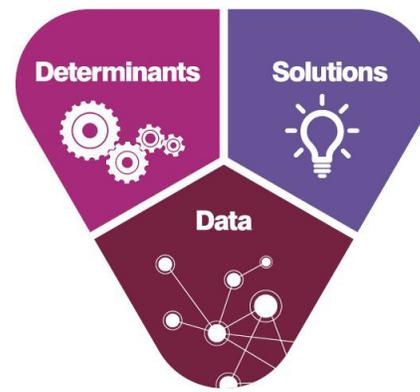




University
of Glasgow

Institute of
Health & Wellbeing



Unconscious Bias on Interview Panels

IHW Pilot 2020-21

What is unconscious bias

- Bias we are unaware of, which is outside of our control
- Happens automatically, triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations
- Influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences
- Can be a problem in the recruitment process as we only have a brief time period and 'limited' information on which to base our decision making

What might trigger an unconscious bias response?

Protected Characteristics

Gender

Ethnicity

Religion/belief

Perceived sexual orientation

Age

Disability

Social class

Other Factors

Clothing

Piercings/tattoos

Haircut

Body language

Accent

Attractiveness

Person

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Attractiveness

Social class

Person (including fit with team)

Rationale for Unconscious Bias on Interview Panels pilot in IHW

Part of the 2018 Athena Swan Gold Action Plan

Inspired by Unconscious Bias on Interview Panels project that has been running at in the Athena Swan Gold Department of Chemistry at University of York since 2015/16

Aims:

To assess Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practices as new staff are appointed (across job families and grades)

To inform recruitment and interviewing in IHW and across UoG

What did we do?

Recruitment and training

- Initial call in early 2020 resulted in 21 volunteers from across all IHW research groups and PSS as well as R&T (mainly Grades-6-8) job families
- Following a suspension for COVID, 18 people attended a half-day online training from the York UB lead in March 2021
- 13/18 subsequently confirmed their willingness to act as observers for 6 month IHW pilot (Jul-Dec 2021)
- 6 ended up acting as observers – due to availability

What did we do?

Interview selection

- Initial focus on SPSHU, where recruitment manager oversees hiring processes
- Subsequently expanded to PH, RCB, MHW and SSIH through key PSS contacts and/or word of mouth
- Overview of interview selection (7/39, 18%)

RG	SPSHU	RCB	SSiH	MHW	PH	HETHA	GCCP	Total
Potential	30	1	2	4	2	0	0	39
Observed	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	7
Shortlisting	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Observer	a,b,c	c	d	e	f	-	-	6/13

What did we do?

Reasons that interviews were not observed

- Hiring manager did not respond to request
- Hiring manager agreed but forgot to provide dates once interview had been arranged
- Hiring manager already been observed
- Hiring manager declined as it was a complicated appointment
- Only one candidate following shortlisting
- No observer available

What did we do?

Assessment

Shortlisting

- Structure of discussion
- Key points

Interviews

- Preparation
- Introduction
- Body Language
- Interviews
- Discussions after

Interview Proforma

Preparation(s):	
Introduction:	
Body language:	
Interview(s):	
Discussions after:	
Strengths (to feedback to panel):	
Areas to consider (to feedback to panel):	

For both shortlisting and interviews, the observer also identified strengths and areas to work on

What did we find?

Observed interview characteristics

Job Family	Grade	Chair	Panel Members	Panel N	Candidate N	Time	Task Summary	Shortlisting Observed?
PS	7	f	m	2	3	50 min	none	no
R&T	6 or 7	m	m,f	3	4	50 min	7 min presentation	no
PS	8	f	f,m,f,f	5	4	40 min	10 min presentation	no
R	6	m	f,f,f	4	6	60 min	10 min presentation	yes
L&T	8	f	m,m	3	3	30 min	5 min presentation	no
R&T	6	m	f,m	3	5	30 min	none	no
R&T	7	f	f,m	3	3	30 min	none	yes

- Range of grades and job families
- Panels all mixed gender, n=2-6
- Time per candidate 30-60 min, 4/7 included presentation
- Shortlisting only observed for 2/7
- All took place on Zoom

What did we find - shortlisting?

Strengths

- Good application of criteria and judgements based on facts
- All panellists able to contribute views
- Efficient – discussion focussed on candidates where disagreement

Areas for improvement

- Make sure all panellists have scored all candidates independently prior to panel
- Try not to assume he/him if gender not clear

What did we find - shortlisting?

Strengths

- Good application of criteria and judgements based on facts
- All panellists able to contribute views
- Efficient – discussion focussed on candidates where disagreement

Areas to work on

- All panellists score all candidates independently prior to panel
- Try not to assume he/him if gender not clear

What did we find - interviews?

Strengths

- Well-structured interviews, relaxed and consistent for each candidate
- Positive feedback given throughout – both verbal and body language
- Panel supportive of technical and childcare issues
- Candidates encouraged to expand on answers if they did not respond fully – ensured a level playing field for those affected by nerves
- Less experienced candidates encouraged to use non-work relevant examples
- Candidates given clear information about what to expect after the interview
- A panel member's close working relationship with some candidates did not appear to influence their questioning
- Panel members had diversity of experiences and could pick up different strengths and weaknesses in the candidates

What did we find - interviews?

Areas to work on

- Use a crib sheet so all candidates benefit from the same information at the start/end of the interview
- Agree questions in advance of the interviews
- Make sure the job description criteria and interview questions align (especially if using “bank” questions)
- Avoid complex (e.g., two-part) questions
- Avoid rushing – ensure sufficient time for questions to be asked and answered fully
- Consider leaving five minutes between interviews for formal reflection
- Take care in positioning camera for Zoom interviews so candidate can see full head and shoulders and face is well lit

What did we find – decision making?

Areas to work on

- Agreed the decision-making process beforehand and have enough time factored in for this part
- Score each candidate separately before final discussions to ensure independence of decision making
- Do not use references to inform judgements before, during or after the interviews
- Avoid judging candidates on whether they would 'fit in' and on 'gut feeling' – if you have these concerns, try to identify why, and if the reason is relevant, in relation to the criteria, then you CAN use this information in your final selection
- If candidates cannot be separated, delay the decision and reconvene in 24/48 hours and/or invite them back for a second interview. If there is really nothing in it, you may be able to appoint on diversity, but must ensure that you can give appropriate feedback to the unsuccessful candidate

Recommendations

- Process needs streamlined and dedicated admin support to liaise between observers and hiring managers
- HR need to be made aware of observer and add to panel – this happened in later interviews (allows observer to access interview documents on CORE and receive panel meeting invitations)
- Shortlisting process needs to be more ‘accessible’
- Consider how long panels need to be – is 30 mins enough?
- Should all panels have at least three members?
- All observers found it a positive and rewarding experience, consider observation as part of interview training process?