

# 7 Tips for crafting a Selection Strategy

Attracting high-quality applicants is a challenging aspect of the recruitment process. Once you have successfully received applications, the swift and accurate determination of the best-qualified candidates becomes crucial, especially considering the current shortage in the labour market. Any disagreements or confusion during the selection process could result in missing out on top candidates. Moreover, a successful recruitment campaign does not always require a high volume of applicants; it only takes the one candidate suitable to apply to get to a successful match. However, selecting the right candidate when you have only one applicant in the interview round can be a daunting task. Hence whether you have 150, 20, or just one candidate, defining a solid selection strategy brings numerous benefits:

- First and foremost, it significantly increases the predictive value of your candidate assessments, thereby raising the likelihood of hiring successful candidates for the job.
- Secondly, it reduces the time required to review and select candidates.
- In addition, having a selection strategy makes it easier to provide honest feedback to candidates who are not selected for the position. Clear and specific feedback empowers candidates to improve their skills. Providing fact-based feedback helps avoid misunderstandings and reduces the chances of it being taken personally. This approach enhances the overall "candidate experience" and leaves a lasting positive impression of TU Delft.
- Finally, a well-defined selection strategy can instill confidence in the candidate you ultimately hire regarding their abilities and suitability for the job. A transparent and fair hiring process makes candidates, even if they were the only candidate in the selection procedure, feel acknowledged and valued. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to identify areas in which the candidate can further develop their skills and abilities.

The list below provides seven tips for crafting an effective selection strategy:

**1. Requirements:** Communicating specific selection criteria in your vacancy text increases the chance on high quality applicants and facilitates alignment within the selection committee. In addition, it can be used to create a clear candidate profile which provides the framework for crafting your selection strategy. Your candidate profile is a combination of must-haves, nice-to-haves and the social fit:

- **Must-haves** are essential to pass the CV-selection or first screening round. Applicants that don't meet these requirements will be rejected. For instance, a diploma, specific area of expertise or working experience.
- **Nice-to-haves** are criteria that distinguish candidates. They are not essential to meet the minimum requirements to start in the position or enable the candidate to become successful.
- **Social fit** refers to a candidate's competencies and personal values that enable a sense of belonging and wellbeing within the TU Delft work space and the Netherlands as living environment.

When describing soft skills or competencies, provide a context to make them meaningful. For example:

Don't write: *"You are collaborative and flexible and have good communication skills."*

Do write: *"You thrive in an interdisciplinary environment and can build and maintain relationships with medical professionals, technical experts and research staff."*

To determine if your candidate profile is spot on, ask yourself these questions when reviewing:

- Envision yourself scanning through the CVs and letters. What will you be looking for? Which elements will decide whether an applicant will be invited for an interview? Are they included as must-haves?
- Who is your most appreciated team member in this position, either currently or in the past? Or what would your ideal candidate look like? Why? Does this person fit within the framework of nice-to-haves?
- Check your profile with the other members of the selection committee. Do they think it is accurate and complete?

**2. Tangible selection criteria:** Next translate your previously defined list of requirements into observable behaviour and/or tangible output. The goal is to define “measurable criteria”. For instance, “good presentation skills” is translated into “ability to effectively convey the core message of a presentation”. Measurable criteria will enable you to prepare effective interview questions and assessments. Rather than making a general statement about a candidate's presentation skills in enables specific feedback. You could for example explain that during the selection process, three out of five listeners were unable to reproduce the core message of the presentation given by the candidate. More examples of measurable criteria can be found in Table A on page 3.

**3. Interviews:** The main responsibility of an interviewer is to create a safe place for the candidate to be authentic and demonstrate his/her personality, skills and ambition. It’s not an interrogation. Prior to the start of the interview ensure you have a clear agreement on the role of each selection committee member and about who asks which question. Usually the chair will do the introduction of the selection committee and provide clarity on the structure of the interview. This is important for the candidate experience. It’s not required for all selection committee members to have the same role in the selection process. Depending on the expertise and future work relation to the applicant, you can also decide to ask specific selection committee member to solemnly provide input on specific subjects. Defining the role and contribution of each member beforehand is beneficial for a smooth and pleasant process. Finish your interview by asking the candidate: Do you feel you were able to give an accurate impression of yourself during the interview or is there anything you wish to add or remark at this moment?

**4. Ranking candidates:** We recommend adopting a structured approach to rank candidates. For example, ask each selection committee member to assign scores to measurable criteria on a scale ranging from low to high or from 1 to 5. Ranking multiple candidates on the same criteria systematically provides better insight into how candidates compare to each other and helps objectify your final decision You can find an example of a scoring chart in Table B on page 4.

**5. Minimizing bias:** To minimize biased decisions, ask the same questions to each candidate in the same order. Share your thoughts on a candidate only after each individual selection committee member has finalized their scoring chart. When comparing different candidates, it's ideal to score relatively, relative to the performance of candidates you assessed earlier (see Figure C on page 4). During a final discussion comparing candidates, focus on reviewing candidate performance per criteria rather than judging them as individuals.







