

# Values Based Recruitment



## Choosing a selection method for Values Based Recruitment

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Work Psychology Group has over 20 years' experience of designing and evaluating assessment and recruitment methodologies for high stakes selection in healthcare, finance, engineering and professional services. The team is made up of experienced consultants who have worked in both research and industry, giving a unique blend of organisational and academic expertise, ensuring the latest research can be turned into practical, innovative solutions. For more information, please see [www.workpsychologygroup.com](http://www.workpsychologygroup.com).

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### Overview

The following guidance is designed to highlight key considerations NHS employing organisations and admissions staff within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may need to take into account when selecting a Values Based Recruitment (VBR) method or enhancing an existing selection method to increase the emphasis on values. It is intended to be used as a guide to assist with the planning, development and implementation of selection activities, whilst recognising the need for individuals to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their own organisation. This is one of a series of guidance documents; complementary information relating to specific selection methods is also available for structured interviews, Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs), selection centres, personality tests and Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs).

It is recommended that utilisation of recruitment methods for assessment of values need to be considered with regards to the national core requirements, as set out in the national VBR framework. This recommends that an individual structured interview (including MMIs) to assess values must be conducted as part of the overall recruitment process to effectively recruit for values. This may occur in isolation or as part of a wider process such as a selection centre or in conjunction with a screening method such as an SJT.

See the [HEE website](#) for more information about the national core requirements and to learn more about structured interviews.

### Summary

- There are a number of ways in which Values Based Recruitment (VBR) can be achieved and in deciding on the most appropriate method, recruiters should start by undertaking a job or role analysis to accurately identify appropriate selection criteria. Outputs from a role analysis should include reference to the values expected of individuals entering the organisation and these should align with those included in the NHS Constitution.
- Recruiters should consider the evidence base for the selection methods available to achieve VBR and in line with the national core requirements which recommend that an individual structured interview (including Multiple Mini Interviews) to assess values must be conducted as part of the overall recruitment process to effectively recruit for values. This may occur in isolation or as part of a wider process such as a selection centre or in conjunction with a screening method such as an SJT.
- Recruiters should attend to practical issues associated with the implementation of selection methods to achieve VBR including how different methods and selection criteria will integrate with each other and be weighted against each other as well as factors such as resource availability, costs and applicant reactions.
- It is important to consider how the chosen approach for achieving VBR will be communicated both within the organisation and externally (for example to applicants).
- Recruiters are responsible for ensuring issues relating to equality and diversity have been attended to through ongoing monitoring, appropriate assessor training and consideration of mechanisms to provide reasonable adjustments to applicants as required.
- In order to ensure selection methods used to achieve VBR are fit for purpose, recruiters should undertake regular evaluation of the chosen methods using this to contribute to ongoing development and refinement of the selection methods.
- VBR should be part of wider culture change initiatives which aim to define and embed the relevant values throughout the organisation across all roles and levels.

### What is Values Based Recruitment?

Values Based Recruitment (VBR) is defined by Health Education England (HEE) as an approach which, attracts and selects students, trainees or employees on the basis that their individual values and behaviours align with the values of the NHS Constitution, alongside their skills and aptitude.

The purpose of HEE's VBR programme is to ensure that the future and current NHS workforce is selected against the values of the [NHS Constitution](#) so that we recruit for the right workforce not only with the right skills and in the right numbers, but also with the right values to support effective team working in delivering excellent patient care and experience. Locally derived values can be mapped to those of the NHS Constitution using NHS Employers' [NHS Constitution mapping tool](#).

As shown through the literature review (available on the [HEE website](#)), the evidence related to VBR directly is limited, and values themselves are difficult measure directly. However, evidence is available which identifies the selection methods which are most likely to provide insight into an applicant's values and therefore achieve appropriate VBR. Such insight into values is usually achieved through assessing how an applicant demonstrates awareness about what is effective behaviour in certain work-related contexts (for example, through the way in which they respond to an interview question, behave in a role-play exercise, prioritise ways of responding to a situation or reflect on a situation).

In deciding which approach to take to VBR there are number of key considerations to take into account.

