Affirmative Action for People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision Policy

Introduction

As a leading provider of support services for people who are blind or have low vision, Vision Australia believes it should not only advocate the employment of people who are blind or have low vision but also demonstrate its positive commitment through policies and practice to establish Vision Australia as an employer of choice for people who are blind or have low vision.

About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to establishing Vision Australia as an employer of choice for people who are blind or have low vision.

To whom does this policy apply

This policy applies to all roles across all Vision Australia Group Entities.

The Board and all levels of management and workforce at Vision Australia have a responsibility to understand, comply with and implement this policy.

Policy

1. Vision Australia is committed to ensuring all employment decisions are based on fulfilling the valid job requirements.
2. All advertised positions are endorsed with the statement, "We highly encourage applications from candidates who are blind or have low vision."
3. Vision Australia shall ensure its staff, including consumer representatives, on selection panels are provided with adequate education and training on equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination principles and their application.
4. Vision Australia actively seeks development opportunities for employees who are blind or have low vision, such as secondments, acting-up opportunities or stretch projects, as part of their developmental pathways, where possible. Additionally, Vision Australia is committed to providing support and resources to facilitate career advancement for these employees. This includes access to training and a supportive environment that fosters growth and encourages exploration of new opportunities.
5. Employees who are blind or have low vision shall have the necessary equipment required to support them in carrying out their duties.

Procedure

The process to determine if someone is appointable is below:

1. Set the role's essential job requirements and pre-determined ratings for these as outlined in the interview guide.
2. Shortlist applicants against essential job requirements.
3. Applicants who have identified as being blind or have low vision and demonstrate that they successfully meet the essential job requirements will progress to interview stage in selection.
4. Interview short-listed applicants and determine ‘Actual Ratings’ based on the essential job requirements.
5. If an applicant who is blind or has low vision meets the predetermined essential job requirements of the role, they are deemed appointable and should be offered the role. This is regardless of whether there is a non-blind or low vision applicant who rates higher on the pre-determined ratings at interview stage.
6. If two applicants who are blind or have low vision meet the predetermined essential job requirements, preference will be given to the applicant who rates higher on the predetermined ratings at interview stage.
7. When, following interview, a candidate who is blind or has low vision is deemed to not meet the essential requirements of the role, and as a result is not to be offered the role, it is incumbent upon the hiring manager to flag and justify to the most senior applicable manager (hereafter Manager) and P & C Business Partner. The Manager and P&C Business Partner will review the recruiting panel’s recommendation and may at their discretion call for a re-assessment.
8. If a candidate who is blind/has low vision is confirmed to not meet the requirements of the role following the interview and following review by the Manager and P&C Business Partner, feedback will be provided to the candidate, and if the candidate is internal, will be integrated into their development plan.

Document Control

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Prepared by: Vision Australia People and Culture

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| Version | Prepared by | Approved by | Effective date | Reason for Changes | Summary of Changes  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.0 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team | Apr 2019 |  | This policy has now been deemed a level 1 policy instead of a level 2 |
| 1.1 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team and Board | Sept 2021 | Periodic review | Minor changes to reflect current language used in job ads |
| 1.2 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team and Board | Dec 2021 | Minor change of wording | Change wording to “all employment decisions are based on the fulfilment of the valid job requirements”  |
| 1.3 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team and Board | Nov 2023 | Insertion of new item in Policy (point 4) | Seeking development opportunities for employees who are blind or have low vision, such as secondments, acting-up opportunities or stretch projects, as part of their developmental pathways. etc |
| 1.4 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team and Board | Dec 2023 | Minor change of wording | Enhancement to the development opportunities wording. |
| 1.5 | Vision Australia People and Culture | VA Leadership Team and Board | Feb 2024 | Changes to wording and procedure. | Clarification of policy coverage and enhancement of the recruitment procedure to require justification where a candidate who is blind/low vision who meets the essential job requirements is not appointed. |

Ends.