

Business Management Units 1 & 2

Chapter 15 — Recruitment and selection

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Chapter 15 Recruitment and selection — 15A Job analysis, job design, job descriptions and job specifications

Theory

Before a business can advertise a vacancy, interview applicants or choose who to hire, it must first be clear about **exactly what the job involves** and **exactly what kind of person is needed to do it**. Working this out is the essential **first step** in recruitment and selection, and it rests on four closely linked ideas: **job analysis**, **job design**, the **job description** and the **job specification**. Getting these right means the business advertises for, assesses and hires the *right* person; getting them wrong — or skipping them — leads to poorly targeted advertising, weak selection decisions, a wrong hire, poor performance and, often, early turnover.

Job analysis. Job analysis is the process of **studying a role to identify and record the tasks, duties and responsibilities it involves, and the skills, knowledge, qualifications and personal attributes a person needs to perform it well**. It is essentially an **information-gathering** exercise: the business examines the job closely and produces an accurate, detailed picture of the position. A business can conduct a job analysis in several ways:

- **Observing** the work being done, watching how an existing employee performs the role;
- **Interviewing** the current jobholder and their supervisor about what the job actually requires;
- Issuing **questionnaires** or surveys to people who do or manage the role;
- **Reviewing existing records** such as an old job description, work diaries, performance data or workflow documents.

The value of job analysis is that every later staffing decision depends on it. If the business does not first understand the role, it cannot design a sensible job, write accurate hiring documents, advertise in the right places, or judge which applicant is the best fit. Job analysis therefore supplies the raw information that feeds **job design**, the **job description** and the **job specification**.

Job design. Job design is the process of **structuring and organising the tasks, duties and responsibilities identified by the job analysis into a defined role or position**. Where job analysis *studies and describes* a job, job design *decides how the job is put together* — which tasks belong in the role, how they are grouped, how much responsibility and autonomy the position carries, and how it connects to other roles in the business. A well-designed job is realistic in its workload, gives the employee a meaningful and manageable set of duties, and fits sensibly alongside the rest of the team. Businesses can, for example, broaden a role by adding variety, or deepen it by adding responsibility, so that the job motivates the person who holds it while still meeting the needs of the business. Crucially, **job analysis informs job design**: the business can only structure a role sensibly once it understands, from the analysis, what the role genuinely needs to achieve.

Job description. A **job description** is a **document that sets out the JOB itself** — what the role involves. It typically states the **job title**, the **duties, tasks and responsibilities** of the position, the **reporting lines** (who the role reports to, and who — if anyone — reports to it), and often the **hours, location, working conditions and remuneration**. In short, the job description answers the question “*What does this job involve?*” It describes the **position**, not the person.

Job specification. A **job specification** is a **document that sets out the PERSON needed to do the job** — the requirements a candidate must meet. It lists the **qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and personal attributes or qualities** (for example reliability, communication skills or the ability to work in a team) that a person needs in order to perform the role well. The job specification answers the question “*What kind of person do we need?*” It describes the **person**, not the position. Because it sets out clear, agreed requirements, the job specification also becomes the **criteria against which applicants are later assessed** during selection.

The relationship between the four. These four ideas form a single, logical sequence at the start of recruitment:

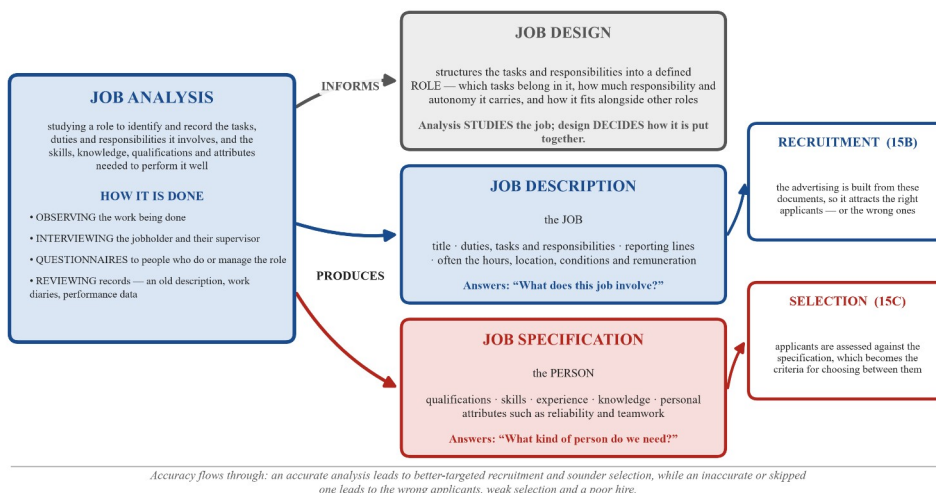
- **Job analysis comes first** — the business studies the role and gathers information about its tasks, responsibilities and requirements.
- That information **informs job design** — the business uses what the analysis reveals to structure the tasks and responsibilities into a workable, well-defined role.

