



National Statistics Office
Uffiċċju Nazzjonali tal-Istatistika

HRSD-POL-008: Policy on Recruitment

January 2024

1. Overview

This policy is designed to ensure that all relevant procedures involved in the process of recruitment and selection are adhered to.

2. Abbreviations

MSA: Malta Statistics Authority

NSO: National Statistics Office

HRSD: Human Resources and Staff Development Unit

DCS: Director for Corporate Services

P&SD: Peoples and Standards Division

OPM: Office of the Prime Minister

3. Definitions

Recruitment: The process of identifying, screening, shortlisting and hiring the best and qualified candidate/s for vacant positions in a timely and cost-effective manner.

4. Policy Objectives

The objective of this policy is to outline the shared responsibilities of the Malta Statistics Authority (MSA) and the National Statistics Office (NSO) on the process of employee resourcing, in line with Maltese law, Government policies and directives, specifically Directive 7 - Manual for Public Sector Entities: Delegation of Authority to effect Recruitment, Promotions and Industrial Relations. Other documents which were reviewed and are mentioned in this policy are:

- (i) The Manual on resourcing policies and procedures;¹ and
- (ii) Directives and decisions taken by the Malta Statistics Authority Board.

The Chairperson, being the legal responsible person for employment functions reserves the right to change or withdraw this policy as circumstances may dictate.

¹https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/Documents/Public%20Service%20Management%20Code/PSMC%20Manuals/Manual_on_Resourcing_Policies_and_Procedures.pdf

5. Scope

5.1 Both the MSA and NSO are guided by the recruitment policies and directives established by central government which provide for:

- (i) Recruitment of employees from the widest pool of resources possible through all plausible methods, but mainly through internal, external calls and expression of interest through the Public Service amongst others;
- (ii) Engagement of employees with diverse backgrounds, skills and abilities who can contribute towards the continuous improvement of official statistics and ancillary horizontal and administrative activities; and
- (iii) Commitment towards providing opportunities for development and career fulfillment.

5.2 This policy shall determine the recruitment process of all staff with the exception;

- (i) Directorship positions which shall be executed directly by the MSA through its Secretariat otherwise delegated;
- (ii) Engagement of casual survey interviewers that are recruited and assigned tasks on a project basis.

6. Policy Statements

Attracting and recruiting people with diverse backgrounds, skills and abilities is of utmost importance to ensure that the current and future technical and administrative needs of both MSA and NSO are met.

7. Responsibilities

This policy shall focus on the process of the Recruitment Process.

At the beginning of the year the Director for Corporate Services (DCS) together with the Director for Finance shall publish for internal consumption the Human Resources Plan. It shall contain information on the number of vacancies to be issued, their grade and when the MSA intends to publish these calls during the year. This report shall be accessible to officers within the HRSD Unit and inside the MSA Secretariat on a need-to-know basis.

Confirmation is approved from the Line Ministry, the latter liaises with and seeks authorisation from the People & Standards Division (P&SD) together with the Coordinating Committee from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

7.1 Internal Recruitment Process

The Collective Agreement specifies that employment resourcing must follow a two-step process: an internal vacancy call and if said vacant positions are not filled, an external open call is issued.

The procedure to be followed for an internal vacancy process is as follows:

- a) The Director General shall inform the MSA Chairman when issuing an internal vacancy which is in line with an approved Human Resources and Business plan at the beginning of each financial year.
- b) All documentation related to the recruitment process shall be filed in an MSA recruitment file. Since this process is being managed by the NSO on delegated authority by the MSA, the DCS and the Head of HRSD have access to recruitment files. All files shall be stored safely in the MSA Registry, the latter having an internal audit function which is intended to ensure that the process is executed in accordance with the public sector regulations and other policies established by the MSA.
- c) Delegated responsibilities falling under the responsibility of the DCS:

The DCS or anybody under his direct authority shall be responsible for all stages of the recruitment process and the management of the file thereafter.

