Words to use and avoid when writing about disability](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability)
* **Review the list of skills and qualifications that are ‘essential’ to the role – ask yourself:**
  + Is every ‘essential’ criterion absolutely necessary to carry out the role? Might one or more criteria unnecessarily dissuade candidates from specific groups from applying?
    - Example #1:“5 years in a similar role” – does this exclude candidates who have taken career breaks or worked in other roles with relevant skills?
    - Example #2: “Degree in Marketing or Communications” – does this exclude candidates who have extensive experience rather than a degree or have a different degree but also relevant Marketing/Communications experience?
    - Example #3:“Valid driver’s license” – does the individual *need* to drive or do they need to travel to campus reliably? If the latter, changing to “Access to reliable transport” is more inclusive of some applicants with disabilities
    - Learn More:Read [‘6 Tips for Inclusive and Unbiased Recruitment Writing’](https://hiring.monster.com/employer-resources/monster-training/job-ads/6-tips-for-inclusive-and-unbiased-recruitment-writing/)

## Diverse Advertising Resources

There is a list of specialist recruitment websites available to St Mary’s on the website [here](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/hr/recruitment-and-attraction/advertising-your-role.aspx). This includes websites aimed at attracting diverse candidates. Some (but not all) of these have an additional cost, chargeable to the departmental budget.

## Providing Reasonable Adjustments

As a [Disability Confident employer](https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/), we are committed to anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled workers are not disadvantaged when applying for jobs at St Mary’s. Information about reasonable adjustments required by applicants is collected at the invitation to interview stage by the HR Team, who will work with you to make the necessary arrangements.

There is no definitive list of what is considered reasonable, and it will be up to the employer to carefully consider any requests for reasonable adjustments, taking into account:

* Affordability
* Practicality
* Whether the adjustment will remove or reduce the disadvantage to the disabled person
* The health and safety of others

**All recruitment processes should include the following adjustments** (from the [Disability Confident Line Manager’s Guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-and-cipd-guide-for-line-managers-on-employing-people-with-a-disability-or-health-condition)):

* Ensuring that the interview room is accessible or appropriately equipped
* Allowing a support worker to attend an interview if required
* Offering communication support if needed
* Adapting tests or selection exercises, for example, by granting some additional time for completion, or questioning whether timed tests are needed at all.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments candidates may ask for include:

* Request to change/alter location of the interview, such as holding it on the ground floor for a wheelchair user or dimming down the lights for an individual with epilepsy
* Offering more time/additional breaks where the individual is being assessed for a sustained period. This can be particularly useful for neuro diverse candidates
* Avoiding nested questions (a question within a question) – which may be challenging for neuro diverse candidates
* Providing an interpreter for a candidate who communicates using sign language
* Being prepared to repeat questions when asked to do so and be comfortable with any pauses from a candidate before/while answering questions as they process and formulate their response
* Providing any written or visual material in an accessible format – our [Digital Accessibility Guidance](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/it/it-self-service/digital-accessibility/digital-accessibility.aspx) may provide helpful for this adjustment

### Discussing disability, health and reasonable adjustments with candidates

Remember, as the hiring manager, you can’t ask questions about an individual’s health or disability during the recruitment process (except in rare circumstances\*). However, it’s important to ask all applicants whether they need particular adjustments or arrangements for any part of the recruitment process, especially at interview.

\*For some jobs, certain disabilities may directly impact the individual’s ability to perform the role (e.g. a significant visual impairment would prevent someone from driving). If this a potential concern, first ensure that the job requirement is genuinely essential for the role and could not be accomplished in another way, then consult with your HR Business Partner. **Do not raise this with a candidate unless instructed to by HR.**

If you need any assistance in this area please reach out to your HR Business Partner or a member of our Recruitment Team by emailing [hrhelpdesk@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:hrhelpdesk@stmarys.ac.uk).

