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IONAD SÁRMHATHÉASCA DCU UM AGSÚLACHT AGUS CUIMSIÚ
DCU CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



Race Equality Guide for Hiring

18th March 2021

Sponsored by



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Foreword by Director, Sandra Healy

On behalf of the DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion, I am delighted to launch the Race Equality Guide for Hiring Managers. This is the first in a series of race equality resources that we are developing to support workplaces in Ireland to become more equitable.

Ireland has become increasingly diverse and has earned the right to be described as a multicultural society with over 18% of people from migrant descent. Diversity sparks innovation, and migrants bring a richness in terms of new perspectives, values and ideas – all of which are in high demand by so many employers. However research reveals many challenges and barriers in terms of how fairly migrants are being treated through hiring processes and in the labour market.

There is a need for employers to examine the approach they are taking to enhancing race equality and to take action now in terms of removing the systemic bias that may exist in processes, practices and attitudes in the workplace. Removing these barriers will lead to a stronger, more diverse and ultimately more reflective workforce and society.

This guide looks specifically at the hiring process and has been crafted and informed by lived experiences of people in the workplace in Ireland. The content is intended to be practical and actionable, providing guidance on the measures required to provide a fair and equal process for all candidates. Our approach has been informed by best practice and supported by insights from the participants of our Race Equality Forums. We have had guidance from specialist organisations, academic experts and employers.

I would like to thank our sponsor, Bank of Ireland, for the support and collaboration on the Guide. I would also like to thank the participants of our Race Equality Forums and my colleagues in the Centre for their work on this important resource.

Sandra Healy
Director
DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion



The DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion

The DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion was established in June 2018. As part of the DCU Business School, the Centre is a central hub for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion. The Centre creates a bridge between DCU's academic talent, industry bodies and specialist groups, supporting organisations build cultures of inclusion by providing access to the very latest in academic research and insights, providing specialist tools to foster more inclusive cultures. It supports organisation in all aspects of their diversity and inclusion journeys.

A core element of the Centre is a membership community of academic experts, informed practitioners, thought leaders and networks. Through research and ongoing engagement with organisations via our membership community, we produce best practice resources and guidance in workplace diversity and inclusion.

Our Purpose, Vision Mission and Values



Values

We live our values of integrity, trust, open collaboration and ambition.



Mission

We forge alliances and collaborate with industry partners on research and practice in diversity and inclusion.



Vision

To be a recognised hub with a world-class reputation for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion.

1



Research

Build on DCU's academic expertise in diversity and inclusion research and practice.

Provide research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion.

2



Capability

Facilitate knowledge management and exchange on core issues, policy and practice in diversity and inclusion.

Provide access to the very latest in academic research, insights and tools on diversity and inclusion to build knowledge and understanding.

3



Community

Forge alliances and collaborate with industry partners.

Partner with specialist organisations, education and government.

Support organisations in all aspects of their diversity and inclusion journeys.

A Message from the Sponsor, Bank of Ireland

Bank of Ireland is delighted to collaborate on research regarding race equality in the workplace. We are committed to addressing the key challenges facing society today and to build a fulfilling workplace for all. Bank of Ireland wants all of its people to reach their potential, and feel valued in an environment that supports diversity and inclusion.

Our aim is that this research will support our own endeavours to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace that supports our colleagues and represents the customers and communities that we serve. This will ensure that we continue to thrive together.

The Bank of Ireland Group is a diversified Financial Services Group. Bank of Ireland, now a subsidiary of Bank of Ireland Group plc, was established in 1783 by Royal Charter.



Matt Elliott, Chief People Officer



Section 1

Introduction

It is well documented that during the past two decades Ireland has become increasingly diverse and has earned the right to be described as a multicultural society, with over 18% of people from migrant descent. Today, Ireland is a beautiful and rich mixture of backgrounds, faiths, skin tones, languages, and accents. However, this is not so evident, due to lack of representation and visibility at many levels in our society. Inherently, migrants bring additional values, perspectives and enterprise, however in order to actively participate in Irish society, we need visibility in all spheres of Irish life.

In 2016, 11.6% of the population of Ireland reported originating from 200 different countries^[1]. Additionally, a growing population of young Irish people have parents and grandparents of different nationalities^[2]. The 2016 Census reported 347,233 (15%) of the workforce in Ireland is from a migrant background.

We have an opportunity to create a culture and a society where all people feel they are welcome, they can participate and they belong— these needs are central to the human experience. People from a migrant background are a permanent feature in Irish society and they want to participate. Those in positions of privilege and power can remove the barriers for migrants by designing targeted, effective interventions that support participation and integration. Removing these barriers will lead to a stronger, more diverse and ultimately more reflective society.

National Action

At a national level improving integration is a core focus for the government with 'employment and pathways to work' one of ten key priorities for the Department of Justice through the 2017-2020 National Migrant Integration Strategy. In July 2020, the Department of Justice and Equality announced a new independent Anti-Racism Committee tasked with drawing up an Action Plan Against Racism for Ireland^[3] which is expected to be ready in 2021.