- d) HRSD Unit is responsible to write the:
 - (i) Internal memorandum to be signed by the MSA Chairperson to communicate the process to all employed staff as per the Collective Agreement; and
 - (ii) The Job Description (Annexed to the vacancy advert).

The internal memorandum (i) must include and outline the following:

- Duties as mirrored in the vacancy's job description;
- Eligibility requirements, which shall include but not limited to, a specific relevant subject area field, listing down the subject areas most compatible to the vacancy call;
- Salary and incremental / allowance explanation; and

- A deadline for applications, i.e. fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of publication on the NSO Intranet;
 - In certain cases, the internal memorandum may include a clause stipulating that candidates are required to be at a minimum eighteen (18) years old by the date of submission of their application for the post to apply, in order to be able to sign an oath of secrecy should they be successful.
- e) Once the internal memorandum is signed off by the Chairperson, the Dissemination and Communications Unit (DCU) disseminates the employment opportunity to all staff through the NSO Intranet by no later than three (3) working days from date of reception of the file.
- f) Applications should be addressed to the HRSD Unit and may be submitted through the dedicated email account; careers.nso@gov.mt, by post or delivered by hand.
- g) Applications are acknowledged by the close of application date.
- h) Applications are vetted by the HRSD Unit members of staff and any missing documents must be provided by the candidates before they are invited for an interview.

Required or obligatory documentation may consist of:

- Letter of application or cover letter;
- Recently updated curriculum vitae (CV);
- Copies of qualification certificates and transcript of results. In case of foreign qualifications, applicants should note the requirement to produce Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) recognition statements in respect of their qualifications from the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority;
- A recent and clean police conduct, issued in the last six (6) months from the date of publication of the vacancy call;
- Duly filled in and signed MSA's Recruitment Process consent form; and
- In cases in which years of relevant working experience are required in addition to the qualification, applicants should be notified to present a copy of their Jobsplus employment history as a testimonial to the claimed experience.

In cases where applicants are waiting to retrieve the required documentation hereabove, applicants are to be granted up to two (2) working days after closing date or up to two (2) working days from date of notification, whichever is the later, to submit the incorrect, incomplete, or missing documents. If the requested information or documentation is not received according to the timeframes stipulated hereabove, the application is considered incomplete and is considered as ineligible.

In cases where an applicant submits an application on the basis of a qualification which is at a higher level than that required in the eligibility criteria but is not in possession of the qualification at the required level, the candidate is to be considered eligible, provided that the candidate meets the other applicable requirements of the call including those specifying the subject matter of the required qualifications. Such cases may include, for example, instances where the eligibility requirement stipulated in the call for applications is for a First Degree in a particular field, whilst the candidate, although not in possession of the required qualification, is in possession of a Post-graduate Degree in the same field. In such cases, no marks are to be awarded for the higher qualification on the basis of which the candidate has been considered to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

In the case of foreign qualifications and the absence of MQRIC equivalence, candidates should be informed accordingly to apply and provide the necessary MQRIC recognition document from the Malta Higher and National Authority before sitting for an interview. If the Malta Higher and National Education Authority are unable to verify the qualification or the equivalence report is in the negative or not presented before the interviewing session, an accreditation from another recognized European Union Education Agency² shall be presented. In the absence of this recognition the concerned candidates shall be informed that they are deemed to be ineligible.

- i) A selection board is created and approved by the Director General (NSO) on recommendation by the DCS, nominating members to interview and select the most suitable candidate for the position. The number of nominated members should be an odd number, no less than three (3) members, and those appointed to sit on selection boards must be at least one (1) grade higher than the vacancy in question.

All members of the selection board are required to sign PSC Declaration Form 8 regarding Political / Trade Union Activities before proceeding with their participation and starting the selection process.

A number of substitute members may also be appointed in case any of the board members become unavailable at the time of the interviewing process.

Additionally, a staff member acting as rapporteur shall be present in all interviews while a number of observers may be present at the interview to complement the selection board since they may have a stake in the recruitment process.