- That same information is then used to **produce the two documents**: the **job description** (which records the *duties and responsibilities* of the designed role) and the **job specification** (which records the *qualifications, skills and attributes* the person needs).

So job analysis is the **foundation** that feeds everything that follows: it *informs job design* and it *produces the job description and job specification*. Together, the designed role and its two documents **define the vacancy** clearly before recruitment (15B) and selection (15C) begin. Because recruitment advertising is built from these documents and selection judges applicants against them, an accurate analysis flows through into better hiring; a careless one flows through into a poor one.

Job analysis is the foundation: it informs the design, and produces both documents

job analysis is a PROCESS; the job description and job specification are the written OUTPUTS it is used to produce



Description versus specification — the JOB versus the PERSON. The two documents are easily confused, but the distinction is simple and important. The **job description** is about the **JOB**: it lists the *duties, responsibilities and reporting lines* of the position. The **job specification** is about the **PERSON**: it lists the *qualifications, skills, experience and attributes* the individual must have. One describes the work to be done; the other describes the worker needed to do it.

Key ideas to keep straight.

- **Job analysis is a process; the description and specification are documents.** Job analysis is the *activity* of studying the role; the job description and job specification are the *written outputs* that the analysis is used to produce. Do not use the terms interchangeably.
- **Job analysis informs job design, and produces the two documents.** Analysis is the foundation — it feeds the structuring of the role (design) *and* the writing of the description and specification.
- **Description = JOB; specification = PERSON.** The job description lists duties, responsibilities and reporting lines (the position); the job specification lists qualifications, skills, experience and attributes (the person). This is the single most common distinction tested.
- **Accuracy flows through.** Because advertising and selection are built on these documents, an accurate analysis leads to better-targeted recruitment and sounder selection, while an inaccurate or skipped analysis leads to the wrong applicants, weak selection and a poor hire.

Contemporary example — Australia Post, April 2024

Australia Post is the government business enterprise that carries letters and parcels across Australia.

New performance standards for Australia Post took effect on **15 April 2024**. Under them, regular letters were to be delivered **every second business day**, while **priority letters, Express Post and parcels continued to be delivered every business day**. Australia Post paired the change with what it called its New Delivery Model, rolled out progressively across delivery centres through to the end of 2025, and said it had adjusted how posties deliver mail each day: a postie still worked a round daily, but the **composition** of what they carried changed to support daily parcel delivery, and rounds were redrawn to cover more delivery points.

This is **job design** rather than recruitment. No new position was created and the postie role kept its title; instead the **tasks, duties and responsibilities** of an existing role were **restructured into a differently defined job** — a different mix of tasks, a different sequence of work through the day and a different round. Because the designed role changed, the **job description** must change with it, since the duties and workload it records are no longer those the old round involved. A redesign of this kind also invites a fresh **job analysis**, because the skills and physical demands of a heavier parcel round may differ from those a letter-focused round required — and that information would in turn feed the **job specification**.

Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, “Changes to Australia Post performance standards to improve financial sustainability”, April 2024 — <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/news/changes-australia-post-performance-standards-improve-financial-sustainability>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Verde Grocers is opening a new store and needs to hire a produce department manager, a role it has never had before. Explain how conducting a **job analysis** would help Verde Grocers fill the position.

Working	Comment
Job analysis is the process of studying a role to identify its tasks, duties and responsibilities and the skills and attributes a person needs to do it.	Anchor the answer in what job analysis actually is.
Because the produce manager role is new, Verde Grocers does not yet know exactly what the job involves or what kind of person it needs — a job analysis gathers this information (e.g. by interviewing supervisors and observing similar roles).	Link the process to the specific problem: a brand-new role.
With this information, Verde Grocers can structure the role sensibly, write an accurate job description and job specification, and advertise in the right places .	Show what the analysis makes possible.
∴ conducting a job analysis gives Verde Grocers the accurate foundation it needs to design the role and attract and select a suitable produce manager.	State the causal conclusion.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Loft & Lever is a fitness studio hiring its first receptionist. The owner has drafted a job description but is unsure what a **job specification** should contain. Explain what should go into the job specification and why it is needed.

Working	Comment
A job specification is a document that sets out the person needed for the job — the qualifications, skills, experience and personal attributes a candidate must have.	Define the document and make clear it is about the person, not the job.
For a receptionist, this might include a first-aid qualification, good communication and customer-service skills, basic computer skills and a friendly, reliable manner.	Apply the definition to the specific role with realistic requirements.
It is needed because it gives Loft & Lever clear criteria to advertise against and to assess applicants during selection.	Explain the purpose the document serves.
∴ the job specification lets Loft & Lever identify and choose a candidate who genuinely has the attributes the	Conclude with the benefit.

receptionist role requires.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Distinguish between a **job description** and a **job specification**.

