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RESEARCH AND POSTDOC JOBS IN EUROPE

Recruiter's Guide

## Welcome to the Recruiter's Guide

Are you an organization that needs advice and assistance with creating a recruitment advertisement? Our guide is designed to help you avoid mistakes, save time and attract the most suitable candidates.

**For those in a hurry, look at the Quick Guide first.**

### Disclaimer

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## Quick Guide to Creating a Successful Job Ad

### Job ad checklist

Check that your ad covers all the below items before you post your job ad, to get the basics right. If you have time, read on in the guide to ensure you attract the right candidate.

See the job ad as your working document, the most effective tool for finding the right person. If you work this way, all elements should automatically get prioritised right.

### Job ad essentials

- Precise job title
- Name of employer (or recruitment agency)
- Job location
- Whether the role is full-time, permanent or a short-term contract
- Publishing date and application deadline
- Job and ad reference number if necessary
- Have clear text, layout, and a professional image
- Branding should be present but not overbearing

### Job description

- Short description of business/organisation, and division activity, market position and aims
- To whom the position reports - or other indication of where the role is in the organisation
- Outline of job role and purpose - set up in a list of points if possible
- Indication of size, responsibility, timescale, and territory of role
- List of firm requirements for the job (as bullets)
- Outline of ideal candidate profile
- A separate list of other skills that would be advantageous to have
- Indication of qualifications and experience required
- Salary range
- Other package details (pension, car etc.)
- Career advancement opportunities
- Equipment and systems to be used in the performance of the job, if necessary

### Response and other information

- Response and application instructions
- Explanation of recruitment process
- Perhaps interview dates
- Contact details as necessary
- Equal opportunities statements

## Putting your job ad into words

### Avoid unsuitable applications

At EuroScienceJobs we see a lot of job ads, and it is surprising how many job ads fail to provide basic information. And therefore recruiters waste a lot of time analysing unqualified applications, and perhaps having to re-publish the ad.

To get only the best applications, and reduce the number of rejected applicants, try these:

- Have a very clear requirement list, and make it as short as possible
- Have a separate “would be advantageous to have” list
- Indicate that “only short listed candidates will be contacted”
- Write clearly where the job is located geographically
- Specify if applicants must be EU nationals, or must have a valid work permit
- Define clear posting and closing dates
- Make posting, mailing and telephone contact details easy to find

Prevent unqualified job seekers from sending useless applications by having a statement that explains that your job requirements are firm.

For example:

*"Please read the qualifications for this position carefully. We will only consider those who meet the listed requirements."*

This won't stop everyone, but it will deter people who are unsure whether you are serious about your stated requirements.

A clear statement of how you are going to reply to applicants will reduce your work task when handling the incoming CVs.

Write for example:

*"The deadline for applications to reach us is 30 March. If you have not heard from us by 15 April, please assume that your application has not been successful."*

EuroScienceJobs actively helps recruiters to get the most suitable candidates and to avoid time-wasting Screening of unfit CVs.

We can improve pre-selection with our Pre-selection Questions and a CV Database Search.

## Clarity means reaching the right people

Give candidates the information they need for applying. If a job ad is unclear or non-specific, the job seekers you want may be less likely to apply, and those who are unsuitable may be encouraged to apply.

Here is some clear job description text, taken from WHO (World Health Organisation) – it explicitly divides job tasks into clear groupings:

- *Negotiate agreements with external publishers (both nonprofit and for-profit) for the translation and publication of information materials in appropriate languages*
- *Cultivate and expand partnerships worldwide with both nonprofit and for-profit bodies in the area of publishing*

Things to avoid when wording your job description:

- vague or obscure headlines
- coded and idiosyncratic communications
- uninspiring descriptions of roles and ideal candidates
- too much emphasis on the job and not enough on the person
- words which are open to interpretation, for example: "frequently," "some," "complex," "occasional," and "several"

Remember, it's a bigger decision to spend years or a lifetime working for your company than it is to purchase your service. The rule is to excite and motivate candidates to apply to your job posting - not scare them away.

## Include your organisation's motivation

Every organisation is unique. They have different strategies, cultures and ways of doing business. Some people do better in one environment than another. You should give job seekers a profile of your company to decide if yours is the right one for them. Sell your company as you would sell your services.

But still, don't forget to make your job ad attractive. Find out what attracted the existing team to apply for their jobs and use that information. You may find that training is a key motivator or that the financial package was a major draw. Play on your strengths and keep the ad benefit-oriented.

## Organising your recruitment

### Defining job function and title

Recruitment is not just carried out to meet immediate vacancies but should be seen as part of an overall organizational strategy for resourcing personnel. See if you can discuss the job role with involved departments, managers, colleagues, leaving jobholder etc., to get the whole picture.

