

Ngā Pou | Principles Guidance

Kopounga Whai-painga | Merit-based Appointments



Kopounga Whai-painga | Merit-based Appointments

We make merit-based appointments.

What are merit-based appointments?

Making a merit-based appointment means giving preference to the candidate who is best suited to the position.¹

Merit-based appointments are an essential cornerstone of our professional and politically neutral public sector. Merit-based appointments act as a safeguard to political patronage, favouritism and prejudice.

Determining the candidate best suited to a position requires us to identify the skills, responsibilities and effort that are necessary to perform the role. Criteria identified may include (but are not limited to) qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, team fit, cultural competency, community connections or other relevant work features.

Why are merit-based appointments important?

Merit-based appointments are the foundation upon which:

- a. **We maintain procedural fairness.** By having selection processes that are open and fair, we support and attract a workforce who understand and can deliver services to meet the needs of different communities.
- b. **We develop a highly capable workforce.** Understanding that appointments are based on merit provides an incentive to perform our roles to the best of our abilities. Merit-based appointments also ensure the public sector reaps the benefit of a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- c. **We maintain public confidence** in our ability to act impartially and make appointments without undue political influence.

¹ Public Service Act 2020, [Section 72](#), Crown Entities Act 2004, [Section 118](#) requires the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment.

What are our roles?

Our leaders have a responsibility to ensure their agencies uphold the principle of merit-based appointment. We all have a part to play in applying the principle. However, depending on our level of involvement in recruitment, some of us will make recruitment decisions or will be involved in running recruitment processes in other ways. For those of us performing these roles, we need to follow our agency's internal policies and work to ensure independence, confidentiality, fairness and transparency in the appointment or promotion of individuals.



Practical tips and resources

Recruitment and Employment Practices

We make sure that all appointments are lawful, follow the required statutory processes and adhere to internal recruitment policies. Permanent appointments are made through an open and contestable process.² Additionally, we adhere to the Good employer requirements outlined in [section 73 of the Public Service Act 2020](#) or [section 118 of the Crown Entities Act 2004](#).

Diversity and inclusion

Merit-based appointments and diversity and inclusion are consistent and mutually reinforcing. Merit-based appointments help us to recruit a diverse workforce with the experience and expertise to improve the lives of all the people we serve. Agencies should ensure their definitions of merit are defined around the requirements of the [Equal Pay Act 1972](#) (focusing on skills, responsibilities, experience and effort required by the work).

Links to additional guidance

This guidance complements and should be read alongside:

- [Guidance: Recruitment guidance for public service recruiters](#)
- [Model Standards: Workforce assurance model standards](#)
- [Guidance: Diversity and inclusion](#)
- [Guidance: Addressing bias](#)



² Public Service Act 2020, [Section 64\(2\)\(a\)](#), [section 70](#) and [section 89](#) are exceptions to a merit-based appointment for public service agencies.