

Hiring process checklist

The ten-step process for a small team without an HR department. Tick each step as you finish it.

Role	Hiring manager	Target start date
STEP AND WHAT "DONE" MEANS		DONE
1	Define the job as evidence. What they'll do in six months, and what someone who can do it has already done.	☐
2	Requirements and knockouts. Three to five must-haves written as evidence; knockouts only for yes-or-no facts; no year counts.	☐
3	Post and collect in one place. Posting meets local rules (pay, AI use, vacancy where required). One inbox, folder or tool for every application.	☐
4	Screen every application. Shown, unclear or not met for each requirement, with evidence; sorted by rule; a random sample of rejections re-read.	☐
5	Short phone screen. Same few questions for everyone; unclear items settled; availability and pay expectations confirmed.	☐
6	Short work sample. Realistic, short, the same for everyone, scored against anchors written beforehand.	☐
7	Structured interview. Same questions, order and follow-ups; each answer rated against anchors straight away.	☐
8	Score, combine, decide. Each interviewer rates alone; ratings combined by the rule set in advance; then discussion.	☐
9	References for facts. Dates, titles and the work they described, not a ranking of candidates.	☐
10	Offer, and review the process. Offer made quickly; everyone else told the outcome; a look back booked for a few months after the start.	☐

Decision and reason (one or two sentences, tied to the requirements)

Look back at ____ months
Still in the role? Ratings against the requirements now? Hire again? Which step predicted best?

Keep application and hiring records for as long as the rules where you hire require. In the United States, covered employers must keep them for at least a year.

From "How to hire the best candidate: a practical guide for small businesses", sortthestack.com/blog/how-to-hire-the-best-candidate