- If the candidate is to **replace a leaving job holder** (in other words an existing job role), then take the opportunity to re-evaluate the job scope
- If the candidate is to fill out a **new job function** with many unknown factors, then sketch out the overall lines and objectives: be honest about uncertainties
- If the candidate is to fill out a **temporary vacancy** or an internship, then explicitly define expectations and job tasks. Your permanent job may be attractive to ambitious people who will use it as a stepping-stone to more prestigious jobs. Fine, but if you want to avoid any lack of involvement, you need to specify this in your job ad.

If the job title does not explicitly describe the job function, then use a strap-line to do so. You may have to work a lot with the job title, so that it is not obscure and doesn't convey what the job function is. Also try to incorporate something new, innovative, exciting and challenging in the role - people are attracted to new things.

### Job requirements

The job description must be in line with reality. In the eyes of the new candidate, and existing colleagues, the official job ad remains the most important document for the job role (together with the contract). So you must take it seriously, otherwise you might put performance of the new professional at risk.

In other words your choice of wording is important: too complex and you could give the impression of inaccessibility, too lightweight and you may lose credibility. Ask colleagues to compare your proposed wording with their experiences of the company and the job.

## How many and which applications will you receive?

An instrument to control the amount of applications is the job requirements. The more specific your job requirement list, the fewer, better targeted responses you are likely to receive.

- If the role is specialist and senior, you may prefer to receive five excellent applications rather than fifty average ones
- For a graduate trainee position you may prefer a bigger choice

Writing a goal oriented job description will attract potential candidates who want to grow within the position, and learn how to make larger contributions to your organisation. See the difference between these two phrases:

- *Is responsible for the preparation and follow-up of financial management and internal control*
- *Takes responsibility for developing a sound financial management and internal control to save money for the agency*

It is the same for clearly defined role objectives: Instead of a list of job responsibilities, draw the focus towards the personal qualities instead of skills. This is critical for high responsibility jobs, but rather to be avoided in more administrative functions.

## Talking to your ideal candidate

Build a mental picture of the sort of person you, and the team, see fitting in. Write as if you were speaking to your imaginary candidate. Use language that your reader uses, and describe the job as practically as possible. Refer to the reader as "you" and use the second person ("you", "your" and "yours" etc) in the description of requirements and expectations. It gets the reader involved.

The job description should be as practical as possible. Make it short. Cut down on formalities (and explain them later to the candidate). Try to omit any unnecessary articles such as "a", "an" and "the". Mark for example the difference between these two:

- *Managing the development team: this includes organising and planning the work of a team of members, reporting on the work progress to the project managers, researching and selecting technologies needed to implement services, keeping the development team up-to-date with state of the art*
- *Managing development team; organising and planning work team members, reporting on work progress to project managers, researching and selecting technologies needed to implement services, keeping development team up-to-date*

Remember that there is a major difference between an online ad and print version. Online job boards force users to read much more from top and downwards. Therefore the job ad must quickly get to the points. If it doesn't grab attention, your race is lost before it begins.

How to get your job ad noticed:

- Don't use long words where short ones will do
- Cut word out where possible
- Use active forms instead of passive
- Strong verbs and specific nouns give energy
- Avoid over-designed graphics and extravagantly presented layouts

This advice was taken from [www.thomasinternational.net](http://www.thomasinternational.net)

## Selecting the right candidate

### Short-listing and interviewing

By focusing on pre-selection and using Pre-selection Questions, drawing up a shortlist will be much easier and will provide you with a selection of candidates that you would really like to request for interview.

When you contact prospective interviewees, provide clear instructions covering:

- Date and time of the interview
- Where you are located and how to get there
- Who they should ask for
- How long the interview is likely to last
- What they should bring with them
- Whether they will be reimbursed for travel expenses



## Interview technique

Interviewers often have a number of set questions which they ask every candidate. These questions are based around the requirement of the job, and by asking the same questions, they can draw a direct comparison between each candidate.

The interviewer should ask questions, which are open, for example how, when, what, why etc. giving the candidate the opportunity to answer fully, rather than responding with a simple “yes” or “no”.

- Avoid interrupting the answers or leading them in any direction
- Summarise the responses back to the candidate, before making notes, to ensure that you have fully understood

Normally the interviewer shouldn't be tempted to talk too much to fill any potentially uncomfortable moments of silence. From the interviewer's point of view, the silence can be a very effective way of encouraging the candidate to offer up more information.

Interviewers must remember that what appears to be a more informal chat than a “grilling” tends to put a candidate at ease to get a more honest response. This gives valuable insight into the candidate's personality traits, rather than simply an understanding of their skills and experience.

The recruiter should remember to notice the body language of the candidate:

- The initial shaking of the hand and introduction tell much about a person
- As does the ongoing seating position, use of hands and use of eye contact

Links to more interview techniques:

- The Interview Process: [Selecting the "Right" Person](#) (focus on legal personnel)
- Taking on staff: [The interview](#)

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