### Key considerations for Values Based Recruitment

#### Choosing a selection method

- Figure 1 below highlights how a **job analysis or role analysis** is the foundation to producing an effective selection process either at point of entry into employment or into training. One aim of a role analysis is to accurately identify appropriate selection criteria. This may be done through direct observation and interviews with those currently undertaking the role. In a healthcare context, role analysis studies conducted in the UK have identified a wide range of attributes beyond clinical knowledge and academic achievement that need to be considered to ensure that healthcare workers train and work within a profession for which they have a particular aptitude<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Patterson F, Ferguson E and Thomas S. (2008). Using job analysis to identify core and specific competencies: implications for selection and recruitment. *Medical Education*, 42(12), 1195-1204.

**Figure 1 Choosing Selection Methods for Values Based Recruitment**

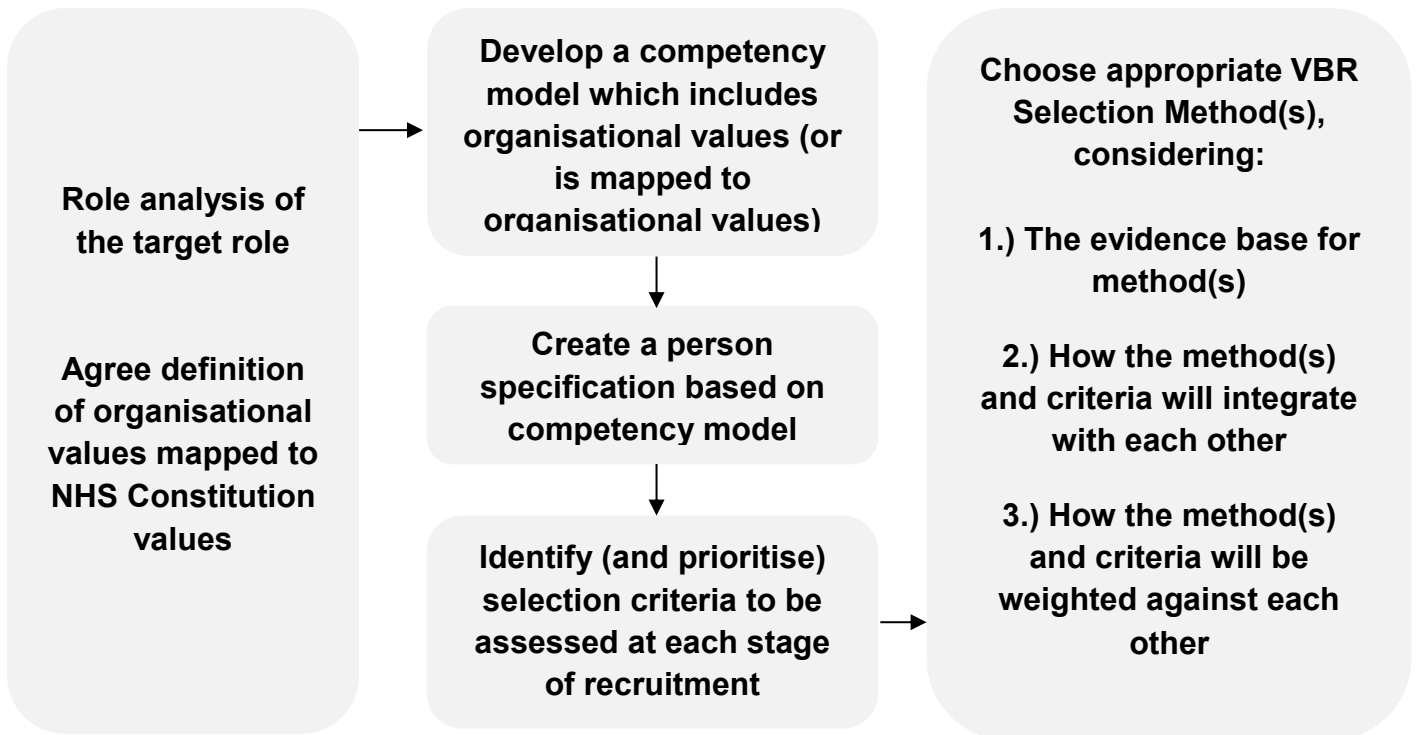


Figure 1 identifies two key questions to consider when choosing a selection method:

Firstly, what is the evidence base that the method is effective for VBR? This is available from the published literature review and executive summary available on the HEE website. In summary, Table 1 below illustrates selection methods that are effective for VBR with a commentary on how they are often used. Choosing between these methods often depends on many other factors, for example, practical and logistical limitations, resource availability and costs. Applicant reactions are often a significant consideration, particularly in high stakes settings. Expertise to implement the selection method is also important to consider, particularly when dealing with large scale recruitment rounds; can the method be implemented and scaled with the expertise available in the organisation? If not, what is the extent of training required?