In 2019, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) published an independent report about Ireland's compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)^[4]. The report assesses Ireland's performance to date on combating racial discrimination across all aspects of Irish society, including within the labour market. It outlines the barriers that impede access to and participation in the workplace for minority ethnic groups, making recommendations for state action.

The Opportunity

Over the last 30 years Ireland has become a rich mix of cultures from around the world^[5]. Immigration is a major opportunity for the economy of Ireland. Migrant workers contribute to the economy and play an important role in financial services, the hospitality sector, healthcare, support services, ICT, the retail trade, construction and Industry in general. For instance, the technology sector has largely been the driver of a more diverse multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, highly skilled workforce. Many migrants have chosen Ireland as their home, and we now have the first generation of young people of migrant descent entering the workforce.

Racial Inequality in The Workplace

Equal and equitable access to the workplace and opportunities must be available for everyone, however, the reality is different for migrant workers who experience many barriers. Research examining experiences of under-represented people in Ireland in the workplace from different ethnicities and nationalities including White Irish, White Non-Irish, Black, Asian, other, and Irish Traveller found that Black people are three times more likely than White Irish to report discrimination in the workplace^[6] and this is the same whether the Black person is an Irish citizen or not^[7]. Additionally, Asian respondents reported more discrimination than White Irish in private services^[8]. Separate studies examine what is called the 'racial order' revealing racial hierarchies in workplaces in Ireland, where Black people are more disadvantaged and consistently on the lower order of the labour supply chain^[9].

Discrimination can also occur before a person from an under-represented group even joins an organisation. A 2009 experiment conducted to measure bias in the Irish labour market^[10] found when CVs were submitted with non-Irish sounding names of African, Asian or German origin, their likelihood of being called to interview was halved compared to candidates with Irish names. The outcomes of these studies are further supported by research carried out by the European Fundamental Rights Agency which found that 32 per cent of Black people from sub-Saharan Africa living in Ireland report having experienced discrimination in the labour market, based on the colour of their skin with a further 28 per cent experiencing discrimination as a result of their ethnic origin^[11]. These findings are higher than those experienced in 12 other European countries included in the study.

Recent research in Ireland examined the gap between what people say in public about minorities in Ireland, versus what they say when given full anonymity, and found people conceal or suppress negative attitudes in order to deliver more socially desirable responses publicly or in surveys^[12]. The study posits that hidden negative views may affect the decisions made in relation to underrepresented people 'behind closed doors' or during the hiring process.

The Language used in this Guide

In consultation with the participants of The Race Equality Forum, an agreement was reached to use the term under-represented people for the purpose of this guide.

Terms are not set in stone or fixed in meaning and evolve over time. The changes in meaning of language meanings and interpretations, and the need to explore the issues around language, reflect the fact that the debate about 'race' and culture is ongoing as we learn and engage collectively.

Employers have an opportunity to create safe spaces for people to engage with one another in an authentic and respectful way. This will provide people with the confidence to become familiar with language and to use their knowledge as part of a commitment to antidiscrimination.

Driving Change

Race can be a topic that is often avoided in the workplace as people feel uncomfortable engaging in topics around race. This was evident through our discussions in the Race Equality Forum and from other studies^[13]. There are many reasons for this including a lack of understanding or a nervousness around not being 'socially correct', or a fear of causing offence if using incorrect terms or language.

There is also an issue in relation to the systemic discrimination that exists within policies, practices and processes in many organisations in Ireland which has negative outcomes for many under-represented people and contributes to more widespread racial inequality. There is a need to address and drive attitudinal awareness across the workforce^[14]. Steps are required to build capacity, knowledge and understanding to broaden awareness around the subject of race equality.

Employers in Ireland have an opportunity to embrace new approaches and make race equality a priority and to create workplaces where people feel welcome, respected and valued for their individual differences.



DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion - Race Equality Journey

Q1 2020

DCU Race Equality Hub

Established to provide employers with a range of practical tools and best practice guidelines to tackle racism, discrimination and foster more inclusive practices in the workplace. This includes a Race Equality Whitepaper and has a range of helpful resources for people to expand their awareness and knowledge on racism, experiences of racism and its impact.

Q1 2021

DCU Race Equality Guide

A series of Race Equality Resources designed to drive change in the workplace in Ireland. The content is developed to build capacity and understanding for employers on race equality and provides practical guidance to improve workplace practices and programmes.

Published:

- **March 2021: A Race Equality Guide for Hiring**

Throughout 2020

Race Equality Forum

The Forums created a safe and confidential space for people who had been impacted by racism in the workplace, to share their experiences. The participants developed practical solutions to tackling workplace discrimination.

2021

DCU Race Equality Training

Informed by the findings of our Race Equality Forums, the DCU Centre has developed a series of workshops for employers - 'An introduction to Building Race Equality in the Workplace'. The workshops will give employers tools, knowledge, practical steps, advice and best practice guidance on creating equitable workplaces in Ireland.

We can deliver the workshops for organisations on request.

We will also run at regular intervals for those who wish to participate individually.

The workshops will be delivered by the DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion.

Section 2

Race Terminology

Firstly, we would like to thank the participants of the Race Equality Forum (Section 3) for their massive contribution to informing Section 2 of this Guide. While participants of the Forum had varying preferences with regard to race related terminology, this section was developed by consensus whilst acknowledging its limitations and the ever evolving nature of language on this important topic.