## How to Remove Bias in Shortlisting

To remove bias from your shortlisting process, ensure you adhere to Section 4 in our [Recruitment and Selection Guidelines](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/hr/docs/recruitment/recruitment-and-selection-guidelines.pdf) and also take these steps:

* Ensure your screening and selection panel has a minimum of 2 people
* Clearly identify (and stick to) the shortlisting criteria, checking in with yourself and your fellow panellists as you shortlist to ensure potential biases aren’t sneaking into the process. Examples of potential bias include:
  + **The ‘similar to me’ effect:** shortlisting a candidate because they have a similar educational or work background, or live in a place you lived, etc.
  + **The ‘halo effect’:** allowing one positive attribute of a candidate’s CV or personal statement cloud your judgement of how they meet the remaining criteria (i.e. allowing the fact they’ve worked at a highly reputable university override concerns that they don’t meet several of the criteria)

## How to Remove Bias in Selection Conversations

As the hiring manager, it is your responsibility to engage in conversations during the selection process that raise awareness of and seek to eliminate potential biases that may emerge. It’s important to recognise that biases exist within all of us, especially those that may not be conscious. **Here are some tips to frame selection conversations with your interview panel seeking to eliminate bias:**

* Set yourself up for success by choosing the setting and timing for your discussion carefully. Bias often creeps in when we’re distracted, rushing, or fatigued, and taking simple steps to combat this can help you and the selection panel make the best decision:
  + If possible try to hold the discussion in a room that’s comfortable and free from noise or distraction.
  + Plan in time to take regular breaks.
  + Ask panellists to keep their phone in their bag/off the table, and avoid checking their messages/emails during the discussion.
  + Keep an eye out for signs you or your colleagues are becoming fatigued or impatient, especially if you’ve been discussing candidates for some time, and suggest a short break to refresh.
* Remind panellists to be aware of any biases they may be experiencing when thinking about or discussing candidates. Here are some potential ways to frame that reminder:
  + “As we begin our conversation about candidates we interviewed, let’s all try to be aware of any biases that may affect our decision-making.”
  + “I know we all really liked this candidate, especially since they began their interview so strongly. But, I wonder if any of us might be experiencing **‘the halo effect’** where we lean on a great first impression or one excellent skill as a reason to excuse other qualities that may not make this candidate suitable for the role?”
  + “I really like this candidate, but I need to think about whether I’m experiencing **the ‘similar-to-me’ effect** and leaning towards hiring them because they have had such a similar career path to my own. How did others score this candidate?”
  + “Our discussion seems to be focusing on some things we didn’t directly ask our candidates about, like [example]. I’m concerned that means we’re **making assumptions**. Can we go back to the criteria we agreed on?”
  + Learn more: Read [“7 Tips on How to Reduce Bias Hiring”](https://www.searchlight.ai/blog/how-to-reduce-bias-hiring)
* Be on the lookout for any panel members (yourself included) who may be dominating the selection discussion or leaning on any power dynamics that may give them more sway in the final decision. Be conscious of any panellists who might be more junior than others and ensure their voices are heard in the conversation. Here are some potential ways to manage power imbalances within the group:
  + Gather opinions from other panellists before sharing your own. This lessens the risk of your opinion of the candidate influencing other people’s opinions.
  + “I’m noticing [panellist] hasn’t shared very much about their scoring of the candidates. I’d really like to hear their thoughts on who would be the best fit.”
  + “I know that [panellist] has shared their thoughts on the candidates, which is really important given the fact they have a senior role in the faculty. [Other panellist], given the unique working relationship you have with this role, I’m curious to hear your thoughts on the candidate pool as well? Please remember everyone that it is okay if we have differing opinions on who would be the best candidate, since we all work with the person in different capacities.”
  + “It seems like we’re all in complete agreement, which is great. Before we make a final decision, let me just check to make sure we’re not leaning too much into **‘group think’** territory and going along with what the group wants. Does anyone have any concerns or thoughts they haven’t shared yet? I want to make sure we think through everything and hear out everyone before making this really important decision.”
  + “It seems like [Panellist 1] and [Panellist 2] are both in favour of selecting [Candidate 1], but myself and [Panellist 3] are in favour of selecting [Candidate 2]. Let’s all return to the criteria together and map both candidates against it once more, to ensure our preferences align with the candidate we each feel is best suited for the role based on the criteria.”
  + Learn more: Read [“How to Avoid Groupthink When Hiring”](https://hbr.org/2019/08/how-to-avoid-groupthink-when-hiring)

Ensuring hiring processes are truly inclusive can be challenging, especially for those of us who are trying to hire quickly or may be new to the role of hiring manager. St Mary’s HR team is here to support you. If you’d like to discuss any of these topics or receive catered advice for your hiring process, please reach out to our Head of Equality and Inclusion Projects at [equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk) for support.

## Values/EDI Interview Question Bank

To live up to our University commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and living our values, **all hiring managers are required to include at least 1 interview question focused on** [**our values**](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/hr/docs/organisation-development/values-training-materials-19-214-jun19-proof-3.pdf) **and/or EDI**.

