

Recruitment terminology guide

A Badenoch & Clark guide

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Active candidate

A candidate that is proactively looking for a job. They will typically sign up to receive job alerts from job boards, will have registered with recruitment consultancies and will actively look at job advertisements in the trade press (see Passive candidate below).

Advertised search

Advertised search is where a vacancy is promoted through printed advertising and/or featured job slots on job boards. This attracts the widest possible response by targeting a magazine's readership and/or a job board's visitors (both passive and active candidates). This route is recommended when the role is highly specialist and candidates are likely to be challenging to locate.

Agency workers directive

The Agency Workers Directive (AWD) provides that after 12 weeks in a given job, an agency worker shall be entitled to equal treatment (at least the basic working and employment conditions) that would apply to the worker concerned if they had been recruited directly by that undertaking to occupy the same job permanently. This includes duration of working time, overtime, breaks, shift work, basic pay, holidays and holiday pay, amongst others.

Attitude

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference" – Winston Churchill. Attitude is a manner of acting, feeling, or thinking that shows one's disposition or opinion. It is the way people communicate or show their feelings and opinions that determines attitude. It's also how people respond to and approach things. Attitude can be assessed by using personality tests to uncover traits that might be attractive to an employer.

Attribute

This is generally considered as a quality or characteristic of a person. For example a positive attribute of a candidate could be how conscientious they are in their method of working.

Competency based interview

Also referred to as a skills-based, situational or behavioural interview. These work on the premise that evidence of past performance is a valid indicator of future performance within a similar role. Many firms now employ some sort of competency framework, asking competency-based questions and using competencies as their preferred selection method. For example a typical question for the decision making competency might be "Tell me about a difficult decision you have had to make?". Candidates should structure their answers in terms of STAR (Situation, Task, Action & Result) as interviewers will look for this in their response.

Contingency based search

Recruitment consultancies that specialise in this are instructed by an employer to conduct a specific search and are paid only if the candidate presented is hired. Contingency based search is the usual method used to recruit for permanent vacancies with salaries of up to about £50,000.

Contract

This is a role in which a candidate is employed for a set period of time e.g. six months or one year. Employers normally pay a consultancy a fee at the start of the assignment, when the assignment is extended and if the candidate accepts a permanent role with the client (see 'Temp to perm' below). During the assignment the candidate will be paid directly by the client.

Executive search

Is the process of recruiting individuals to fill executive level positions or roles with very niche skills. Models range from 'Retained' to 'Contingency' search – these terms are explained elsewhere in this guide.

Flexible working hours

This usually refers to an arrangement where individuals are allowed a greater degree of flexibility in when they work their hours. Typically they might work the same number of hours, but either start later, or finish earlier than traditional set hours, for example 12-8pm rather than 9am-5pm.

Full time

Generally understood to mean working 5 days per week, and at least 7.5 hours per day (or 37 hours per week). It is typical for many lawyers to work considerable longer hours than this in a 'full time' role.

Gardening leave

A set period of time away from the office following a candidate's resignation or otherwise any type of termination of their role. The employee still remains on the firm's payroll and as an employee of the firm, however they are unable to access any up to date or important information/data that they may take elsewhere. The employee will continue to receive their standard annual salary during this set period and they are still obliged to respect the terms in their employment contract regarding confidentiality agreements and notice periods etc.

Headhunting

The process of approaching an individual, already working in another firm or for a competitor, with information of a possible role or opportunity that may entice them away from their current employer. This practice will require the head-hunter to approach the desired candidate directly, without the knowledge of their current employer, with another job offer in the hope that they will be tempted to leave. Put simply, it's the process of attempting to remove influence or power from a competitor for your gain.

Interim

This is a temporary position which may vary in length and the number of hours per week. It is effectively any position which is not a permanent or a fixed term contract. Candidates in a temporary position will be paid either by the hour or day, and are nearly always subject to shorter notice periods than those on a contract or permanent basis. Candidates are often taken on in an interim role for short term cover for holidays, sick leave or any period of absence where cover is needed. For example if an employee has resigned the firm may need temporary cover whilst it recruits permanently so an interim candidate is hired while the search for a permanent employee takes place.

Job board

A job board is an employment website designed to facilitate job hunting by bringing job seekers and employer together online. Job boards detail a number of vacancies, either advertised by the employer directly or through a recruitment consultancy. Some job boards are industry specific (e.g. www.totallylegal.com), targeting professionals within a particular field such as legal. Others can be multidisciplinary (e.g. www.monster.co.uk). Job boards are increasingly important to both employees and employers as more and more recruitment traffic is driven through the internet. Most job boards require candidates to upload their contact details and/or CV as part of the application process. In addition to vacancies, job

boards often feature further information about particular employers, consultancies and also provide useful information such as CV writing tips.

Job description

The job description or specification is generally created by employers based on specific needs within their firm. It serves as a filter process for employers to ensure that the only applications received are those that match the specifications required. The job description details aspects such as the particular responsibilities that will be performed in the role; the description and composition of the team/organisation; how the vacancy has arisen; the strategic objectives that will be fulfilled by making this hire; reporting line; information about the culture of the organisation/department; qualifications and experience required; expectations that will be laid on the successful applicant; salary range and benefits package; information about opportunities for training and career development; and an overview of the recruitment process involved such as number of interviews or specific tests involved. It is important for the job description to be as detailed as possible in order to screen applicants appropriately. The job description is also an opportunity to sell both the role and the firm to prospective candidates so it is also useful if it contains unique selling points that would make this role attractive above others in the market. Applicants will also base their interview preparation around the job description.