Talking about race and race equality can be complex and sometimes uncomfortable. What is needed is the confidence to become familiar with the appropriate language and commitment to engage with colleagues respectfully. In this section we share some definitions for terms that are widely used when discussing race and race equality. The intention of this Guide is to support organisations and individuals to engage in meaningful dialogue on race and racial equality.

Top Tips

The Hiring Process

- Evaluate and challenge the language used in your job advertisements, what cohort are you appealing to, who is missing?
- Develop recruitment, hiring and retention strategies that support and attract racially diverse talent.
- Ensure hiring managers are trained to increase their knowledge on qualifications and skills gained outside Ireland and visa categories as they relate to the Irish system.
- Create interview processes that are inclusive, non-judgemental and respectful of different cultural norms.
- Approaches should be multidimensional working to address biases and discrimination in all aspects of the hiring process.

Written Context

- If you are writing a report that includes skin colours and you are using the term 'Black' in reference to people, ensure to also use the term 'White' when referencing White people.
- All ethnic groups should be capitalised i.e. Asian, Black, Mixed Ethnicity, Traveller, White.

Avoid Using Labelled Race Terminology

- Be careful when using a single term to encompass under-represented people. People generally don't fit into simple categories so it can unintentionally result in misunderstanding and feelings of exclusion.
- Ensure that careful consideration is taken as to what terms are used and whether they adequately reflect the diversity and values of the organisation.

Survey / Data Collection

- In surveys order ethnic groups alphabetically. It may cause offense to place 'White' first in a list of ethnic groups.

Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are used to categorise certain sections of the population; race describes physical, biological attributes, and ethnicity refers to cultural identification. Race may also be identified as something you inherit while ethnicity is something you learn, based on cultural expression and place of origin.

Terminology

Ally

An ally takes action to support people outside of their own group and actively and consistently advocates for people from underrepresented groups. Allyship includes activism, inclusive use of language, and combating prejudice such as racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination. Allyship is the practice of advocating for social justice, inclusion, and human rights.

Anti-Racism

Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. Anti-racism is rooted in action that challenges all forms of racism including systemic racism. An anti-racist supports anti-racist practices through their actions and actively calls out and challenges racist behavior.

BAME and BME

BAME is an acronym for Black, Asian, minority ethnic and BME stands for Black and minority ethnic. Both acronyms refer to specific ethnic groups and this can be divisive and exclusionary. They can be perceived as convenient labels that are placed on under-represented groups of people, rather than identities with which people have chosen to identify. It is generally perceived that these terms refer only to non-White people, which does not consider White minority ethnic groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage.

Culture

Culture is an umbrella term that describes the characteristics and knowledge created by human societies, encompassing language, religion, food, social habits, music and arts.

Cultural Racism

Cultural racism is a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalised supremacy and internalised racism. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws.

Diversity

Diversity in the workplace is a term that is used to describe our individual differences. Diversity is about recognising difference. It's acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making and the workforce being representative of the organisation's customers and communities.

Ethnicity

Every person has an ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to an individual's identification with a group sharing some or all of the same culture, lifestyle, language, religion, nationality, geographical region and history.

Ethnic Minority

Everyone has an ethnicity, whether it is in the majority or the minority. An ethnic minority is a group of people who are different in race or colour and cultural origin from the dominant group of the country in which they live (often the majority population). Some people find the term 'minority' problematic as it implies being less than.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism relates to the viewing or interpreting the world from the perspective of a particular ethnic group. 'Eurocentrism' is, for example, viewing the non-European world from a European perspective.

Inclusion

Inclusion at work is where peoples differences are valued and all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully. An inclusive workplace is one where all people have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organisation's success.

Implicit Bias

An implicit bias can be described as an unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward a social group. Due to implicit biases, people may often attribute certain qualities or characteristics to certain members of a particular group which is often known as stereotyping.

Microaggressions

The verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages aimed at an under-represented person or group.

Multiracial

Many terms exist for people of various multiracial backgrounds; biracial, multi-ethnic, multiracial. Individuals of multiracial backgrounds make up a significant portion of the population in many parts of the world.

Multi-Cultural

Multiculturalism is an acceptance and positive attitude towards the cultural varieties in our societies. However, multiculturalism may simply provide ammunition to reinforce racism unless there is recognition of the structural racism that exists in society.

People of Colour - POC

A POC is used to describe someone who does not consider themselves to be White. Never use the term 'Coloured People' as this is considered extremely racist.

Race

The word race is an inherently controversial term. The word comes from historical categorisation of people according to their skin colour and physical characteristics. There is no scientific basis for divisions into biologically determined groups. Individuals, not nations or 'races', are the main sources of human variation.

Racial Equality

Racial equality occurs when equitable and equal opportunities are afforded to people of all races and ethnicities. Where workplace policy and practices uphold the values and beliefs that racial groups are equal, with none being inherently superior or inferior.

Racial Prejudice

Racial prejudice refers to an opinion or attitude about racial groups based on false or mis-information. It refers to a tendency to judge people in a particular way, usually negative.

