

Official Information Act Request

Requester's details

Date: 13 April 2022

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Reference number: ENQ-43710-Q2X8G9

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request received on 29 March 2022 for information relating to recruitment processes at the Environmental Protection Authority.

The information you have requested follows.

1. Would a candidate applying for a leadership/management type position in your organisation be required to do a task before the interview? (i.e. a phone screen, pre-test, etc) Or would the candidate have to complete a task after the interview such as - an aptitude test, numeracy/literacy or psychological profiling? Or are the interview and reference checking essentially the total recruitment process?

All candidates are contacted to complete a phone screening to determine whether their skills match the criteria for our role requirements. This is completed prior to interview, however, it is not standard practice for us to complete aptitude testing, unless specifically required for a specialised role. We are currently in discussions about using Hogan assessment to assess team fit for some of our more technical science positions.

On occasion, we set tasks/activities for candidates to do prior to coming to interviews. These can include scenario testing, written exercises, and asking them to answer some questions in presentation form to the panel, etc.

All executive level role candidates complete a leadership assessment with Cerno Limited, to assess their suitability. This includes verbal and numeric ability tests, personality assessments, and a role play.

2. How are applicants chosen to be interviewed? (See the options below from a to c)
 - a) A representative from Human Resources goes through the candidate pool of CVs received?
 - b) A representative from HR and the hiring manager go through the candidates?
 - c) The hiring manager acting alone selects who is to be interviewed?

The EPA uses a combination of b and c. A representative from the recruitment team, People & Capability (Human Resources)(HR), or the leaders panel, supports the hiring manager to shortlist candidates. We encourage them to include diverse panel members.

3. Does your organisation use 'BEI' type interviews for middle/senior leadership/management interviews?

Yes.

4. If the answer to the above is 'no' how would you describe the type of interviews that are carried out?

N/A.

5. Is a representative from HR on the interview panel? (Never/Always/Sometimes?)

Sometimes.

6. For 'BEI' style interviews does each panel member score the candidate and then these scores are combined to tally up to a grand total score?

Yes.

7. Could a candidate who scores lower than the top scorer (e.g. came in second) still be considered the preferred candidate?

Yes. If the top scoring candidate didn't score competitively in critical areas of criteria, they may not be considered suitable. Our assessment may be concerned with the total score and more dependent on scoring highly in the key areas of competence.

8. What are some of the factors or conditions that might give rise to the above in question #7 above? (I.e. – team fit, personality, how panel felt about them?) Other factors?

Included in response to previous question.

9. Are those in your organisation who do the interviewing trained in the BEI interview method?

Some leaders are, although some newcomers are yet to receive formal training. Guidance is provided by a Recruitment Advisor as and when required and new leaders supported with one-on-one coaching.

10. Once a candidate has been selected and employed by your organisation do you keep a record of how long he/she stays with the organisation? (length of tenure)

This is recorded via our HR management system, Success Factors.

11. Or do you keep records of how that candidate is tracking regards their role? (good performance appraisals, improvements plans? Unsatisfactory performance?)

We complete annual performance reviews for each employee through our HR system, as well as regular catch-ups to track progress against performance and development goals. Goals are often linked to the requirements of their position description. When performance is becoming unsatisfactory, performance improvement plans may be implemented to support the employee to lift performance in any particular areas identified.

12. Have you ever surveyed applicants who have been interviewed as to how they feel about the BEI interview process? If so, please share these results.

No, we have not to date.

13. Does your organisation ever use recruitment firms to source candidates? (I.e. this approach is sometimes use for specialist positions or senior management type roles)

On occasion, where our recruitment team is at capacity, or where a specialised role calls for proactive recruitment support.

14. The candidate pool since Covid – March, 2020. In your view has the pool of candidates changed or got smaller since March, 2020. Has it taken longer to recruit for roles or have some roles remained vacant? Have there been other flow on effects since Covid impacted in March 2020?

The number of applications received has reduced overall, and we have found the market very competitive. Some candidates have multiple opportunities, and we need to move swiftly to make offers to those we are interested in. Some roles have required several recruitment campaigns and shoulder-tapping. Others we have filled successfully in the first round.

I hope this information is helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via ministerials@epa.govt.nz

We may publish your request and our response on our website, www.epa.govt.nz. We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

Yours sincerely



Kellie Houlton
General Manager, People and Capability