



Independent  
Commission for  
Reconciliation and  
Information Recovery  
**Recruitment Policy & Procedure**

May 2026

# Document information

## Owner

The owner of this policy is the **ICRIR Human Resources**

## Author

The author of this document is the HR Department

## Approver

The approver of this document is the **Director of People and Culture**

## Document location

The electronic version of this file is located on the ICRIR intranet.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) screening

This policy has been reviewed by the author in accordance with the ICRIR EDI Screening process.

## Review date

The next date for reviewing this policy is June 2027.

## Document history

| Version | Author job title | Changes        | Date policy approved                                   |
|---------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 2       | HR Department    | Updated Policy | Signed off by Director of People and Culture. May 2026 |
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# Table of contents

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. Introduction                             | 4      |
| 2. Equality, Fair Employment and Monitoring | 4      |
| 3. Principles                               | 5      |
| 4. Campaign Initiation                      | 6      |
| 5. Advertising                              | 6      |
| 6. Applications                             | 7      |
| 7. Internal Recruitment                     | 8      |
| 8. Probation Period                         | 9      |
| 9. Reasonable Adjustments                   | 9      |
| 10. Recruitment Selection Panel             | 10 -11 |
| 11. Use of External Panel Members           | 12     |
| 12. Declaration of Interest                 | 12     |
| 13. Use of Merit Lists                      | 12 -13 |
| 14. Appointment                             | 14     |
| 15. Employment Contracts                    | 14     |
| 16. Salary                                  | 15     |
| 17. Exceptions                              | 15     |
| 18. Pre-Employment Checks                   | 16     |
| 19. Vetting                                 | 17- 19 |
| 20. Data Protection                         | 19     |
| 21. Complaints                              | 19     |

## **Introduction**

The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (the Commission or ICRIR) is an equal opportunities employer. We value and support all our people and are committed to being an inclusive employer with a diverse workforce. These recruitment principles have been established to promote a professional and consistent approach to hiring across the Commission.

Responsibility for implementing these principles and procedures sits with the Director of People and Culture.

These Recruitment Principles should be read alongside policies on: Conflicts in Investigations, Code of Conduct, Raising a Concern Policy, Pay Policy, the Pre-Employment Checks Policy, and the Declaration of Interest Policy.

If a candidate or employee has any questions about these principles and procedures, please contact [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk)

Please note that this policy is not contractual and does not form part of any contract of employment or contractual agreement.

## **Equality, Fair Employment and Monitoring**

The Commission is committed to equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment. In Northern Ireland we comply with the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO) and with our statutory duties under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Commission will:

- a. maintain registration with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and complete annual monitoring returns in accordance with FETO;
- b. collect community background and sex monitoring information from candidates using a confidential process. Monitoring data will be held separately from selection materials, accessed only by personnel for monitoring, reporting purposes, and will not be provided to any Recruitment Selection Panels;

- c. screen significant changes to recruitment policies and procedures. Where screening indicates potential adverse impact, proportionate mitigation measures will be considered and recorded;
- d. where lawful and appropriate, consider proportionate positive action measure to encourage applications from under-represented groups, without altering merit-based selection standards.

## **Principles**

Selection for appointments to the Commission is based on the principle of appointment on merit based on fair and open competition.

Merit involves appointing the most suitable candidate based on clearly defined criteria for the role, including the ability to meet the standards set out in the Commission's Code of Conduct. A role must only be offered to someone who is competent and suitably qualified and experienced to perform it.

Fair means there must be no bias in the assessment of candidates.

Open competition means appointment opportunities that are advertised publicly. Potential candidates must be given reasonable access to information about the role and its requirements and about the selection process including timescales. This approach guarantees that anyone who wishes to apply is given the opportunity to do so.

Selection and interview processes will be objective, impartial and applied consistently.

These Recruitment Principles must be applied fairly and consistently to all job applicants.

It is envisaged that most permanent appointment opportunities will proceed by way of open competition. Internal recruitment exercises will also be carried out on occasion. Please refer to the 'Internal Recruitment Process' section below.