Racial Stereotyping

Racial stereotyping is the categorisation of a whole racial group of people because of the actions or behaviour of a single person/a few people, or as the result of racial prejudice.

Racism

Racism is all practices, procedures and behaviours that discriminate against people because of their colour, culture and or race or ethnic background. It includes racial prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, exclusion, harassment, microaggressions, institutional and structural racism and ethnocentrism.

White Fragility

Refers to a number of responses including defensiveness to complete dismissal by White people in reaction to racism. This can include an outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and may lead to the White person becoming argumentative. Other responses include silence and avoidance of dialogue which results in further racial inequity.

White Privilege

Refers to the unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices on people solely because of their skin colour. Many White people are not aware of their privilege as it is built into the structure of society. When the system is set up to advantage white people, this is known as structural racism.

Terminology Conclusion

The terminology listed above is not exhaustive. No terms are agreed by everyone and the contradictions and conflicts that the use of language creates must be acknowledged.

The English language is forever evolving. We must acknowledge the continual changes in terminologies and interpretations, and the need to explore the issues around language and reflect the fact that the debate about race and culture is ongoing.

Section 3

DCU Race Equality - A Case Study

Overview

The DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion conducted confidential Race Equality Forums throughout 2020. Participants of the Forums were people from diverse backgrounds, living and working in Ireland. The Forums created a safe and confidential space for people to share their experiences. The participants developed practical solutions to tackling workplace discrimination and their input has informed this guide.

The Forums provided the Centre with rich analysis and insights into the wide range of issues and barriers experienced by migrant people in the workplace. The insight and findings also guided the approach and informed how we went about designing the guide. The purpose of this guide is to provide organisations and hiring personnel with the information required to take action and create equitable access to opportunities for all.

Themes Discussed

The two main topics discussed in the sessions were:

1. Lived experiences of pathways to employment
2. Barriers and inequalities in hiring processes

There are many barriers to race equality in the workplace, however for the purpose of this guide, we will focus on eight key barriers identified by the participant of the Race Equality Forums.

1. Race Equality and Priorities

“Diversity and Inclusion practitioners are focusing on many important issues but the conversation on race equality has not been prioritised.” - Forum Participant

Employers have made great strides in many areas of EDI. However, there can be an imbalance in the way organisations focus on the many different aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Until recently race and ethnicity was not on the priority list for many employers in Ireland.

Key Learnings

Organisations must be more proactive by taking deliberate action towards race equality. Creating space for speaking honestly and openly about race in the workplace is something that should be encouraged. Whilst it is important to recognise and celebrate people’s differences, there is much to be done in relation to employees’ attitudes and behaviours which can be a barrier to equality for those in the minority.

Employers should prioritise educating the majority workforce about racism and race equality in addition to celebrating difference and encouraging diverse contributions. This Guide can be used as a starting point to have respectful and open conversations in your workplace.

2. Discussing Racial Differences

“Managers avoid talking about race equality, it is like the elephant in the room” - Forum Participant

People avoid discussing racial differences for fear of being wrong or saying something that might cause discomfort. Many of the people in the Forums said that while they are used to being in a minority in the workplace in Ireland, it can be frustrating when the lack of representation is not acknowledged.

Key Learnings

It is important to recognise and celebrate people’s differences. Speaking honestly and openly about race in the workplace in Ireland is something that should be embraced. However there is much to be done in relation to attitudes and behaviours which can be a barrier to equality for those in the minority.

Employers should prioritise educating the majority workforce about racism and race equality in addition to celebrating difference and encouraging diverse contributions.

3. Bias in Recruitment

“I had to change my name to get an interview and therefore a job” - Forum Participant

Participants of the Forums said that when they used their own names on CVs, they failed to secure an interview for a job. There is a perception that some recruiters and hiring personnel in Ireland tend to gravitate towards applications from people with Irish sounding names. Those involved in the Forums advised that when they used English or Irish names on their application, they were more successful in getting through to the next stage of the process, and in some cases, successfully getting the job.

This is further supported by a 2009 experiment conducted to measure bias in the Irish labour market^[15] which found when CVs were submitted with Irish sounding names their likelihood of being called to interview was doubled compared to candidates with names from African, Asian or German origins.

Key Learnings

When it comes to recruitment, Ireland has robust laws that prohibit employers from discriminating against a potential candidate on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, origin, and many other grounds. Yet, it is clear from the experiences of our participants that discrimination in recruitment is still prevalent.

The emphasis should be on a candidate's skills, experience, and ability - not on a person's race. Many migrant people are well educated, hardworking and committed with unique talent, experiences and transferable skills that would benefit any organisation. We have to embrace diversity and tap into the potential that it brings.

We recommend that recruiters and hiring personnel check their own unconscious biases, and make sure that they are choosing the right candidate for the role. Where possible, it is beneficial to bring another colleague on board to support with shortlisting to ensure that the process is fair and free from bias. Remember enhanced diversity increases productivity and creativity and improves performance overall.

4. No Seat at the Table

“I have worked in different companies and I have never been invited to a committee, a focus group, or meeting where my voice has been heard with regards to race equality” - Forum Participant

Ireland is a rich, diverse country with people from all over the globe. This diversity should be reflected in all aspects of society, including in the workplace, because representation matters. Many of the Forum participants said they were not given the opportunity to have a voice to share ideas and contribute.

