

Setting up an agency talent pool

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Talent pools provide access to candidates who have recently been assessed as meeting the requirements for employment at a grade level. This can help you to fill vacancies quickly and attract and retain a wide range of candidates.

Use this guidance to help you set up talent pools within your department or agency.

Advertising

We recommend advertising externally on the [I work for NSW](#) website to attract the widest pool of candidates. This gives you flexibility to offer ongoing, temporary or term employment.

If you choose not to advertise externally, you will only be able to offer temporary or term employment, without the possibility of conversion to ongoing.

You can supplement advertising on [I work for NSW](#) by advertising on other platforms. This is a good way to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Assessment

GSE rule 19 requires that you do a comparative assessment to set up a talent pool. **GSE rule 17** sets out the requirements for comparative assessment:

- screen for essential requirements, such as a qualification or license
- review an application and resume
- assess candidates using at least 3 capability-based assessments, one of which is an interview
- use more than one assessor.

Under GSE rule 19(5), you don't have to complete referee checks when including someone in a talent pool. Instead, you are required to do referee checks when the candidate is being considered for a role. Doing referee checks at this time means that they will be as current as possible, and more effective for the hiring manager.

If you are creating talent pools to fill various roles, we recommend that you assess all capabilities – focus and complementary. This gives you more flexibility to use the talent pool for roles that have different focus capabilities.

All candidates who demonstrate that they meet the standards for the role through the comparative assessment may be included in the talent pool. Candidates should not be ranked. Candidates can be placed in talent pools for a maximum of 18 months from the date the talent pool is approved within your workplace.

Privacy considerations

You should tell candidates about the way their personal information will be used and disclosed and seek formal consent for this before including them in a talent pool.

A good way of doing this is to list the data that is collected (e.g. profile information, work and educational experience, assessment report, selection report etc.) and identify who will be authorised to access this information (e.g. HR and hiring managers within the agency or other agencies).

You should only use and disclose personal information for the purpose for which it was collected, unless you have the candidate's consent, subject to limited exceptions under privacy legislation. You should notify candidates if anything changes in protecting their privacy or storing or handling personal information.

Other things you should consider doing include:

- only collecting personal information directly from the candidate, unless they have authorised collection from someone else
- informing candidates who will be storing their information
- notifying candidates about how they can access, correct and update their personal information, and allowing them to access it without excessive delay or expense
- storing personal information securely, keeping it no longer than necessary and disposing of it appropriately.

You can use a talent pool to target employment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability. To do this, you need to seek permission from candidates to be considered and ensure they consent to their demographic information being used for this purpose.

Refer to the Information and Privacy Commission's (IPC) summary of the [*Information Protection Principles*](#) or [visit the IPC website for more information](#).

Setting up a shared talent pool

You can set up talent pools in partnership with other Public Service agencies. As with single agency talent pools, you can set up a joint talent pool by running a recruitment process to establish a shared talent pool.

To ensure the talent pool is set up, managed and used effectively, you will need to decide jointly who has responsibility for:

- developing the role description
- designing, managing and funding the assessment process
- managing the talent pool for its duration, which is likely to involve:
 - responding to requests for candidate information
 - communicating with candidates in the talent pool
 - updating candidate information (e.g. employment status, withdrawal from pool, change in preferences etc.).

You also need to make sure that you adhere to the same privacy considerations and seek consent from candidates for their personal information to be shared among the agencies using the talent pool.

Setting up an agency talent pool for diversity groups

You can use [**GSE rule 26**](#) to set up a talent pool for eligible persons listed in GSE rule 26(4). The main groups are:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- people with disability
- people under the age of 25 years
- people who are on a Refugee and Humanitarian (Migrant) (Class XB) visa.

Setting up a talent pool for diversity groups can help you to improve employment opportunities for people from these groups and enhance diversity in your agency.

To set up a talent pool for diversity groups, follow the same process to set up an agency talent pool. [**GSE rule 26 \(3\)**](#) allows modifications to the advertising requirements and assessment processes set out in Part 3 of the GSE Rules to facilitate the employment of eligible persons.

You still need to ensure that candidates are assessed against the standards for the role using relevant capability-based assessments.

Employment decisions under **GSE rule 26** require that the person is suitable for the role and has the greatest merit of the eligible persons seeking to be employed in the role. This means that you need to consider the merit of the people in the talent pool to employ someone from that pool.

In seeking to target employment to a specific diversity group, agencies should also ensure that they are complying with the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*. Further information about the requirements that apply is available from **Anti-Discrimination NSW**.

A fact sheet on using GSE rule 26 to employ people with disability is available on the Public Service Commission's disability employment webpage. The **Australian Human Rights Commission** published *Guidelines for the targeted recruitment of people with disability (2022)*.

Candidate care

Actively engaging with candidates for the duration of the talent pool has benefits for agencies and candidates. You might consider sending a welcome email when a candidate is formally placed in the talent pool. This is a good time to:

- allocate a contact person for the duration of the talent pool
- manage candidate expectations – e.g. let them know:
 - being placed in a talent pool is not an offer of employment and does not guarantee an offer of employment
 - referee checks will be carried out before an offer of employment is made (even if referee checks have been done to place the person in a talent pool, the hiring manager may decide to do their own checks)
 - they may be contacted by HR or hiring managers about employment opportunities
 - they may be asked to a 'job-fit' interview or to do additional assessment(s)
 - they may be asked to complete pre-employment checks (e.g. working with children or criminal records checks)
 - how their personal information will be stored and used
 - they can choose to withdraw from the talent pool at any time.

You should also confirm preferences, such as location and types of employment offers they wish to receive. It is important to send regular communications to candidates about the talent pool (e.g. monthly or quarterly). This is an opportunity to confirm that candidates still wish to be included in the talent pool and to update their preferences and profile information.