

## **ANNEX 19 CPS RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE**

# **Guidance for Conducting Associate Prosecutor Recruitment CPS National Recruitment Centre**

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the recruitment of Associate Prosecutors.

The standardisation of the recruitment process for this role has been introduced for the following reasons:

- To ensure a consistent, fair and equitable process across the 42 Areas of the Crown Prosecution Service;
- To select an appropriate quality of candidate to undertake the AP qualification programme (Foundation and Advocacy courses); and
- To satisfy requirements for Associate Prosecutor membership of the Institute of Legal Executives and the award of rights of audience and rights to litigate (from 1 May 2011).

In order to achieve this, a number of steps have been taken:

- The Job Description and Person Specification for the role have been standardised;
- A consistent two stage assessment framework has been implemented; and
- National minimum standards have been set.

This document therefore contains information on the different stages of the process. It details what is expected of panel members, and provides guidance on how to complete the assessment documentation and uphold consistent national standards.

### **Note on the Recruitment Assessment Scale**

The CPS uses a 1 -5 scale for assessing candidate performance in recruitment exercises. The ratings and definitions are as follows:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Evidence gathered</b>	No evidence or irrelevant information provided.	Partial evidence with some relevant information.	Relevant information, minimum standards evident across most criteria measured	Minimum standard met, in addition has provided detailed relevant evidence across majority of criteria	Consistently provides detailed relevant evidence across all criteria measured.
<b>Development needed</b>	Needs to develop all areas	Needs to develop most areas	Needs some further development	Needs little further development	Needs no further development

## Standardised Assessment Process – Overview

The assessment process consists of two stages:

### Stage 1: Application Form Shortlist

Competencies Assessed:

- Leadership
- Communication and Negotiation
- Reasoning and Decision Making
- Specialist Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Standard:

- Minimum standard of 3 across the board
- Merit order to be produced using 1 – 5 ratings. Should candidates tie a decision should be made on highest score in the key competencies: **TBC**
- Candidates to be invited to final assessment at a ratio of 3 to 1

### Stage 2: Final Assessment – Case Study Presentation and Interview

Competencies Assessed - Case Study Presentation:

- Communication and Negotiation
- Reasoning and Decision Making
- Specialist Skills, Knowledge and Experience
- Equality and Diversity Awareness and Management

Competencies Assessed - Interview:

- Leadership
- Achieving Results
- Planning and Organising
- Continuous Self Development

Standard:

- Minimum standard of 3 across the board
- Merit order to be produced using 1 – 5 ratings. Should candidates tie a decision should be made on highest score in the key competencies: **TBC**
- Candidates to be offered position in merit order.

## **Guidance on the Shortlist**

You will be provided with candidates' supporting statements.

Applicants are required to provide examples addressing criteria under the following competencies:

- Leadership
- Communication and Negotiation
- Reasoning and Decision Making
- Specialist Skills, Knowledge and Experience

You are required to assess the evidence provided and score candidates in each of the above areas.

**The minimum standard is a 3 in each competency.**

This means that candidates are expected to provide satisfactory evidence for the criteria under each competency.

Candidates achieving this minimum standard, or above, should be placed in order of merit and invited to the final assessment. We recommend inviting 3 candidates for each available role.

## **Guidance on the Case Study**

Candidates will be required to sit a case study, which is provided by the National Recruitment Centre from a library of standard exercises.

The case study will constitute a case file, which the candidate will be asked to present either as a guilty plea or an application for remand custody.

Following their presentation you should question candidates on the case study for a further 10 minutes.

This questioning must include questions on diversity related issues.

Suggested topics/lines of questioning on the presentation are as follows:

- The application of the Code for Crown Prosecutors in making a review decision
- Awareness of CPS policy on victims and witnesses
- The use of special measures
- Understanding of the Associate Prosecutor remit i.e. the Director's Instructions
- Dealing with unrepresented defendants e.g. what would you do differently

### **Guidance on the Interview**

The interview should take the form of a competency based interview.

You are required to ask questions on the following competency areas:

- Leadership
- Achieving Results
- Planning and Organising
- Continuous Self Development

You are asked to select one or two standard opening questions for each competency.

For consistency, all candidates should be asked the same opening questions. However, you should then probe around the candidate's initial answer to elicit a full response.

Suggestions for standard questions are included in the appendix.

**Appendix: Associate Prosecutor  
Standard Interview Questions**

**Leadership**

- *Takes responsibility for actions and decisions; consults appropriately.*
- *Instils confidence and works under own direction; successfully deals with pressures and demands.*

Tell us about a time when have you had to act in the absence of a manager?

- What challenges did this present?
- How did you go about it?
- What were the main demands?
- What did you learn?

When have others looked to you to lead or to take responsibility for a situation?

Give us an example when you have been solely responsible for dealing with a demanding task.

- What was the situation?
- What action did you take?
- Why did you take that action?
- What was the outcome?
- What would have been the potential impact had you not taken action in this situation?

Tell us about a time when have you had to work under your own direction.

- What were you required to do?
- How did you ensure you were working to the highest standard?

Tell us about a time when you have had to work under a high degree of pressure?

Tell us about a demanding situation when you have been required to deliver?

## **Achieving Results**

- *Sets, maintains and achieves high quality standards in all circumstances.*
- *Supports and contributes to the delivery of the organisation's strategic aims and objectives.*

Tell us about a time when you have been required to produce high quality work under difficult circumstances?

Tell us about a deadline or objective that you have achieved.

- How did you plan to achieve this?
- How did you go about achieving the objective/deadline?
- How did you measure your progress?
- What were your desired outcomes?
- How did you measure your success?

How do you think that your current role contributes to the achievement of the strategic aims of the CPS?

- Tell us about a time when your actions have contributed to this aim?

How do you ensure that you understand the strategic aims of your department or the organisation?

- When have you personally contributed towards these?

Tell us about a strategic aim that you are currently working towards?

- What actions have you taken that have supported the delivery of this?

## **Planning and Organising**

- *Prioritises a varying and sometimes demanding workload and manages own time effectively.*
- *Balances conflicting priorities and interests to deliver results.*

When have you had a number of conflicting priorities in your workload?

- How did you go about managing these?
- What action did you take to meet these priorities?

- Did you encounter any problems, if so how did you tackle them?
- What was the outcome?

When have you had to adjust or review your priorities in light of new information or an unexpected demand?

Tell us about a time when you have had a demanding workload to complete.

- How did you approach this?
- What did you take in to consideration when approaching your work?
- How did you ensure that you completed all your tasks?

Tell us about a time when you have had to deal with a large workload that included a wide variety of tasks?

### **Continuous Self Development**

- *Develops role knowledge and expertise through continual professional development.*

Tell us about something that you've learnt within the past year that has allowed you to better perform your role.

Tell us about when you have taken it upon yourself to develop your skills and knowledge.

- How did you apply this knowledge in your daily job?
- How has it improved your work?

How do you ensure that you are up to date with the knowledge and skills required to perform your role?

What do you do to ensure that you develop yourself within your role?

What do you think your responsibility is in terms of professional development?

- Give us an example.