Secondly, how can an assessment of values be integrated alongside all the other important selection criteria identified from the role analysis? Careful consideration and choice of selection methods can help to provide a balanced, effective and user friendly experience that integrates the assessment of values effectively. The weighting of each selection criterion (including any assessment of values) in the overall selection decision needs to be defined in advance to ensure that the selection system is giving appropriate weighting to relevant criteria. For a more in-depth summary of the evidence-base relating to MMIs please see the **VBR literature review**.

**Table 1 Selection Methods for Values Based Recruitment**

Selection Method	How and where are they used?
<b>Structured Interviews</b>	<p>Interviews based on a thorough role analysis, using structured and standardised questions with trained interviewers and appropriate scoring can be reliable and valid. They offer a face to face encounter that allows skilled interviewers to probe beyond initial responses. Applicants prefer interviews to other methods although they are relatively resource intensive.</p> <p><b>Personality tests</b> can be used to complement structured interviews by providing insight into an applicant's self-reported preferences or traits and to drive more focused questioning at interview (rather than as a standalone instrument without verification). Personality tests can also be useful at the <b>attraction phase</b> of VBR as part of self-assessment/selection.</p>
<b>Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)</b>	<p>Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs) are a particular type of structured interview that comprise a series of short interview stations, each of which employs a single standardised short interview scenario and a single assessor (interviewer). MMIs may be more advantageous than traditional interviews in that the multi-rater assessment offers good reliability. Due to the multiple components of an MMI, they are more resource intensive than other selection methods.</p>
<b>Selection centres</b>  using work samples for example group exercises, written/in-tray task, presentations, interactive exercises	<p>When designed appropriately (using a multi-trait, multi-method approach with work samples), selection centres are valid predictors of job performance. Applicants are positive towards selection centres as they have multiple opportunities to perform and can provide realistic job previews. Selection centres can be expensive to design and implement but offer an assessment environment which more closely reflects the environment of the target role.</p>
<b>Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs)</b>	<p>Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) are standardised scenarios, often delivered on-line with pre-determined machine markable scoring responses. These differ to situational scenarios delivered in an interview context. SJTs can be mapped to organisational values. They are effective in high volume selection, often for screening alongside other criteria identified as important to the role (for example, numerical and verbal reasoning).</p>



## Weighting

- In any selection process, it is important to avoid placing undue weight on different sources of information gathered. The accurate and appropriate weighting of selection tools or exercises should ideally be defined based on systematic role analysis and identification of the key criteria for a role. Weighting of selection tools will therefore differ depending on the specific role being recruited to or the specific needs of the recruiting organisation.
- The incorporation of a values based assessment with existing skills/knowledge-based assessment may be on the basis of equal weighting. Alternatively particular values or criteria may be weighted based on their relative importance or relevance to the role.
- The weighting of values within the selection process should be agreed in advance as part of the design stages of the selection process. The weighting applied to one component of the selection process in relation to other elements should be considered based on the person specification and role requirements.

## Communication

- To generate engagement with the chosen selection method(s), it is important that managers openly, and clearly, communicate the purpose, features and outcomes to recruiting staff. When embedding values based recruitment, it is important that there is clear communication regarding the organisation's values and how these are aligned to, and incorporated within, the recruitment practices.
- As well as internal communication, it is crucial that the selection methods are clearly communicated to applicants. Applicants should have a clear understanding of the experience they are likely to encounter when participating in the recruitment process, the values of the organisation and how these relate to the role for which they are applying.

## Equality and diversity

- In developing a selection process it is important to consider issues relating to equality and diversity to ensure that the chosen method does not inadvertently advantage or disadvantage certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics (including: age, gender, marital status, disability, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or sexual orientation).
- This should include consideration of the following issues:
  - Are the interview questions or exercise instructions written in plain English and will they be easily understandable when read aloud? *For example, the use of colloquial terms or jargon might unfairly disadvantage those whose first language is not English or unfairly advantage those who have previously worked within a particular organisation and therefore have knowledge of certain*