Being a minority in an organisation can be very daunting and when you are not included in the decision-making it adds another layer of anxiety and isolation. Organisations are missing a real opportunity to discover new ideas; it is not enough to have a diverse workforce if they are not included in decision-making.

Key Learnings

Diversity cannot exist without inclusion and equity. It is important to have a workforce where people have an opportunity to participate, share, contribute, learn, and bring authenticity to their work.

Organisations should aim to create workspaces where employees are included in decision making, where they feel valued and respected. Employers need to implement positive interventions and work towards removing any barriers that would limit under-represented people from progressing in their careers. Ultimately, representation is beneficial for both the employee and employer.

5. Isolation

“I prefer to skip my lunchtime as it is hard to make relationships with Irish work colleagues while easier to make friends with non-Irish in the workplace” - Forum Participant

“It is even more difficult for people of colour to network during the lockdown” - Forum Participant

People in the forum have found it difficult to connect with or establish relationships with their White Irish colleagues. They find they are often not included in conversations or invitations to lunch or coffee which leads to feeling lonely and isolated. Many feel that because they are different, they are perceived as not fully ‘getting’ Irish conversation. In the interest of not causing offence, their White colleagues avoid including them in ways that lead to meaningful connection.

This divide has become even wider since the lockdown where people are working remotely and feel more cut off from their colleagues than before.

Key Learnings

A lack of opportunities for fostering relationships with colleagues leads to higher levels of social exclusion which can impact negatively on positive outcomes such as engagement, productivity, inclusion, innovation, trust, work and life satisfaction^[17].

Mentorship and sponsorship programs support relationships to flourish among workers from different backgrounds and is good for career mobility. Creating a buddy system for new hires in which more-experienced employees help facilitate social relationships is a good approach for fostering new relationships. Also, making conscious efforts to develop inclusive leadership practices amongst the people manager community is a key element of inclusion and cultural change.

6. Accent Bias in the Workplace

“Is there anyone who speaks English to discuss the report?” Someone at work asked this when they heard my accent.” - Forum Participant

Forum participants shared many examples of discrimination in the workplace. However, discrimination in relation to spoken English was shared by nearly every participant. It is felt that given the colour of their skin, there is an immediate inclination from White Irish colleagues to make assumptions about their ability to speak English. They also regularly hear comments about their accent being difficult to understand.

These assumptions, made on the basis of nationality, skin colour or race are considered hurtful and discriminatory. Furthermore, some of the participants who were born and raised in Ireland, and speak with an Irish accent, are still asked where they learned to speak such good English.

Key Learnings

In addition to there being a clear lack of tolerance for those who do not speak with the same accent, there is also discrimination relating to perceptions of how people might speak or understand English based on the colour of their skin. Measures are therefore needed to tackle and affect change in relation to people’s attitudes. Organisations in Ireland need to be committed to changing behaviours that can cause negative outcomes as a result of prejudice or negative stereotyping^[18].

Employers should evaluate organisational culture and foster inclusion by celebrating diversity, embracing differences, and encouraging individuals to be themselves in the workplace. This reduces the pressure of people feeling ‘othered’ or like outcasts. Where possible, organisations should invest in Diversity and Inclusion, and unconscious bias training for all staff members, particularly human resources and managers.



7. Misunderstanding of Qualifications

“Employers underestimated my experience and qualifications; what I have done outside Ireland means nothing to them.” - Forum Participant

Forum participants feel many employers in Ireland underestimate or do not recognise their qualifications and negatively compare them to qualifications awarded in Ireland. As a result, many have been forced to settle for positions that are lower than the standard they are capable of.

Recent research supports this, showing that the challenges experienced by minority groups in obtaining recognition in Ireland of qualifications acquired abroad leads to under-employment^[19]. The overqualification rate for migrant workers in Ireland is 41%, compared to 29% for workers born in Ireland^[20].

There are undoubtedly many reasons for this. In an independent report, the IHREC^[21] outlines that a European directive on the recognition of foreign qualifications only applies to people from the EU, and there are often lengthy and complicated procedures in place. While Quality and Qualifications Ireland operates a system for the recognition of vocational skills accredited in other countries, the State has recently committed to promoting this role more widely.

It is not just the case in Ireland. Results from a project monitoring the discrimination of ethnic groups in the UK^[22] found that applicants from outside of Britain (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Africa) who mentioned their skills and past achievements in job applications still received considerably lower callbacks from employers than White British applicants who did not include relevant information in their application.

Key Learnings

It is important that organisations in Ireland remove bias related to qualifications within their hiring process. Fair recognition should be awarded to credentials, previous experience and education received outside of Ireland.

8. Lack of External Networking Opportunities

“I don't know where to go to network with people” - Forum Participant

Participants in the Forum feel there are a lack of networks and networking opportunities that support and champion underrepresented groups. In Ireland, people are aware that ‘who you know’ can be key to learning about potential job opportunities and building new connections. It can be daunting to become a member of a mainstream network when you look different to everyone else, however there is a keen desire to have access to the same opportunities to build relationships that can result in better work outcomes.