Locum

A position that requires a candidate within the legal profession to take the place of another professional on a temporary basis (e.g. to cover holidays or absences through illness). Owing to the temporary nature of the work, locum candidates are often paid on an hourly or a daily basis. The sourcing of a suitable candidate will incur a fee, usually calculated as a percentage of the hourly/daily rate of the candidate. Refer to 'Interim' in this guide too.

Notice period

The amount of time specified in the terms and conditions of employment that an employee must work between resigning from an organisation and leaving the employment of that organisation. The standard period within the legal profession is usually 3 months although it is often longer for more senior roles.

Numerical reasoning

An assessment (usually written or completed online) that is designed to profile a candidate's intelligence, aptitude and personality by focussing on the decisions that they make in relation to number based questioning. The questioning will often incorporate elements of arithmetic, data interpretation, computation and estimation. It is important to remember that these are primarily tests of reasoning ability rather than mathematical ability. Refer to 'Verbal reasoning' and 'Psychometric testing' in this guide too.

Part time

There are two types of employment, full time or part time. Part time means working less than 5 days per week (fewer than 37 hours/week) e.g. working a 3-days per week, (21 hours per week). Refer to 'Full time' in this guide too.

Passive candidate

A candidate that is not actively looking for a role but may be persuaded to do so if their details were referred to a recruitment consultant by a friend, colleague or relative and the proposed role is attractive enough.

Person specification

A breakdown of criteria a candidate needs to fulfil in order to be considered for interview by an employer. It would normally take the form of a description written in a job advertisement. Examples of person specifications might include qualifications, experience (e.g. 3+ yrs PQE), area of expertise (e.g. tax and trusts), background (e.g. top 20 firm) and skills such as language, IT literacy and managerial experience.

Placement

Finding suitable employment for applicants following a process that includes a broad constellation of activities based upon adequate evaluation. These activities may include evaluation of the client's vacancy; registration and interviewing of potential applicants; submission of applicant's details to the employer; employer consultation & advice; and negotiation of terms offered by employer to the successful applicant.

Private & Confidential role

Some roles may need to be promoted on a 'private & confidential' basis. For example sometimes a vacancy is one of two or more almost identical roles within the same firm that, for whatever reason, have different pay and/or benefits – both the hiring manager and the recruitment consultant will need to be discrete about which firm the vacancy relates to and what benefits are offered out of respect for the person in the other similar role.

Psychometric testing

A series of questions, problems, or practical tasks that provide a measurement of aspects of somebody's personality, knowledge, ability, or experience. There are three main categories of psychometric test: ability or aptitude tests, achievement tests, and personality tests. No test can ever be 100% accurate, and should be viewed more as a useful indicator than a definitive verdict on a person's skills or potential. Refer to 'Numerical reasoning' and 'Verbal reasoning' in this guide too.

Retainer based search (Retained search)

A recruitment consultancy is sometimes hired on a retainer basis as the sole provider of search services for a client. The consultancy is paid whether or not their candidate is hired. Retained consultancies are much more selective about the candidates they present to an employer and they go above and beyond the usual service provided in order to match an individual to a particular vacancy. Retained search is typically used for senior level roles.

Right to work

To coincide with the expansion of the European Union (EU) new rules about ensuring that job applicants have the right to work in the UK were implemented on 1st May 2004. These rules tightened existing procedures that have to be followed under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 to prevent the employment of illegal workers. The regulations make significant changes to the list of documents and also detail how the employer has, before the employers begins, checked and retained copies of certain original documents from a specified list.

Skill

A skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job.

Temp to perm

A role that is temporary in the first instance that ultimately becomes permanent. There is normally a conversion fee associated with this which can range from 18% to 30% of first year salary. For example: a firm struggling to find someone with the right cultural fit might hire a temporary worker that almost matches their specifications to see if they'll be a good fit. Meanwhile the firm can continue searching for the right candidate whilst someone 'under test' is covering the work.

Verbal reasoning

A test designed to assess a candidate's grammar, verbal skills and ability to follow detailed written instructions, which usually includes questions about spelling, critical reasoning, word groups, sentence completion and comprehension. Candidates who are not native English speakers may be significantly disadvantaged by such tests. An example of a verbal reasoning question might be "Which of the following words are misspelt? A) separate B) ordnance C) obviously D) sucess E) none of these". Refer to 'Numerical reasoning' and 'Psychometric testing' in this guide too.

Working time directive

The Working Time Directive was a piece of legislation introduced in 1993 by the EU Member States with the aim of improving employment conditions in these countries. It lays down minimum requirements in relation to working hours, rest periods, annual leave and working arrangements for workers. Its most

groundbreaking provision was to introduce a maximum 48 hour working week. However, Member States were allowed to 'opt out' of the directive if a number of conditions were met, including workers signing individual 'opt out' agreements as part of their employment contracts, and accurate records of working hours being kept. The UK has been the only Member State to make widespread use of the opt out provisions.

Other Badenoch & Clark resources

Workplace studies

Detailed analysis of current trends in employment. See www.badenochandclark.com/for-employers for further details.

www.market-talk.co.uk

A quarterly electronic newsletter for customers of Badenoch & Clark, reporting news and discussing recruitment trends in each of our core sectors.

Connections

Our unique magazine for customers and contacts of Badenoch & Clark, published three times of year. Packed with comment, opinion, news and analysis on recruitment, talent management and broader business issues. See past issues at www.badenochandclark.com

www.happinessatworkindex.co.uk

A quarterly index tracking employee happiness across the UK office workforce. Results by profession and region.

Future guides

Throughout 2010 we will be producing a series of guides focusing on the key areas of attraction, retention and recruitment.

If you would like to get involved in any of these we'd be delighted to hear from you. Contact us at connections@badenochandclark.com

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