



**European Union**

European Regional  
Development Fund

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY

# Finders keepers series

Session 1: Attract

**Session 2: Select**

Session 3: Keep



## Select toolkit

## Section 1: Purpose and contents

This is the second toolkit in the Attract, **Select**, Keep series and contains:

Section	Contains	Page number
1	Contents	2
2	Selecting competencies	3
3	Example competency framework	3
4	Blank competency framework	3
5	Example recruitment matrix	4
6	Blank recruitment matrix	4
7	Interview questions	4
8	Example interview template	5
9	Blank interview template	8
10	Work-based tasks	9
11	Example work-based tasks	9
12	Useful resources	10
13	Top tips	10



## Section 2. Selecting competencies

When selecting competencies, you should aim to identify the 4-6 most pertinent competencies for the role. Consider which competencies are an absolute requirement for candidates to possess on entry and which competencies could be reasonably developed in the role.

Standard graduate level competencies include:

- Teamwork
- Motivation and drive
- Communication
- Commercial awareness
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Time-management
- Innovation and creativity
- Leadership
- Attention to detail

To ensure that staff recruiting understand what the competency represents within your business and your recruitment process is a valid test of candidates' suitability for the role, you can develop a competency framework which outlines positive and negative indicators for each competency.

## Section 3. Example competency framework

Competency	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
<b>Teamwork</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to build effective trusting relationships with a variety of people</li> <li>• Able to find win-win solutions</li> <li>• Offers support and help to colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has difficulty working with other people, causing offence or upset</li> <li>• Wins at the expense of others</li> <li>• Does not engage or offer ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Attention to detail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes ownership and responsibility for their work</li> <li>• Able to plan and prioritise work effectively</li> <li>• Gets the details right and targets content to audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids ownership and responsibility</li> <li>• Poorly organised and unable to prioritise effectively</li> <li>• Lacks attention to detail, poorly-presented work and misjudges audience</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the customers, market and business priorities</li> <li>• Able to accurately analyse and make sense of complex data or information</li> <li>• Delivers positive business results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstands the customers, market and business priorities</li> <li>• Draws incorrect conclusions from analysing data or information</li> <li>• Does not deliver results</li> </ul>
<b>Motivation and drive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goes the extra mile for customers and colleagues</li> <li>• Eager to learn and get involved</li> <li>• Uses their initiative and works well independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does only what is required</li> <li>• Refuses to take on additional work, tasks or projects</li> <li>• Needs lots of supervision, support and direction</li> </ul>

## Section 4. Blank competency framework

Competency	Positive indicators	Negative indicators

## Section 5. Example recruitment matrix

You should seek to test each of the competencies at least twice during your recruitment process. Utilising a three-stage process, combining a written application, interview and a work-based test, will provide a suitably robust recruitment process that is not overly onerous for the business or the candidates.

Competency	Test through CV and covering letter	Test in interview	Test in work-based task
Teamwork			
Attention to detail			
Commercial awareness			
Motivation and drive			

## Section 6. Blank recruitment matrix

Competency	Test through CV and covering letter	Test in interview	Test in work-based task

## Section 7. Interview questions

You should seek to ask clear, concise and open questions. You can then follow up with additional probing questions to source further information.

### A bad question would be:

*Are you a good team player?*

### A good question would be:

*Tell us about a time where you have worked effectively as part of a team to achieve a positive outcome, what did you do?*

### You could then probe to source further information or clarification:

*What was your role?*

*How did you support your team?*

*What was the outcome?*

*What would you do differently if faced with the same task again?*

### Illegal questions:

It is important to avoid asking any question that relate to the 9 protected characteristics (age, disability, marriage/civil partnership, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment)

Whilst employees need to be with you for two years before employment rights apply, issues relating to these characteristics can be legally raised from the application stage.



## Section 8. Example Interview template

Each question is marked out of 4, there are two questions for each competency. The total score is out of 32.

1	2	3	4
Does not meet job requirements	Partially meets – some gaps	Meets requirements	Exceeds requirements

Date of Interview & Job Title	Interview Panel	Candidate Name
Marketing Assistant Date:		

### Explain to candidate:

- Introductions and interviewer roles - build rapport to put candidate at ease
- Timings of interview – 45 minutes
- Format of interview - competency based interview questions: we are therefore looking for the candidate to provide examples which may come from their education/studies, work experience and/or personal interests and hobbies, encourage candidates to provide as much information as they can and to be specific about what they did and how they did it in their examples

Motivation and drive	Answer	Positive Indicator
<b>Why did you choose your degree subject?</b>  What aspects have you most enjoyed?  What have you done beyond your course to develop your knowledge?		Uses their initiative and works well independently
		<b>Score:</b>
<b>Why have you decided to pursue a career in this area?</b>  What is your understanding of what the person in this role does?  Why does this interest you?		Eager to learn and get involved
		<b>Score:</b>



Commercial awareness	Answer	Positive Indicator
<b>Why would you like to work for us?</b>  What research have you conducted?  What do you consider to be our USP?		Understands the customers, market and business priorities
		<b>Score:</b>
<b>What do you see as the biggest challenge facing our industry?</b>  Why do you think that is such a challenge?  What do you think our business should be doing to respond to the challenge?		Able to accurately analyse and make sense of complex data or information
		<b>Score:</b>