Key Learnings

Simply hiring people from under-represented groups does not ensure that they feel comfortable or equipped to build the relationships necessary for advancement at work. When you have people from under-represented groups in your workplace or team, consider how you can invite them and introduce them into your professional networks.

Building workplace relationships across racial boundaries can be difficult and career mobility can be influenced by colleagues’ feelings of familiarity or closeness. Implementing a ‘buddy/sponsor’ system can make the person feel welcome and can reduce feelings of isolation.

Professional networks play an important role in career mobility. When hosting professional networking events, ensure there is some structured networking built in, as opposed to just free-form socialising. Structure within gatherings ensures there is a focus on the unique talents each individual brings to the group, perhaps focused on the skills diversity. This approach is very useful, and it can create equity and opportunity for all employees.

Outcome

Based on findings from the Race Equality Forums, it is clear that many organisations in Ireland are at an early stage of their race equality journey. Race equality in the workplace is not just a set of policies or procedures. Inclusion lives in the collective behaviours embraced by everyone working in the organisation. Racism has no place in our society and organisations need to commit to being part of the change.

Section 4

A Guide for Race Equality in Hiring

1. Getting Started

In order to make progress on race equality it is widely accepted that an understanding of the demographic footprint of employees is the starting point for change. By establishing the current baseline for the organisation, it is easier to identify gaps and focus on the steps needed to create a more equitable workplace for all - particularly when it comes to creating goals and KPIs for hiring.

However, one of the biggest challenges for employers is getting a clearer picture in terms of the data. Organisations in Ireland find it challenging to collect diversity data. Aside from navigating the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018, employees report a reluctance to provide sensitive information about themselves to their employer.

There can also be a reluctance by people to report misconduct such as discrimination in the workplace, due to a fear of recrimination or a lack of trust in the confidentiality of the process. Studies show that an employee's fear of losing their job is the main reason for not reporting^[23]. Another concern is how they might be treated by their colleagues for coming forward^[24].

What to Do?

- **Build Trust in the Process:** People are more likely to report where they trust in the confidentiality of the process and can raise concerns anonymously. Removing any barriers to achieving this is important.
- **Keep it simple and anonymous:** Ensure the process is easy to engage with and fully anonymous by using the right tools to collect data and information.

2. Hiring Process

Talent Attraction

External Brand and Online Presence: An organisation's brand and online presence can be very revealing for candidates from under-represented groups.

- Review and examine the image that your organisation is portraying externally.
- Consider the language used on the website and across social media. What types of images are used and are under-represented groups featured. While diversity is key, it is also important to reflect an authentic view of the organisation, avoiding tokenism.
- Reference on the website if the organisation is an equal opportunities employer.
- Promote the work being done to promote an equitable workplace organisation. This can be a helpful way to share detail about the culture and workplace.
- Provide a space where employees provide insights about what it is like working in the environment.

Marketing and Advertising: Review where the organisation advertises new roles. Taking a more creative approach to where job roles are advertised attracts a wider and more diverse pool of applicants. Marketing and advertising a role should be intentionally directed to intermediaries, websites and boards that appeal to under-represented people and not just the majority. Be mindful of where and how the organisation advertises.

- **Time and Resources:** Ensure sufficient time and effort is spent on marketing and advertising efforts.
- **Advert Wording:** Consider adapting the language to appeal to diverse candidates.
- **Recruitment Websites:** Ask how the organisation's job postings can reach more diverse candidates.
- **Advertising on Social Media and other Sites:** If you advertise job roles online, explore potential sites, locations and social media channels where more diverse candidates will see the advert.

Job Description

Qualifications: To attract a wide pool of candidates, consider the language and terms used to describe the qualifications and skills required in the job description.

- It is helpful to add additional information about the equivalent qualifications required. For example:

“Level 8 required. This is the equivalent of an Honours Bachelor Degree.”

This makes it easier for potential candidates to assess their own suitability quickly. It also helps hiring personnel build their knowledge and understand of equivalent qualification.

For more information see example below visit: <https://nfq.qqi.ie/>

- Consider how your organisation values the candidates’ experience and skills gained outside Ireland and ensure this is not used as a barrier to selection.

Search

Country

--All--

Type of Education

--All--

Search Clear

1432 Qualifications

Diplôme de Licence / ليسانس / Licence / الإجازة

Bachelor's Degree / Bachelor

Irish Award Class: Honours Bachelor Degree

NFQ Level: 8

Country: Algeria



Diplôme d'Études Supérieures / دبلوم في الدراسات العليا

Diploma of Higher Studies

Irish Award Class: Honours Bachelor Degree

NFQ Level: 8

Country: Algeria



Licenciado / Licenciatura

Bachelor Degree

Irish Award Class: Honours Bachelor Degree

NFQ Level: 8

Country: Argentina



Specialist Diploma / Դիպլոմ մասնագետի

Irish Award Class: Honours Bachelor Degree

NFQ Level: 8

Country: Armenia



Certificate III

Irish Award Class: An Award at Level 4

NFQ Level: 4

Country: Australia



3. Selection

Part 1 - Mandatory Unconscious Bias Training

Unconscious Bias:

