



27 April 2022



Reference: OIA-2021/22-1182

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) recruitment and interview process

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 28 March 2022. You requested:

1. *Would a candidate applying for a leadership/management type position in your organisation be required to do a task before the interview? (i.e. a phone screen, pre-test, etc) Or would the candidate have to complete a task after the interview such as - an aptitude test, numeracy/literacy or psychological profiling? Or are the interview and reference checking essentially the total recruitment process?*
2. *How are applicants chosen to be interviewed? (See the options below from a to c)*
 - (a) *A representative from Human Resources goes through the candidate pool of CV's received?*
 - (b) *A representative from HR and the hiring manager go through the candidates?*
 - (c) *The hiring manager acting alone selects who is to be interviewed?*
3. *Does your organisation use 'BEI' type interviews for middle/senior leadership/management interviews?*
4. *If the answer to the above is 'no' how would you describe the type of interviews that are carried out?*
5. *Is a representative from HR on the interview panel? (Never/Always/Some times?)*
6. *For 'BEI' style interviews does each panel member score the candidate and then these scores are combined to tally up to a grand total score?*
7. *Could a candidate who scores lower than the top scorer (e.g. came in second) still be considered the preferred candidate?*
8. *What are some of the factors or conditions that might give rise to the above in question #8 above? (I.e. – team fit, personality, how panel felt about them?) Other factors?*
9. *Are those in your organisation who do the interviewing trained in the BEI interview method?*

10. *Once a candidate has been selected and employed by your organisation do you keep a record of how long he/she stays with the organisation? (length of tenure)*
11. *Or do you keep records of how that candidate is tracking regards their role? (good performance appraisals, improvements plans? Unsatisfactory performance?)*
12. *Have you ever surveyed applicants who have been interviewed as to how they feel about the BEI interview process? If so, please share these results.*
13. *Does your organisation ever use recruitment firms to source candidates? (I.e. this approach is sometimes use for specialist positions or senior management type roles)*
14. *The candidate pool since Covid – March, 2020. In your view has the pool of candidates changed or got smaller since March, 2020. Has it taken longer to recruit for roles or have some roles remained vacant? Have there been other flow on effects since Covid impacted in March 2020?*

I will answer each of your questions in turn.

Question 1

Would a candidate applying for a leadership/management type position in your organisation be required to do a task before the interview? (i.e. a phone screen, pre-test, etc) Or would the candidate have to complete a task after the interview such as - an aptitude test, numeracy/literacy or psychological profiling? Or are the interview and reference checking essentially the total recruitment process?

NEMA is committed to providing a fair and equitable recruitment and selection process for all applicants. NEMA's Human Resources (HR) services are provided by the HR team within the Central Agencies Shared Services. The aim of the HR team's involvement is to ensure a consistent and fair approach to recruitment and to ensure that the many and varied legislative and human resource policy requirements are met.

As part of the recruitment planning, once an advert closes, a selection panel consisting of the Hiring Manager and normally two other panel members will shortlist candidates using selection criteria that aligns specifically to the role. Candidates will then be screened by phone and asked a few generic questions around their interest in the role, why they are looking to move on from their current role, salary expectations etc.

Candidates invited to attend an interview will be sent details via the e-recruitment SnapHire system including the provision for any special interview considerations, such as whanau or support group or any other special needs that may be required. At this stage, any other specific criteria from the candidate will be requested to further assess their suitability.

For leadership roles, NEMA requires a short presentation to be prepared, usually delivered within a 5-7 minute timeframe at the beginning of the interview in response to a question or questions which have been sent to candidates 24-48 hours prior.

At interview, initial pre-employment checks are required such as identity verification, confirmation of citizenship, confirmation of right to work in New Zealand and agreement to obtain personal information from previous public sector agencies to check any serious misconduct. Three further checks around security requirements of the role, conflict of interest and health and safety considerations are also discussed during this time.