## **Campaign Initiation**

Hiring managers with the support of the recruitment team and the HR team are responsible for designing and implementing selection processes that are tailored to the specific nature of each appointment, ensuring that these processes allow the Recruitment Selection Panel to assess candidates fairly based on the required skills and experience. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the process should be proportionate to the role being filled. Before any recruitment campaign can proceed, The Hiring Manager must go through the internal approval process to enable the Recruitment Team can advertise the role. This includes personally approving the selection criteria, role description, duration of the role, appropriate vetting level, Recruitment Selection Panel composition, selection methodology, recruitment timetable, remuneration and other terms, as well as the advertising strategy — particularly how to attract a strong and diverse pool of candidates.

## **Advertising**

The media chosen to publicise appointment opportunities and the time allowed for advertising should be suitable for attracting a sufficiently strong and diverse field of candidates, maximising the chances of appointing the best possible person and as a result contributing to improved business performance.

When recruitment agencies are engaged to assist the Commission in their selection for appointment, the requirements of these Recruitment Principles must be clearly communicated to them by the Commission's Recruitment team, including the importance of achieving a strong and diverse field of candidates.

Deadlines for applications may be extended, or late applications accepted, provided that any changes are applied consistently to all applicants and clearly communicated in any published materials. However, the Commission has no obligation to extend deadlines or accept late applications.

To comply with fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland, all applicants should be given the opportunity to declare their community background and sex. This will be stored separately for monitoring purposes only and won't be used as part of the selection process.

All job adverts and role profiles will clearly state:

- the level of vetting required
- that appointment is subject to satisfactory clearance
- any ongoing change of circumstances reporting.

## **Applications**

Candidates will receive an email from an applicant tracking system usually within 24 hours of the application being submitted indicating that the application form has been received and is being processed. However, if you should not receive a notification from the applicant tracking system within 24 hours of submitting your application, please email our Recruitment Team as below. Should a candidate need to contact the ICRIR Recruitment Team to notify us of errors or changes that may be required to an application, please do so at the earliest convenience at [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk).

During application stage, candidates will also receive a Unique Identifier Number (UID). Candidates will need the UID if they are contacting ICRIR about the application, and throughout the recruitment process.

All candidates who submit an application form and who have been shortlisted will then receive an invitation to the next stage of the recruitment process e.g. an assessment and/or interview (please see further details in the Recruitment Selection Panel section below).

During a recruitment campaign, candidates who are successful in securing a conditional job offer will be required to present evidence to commence the Pre-Employment Checks Process and vetting process.

## **Internal Recruitment Process**

As part of our commitment to developing our own colleagues, the Commission will consider internal recruitment where appropriate. The relevant Leadership Team members will determine if the role(s) should be advertised externally or internally based on the below factors:

External recruitment – may be considered appropriate when:

- a role demands specialist skills which an internal pool of candidates could not fulfil;
- the diversity of the pool of people who may apply for this role is limited and/or
- there are insufficient numbers or competent internal candidates for a role.

Internal recruitment – may be considered appropriate when:

- there is likely to be a pool of internal candidates who meet the competencies for the job, thus providing a development opportunity as well as cost saving by avoiding the expense of external recruitment; and/or
- the post requires an existing knowledge of ICRIR, and it is expected that there are a number of internal candidates who meet the competency criteria.

Please note that the decision to advertise a position externally does not necessarily indicate that there are no suitable internal candidates, or that internal candidates should not apply.

Any decision to conduct an internal only recruitment process must go through the normal recruitment approval process and be supported by a brief written business case which outlines:

- the operational rationale for the role(s);
- that an equality screening has been carried out and that the approach is not likely to perpetuate under-representation or have an adverse impact; and
- sets out any proportional mitigations (e.g. targeted outreach in subsequent external campaigns).

The business case and screening outcome must be retained within the recruitment file.

## **Probation Period**

To maintain consistency and ensure fair opportunities for career progression, employees must successfully complete their probationary period before applying for internal vacancies or transfers. This principle supports the development of a stable and committed workforce by allowing individuals to demonstrate their suitability for their current role before pursuing new opportunities within ICRIR.

Exceptions to this requirement may be considered in exceptional circumstances, subject to approval from the Director of People and Culture.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

The published selection process must be followed for all candidates, except where reasonable adjustments are required for a candidate with a disability.

Candidates with disabilities who require adjustments to participate fully in the assessment process will have the opportunity to request such adjustments in advance of submitting an application and in advance of any subsequent interview. Requests should be made to [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk).

The Commission will only request supporting evidence where it is necessary and proportionate to understand the adjustment required. Any reasonable adjustments may subsequently be communicated to the Recruitment Selection Panel, if necessary.