**6. Additional support:** Do you still have questions or require additional support in your recruitment process? Ask your [Talent Acquisition Specialist \(TAS\)](#) for support. The TAS offers assistance in various

areas of recruitment, including selection, vacancy text optimization, attracting candidates and proactive candidate sourcing through talent scouting.

*Table A: Translating abstract criteria into observed behaviour and tangible results*

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Measurable criteria (observed behaviour, skills or tangible output)</b>
<b>MSc in relevant subject such as (applied) physics, biophysics or mechanical engineering</b>	MSc Diploma in a specific relevant area.
<b>Sufficient English language skills</b>	Specific IELTS or TOEFL results in case of an application for a PhD candidate position. In case of <i>e.g.</i> a Management Assistant position for example a writing assignment in English with a maximum of X errors.
<b>Sufficient comprehension of the field of <i>e.g.</i> biophysics</b>	For PhD candidates for example: Ability to understand and use scientific papers in discussion, experimental design and research strategy. For technician for example: Ability to level with researchers about the goal of a measurement.
<b>Mastery of a technical skill <i>e.g.</i>: Experience with cell culturing</b>	Ability to quickly gain required skills to independently prepare and perform experiments on scale X and prepare type Y samples. Demonstrated for example by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ability to explain the steps required to prepare or execute an experiment.</li> <li>2. Provide examples of typical challenges and lessons learned when using this specific technique.</li> <li>3. Interpret data output</li> <li>4. Ask relevant questions during a lab tour</li> <li>5. Being able to name key parts of equipment and their function during a visit to the lab.</li> <li>6. Ability to provide details of previous experience for example in terms of number of batches produced, scale, temperature etc.</li> </ol>
<b>Proficient in Microsoft Office and Excel</b>	Ability to produce and revise documents in Word and Excel. Demonstrated for example by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Editing a given text within a given timeframe.</li> <li>2. Executing a relevant assignment successfully using Excel.</li> </ol>
<b>Soft skill <i>e.g.</i>: good presentation skills or ability to set priorities</b>	Ability to present a presentation in fluent English and answer questions adequately.  When given multiple tasks and limited resources for completion the candidate is able to identify and prioritize the most important task.
<b>Competence, <i>e.g.</i> Self-reflection</b>	Shows understanding of own strengths and weaknesses; Regularly evaluates the own approach and considers ways of improving or modifying it; Tries to improve weaknesses by modifying own behaviour, position or methods; Shows an understanding of their own cultural background, standards and values and the effect these have on others.
<b>General Motivation</b>	Asks follow up questions and actively looks to expand his/her understanding. Eyes light up when speaking about the topic or tone of voice becomes animated. Made an effort prior to the job interview to find available information on internet or via current network.
<b>Social and cultural fit</b>	Seems at ease after settling in the conversation and responds natural and adequately in interaction with others.

Table B: Example of a scoring chart

Date: Name candidate: Name interviewer:		
Criteria	Observations/Notes	Score
Understands the reading material and is able to contribute to a scientific discussion on the subject		
Able to prepare a professional presentation, convey the core message and structure the story.		
Can explain the subsequent steps in performing technical procedure X or using program Y for a purpose Z.		
Shows real understanding of own strengths and weaknesses.		
Shows enthusiasm about the topic e.g. by asking follow up questions / sparkling eyes / animated speech		
After settling into the conversation candidate appears at ease and interacts natural and adequately with interviewer		

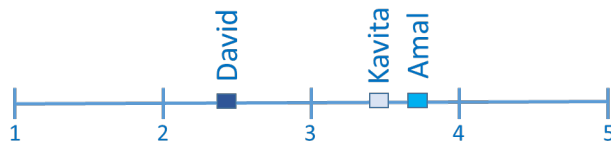


Figure C: Scoring fictive candidates David, Kavita and Amal relative to each-other to minimize biased judgements.

**7. Cultural & Social Match:** Surveys indicate that more than half of the newly hired employees who leave within the first year of employment do so due to a lack of "Social Fit." These employees don't feel a sense of belonging in their new work environment. Therefore, even if a candidate meets all the technical requirements and competencies, you may want to reconsider hiring them if there is an incomplete social fit. Unfortunately, assessing social fit during the selection process is challenging and susceptible to biased judgment. To improve the process, you can consider the following:

- When a candidate visits from abroad, choose a hotel in the city centre for their stay. Ask one of their potential future colleagues to meet the candidate at the hotel and walk with them to TU Delft. This allows for an informal chat and an experience of the living environment.
- Observe how the candidate interacts with the people and the workplace of TU Delft during their visit. Gather input on this topic from all the individuals who have met the candidate during their visit.
- Ask the candidate about their impressions of the country, culture, and working environment. Do this both at the end of the visit and after one or two days have passed. Don't hesitate to share your own observations to break the ice and set the tone for an honest discussion.
- Inquire about their expectations regarding working in the Netherlands, and possible relocation obstacles.
- Monitor the new colleague closely during the trial month and don't hesitate to voice concerns, as this benefits both the employee and employer.