A **job description** is a document that sets out the **job itself** — the **duties, tasks and responsibilities** of the role, together with its **title, reporting lines** and usually its hours, location and conditions. It answers the question “*what does this job involve?*” A **job specification**, by contrast, is a document that sets out the **person** needed to do the job — the **qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and personal attributes** a candidate must have. It answers the question “*what kind of person do we need?*” The key difference is therefore one of **focus**: the job description describes the **position and the work to be done**, whereas the job specification describes the **individual and the requirements they must meet**. ∴ the two documents differ in whether they define the **job** (description) or the **person** (specification), even though a business prepares both from the same job analysis.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

A business owner states, “Job analysis is a waste of time — I already know what my business does, so I can just write a job ad and start interviewing.” Evaluate this statement.

The statement has a little merit but is **largely mistaken**. It is true that an experienced owner has useful knowledge of the business, and for a very simple or familiar role a lengthy formal analysis may add little, so the owner’s instinct to move quickly is not entirely unreasonable. **However**, skipping the job analysis is risky because knowing what the *business* does is not the same as having a clear, accurate picture of a *specific role* — its exact tasks, responsibilities, reporting lines and the skills and attributes it demands. Without a job analysis, the owner is likely to write a **vague or inaccurate job advertisement**, attract the **wrong applicants**, and have **no clear criteria** to judge candidates against at interview, making a poor hire — and the early turnover, lost productivity and re-hiring costs that follow — far more likely. A job analysis need not be lengthy, but it converts the owner’s rough sense of the role into an accurate job description and job specification that make recruitment and selection targeted and defensible. ∴ the statement should be **rejected**: while the owner’s knowledge helps, a job analysis is a small investment that materially improves the chance of hiring the right person, so it is not a waste of time but the foundation of effective staffing.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Define the term *job analysis*.

Q2. Identify the **two** documents that a business produces from a job analysis.

Q3. For each of the following, name the term being described: (a) a document listing the duties, responsibilities and reporting lines of a role; (b) structuring the tasks and responsibilities identified for a role into a defined position; (c) a document listing the qualifications, skills and personal attributes a person needs to do a job.

Q4. Explain what is meant by *job design*.

Q5. A café is creating a new “shift supervisor” position. (a) Identify **one** method the café could use to carry out a job analysis for the role. (b) Explain how conducting a job analysis would help the café fill the position.

Q6. Explain the difference between a **job description** and a **job specification**.

Unscaffolded

Q7. Describe *job analysis*. (2 marks)

Q8. Explain the relationship between **job analysis** and **job design**. (3 marks)

Q9. Distinguish between a **job description** and a **job specification**. (4 marks)

Q10. Explain how a **job analysis** is used to produce a job description and a job specification. (4 marks)

Q11. Compare **job analysis** and **job design**. (4 marks)

Q12. Analyse how conducting a thorough job analysis can affect a business's ability to select the right employee. (6 marks)

Q13. Discuss the value to a business of preparing a detailed job description and job specification before advertising a position. (6 marks)

Q14. Justify the decision by a business to conduct a **job analysis** before designing a new role. (4 marks)

Q15. Propose and justify **one** method a business could use to carry out a job analysis for a newly created role. (4 marks)

Q16. Case study. Terrain & Trail is a growing outdoor-adventure retailer run by Nadia. She is opening a second store and needs to hire a **store manager** for the new location — a more senior role than any she has filled before. In the past Nadia has hired casual staff informally through friends and family, without any written documents; her last such hire turned out to be a poor fit and left within two months. This time she wants to define the role properly before advertising it. (a) Identify **one** document Nadia should prepare as part of the job analysis for the store manager role. (1 mark) (b) Explain how conducting a **job analysis** could help Terrain & Trail recruit a suitable store manager. (3 marks) (c) Analyse how preparing an accurate **job description** and **job specification** could help Terrain & Trail avoid another poor hiring fit. (4 marks)

Q17. Evaluate the usefulness of **job analysis** as the first step in staffing a new position. (6 marks)

Q18. A business writes a **vague** job description and an **inaccurate** job specification for a role. Explain **one** problem this could create, and recommend **one** way the business could improve the documents. (4 marks)

Q19. Extended response. Effective staffing begins long before a candidate is interviewed. Analyse how **job analysis** informs **job design** and is used to produce the **job description** and **job specification**, and evaluate the view that time spent on job analysis is essential to staffing a business effectively. (10 marks)