- Organisations should be mindful of people's unconscious biases and should take every precaution to minimise the behaviours that can result from these biases. Unconscious bias can have a significant influence on important decisions during the recruitment process. Whether it is negative body language or favouring a particular candidate with a similar demographic background, it can lead to different treatment for different candidates and should be mitigated against as far as possible so everyone has the same experience and the right candidate is selected.
- Organisations should be committed to ensuring that all participants in the recruitment process receive appropriate training and have an awareness of the role that unconscious bias can play. Below are some triggers that can lead to unconscious bias decision making during the selection process^[26]:

- **Stereotype Incongruity** (not the 'expected' fit) – a preconceived idea about the type of candidate expected to succeed in a given role. This can lead to overlooking other qualified candidates who don't fit within that preconceived profile.
- **Underrepresented Groups** – Ensure assumptions are not made based on stereotypes.
- **Clarity of Information** – this can impact in two ways. Firstly, the required criteria for the role must be clearly stated so that candidates can be objectively assessed against these criteria. Secondly, if you do not specifically ask for all the evidence from the candidate you are more likely to fill in the gaps with your own assumptions and biases.
- **Time Pressure** – when under pressure, we use all of our available cognitive resources in managing stress, this leaves less time to gather appropriate data and make objective decisions in hiring.

Outlined are some of the **types** of unconscious biases that can play out during the hiring process:

- **Affinity Bias** - where we feel a natural affinity for those who we have something in common; whether it is going to the same school, being from the same place or knowing the same people.
- **Availability/Heuristic Bias** - using a mental shortcut to make a decision about a person's competency for a job without examining the evidence.
- **Confirmation Bias** - a quick decision is made on a candidate's suitability for a role because of preconceived assumptions. Irrelevant questions are then asked to elicit responses to verify the assumptions. The concern is that you may pass on a better, more suitable candidate.
- **Conformity Bias** - despite feeling a candidate has great potential, you agree with the majority of the panel on a different candidate for fear of negative reaction or repercussion from other panelists.
- **Halo Effect** - where a positive focus is on a singular aspect of the candidate such as the school they went to or a sport they play, rather than establishing whether they have the right qualifications, experience and skills for the job.
- **Horn Effect** - where a negative focus is on a singular aspect of the candidate which clouds judgement relating to the candidates experience, qualifications and skills.
- **Similarity Attraction Bias** - people like to be surrounded by like minded, similar types of people who we feel we will get on with. As such, we are inclined to favour those that are more similar to us in terms of traits and characteristics. This can result in negative bias for those that are different, even if they have the right qualifications for the job.



Part 2 - Reviewing and Assessing the CV / Application

- **Stick to the Role Criteria:** In the selection process it is important to be clear at the outset about the role criteria and the minimum required technical skills or qualifications. It is important to question any first impressions that are made and be comfortable articulating why a candidate is rejected or invited to the next stage of interview.
- **Assessment of Names:** We know that people with names that are not familiar sounding in the Irish workplace are less likely to get through the first round of the hiring process. Research has shown that candidates with Irish names were over twice as likely to be invited to interview for advertised jobs as candidates with identifiably non-Irish names, even where skills and qualifications were the same. This demonstrates unequal treatment and bias on the parts of employers/recruiters.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Software:** This can be used to support organisations in removing demographic information from applications to select candidates for interviews. This helps to remove some of the bias that may arise within the hiring process. However it is important to ensure that the software you are using is fit-for-purpose, well tested and has a strong track record of success.
- **Assessment of Skills and Qualifications:** Fair and balanced recognition should be given to credentials and experience gained outside of Ireland. By not doing so, organisations will continue to discriminate through the hiring process and will lose out on hiring diverse talent.

Citizens Information offers [guidance](#) for getting international qualifications recognised in Ireland. It also provides links to compare qualifications between Ireland and other countries which can be helpful. [NARIC Ireland](#) provides advice and comparisons, via the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) website, of foreign qualifications and how they fit into the Irish national Framework of Qualifications.

- **Working Permits (Stamps) and Visas:** It is important to understand and recognise the types of visas and working permits that enable people from different countries to work and live in Ireland legally. More information is available on pg 31 of this document from the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Part 3 - The Interview

A diverse interview panel is good practice for conducting a fair and equitable interview process and can go some way towards removing personal biases. Some other important considerations are outlined^[25].

Structured, Competency-Based Approach

- A standardised approach should be taken with a framework agreed in advance.
- In addition to having questions related to the essential duties of the job, it is helpful to also ask some competency-based questions about how the candidate dealt with past experiences or how they might deal with future challenges or situations.
- The interview panel should ask each candidate the same set of questions and competencies to ensure information about every candidate is gathered and documented consistently.

Part 4 - Evaluation and Final Decision

With the right preparation, training and consideration, an organisation's hiring process should result in equitable, fair outcomes for all. However, even at the final stage, where a decision is made, it is important that the interview panel is reminded of the following:

- Check your bias and keep an open mind.
- Base the final decision on the articulated job criteria.
- Ensure that nobody is overlooked for lack of a champion - consider positives and potential pitfalls of each final candidate.
- Healthy debate is important - do not be afraid of conflicting opinions and encourage challenge and meaningful discussion.
- Ensure the detail relating to decisions and scoring of the candidates is retained for reference purposes and to share back feedback with unsuccessful candidates where appropriate.