To support hiring managers in sourcing these questions, we’ve provided a list of potential options below (though managers may write one of their own if they so choose):

**Questions for Any Role:**

* **Values Questions:**
  + St Mary’s has 4 key values that serve as the foundation of how our university operates on a day-to-day basis. Those values are: Inclusiveness, Generosity of spirit, Respect, and Excellence.
    - Choose one of these values, and tell us how you would model it in this role at St Mary’s?
    - Choose one of these values, and tell us about a time this has been important to consider in your work. What did you do and what was the result?
    - Our values describe how we aspire to be at all times, but we know we all sometimes get things wrong. Can you tell us about a time when something went wrong and a colleague/student/customer was impacted negatively? How did you address the problem?
    - How do you envision one or more of these values enhancing this role?
* **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Questions:**
  + Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are a key university-wide commitment and closely linked with our core values of Inclusion and Respect.
    - How would you help live out our university commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion if offered this role?
    - What steps would you take to make a co-worker or student feel respected and included?
    - In your view, what does our university commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion mean in this role? What does an inclusive work environment mean to you?
    - In what ways have you demonstrated commitment and understanding of the importance of diversity in your previous experience?
    - Please explain how diversity has played a role in your career.

**Questions for Leadership/Management Roles:**

* **Values Questions:**
  + St Mary’s has 4 key values that serve as the foundation of how our university operates on a day-to-day basis. Those values are: Inclusiveness, Generosity of spirit, Respect, and Excellence.
    - How does one or more of our values support your leadership/management style?
    - Tell us how you would aim to uphold our four core values in this role?
    - How would you build a positive team culture based on these values?
    - Choose one of these values. Can you tell us about a time you have had to give difficult feedback to a colleague on their behaviour in relation to this value? How did you go about it and what was the result?
* **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Questions:**
  + Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are a key university-wide commitment and closely linked with our core values of Inclusion and Respect.
    - What experience do you have leading diverse and inclusive teams?
    - Please describe any rewards and challenges you have experienced when leading diverse teams.
    - Describe your experience incorporating EDI into strategic planning.
    - Please describe a time when you demonstrated commitment to inclusion in your work.

**Questions for Entry-Level or Grades A-D Roles:**

* **Values Questions:**
  + St Mary’s has 4 key values that serve as the foundation of how our university operates on a day-to-day basis. Those values are: Inclusiveness, Generosity of spirit, Respect, and Excellence.
    - [Hiring manager choose one of the values related to the role]. Can you give an example of when you’ve lived out this value in a work or education environment?
    - [Hiring manager choose one of the values related to the role]. Why might this value be important for someone working in a university [or customer-facing] environment?
* **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Questions:**
  + Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are a key university-wide commitment and closely linked with our core values of Inclusion and Respect.
    - What steps would you take to make a co-worker or student feel respected and included?
    - What are some benefits diversity can bring to a work [or educational] environment?

**Questions for Teaching/Student-Facing Roles:**

* **Values Questions:**
  + St Mary’s has 4 key values that serve as the foundation of how our university operates on a day-to-day basis. Those values are: Inclusiveness, Generosity of spirit, Respect, and Excellence.
    - How does one or more of these values enhance your ways of working with students?
    - Could you tell us about a time when you have supported a student who felt their experience was not in keeping with these values? How did you address the problem and what was the result?
    - Choose one of these values. In your view, what does this mean a student can expect in your classroom/when accessing your service?
* **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Questions:**
  + Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are a key university-wide commitment and closely linked with our core values of Inclusion and Respect.
    - What is your experience of teaching/supporting diverse student groups?
    - St Mary’s is involved in ongoing work to decrease the attainment gap and embed equality, diversity, and inclusion in our teaching methods. What is your understanding of the attainment gap and how have you incorporated this knowledge into your teaching methods?
    - What efforts have you made in previous roles to make your interactions with students more inclusive?

**Questions for Research Roles:**

* **Values Questions:**
  + St Mary’s has 4 key values that serve as the foundation of how our university operates on a day-to-day basis. Those values are: Inclusiveness, Generosity of spirit, Respect, and Excellence.
    - How do you envision one or more of these values enhancing St Mary’s research efforts?
    - Choose one of these values. Tell us what this means for a research project, and what steps you would take to embed this value when leading a research project?
* **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Questions:**
  + Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are a key university-wide commitment and closely linked with our core values of Inclusion and Respect.
    - How has equality, diversity, and inclusion informed your previous work leading research projects?
    - Describe a time when you’ve supported equitable distribution of research opportunities to a diverse population of researchers.