Teamwork	Answer	Positive Indicator
<b>Tell us about a time you disagreed with a team you were working in on the best way forward. How did you resolve this?</b>  Why did you disagree?  How did you work with the team to find a solution?		Able to build effective trusting relationships with a variety of people
		<b>Score:</b>
<b>Tell us about a time where you have worked effectively as part of a team to achieve a positive outcome, what did you do?</b>  What was your role?  How did you support your team?  What was the outcome?		Offers support and help to colleagues
		<b>Score:</b>



Attention to detail	Answer	Positive Indicator
<b>Give me an example of where a strict, challenging deadline had to be met and something went wrong. How did you react?</b>  How did you manage your time?  What did you prioritise?  How did you manage quality?		Takes ownership and responsibility for their work
		<b>Score:</b>
<b>Describe a time when you had to communicate a complex issue to an audience?</b>  Why was the issue complex?  How did you communicate the issue?  How did you tailor your message to the audience?		Gets the details right and targets content to audience
		<b>Score:</b>
		<b>Total:     /32</b>



## Section 9. Blank Interview template

Each question is marked out of 4, there are two questions for each competency. The total score is out of 32.

1	2	3	4
Does not meet job requirements	Partially meets requirements – some gaps	Meets requirements	Exceeds requirements
<b>Date of Interview &amp; Job Title</b>	<b>Interview Panel</b>		<b>Candidate Name</b>
Date:			

**Explain to candidate:**

- Introductions and interviewer roles - build rapport to put candidate at ease
- Timings of interview –
- Format of interview –

Competency	Answer	Positive Indicator
		Score
		Score:
<b>Competency:</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Positive Indicator</b>
		Score:
		Score:
<b>Competency:</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Positive Indicator</b>
		Score:
		Score:
<b>Competency:</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Positive Indicator</b>
		Score:
		Score:
		<b>Total: /32</b>



## Section 10. Work-based tasks

To assess a candidates' suitability for the role, it is a good idea to include a work-based task to test their competence. This should be a realistic task based on the work they will be involved in when they start their role.

Examples could include a:

- Programming test for a software role
- Press release for a marketing or communications role
- In-tray exercise for an administration role
- A technical drawing test for an engineering role
- A customer pitch for a sales role
- Event planning task for an events assistant role

The next section contains an example of a work-based task, but if you would like further examples, just get in touch.

## Section 11. Example work-based task

### Press release task for Communications Assistant role (30 minutes)

We are launching a new product and you are responsible for developing the press release. You will be meeting with the Product Manager to discuss the product and source content for the press release.

You have:

- 5 minutes to prepare initial questions for the Product Manager
- 10 minutes to question the Product Manager
- 15 minutes to draft the press release

Task element	Assessor notes	Score
Question preparation: Quality and structure of questions		/5
Meeting with product manager: Probing and attention to detail		/5
Draft press release: Written communication and targeting to audience		/10
		Score: /20



## Section 12. Useful resources

### HR resources

ACAS: <https://www.acas.org.uk>

HR Grapevine: <https://www.hrgrapevine.com/>

XpertHR: <http://www.xperthr.co.uk/>

HR Review: <http://www.hrreview.co.uk/>

Peak HR: <https://www.peakhr.co.uk/>

My HR Hub: <http://www.myhrhub.co.uk/>

Charm HRM: <http://www.charmhrm.co.uk/>

Finch Consultancy: <http://www.finchconsultancy.co.uk/>

### Articles:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/bad-behaviour-kylie-cook>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/people-purpose-why-smes-have-got-what-we-all-want-kylie-cook>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/graduate-recruitment-hacks-smes-mike-grey>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/one-bright-idea-graduate-recruiters-rebecca-fielding>

## Section 13. Top tips

Here are 10 Top tips which will help your recruitment process run smoothly and improve your chances of selecting the strongest and most suitable candidate for your role.

1. Try and book interview dates and assessments with sufficient notice, if a candidate can't attend for a good reason try and accommodate them at a different time
2. Take the time to brief assessors fully to ensure they understand the process and assessment criteria
3. Remember that strong candidates have options; use the recruitment process as an opportunity to sell the company and role
4. Give them a tour and an opportunity to meet with other members of the team
5. Candidates should be compared against the criteria for the role and not against each other, as the available pool of candidates might be of poor calibre overall
6. Be aware of unconscious bias; attitudinal, gender, social, educational and racial similarity may lead you to give higher ratings to candidates who are like you
7. Aim to strictly follow the defined processes that you have planned to ensure you are fair to all candidates. However, ask candidates if they require any adjustments prior to the final assessment. Reasonable adjustments can help you to see the full potential of a candidate whose performance may otherwise have been impaired (eg. additional time to read through a task for a dyslexic candidate)
8. Try and make offers within 48 hours if possible - good candidates will potentially have other interviews and you may lose them if you delay too long
9. Keep in mind the salary and core requirements of the role. By embarking on a quest for the perfect candidate, you may miss out on candidates that have huge potential and are a great fit
10. When working with a university, keep your contact up to date with progress. This will allow them to offer support, add value to the process and encourage them to strongly promote future opportunities with your business. Provide feedback which will help them guide their students and improve their services