# OVERVIEW OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

## Appointing a new governing group member

This document provides insights and practical steps for engaging a new governing group member.

## Timeframes

A typical governing group recruitment process for a sporting organisation can take up to three months. The major determinant of time is candidate and interviewer availability. If you have a hard deadline, an AGM for instance, allow yourself ample time. The process will necessarily follow any stipulations that exist in your constitution, especially if there are both elected and appointed roles to consider.

An indicative timeframe might be:

Week 1 Discussion within the board to plan the appointment

Week 2 Document and agree the position description and advertisement

Week 3 Advertise the positions

Weeks 4 - 6 Monitor responses

Week 7 Screen applications once position has closed

Weeks 8 - 9 Panel interview shortlisted candidates

Weeks 10 - 11 Due diligence on preferred candidate(s)

Weeks 12 Confirmation by full governing group as per the constitution   
Production of appointment documentation

## Planning

The board should discuss the available position(s) and ensure expectations are aligned around approach, processes and timeframes. Before meeting, the chair should review relevant sections of the constitution, board charter or similar documentation that may stipulate requirements for board recruitment.

Questions to discuss may include:

* What would success look like for this appointment?
* Why would a capable person want to take this role – what is in it for them?
* What do we expect this person to contribute on a monthly basis (duties and responsibilities)?
* What are the three key personal qualities or traits we will require in our director(s)?
* What skills, experiences or backgrounds are missing from the board in order to achieve the organisation’s strategy?
* How do we prioritise these missing competencies – top four essential versus many preferred?
* Do we require greater diversity of thought or broader representation around the table?
* Where do we expect to find this person?
* Do we have specific individuals in mind?
* What will the interview and selection process be?
* When do we want the role to start?

During the discussion, if not already stipulated in your constitution, an appointments panel/subcommittee should be formed to run the appointment process and make final recommendations. Governing group appointment panels normally consist of a governing group member not seeking re-election, a representative of the sport at the grass-roots or regional level, and where practical an independent expert in governance and/or recruitment.

## Role description and advertisement

The output from your board discussion will provide most of the content for the development and/or review of the role description. When advertising, it is important to highlight the benefits of becoming a governing group member, focusing on the cause, the strategy, and/or the ability to learn.

Make the advertisement a joy to read, remembering sport and recreation makes a valuable contribution and is an interesting and challenging area to be involved with.

## Attracting candidates

Governing group recruitment is the governing group’s responsibility, not management’s. They should not be involved in a process that is selecting people to whom they are ultimately accountable. You can make this clear by asking for applications to be sent to the appointments panel c/-, not to, management.

Use word of mouth and your own networks along with advertising to attract candidates. Advertise the role on your own website, your national organisation’s website and/or relevant community sites.

Think carefully about how the application process represents your organisation. Is it easy to apply? Are you asking for a form to be filled out with information that duplicates material on a CV? Use email rather than posting applications.

Treat all potential candidates the same, applying a formal process for everyone. This gives you the confidence that the preferred candidate is well briefed on what is expected of them.

Remember it is ok not to appoint rather than appointing someone who is not suited to the role.

## Candidate selection and interviews

Plan well for the interview, agreeing the questions you want to ask and the approach you want to take. Candidates should be scored against the requirements of the role description and the strength of answers to questions you posed.

Provide a briefing email for candidates selected for interview, outlining:

* date, time and location of the interview
* who will be on the interview panel
* the structure of the interview
* any specific preparation required by the interviewee
* a copy of the organisation’s strategic plan or other background information.

Respond to unsuccessful applicants within a week of the application closing date. Send ‘no’ emails to the definite ‘noes’ and a ‘we are still considering you so please bear with us’ email when you require more time. Displaying this respect to all applicants creates a strong brand experience. Remember that a candidate who is not right this year may become a great governing group member in subsequent years. Feedback to interviewed candidates should be by phone and not email. This is not only simple courtesy but allows the panel chair to explain to unsuccessful candidates why they were not a fit on this occasion.

## Due diligence

Consider undertaking due diligence on a preferred candidate immediately after the first interview. If this step is left until later in the process it is human nature to seek references that affirm the decision you have already made, rather than being a completely objective assessment of capability.

As with interviewing, there are many questions you can pose to a referee. Three standard questions to ask are:

* We are considering appointing XXX to our board – what observations would you be able to share from your experience of working with them?
* How do they contribute or add value to the board you sit on?
* Is there anything else we should be aware of in considering them for a governance role?

Part of the individual’s due diligence should be to ask, “Are there any major issues the organisation faces that I, as a prospective governing group member, should be aware of?” If they don’t ask this question and there are issues, you may like to volunteer this information upfront to avoid issues after appointment.

## Letter of appointment

A commitment letter completes the recruitment process. It should be written consistent with your organisation values and style. The letter outlines the commitment required of the role and records your agreement to undertake this responsibility. It is important to make sure there is no confusion around expectations at the outset.

It is more personable and welcoming to present this letter in person rather than posting or emailing it.

This is also a good time to start the paper flow, at least key dates, the induction process and the first list of background reading.