## **Recruitment Selection Panel**

A Recruitment Selection Panel of at least three people including the hiring manager, who will act as Chair, must be set up to oversee the selection and appointment process. As far as practical, they should be persons of a different sex and community background. Only persons who have been suitably trained and/or hold the relevant experience are eligible to serve as Recruitment Selection Panel members.

The Recruitment Team will remove names and any identifiable information (including address) before the Recruitment Selection Panel score application forms or CVs to enable blind selection to take place. Personal details are only made available to the Recruitment Selection Panel once a decision has been made on which candidates should be invited to an interview. As mentioned above, the Recruitment Selection Panel will not have access to any details provided as part of an equal opportunities monitoring form or declaration of interest which will be processed separately.

Recruitment Selection Panel members must declare any potential conflict of interest on their part to [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk) including prior knowledge of any candidate; equally a candidate should declare any potential conflict of interest prior to interview to [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk). A record must be kept of actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and how these were dealt with – those with an actual conflict may not be involved in the selection process.

Advice must be sought from the Director of People & Culture where any doubt arises about whether a connection constitutes an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

All candidates will be asked the same set of lead questions, but any follow up questions may differ according to a candidate's response. The Recruitment Selection Panel must ensure that candidates are impartially assessed against the published selection criteria at each stage of the process where assessment occurs and must take the final decision on which candidate(s) are the most meritorious. Candidates should bring evidence of their education and professional qualifications to the interview.

At the end of the process the Chair must produce a written record which should describe the outcome including candidate feedback, assessment stages and what evidence the assessment of merit was made, the order of merit, and confirm that the selection process was conducted in accordance with ICRIR's recruitment policies and procedures. All documentation relating to sift, interviews and notes should be stored in a secure location following ICRIR retention periods.

Each candidate who applied for a role via the applicant tracking system will receive an outcome to the application via the same method. If at any point the Chair has any cause to believe any of ICRIR's recruitment policies and procedures may be breached, they must pause the process until this has been resolved, referring to the HR team if necessary. Any Recruitment Selection Panel member may also raise such a concern with the Director of People and Culture. The Recruitment Team will be responsible for notifying the successful applicant and sending them an offer letter.

### **Use of External Recruitment Selection Panel members**

External Recruitment Selection Panel members can be helpful to provide specialist expertise when recruiting to niche roles or senior leadership positions and can provide wider perspectives in recruitment.

The use of any external Recruitment Selection Panel members must be signed off at the outset of the recruitment campaign by the Director of People and Culture. The Head of Information Governance and Data Protection will advise on the appropriate method of sharing application information to ensure compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

HR will maintain a record of external Recruitment Selection Panel members, consider any declared actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and provide advice on dissemination of personal material.

### **Declaration of Interest**

Following interview, scoring and provisional offers, candidates' declaration of interest forms shall be considered by the Hiring Manager (and may potentially be escalated to the Vetting & Pre-Employment Checks Escalation Panel) as part of the Commissions Pre-Employment Checks (please refer to the Pre-Employment Checks section below). Candidates may be contacted by the hiring manager regarding any interests declared to discuss and to consider mitigation (if necessary).

## **Use of Merit Lists**

The candidate recommended for appointment must be the one placed first in order of merit by the Recruitment Selection Panel. If the most meritorious candidate turns the appointment down, the hiring manager must then either offer the appointment, in merit order, to the other appointable candidate(s) or close the process without an appointment being made.

Each time a recruitment campaign is run via the Commission, a merit list will be maintained. A merit list is a list of appointable candidates, who were not the top scoring candidate for a role, but who were considered to be, appointable to the role.

The purpose of a merit list is to avoid further recruitment if the need for the same or similar role arises in future and should be considered before further recruitment activity is undertaken. The rank of candidates on a merit list is determined by the final scores at interview stage. Merit lists are held for a standard period of 12 months. Candidates are contacted by the Recruitment Team to ask permission for the ICRIR to store their details securely on our HR system. After 12 months, the merit list expires, and candidate details will no longer be stored. If you have a merit list which is soon to expire and you anticipate you may need to use it, please speak to the Recruitment Team. A merit list can be used if a vacancy arises and a live merits list exists for the same job role and pay band.

Candidates must be appointed in merit order. Candidates cannot be selected from a merit list out of order of placement on the list, i.e. a candidate cannot be appointed because the hiring manager and /or Selection Panel think they are a better “fit” than the higher placed candidates. If appointed from a merit list, candidates must be offered roles on the same terms and conditions, as those attached to the originally advertised position.