*acronyms or local expressions.*

- Are the scoring criteria clear and unambiguous? Unclear definitions or statements are more likely to be open to interpretation by assessors and lead to bias. *For example the indicator 'good communication skills' could be interpreted differently by different assessors. Less ambiguous indicators would include: 'summarises key messages', 'speaks at an appropriate pace' and 'conveys confidence'.*
- Do questions or exercises rely on a particular type of experience which is not a specific requirement of the role? *For example an interview question 'tell us about your experience of volunteering and what you have learnt from this' relies on an applicant having undertaken some form of voluntary work. An alternative would be: 'tell us about your experience of helping others and what you have learnt from this' as this gives applicants the opportunity to draw from a wider range of possible experiences.*
- Ensuring a wide range of individuals from a range of backgrounds are involved in the design of selection methods helps to avoid questions, exercises or scoring criteria which may unintentionally advantage or disadvantage particular groups. Formal equality and diversity checks of exercise content can also be undertaken by experts if required.
- Appropriate training helps to ensure that all assessors have a clear and shared understanding of the scoring criteria and know how to ask questions or provide exercise instructions in a consistent and appropriate manner. Training should also be used to raise awareness of the impact of biases (both conscious and unconscious) to help assessors identify and guard against these both in themselves and in others.
- Ensuring more than one assessor is involved in delivering and scoring the selection exercise(s) helps to reduce the influence of biases.
- Provision should also be made to make reasonable adjustments for applicants with special requirements. These special requirements might include (but are not limited to) applicants who have physical disabilities (for example an applicant who uses a wheelchair requiring a ramp to access the building, or a visually impaired applicant requiring written material to be printed in a larger font) or applicants with specific learning difficulties (for example an applicant with dyslexia requiring additional time to complete a task which involves processing a large amount of written information).

### Evaluation

- It is important to evaluate the effectiveness and utility of a selection process to ensure it is fit for purpose and reliable in terms of selecting the appropriate applicants.
- By reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the process, fairness, reliability and

validity can be enhanced. It may be useful to consider the following questions when evaluating the effectiveness of a selection method:

- Is the selection method a good predictor of future performance? For example, what is the correlation between selection method ratings and subsequent performance ratings?
  - Does the selection method produce good quality information to inform selection decision making?
  - Are there significant differences in performance across particular groups of applicants (for example on the basis of age, gender or ethnicity)? It is important to monitor any such differences as these may indicate that the method is unfairly discriminating against particular groups. If such differences are identified, then the potential reasons for these should be investigated (for example reviewing the wording of questions – see section on ‘Equality and Diversity’ above).
  - Is the method effective in supporting selection of individuals with values congruent with the organisation, and identifying those who are unsuitable?
  - Does the selection method receive favourable reactions from those involved in the process (including applicants, recruiters, and administrators)?
- For a more detailed discussion of the evaluation criteria which can be applied to assess the effectiveness of a selection method, see the published VBR literature review.

### Embedding values

- VBR represents just one part of embedding the desired values throughout an organisation. Once recruited, individuals are susceptible to the influences of others around them. As such an individual recruited with the right values can quickly become disengaged or find themselves behaving at odds with those values if the values displayed by individuals already working within the organisation are not consistent with those they have been recruited for.
- For VBR to be a success there should be a clear focus on requirements and a clear demonstration that values are fully supported by the organisation. Tools provided by NHS Employers such as the [Self-Assessment Checklist](#) are available to help organisations prepare for undertaking VBR.
- VBR should be part of wider culture change initiatives which aim to define and embed the relevant values throughout the organisation across all roles and levels. This includes attending to other important issues such as:
  - **Induction activity:** What information are new recruits given about the organisation they are joining? How is this process managed? How are the

values positioned to ensure shared and clear understanding?

- **Staff appraisal processes:** To what extent are the values referred to within staff appraisals? How is the appraisal system carried out? Are managers supported in appraising their staff against the defined organisational values?
- **Development and training initiatives:** What training or development is available to staff to support them in learning about the organisational values and how these apply to their particular role? To what extent can existing training or development initiatives be used to reinforce the organisational values?
- **Raising concerns:** To what extent are staff able to raise concerns when they identify behaviour which they believe is inconsistent with the values of the organisation? Do staff members feel supported by managers to enable them to do this without fear of repercussion? To what extent is this encouraged and monitored across the organisation?
- **Sharing and communicating the values:** How are the defined values shared and promoted throughout the organisation? Who should be made aware of these and how are such messages best communicated?