

TRIPARTITE GUIDELINES ON NON-DISCRIMINATORY JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Introduction

The Ministry of Manpower together with the Singapore National Employers' Federation/Singapore Business Federation and the National Trades Union Congress issued the Tripartite Guidelines on Non Discriminatory Job Advertisements in 1999 to promote the use of objective criteria in the recruitment of job candidates. The Guidelines has been reviewed in consultation with the Tripartite partners and taking into consideration public feedback on job advertisements. It serves as a reference for employers in their recruitment process.

Principle

Under the Singapore constitution, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection under the law. In line with the principle of equality and responsible/enlightened employment practices, employers should select candidates based on merit i.e. qualification, skills, experience and attributes which are pertinent to the job.

Employers are encouraged to implement the tripartite guidelines to select the best candidate for the job, based on the job requirements. Employers should provide equal opportunity in the selection of candidates regardless of age, race, gender, religion, marital status, criminal record and disability as part of their enlightened employment practices. In the case of a female candidate who is in the family way, employers should also extend the same opportunity to the candidate and consider her job suitability on the basis of her qualification, skills, aptitude and experience.

As valued employees and talents are critical to the success of an organization, companies therefore should not limit its pool of candidates but extend the scope to attract the best candidate for the job. This would benefit the company and at the same time provide equal opportunities to candidates of diverse background and attributes. The principle of providing equal opportunities should be clearly spelt out as part of the company's Human Resource policy, communicated and implemented in the recruitment process. In its placement of job advertisements in all advertising media including online advertisements, employers should set out clear, objective and relevant criteria.

Criteria which should NOT be in Job Advertisements

AGE

Employers should not stipulate age as a requirement for employment. Words or phrases that suggest preference for job candidates of a particular age group should also not be used in job advertisements. Examples include “young”, “youthful working environment” or “fresh school leaver/ fresh graduate.

If the nature of the job is physically demanding such as the handling of heavy cargo, the required physical attributes or other job-related criteria should be clearly described in the job advertisements, rather than indicating an age cut off.

Examples

- Candidates are required to load and unload sacks of rice of at least 10 kg each.
- Candidates are required to handle heavy equipment.

RACE

Race should not be a criterion for the selection of job candidates as multi-racialism is a fundamental principle in Singapore and selection based on race is unacceptable. Job advertisements featuring statements like “Chinese preferred” and “Malay preferred” are therefore unacceptable.

LANGUAGE

If a job entails proficiency in a particular language, employers should justify the need for the requirement. This would reduce ambiguity and minimize incidence of misunderstanding between the job seekers and the recruiting party.

Examples

- Chinese language Teacher for Pre School Centre, good credit in ‘O’ Level Chinese.
- Translator for a leading Malay sports magazine. Proficiency in Malay is a must.
- Tour Guides to take Chinese/Japanese/Indian tourist groups. Knowledge of Mandarin / Japanese / Indian dialects is essential.

GENDER

Where practical requirement of the job dictates the need for employees of a particular sex, this must be supported by valid reasons. In addition, words or phrases that suggest preference for job candidates of a particular gender such as

“female working environment” or “waitress” should not be used in the job advertisements.

Examples

- Women’s Fashion Boutique requires salesgirl to model clothes while on the job.

MARITAL STATUS

Marital status is an irrelevant criterion in employment; as jobs can be performed equally well by either married or single persons.

RELIGION

Religion is unacceptable as a criterion for recruitment EXCEPT in cases where employees have to perform religious functions as part of the job requirement. In such cases, the requirements should be clearly and objectively presented.

OTHER REFERENCES

In line with the principle of equal opportunities, fair and objective employment practices should be extended beyond the recruitment stage to cover all stages of human resource management. To apply this principle consistently across the various function of human resource management, employers can refer to the Code of Responsible Employment Practices, the Tripartite Guidelines on Family Friendly Workplace Practices, the Employer’s Guide to Age-Friendly Employment Practices and the Tripartite Guidelines on the Employment of Older Workers Above 62 years old.

Jointly Issued by:

Singapore National Employers' Federation/Singapore Business Federation, National Trades Union Congress and Ministry of Manpower.