For volume recruitment campaigns where multiple candidates will be offered employment, all candidates will commence pre-employment checks simultaneously.

Employment offers will be issued once candidates have successfully completed all required vetting, even if this results in candidates positioned lower on the merit list receiving an earlier start date. This approach is intended to facilitate the timely onboarding of candidates. Please note that this process will only apply where there are enough confirmed posts available to support the issuance of all employment offers.

All initial offers made will be provisional and subject to successful completion of pre-employment and vetting checks.

## **Appointment**

The candidate placed first will be offered an appointment. All initial offers made will be provisional and subject to successful completion of pre-employment and vetting checks.

Successful candidates should be aware of the timeframes associated with pre-employment and vetting checks to be completed. Please refer to sections below. Any successful candidate should carefully review the provisional offer in respect of the pre-employment and vetting checks and candidates should make the recruitment team aware of any discrepancies or any issues requiring further consideration.

**A candidate should not hand in their notice to their current employer until they receive an unconditional offer of employment.**

## **Employment Contracts**

The Commission will consider each role before deciding the type of contract being offered. The following principles will apply:

For roles required for a period of 0-24 months – Fixed Term Contracts

For roles required for a period of 2+ years – Permanent Appointments

In exceptional circumstances, fixed term contracts may be granted beyond 2 years where a lesser timeframe may hinder occupational effectiveness.

This exemption must be:

- Justified with a clear business rationale;
- Approved by the Director of People & Culture; and
- Documented with the business case and decision retained on the relevant personal file.

All roles within the Commission will be assessed for their suitability to be advertised as secondment opportunities. Where a role is offered as a secondment, the standard duration will typically be between one and two years, with a maximum term of up to three years.

## **Salary**

Hiring managers (or more senior Commission staff) do not have scope to offer salary outside of the ICRIR pay bands.

## **Exceptions**

Exceptions to fair and open competition, by definition, are exceptional. The Commission will only accept appointments outside of its recruitment policies and procedures in the circumstances below. Where these situations arise, approval for exception to fair and open competition must be signed off by the Director of People and Culture and the CEO.

### **a. Temporary Appointments**

Where the urgency or short duration of the role makes a full competition impractical or disproportionate. ICRIR may appoint for a maximum of 2 years. Any extension beyond 2 years (or recruitment for a role which lasts longer than a 2-year period) requires written approval from the CEO, with the maximum extension of one year.

#### b. Highly Specialist Skills

ICRIR may appoint people with highly specialist skills that are not readily available (including but not limited to skills required for example, Senior Investigating Officers, Strap Officers, Data Protection Officers and Intelligence Officers), where a full process is unlikely to secure suitable candidates within the required timescale of a role. The Commission may appoint for a maximum of 2 years. Any extension beyond a 2-year period (or recruitment for a role which lasts longer than a 2-year period) requires written approval from the Director of People/Director of Finance.

#### c. Former employees of ICRIR

Former employees (excluding public appointees) of ICRIR who were previously appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition may be reappointed to a permanent or fixed term contract within a maximum of 3 years of leaving the ICRIR. They must meet the essential criteria of the new role and be employed in a role which is within their previous pay band.

#### d. TUPE

Where the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ('TUPE') or Service Provision Change (Protection of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 may apply to the transfer of an organisation, team, or function, ICRIR will transfer the affected staff.

### **Pre- Employment Checks**

As a public-facing body tasked with promoting reconciliation and sensitive investigative and reconciliation work, including recovery of information and evidence in relation to deaths and serious injuries for victims, survivors and their families, ICRIR must uphold the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, and public trust.

The Commission is also under a duty not to do anything which would put the life or safety of anyone at risk, have a prejudicial effect on any actual or prospective criminal prosecution or prejudice or risk prejudicing national security interests of the United Kingdom.

To ensure that all personnel meet these standards, it is both necessary and lawful to assess a candidate's background for any history that may compromise the Commission's reputation or operational effectiveness.

All prospective employees or workers of the ICRIR will be required to complete the pre-employment checks outlined below (whether directly with the Commission, or via an agency). This applies to all roles, including permanent, temporary, agency and contracted positions. For further information please refer to the Pre-Employment Checks Policy.