For any preferred candidates after interview, they may be required to undertake psychometric testing which is arranged through an approved All of Government (AoG) recruitment provider. This will then be followed with post pre-employment checking such as conducting two verbal employment reference checks, criminal records check, credit check (especially for people leadership roles with financial delegations), serious misconduct check and any other relevant checks (ie confidentiality, security clearance etc).

Question 2

How are applicants chosen to be interviewed? (See the options below from a to c)

(a) A representative from Human Resources goes through the candidate pool of CV's received?

(b) A representative from HR and the hiring manager go through the candidates?

(c) The hiring manager acting alone selects who is to be interviewed?

As outlined in Question 1, the Hiring Manager is responsible for shortlisting candidates predominantly in conjunction with the panel members who will be interviewing the candidates. Candidates are measured against a shortlisting capabilities matrix designed for their role which results in identified longlist and shortlisted candidates. For some roles, the Hiring Manager and the NEMA Senior Advisor Recruitment and Induction will shortlist the candidates using the same matrix.

Question 3

Does your organisation use 'BEI' type interviews for middle/senior leadership/management interviews?

Yes, behavioural based and situational type questions are included as part of the structured interview.

Question 4

If the answer to the above is 'no' how would you describe the type of interviews that are carried out?

Not applicable

Question 5

Is a representative from HR on the interview panel? (Never/Always/Some times?)

Sometimes. Upon occasion the Senior Advisor, Recruitment and Induction may be invited to attend as a panel member.

Question 6

For 'BEI' style interviews does each panel member score the candidate and then these scores are combined to tally up to a grand total score?

Yes, each panel member is allocated a question to ask and at conclusion of the interview, an assessment sheet is used to score the candidate for a combined grand total score. Panel members discuss each section first to agree on the combined score for each question prior to calculating the combined total score.

Question 7

Could a candidate who scores lower than the top scorer (e.g. came in second) still be considered the preferred candidate?

As the panel members would have already discussed each score prior to allocating, the top scorer has already been identified as the preferred candidate. At times there may be a secondary preferred candidate, if scoring is close.

Question 8

What are some of the factors or conditions that might give rise to the above in question #8 above? (I.e. – team fit, personality, how panel felt about them?) Other factors?

The suggested factors of team fit, personality and how panel members felt about them as well as how they responded to questions, evidence of skills and capabilities and body language.

Question 9

Are those in your organisation who do the interviewing trained in the BEI interview method?

NEMA does not hold records which indicate which interviewers are trained in the Behavioural Event Interviewing method. Therefore this information is refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this information is not held by the agency.

Question 10

Once a candidate has been selected and employed by your organisation do you keep a record of how long he/she stays with the organisation? (length of tenure)

Yes, all of this information is held by Central Agency Shared Services (CASS) whom NEMA is required to use for the provision of human resources, information management and information technology support. As part of their role CASS HR are responsible for creating the Individual Employment Agreements for each new staff member as well as the payroll functionality and records.

Question 11

Or do you keep records of how that candidate is tracking regards their role? (good performance appraisals, improvements plans? Unsatisfactory performance?)

Managers are responsible for any Individual Development Plans for their teams.

Question 12

Have you ever surveyed applicants who have been interviewed as to how they feel about the BEI interview process? If so, please share these results.

NEMA does not hold records from interviews with applicants which have sought their views on the BEI interview process. This information is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held.

Question 13

Does your organisation ever use recruitment firms to source candidates? (I.e. this approach is sometimes use for specialist positions or senior management type roles)

Yes, we have engaged with All-of-Government (AoG) recruitment agencies for senior management and difficult to fill specialist roles as well as short term temporary and contractor roles.

Question 14

The candidate pool since Covid – March, 2020. In your view has the pool of candidates changed or got smaller since March, 2020. Has it taken longer to recruit for roles or have some roles remained vacant? Have there been other flow on effects since Covid impacted in March 2020?

During the last six months, there has been a strong interest in the emergency services field, and NEMA has been able to fill the majority of roles in the initial recruitment round, with the exception of two roles when the positions were advertised twice before making an appointment.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



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