- j) A list of potential candidates is drawn in a report format and provided by the HR unit to the members of the selection board by no later than three (3) working days from

² <https://europa.eu/europass/en/recognition-skills-and-qualifications>

the closing date for the receipt of applications, to execute the eligibility procedure in line with *The Manual on resourcing policies and procedures*.

- k) The Chairperson of the selection Board shall hold a meeting with the other board members in five (5) working days' time from the reception of the screening report to assess and confirm the report on the eligibility process and method used to shortlist candidates or otherwise.

Once the selection board's Chairperson confirms the eligibility of candidates, the report is finalised and feedback is provided to the Head of HRSD, detailing eligible candidates to proceed to interviewing stage, and ineligible candidates. In addition to the report, the selection board will be required to provide the HRSD with a duly signed PSC Declaration Form 6 regarding Conflict-of-Interest, and Form 7 regarding Eligibility of Candidates. Should the Chairperson or any of the Members of the selection board not be in a position to sign PSC Declaration Form 6 – "Conflict of Interest" mentioned hereabove, the Chairperson / Member should immediately notify the NSO Director General or the MSA.

Ineligible candidates are to be notified that their employment process cannot proceed and informed of the reason why they are being deemed as ineligible, quoting the relevant paragraph in the call for application. Eligible and short-listed candidates are to be invited for an interview.

- l) If a candidate contests the ineligibility of his/her application, it is to be reviewed by an independent petitions' board and its decision is considered final. The formation of the petitions board is determined by the MSA. The Head of HRSD is to communicate the petitions board's decision to the respective candidate.
- m) Interviewing dates are scheduled by the HRSD. Candidates are to be notified at least ten (10) working days before the interview date by email or in writing for audit trail purposes. Interview invitations shall include a deadline for candidates to confirm availability on the given date and time of the interview. In the exceptional circumstance where an applicant is unable to physically attend for an interview due to a valid reason, the selection board may carry out the interview by videoconference or give the applicant an alternative date to sit for a physical interview.
- n) If a candidate does not inform the HRSD Unit that he/she cannot attend the interview for a valid reason, the candidate will be disqualified from the interviewing process.

- o) The interview process shall be conducted on the principles of good governance as established in *Manual for Public Sector Entities: Delegation of Authority to effect Recruitment, Promotions and Industrial Relations*.
- p) Following the interview, the rapporteur submits a draft report to the selection board within two (2) working days from the last interview. The report highlights the performance and outcome of each interviewee together with a proposal for which candidate/s shall be invited to take up employment. The interview report is to be agreed and signed off by all members of the selection board and sent back to the Head of HRSD Unit within five (5) working days from reception.
- q) The report as minimal requirements shall include the following details:
- (i) Number of applications received;
 - (ii) Agreement on interview pass mark and interview format;
 - (iii) Outcome/Process of interview; and
 - (iv) Final recommendation of the Board³.
- r) The final interviewing report and result sheet is to be approved by the DG NSO and MSA Chairperson prior to requesting selected interviewees to sign an employment contractual agreement. During this period, the recruitment file is passed on the MSA Secretariat for verification purposed. Notwithstanding this, in consideration of the vastly competitive employment market, once the report is endorsed by the members of the selection board, the HRSD can communicate the outcome of the interview to the successful candidates.
- The outcome shall also state to the successful candidates that the validity period of the result is one (1) year from the notification of the interview result.
- If within the validity period of the result, a fresh call for applications is issued for the same position, any remaining candidates on the initial pass list who are not yet appointed will, during the validity period of the first call, take precedence over successful candidates from the second call. In this regard, the Permanent Secretary and the PS&D shall be duly informed of the outcome. Once the valid list of successful candidates has been exhausted, successful candidates from the second call will be contacted to take up employment.
- s) In the case of a petition regarding the interviewing process, candidates are to inform the HRSD within ten (10) working days from notification of result. If a petition,

³ In the rare eventuality that a member of the selection committee does not agree with the final recommendations reached the member can raise a minority report to the MSA Board.

complaint, or appeal is found to be justified, the HRSD shall inform the petitions' board through the MSA. The formation of the petitions board is determined by the MSA. The Head of HRSD is to communicate the petitions' board's decision to the respective candidate.

