



working for us

# **Recruitment and selection toolkit**

## **Guide to feedback given after an interview**



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## Purpose of the guide

We have developed this guide to work alongside the information in 'Section 3 – The selection process' of the [recruitment and selection toolkit](#).

In this section of the toolkit, you'll find out about the whole selection process from start to finish, including what to do before, during and after the interview, and details on giving feedback. You should refer to this for information and to help you before you carry out interviews for the post you are recruiting for.

The purpose of this guide is to take you through the process of giving feedback in more detail. You'll find information on the feedback process, the principles and basis of feedback, as well as do's and don'ts and helpful tips to make sure you're able to give feedback confidently and effectively.

The links, templates and guidance below are available from the **index** page of the recruitment & selection toolkit on Connect.

### Related links

[Recruitment and Selection and Associated Procedures Managers Toolkit](#)

### Related templates and guidance

[RS Recruit 6 – Overall Role Requirement and Assessment Form](#)  
[Example Recruit 6 Form](#)

### The feedback process

#### What is feedback?

'Feedback' can be defined as an assessment of a person's performance. In recruitment and selection, providing feedback is good practice and it can be useful for people to receive feedback after their interview. This is a positive step which might help them to secure a job in the future.

#### Requests for feedback

Normally, the candidate will ask for feedback, although it may sometimes be appropriate for the selection panel to begin the process (for example, if the candidate already works for the council).

If the candidate has asked for feedback, the selection panel should discuss the reasons for not appointing them and agree what feedback they will provide. The chair of the panel or any other member can provide the feedback, but they should make sure that they give enough time and attention to prepare a suitable response to the candidate.

Requests for feedback should be kept confidential and should not affect the candidate's future applications for jobs. It's important that they're handled quickly, that they are short but still detailed enough to be effective, and that they cannot be seen as being biased or unfair.

#### Areas for feedback

Candidates who have not been successful are naturally often upset and disappointed, and can misunderstand or misinterpret feedback. As a result, it's important to handle the feedback process sensitively.

Possible areas for feedback include information on:

- how the candidate filled in the application form;
- how the candidate prepared for the interview;
- how the candidate delivered a presentation, and the content of their presentation (if this applies);
- the candidate's body language; and
- how the candidate responded to questions.

### Principles of feedback

When you give feedback, do the following.

- First identify the good parts of the interview – be specific about what was good and why.
- Confirm or share positive points.
- Ask the candidate what they thought went well and what didn't go as well.
- Discuss the parts which were not so good and which could be improved, concentrating on the most significant issues and suggesting positive alternatives.
- Give the candidate time to respond, and listen carefully to what they have to say.
- Try to concentrate on information that would help the candidate to prepare for an interview at a later date.

### Effective feedback – general pointers

#### What good feedback should be

- **Timely** – if a candidate has not been successful, take time to explain things to them. This way, they can understand what you have said and can discuss it with you. Ideally, the sooner you provide the feedback, the better it will be. By giving feedback as soon as possible after the interview, both you and the candidate will be able to remember it better.
- **Planned** – make sure there is enough time to give the feedback in a relaxed way without interruptions. Face-to-face feedback is better for internal candidates and should be given in private. If you're giving feedback over the phone, you should check if it's a convenient time for the candidate to speak, in case they want to ask specific questions.
- **Specific** – be specific about the action or behaviour you're referring to, concentrating on particular points and basing it on relevant, accurate information. It's easier for someone to react to this than to general statements. Make your feedback practical so the person can do something about it – feedback which isn't specific doesn't allow the candidate to recognise the areas that they need to develop.

- **Constructive** – your feedback should include positive feedback from the selection process, as well as feedback on areas where the candidate didn't show that they met the criteria for the post. By taking a balanced approach, the candidate is more likely to accept your feedback. By making feedback constructive, you'll help the candidate to find out what they need to do rather than just telling them what they're doing wrong. Suggest ways to help them improve and, if possible, how they could gain the necessary skills and experience that would better fit them for the job.
- **Clearly communicated** – clear communication is specific not general, descriptive rather than vague, and based on facts rather than biased. Using the right language will make sure that your information is clear and that you don't confuse candidates by using jargon. Avoid sensitive or critical language that the candidate could interpret as a personal attack. Feedback should be well thought through and presented in a way that will not sound like you're just giving advice or causing offence.

For example, say:

- **"I found the example you used to show your negotiation skills confusing".**

Don't say:

- **"Your example didn't make sense".**

### Basis of feedback

#### What should feedback be based on?

- Your feedback must be based on your fair judgement if the candidate has been assessed against the criteria for the post (that is, the criteria set out in the role profile and person specification).
- Your feedback must be based on the notes you made on the 'Recruit 6 – Overall Role Requirements and Assessment Form', and should include results from the interview and any other methods of assessment you used – don't rely on memory.
- Your feedback should be based on facts (not your personal bias) and should always be backed up with evidence and specific examples you can describe.
- Your feedback should be based on what you observed during the selection process only.

### Do's and don'ts

#### Do

- Describe what you have observed.
- Give detailed examples to back up what you're saying and focus on the person's actions, not the person themselves.
- Be prepared to give candidates further feedback (for example, for action plans for personal development and training).
- Use clear, jargon-free language.

#### Don't

- Give feedback to anyone except the candidate.
- Use general statements.
- Present your views, reactions and opinions as facts.
- Criticise the person instead of referring to their specific behaviour.
- Focus on the negatives and ignore the positives.

### Final tips

- Be well prepared.
- Know what you want to say.
- Practise your technique beforehand.

Think about:

- format;
- content;
- timing; and
- language.

### Advice and guidance

If you or any member of the selection panel has any concerns about giving feedback to candidates, your Service HR Team can provide advice and guidance.