**These checks are carried out by a third party and could take between two to eight weeks for completion.**

### **STAGE 1 -Pre-Employment Checks**

#### **Pre-Employment checks include:**

- Identity Verification - Passport, birth certificate, or national ID, along with proof of address.
- Right to work - Manual document checks (e.g. passport, visa)/ Online checks using a share code (Home Office service). ICRIR follows [Home Office guidance](#) and maintains a statutory excuse against illegal working.
- Pre Employment Check Questionnaire – Conduct, Integrity, Finance and social media if required.
- Declaration of Interest form – refer to policy
- Employment History and References
- Qualifications and Professional Registration (as applicable)
- Criminal Record Checks

The above checks, questionnaires and/or forms are collectively referred to as “Pre employment checks” and are set out in detail in our Pre-employment Checks Policy to which you should refer before applying for a role within the Commission.

## **STAGE 2 -Pre-Employment Checks Escalation Panel**

If during the pre-employment checks process, there is information that gives cause for concern, a candidate’s application will be referred to the pre-employment checks Escalation Panel who will make a decision regarding their suitability for appointment or continued employment before they should proceed to vetting.

## **STAGE -3 Vetting**

Following completion of Pre – Employment Checks, all prospective candidates are required to undergo National Security Vetting appropriate to the nature of the role and sensitivity of work to be carried out.

Vetting is required for all Commission staff; however, SC or DV clearance may be required depending on the role a candidate is applying for. The advertised job specification will state what level of National Security Vetting clearance is required.

## **Government Vetting Requirement**

National Security Vetting is a UK Government requirement for risk assessed roles that involve access to sensitive information, assets or locations. The Cabinet Office is the sponsoring authority for the Commission and sets the expectations that the Commission must follow to meet Government vetting standards. Employment in roles requiring national security vetting is conditional upon obtaining and maintaining the appropriate level of clearance.

Vetting itself is carried out by United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV), the single Government provider of National Security Vetting. UKSV manages the end-to-end vetting process on behalf of Government departments and public bodies, including issuing questionnaires, undertaking background checks and providing assessments to the vetting authority. Clearance levels are determined by the nature of the role and the sensitivity of the information to which the postholder will require access.

## **The Commission's Role**

The Commission does not conduct national security vetting. Its responsibilities within the recruitment process are to:

- identify roles that require a security clearance and what level;
- sponsor candidates for the appropriate level of vetting via the Cabinet Office to UKSV to begin application for vetting; and
- maintain internal records of clearance status.

The Commission does not have access to the personal information candidates submit to UKSV. All vetting information is managed confidentially by UKSV.

Operational processes and internal requirements are set out in the ICRIR Vetting Policy.

## **United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) Role**

UKSV conducts the national security vetting process, comprising the issuance of security questionnaires through its online portal, the conduct of background enquiries, and interviews where necessary. If a candidate fails to return completed Vetting Questionnaires within the required timeframe, their application may be discontinued. Candidates can assist with the process being as smooth as possible by ensuring that they complete the Vetting Questionnaires in a timely manner and answer all the questions in full.

Following its inquiries, UKSV submits a report to the Cabinet Office with a recommendation to grant or refuse clearance. Acting as the sponsoring authority, the Cabinet Office subsequently informs the Commission's Vetting Team of the outcome. Vetting timeframes vary and are controlled by UKSV.

## **Appeal - Candidates**

In the event of UKSV refusal or withdrawal, candidates already employed within the Commission may have the right to appeal to SVAP. For further information please refer to the ICRIR Vetting Policy.

Candidates who have applied for a role with the Commission requiring national security vetting who are not yet employed have no right to appeal in the event of a UKSV refusal or withdrawal.

## **Further Information**

All detailed requirements, clearance levels and operational responsibilities relating to National Security Vetting are set out in the ICRIR Vetting Policy, which must be consulted for all procedural matters. Some clearance levels require periodic renewal during the course of employment (“Aftercare”). The Cabinet Office manages this process.

## **Data Protection**

Any personal data and sensitive personal data collected during the recruitment process will be processed in accordance with ICRIR’s data protection and recruitment privacy notice, which will be made available to all job applicants and prospective employees before they provide personal information.

## **Complaints**

Individuals may complain to the Commission that the recruitment policies and procedures have not been complied with. All complaints to be made in writing and sent to [recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk](mailto:recruitment@icrir.independent-inquiry.uk) within 3 calendar months of closing date for applications.