Top Tips for Interview Panel

Dos and Don'ts for Interview Panel

DO

- Ask how to pronounce the person's name respectfully if you are not sure.
- Agree interview framework including role criteria and competencies to standardise the approach in advance.
- Ask for examples from the candidate and avoid making assumptions.
- Check your bias at all times.
- Ensure that you have a diverse hiring panel.
- Consider including an external person on your hiring panel.
- Articulate why a candidate has not been selected to increase the levels of accountability and help to mitigate against bias.

DON'T

- Don't ask can you abbreviate or shorten a candidates name.
- Don't assume anything about the candidate - ask for evidence through examples or previous experience.
- Don't make decisions about hiring outside of the documented process.
- Don't rush the process.
- Don't use 'culture fit' as a reason not to go with a candidate. Consider the desired attributes to guide and evaluate decisions.
- Don't rely on a gut feeling or instinct when it comes to decision making. Ensure you can reference characteristics, experience or behaviours.
- Don't shift standards or deviate from the agreed role criteria and competencies.

Section 5

Attracting Talent

To attract more talent from under-represented group, organisations should consider the following:

- **Graduate Recruitment** - look beyond the same universities, colleges and institutes of technology. Are there relevant courses in other locations with potentially suitable candidates?
- **Third level Societies** - Consider engaging with societies. Many seek sponsorship and support during the academic terms and in exchange it can be a way to share information about an organisation with potential future candidates.
- **Job Sites** - Look for job boards away from ones normally used.
- **Online Adverts** - If placing job adverts via an intermediary seek information on how the adverts can be focused on sites and social media that will be used by under-represented groups.
- **Employee Referrals** - Research has found that regular referral schemes can lead to less diverse workforce and greater pay inequities²⁷. Instead, consider implementing a diversity referral scheme which has worked successfully in some organisations.
- **Transferable Skills** - Identify which skills of someone who works in a different sector can be transferable to yours and use this as a way to recruit people with more diverse experience.
- **Recruitment** - If you are using an external recruitment company insist on a proportion of diverse candidates, or explore recruitment firms that can deliver on this.
- **Networks** - Connect with networks and organisations that have access to underrepresented groups.

Irish Immigration Residence and Work Permits (Stamps)



Categories

Stamp 0 - Temporary permission for specific and limited purpose, no benefits, not reckonable (e.g. elderly parents)

Stamp 1 - Migrant workers on permits, renewable each year (e.g. general employment permit, critical skills permit), reckonable for naturalisation

- **Stamp 1A** - Trainee Accountants
- **Stamp 1G** - Third Level Graduate Scheme – 12 months with Bachelor Degree, possibility of 12 month extension with Masters Degree – Right to work without permit. Also given to Spouses/ Partners of Critical Skills Permit Holders

Stamp 2 - International Students pursuing a course of at least 1 year duration (not reckonable for naturalisation)

Stamp 3 - Spouse/civil partner or family member who is here based on a work permit, volunteers, religious personnel (reckonable for naturalisation)

Stamp 4 - Received after 2-5 years of reckonable residence on Stamp 1.

Also: Refugees, Subsidiary Protection beneficiaries, leave to remain, spouse of Irish National, parent of Irish citizen child, long term residency

- **Stamp 4EUFAM** - Family Member of a EU citizen
- **Stamp 4S** - Special Student Scheme

Stamp 5 - Permission to remain without condition as to time (8 years reckonable residence)

Stamp 6 - Persons who have dual citizenship through: birth in Ireland, parent(s) born in Ireland, grandparent(s) born in Ireland, naturalisation or post nuptial citizenship

Entitlements



Stamp 1

- Right to Work with employment permit, employment permit only for particular job, renewable every year
- No entitlement to JSA/SWA
- No right to medical card
- Access to Social Housing List after 5 years on Stamp 1
- Right to Child Benefit



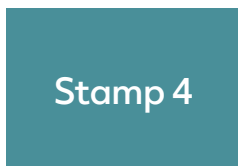
Stamp 2

- Limited right to work (20hrs p/w during term, 40hrs p/w out of term)
- No entitlement to JSA/SWA
- No access to Social Housing List
- No medical card
- Right to Child Benefit



Stamp 3

- No right to work on arrival. Must first be offered a job before applying for a working visa
- No entitlement to JSA/SWA/Medical Card
- Right to Child Benefit
- Social Housing after 5 years



Stamp 4

- Right to work without permit
- Right to JSW/SWA/CB/Medical Card
- Right to access social housing right away in most circumstances [Circular 41/2012]

For further information please refer to the [Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service \(INIS\) website](#) or contact the **Immigrant Council of Ireland's Information Service**, we provide detailed and confidential information on any immigration issues.

INIS phone line is open Mon-Tue-Thu-Fri 10am-1pm 01 6740200.

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Bank of Ireland



Business in the Community (BITC)



Irish Business and Employers Confederation



Irish Centre for Diversity



The Immigrant Council of Ireland



African Scholars Association of Ireland (ASAI)



Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)



Phase Innovate



Members of the DCU Race Advisory Council



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