- t) The petitions' board is empowered to change and/or annul any wrong decision and shall take whatever action it deems fit to provide appropriate redress, including the issue of a revised result or the annulment of the selection process, as well as recommending disciplinary/criminal action against defaulting officers/persons in cases of abuse, as considered appropriate. A revised result shall not give grounds for the submission of fresh petitions.

Successful candidates are invited to take up employment by the Head of HRSD and eventual signing of employment contract, which is provided to the candidates by the HRSD once the ten (10) working day petitions' period lapses. In special circumstances, the NSO Director General may, if he/she deems it necessary and proper, to authorise successful applicants to accept employment after a maximum of four (4) weeks' time from the notification of the interview result, unless the candidate is employed during the time of the vacancy call. In such case, the applicable notice period, as per employment law, where the incumbent is currently employed, shall be respected.

The HRSD shall ensure that the recruitment and onboarding process involves:

- I. The administration of the Oath of Secrecy as per MSA Act;
- II. Signing of contract of employment;
- III. Processing of Jobsplus engagement form;
- IV. Monthly employment return as requested by the PS&D.

7.2 External Recruitment Process

In the external recruitment process, points 7.1 (b) to 7.1 (e) as stipulated hereinabove are dismissed and extended to the Process 03 of the Manual for Public Sector Entities: Delegation of Authority to effect Recruitment, Promotions and Industrial Relations as outlined hereunder. In certain cases of urgent staffing needs, there exists the possibility of a Concurrent Issue of an Internal and External Call as outlined in Section 3.6 of the aforementioned Manual:

- (i) The HRSD will contact the Resource Support and Services Limited (RSSL) and the Engineering Resources Limited (ERL) to seek if there is any suitable candidate to fill the vacancy. In the event that a suitable candidate is found and redeployment is required, the People & Standards Division (P&SD) shall be notified, and standard onboarding is to be followed;

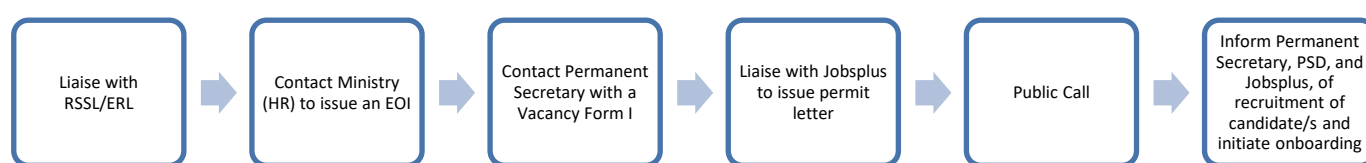
- (ii) If no suitable candidate is found from RSSL/ERL, the HRSD will liaise with the Director responsible for the Human Resources of the line Ministry, to check if the vacancy could be filled through an Expression of Interest (EOI) across the Public Administration (Public Service & Public Sector), which issue requires the prior approval of the P&SD. The P&SD shall be notified, and standard onboarding is to be followed;
- (iii) If the above steps (7.2 (i) and 7.2 (ii)) prove futile to fill the total complement of the vacancy call, a Vacancy Form I, including a copy of the Job Description, is compiled by the HRSD Unit, signed by the MSA Chairperson, NSO Director General and Financial Controller, and submitted to the Permanent Secretary for endorsement. In cases where the NSO is required to replace resigning or departing employees who occupied the same position of the ongoing vacancy call after a Vacancy Form I has already been submitted, the Permanent Secretary (PS) needs to be informed with due update, and normal recruitment procedures remain applicable;

Once approval is received, the HRSD starts liaison with Jobsplus to provide a list of Part 1,2,3 registering candidates according to the requirements set out in the vacancy call. CAP 594 of the Jobsplus Act stipulates that Parts 1,2 eligible candidates are to be given priority over the other parts of the register prior to publishing a public call for applications. If Jobsplus' recruitment services prove futile, Jobsplus are to be notified of the progress and a permit letter is then supplied so as to publish the vacancy call publicly for a minimum duration of fifteen (15) days or a maximum of thirty (30) days.

- (iv) The HRSD shall liaise with Department for Information (DOI) to publish the vacancy call on the earliest issue of the Government Gazette, by no later than three (3) working days from the receipt of the permit letter from Jobsplus. The HRSD must ensure that the vacancy number and permit number are clearly visible on the vacancy advert, that the correct and latest template is being applied, that the latest eligibility requirements is listed in the call, mirroring those set out in the internal call and latest Job Description and, that the deadline (date and time) for applications is clearly stipulated at the end of the vacancy call. Subsequently, the HRSD will liaise will the Communications and Dissemination Unit to publish the vacancy call on the NSO website by no later than five (5) working days from receipt of the file. In certain cases, the HRSD may request the DCS for approval to engage with third party organisations to advertise the vacancy call extensively.

- (v) Applications should be addressed to the HRSD Unit and may be submitted through the dedicated email account; careers.nso@gov.mt, by post or delivered by hand, with the subject caption mirroring the vacancy being applied for. Applications received after noon (12:00hrs) of the closing date for applications will not be accepted. Late applications will not be considered. It remains the responsibility of the applicant/s to verify that the said application was received on time.

Figure 2: Process 03 of the Manual for Public Sector Entities: Delegation of Authority to effect Recruitment, Promotions and Industrial Relations:



8. References

Not Applicable

9. Attachments

Not Applicable

10. Document Control

10.1. This policy needs to be formally reviewed by the Policy Owner every twelve (12) months from coming into effect. In addition to addressing emergent institutional needs, the review will address the following, among others:

- (i) Issue of new guidelines by the People and Standards Division - Office of the Prime Minister.
- (ii) Directives and decisions taken by the Malta Statistics Authority Board; and
- (iii) any applicable amendments and/or additions to employment legislation.

10.2. The current version of this policy, together with any previous versions, shall be recorded below.

Version History		
Version	Description	
1.0	Date Live:	January 2024
	Version Notes:	First version of the policy

	Full Name & Role
Policy Owner:	Duncan Brincat (Director Corporate Services)
Reviewed by:	Dr Sarah J. Meli (Legal Advisor)
Reviewed by:	Keith Grech (Malta Statistics Authority)
Approved by:	Etienne Caruana (Director General, NSO)

Annex 1: Sample checklist to be used for internal verification.

Process 1 (internal call)
1. Call for vacancy issued by the Director General in line with the Human Resources plan approved by MFE
2. Issue internal memo signed off by MSA Chairperson and disseminated to all staff
3. Receipt of applications by staff:
(i) Email or letter of application
(ii) Curriculum vitae
(iii) Associated Documentation
4. Confirmation of receipt of application
5. Eligibility report by interviewing board members
6. Invites or rejection letter to applicants
7. Interview:
(i) Declaration – Conflict of Interest
(ii) Declaration – Eligibility of Candidates
(iii) Declaration - Political and/or Trade Union Activities
(iv) Report duly signed by all members of the selection board
(v) Overall Marking Sheet (The marking sheet of each interviewing board member shall be kept by the respective board member for a period of one year)
8. DG and MSA approval of report
9. Copy of candidate's / s' acceptance or rejection declaration email.
In the event that the post is not filled through an internal call, a request to issue an expression of interest is processed as follows:
Process 2 (expression of interest)
10. RSSL/ERL
11. If process 10. does not produce any results, approval from line Ministry (Perm Sec) to issue expression of interest or external call
11. If no expression of interest if approved, copy of signed Vacancy form

Process 3 (External call)
13. Vacancy Form signed off by MSA/NSO/Permanent Secretary
14. Jobs plus form
15. External call in government gazette
16. Notification to MFE and P&SD that post has been filled, otherwise start of Process 2.