Q20. Under performance standards that took effect on **15 April 2024**, Australia Post's posties remained in the same role but carried a changed mix of items — parcels and priority mail every business day, regular letters every second business day — over rounds that were redrawn to cover more delivery points. Analyse this change as an example of **job design**, and explain what it would mean for the role's **job description**. (5 marks)

Answers

Q1. The process of studying a role to identify the tasks, duties and responsibilities it involves and the skills, qualifications and attributes a person needs to perform it. **Q2.** The job description; and the job specification. **Q3.** (a) job description; (b) job design; (c) job specification. **Q4.** Structuring and organising the tasks, duties and responsibilities identified by a job analysis into a defined role or position. See solutions. **Q5.** (a) e.g. observing the work / interviewing a supervisor or jobholder / a questionnaire / reviewing existing records. (b) It identifies exactly what the supervisor role involves and what the person needs, so the café can design the role, write accurate documents and select a suitable applicant. See solutions. **Q6.** A job description sets out the **job** (duties, responsibilities, reporting lines); a job specification sets out the **person** (qualifications, skills, experience, attributes). See solutions. **Q7.** Studying a role to identify its tasks, duties and responsibilities and the skills and attributes needed to do it. See solutions. **Q8.** Job analysis gathers the information about the role; job design uses that information to structure the tasks and responsibilities into a defined position — analysis informs design. See solutions. **Q9.** Description = the job (duties/responsibilities/reporting lines); specification = the person (qualifications/skills/experience/attributes). Both terms required. See solutions. **Q10.** The analysis identifies the role's tasks and requirements; the duties/responsibilities become the job description, the required skills/qualifications/attributes become the job specification. See solutions. **Q11.** Similarity: both are early staffing steps that define a role and both rely on the same information. Difference: analysis *studies and gathers information* about the role; design *structures* that information into a defined position. See solutions. **Q12.** Causal chain: thorough analysis → accurate specification/criteria → better-targeted advertising and clearer selection criteria → more suitable applicant chosen. See solutions. **Q13.** Discuss — advantages (targeted advertising, clear selection criteria, right fit, fewer costly mistakes) and disadvantages (time, cost, can date if the role changes); no judgement required; don't double-dip. See solutions. **Q14.** Justify — argue why: without analysis the role cannot be structured sensibly, so analysis prevents a poorly designed job and wasted recruitment effort. See solutions. **Q15.** Propose one method (e.g. interviewing the supervisor plus observing a similar role) + argue why it suits a new role. See solutions. **Q16.** (a) A job description **or** a job specification (either is acceptable). (b) Analysis clarifies what the senior store-manager role involves and what person is needed, so Nadia can advertise and select properly rather than hire informally. (c) Accurate documents give clear duties and clear person-criteria to assess applicants against → better fit → avoids a repeat of the two-month mis-hire. See solutions. **Q17.** Evaluate — usefulness (foundation for design, documents, advertising and selection) vs limitations (time/cost, can date), ending in an evidence-based judgement. See solutions. **Q18.** Problem: e.g. attracts the wrong applicants / no clear criteria / wrong hire. Recommend: conduct or redo a proper job analysis and rewrite both documents accurately. See solutions. **Q19.** Model response in solutions. **Q20.** Job design = structuring tasks and responsibilities into a defined role. Here an existing role was restructured, not replaced: different tasks, different sequence, redrawn round → the duties and workload recorded in the job description no longer match, so the document must be rewritten. See solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q4. Job design is the process of **structuring and organising the tasks, duties and responsibilities identified by a job analysis into a defined role or position**. It involves deciding **which tasks belong in the role, how much responsibility and autonomy the position carries**, and **how the role fits with other jobs** in the business, so that the resulting job is realistic, manageable and useful to the business. Job design draws directly on the job analysis: the business can only structure a role sensibly once the analysis has revealed what the role genuinely needs to achieve.

Q5. (a) The café could **interview** the people who best understand the work — the owner or manager who will supervise the position, and the experienced staff who already carry out parts of it — about what the shift-supervisor role needs to involve. (**Observing** a shift being worked, issuing **questionnaires** to staff, or **reviewing existing records** such as rosters, work diaries and job descriptions for similar roles would each also be acceptable.) (b) Conducting a **job analysis** would help the café fill the position because the role is **new**, so the café does not yet know exactly what the job involves or what kind of person it needs. The analysis would identify the shift supervisor's **tasks, duties and responsibilities** — for example opening and closing the café, supervising staff on shift, handling cash and dealing with customer complaints — and the **skills, experience and personal attributes** the role demands, such as previous hospitality experience, the ability to lead a small team and reliability under pressure. With that information the café can **structure the role sensibly**, write an accurate **job description** and **job specification**, advertise where suitable applicants will see the vacancy, and **assess candidates against clear criteria**, so it is far more likely to appoint a supervisor who can genuinely do the job.

Q6. A **job description** and a **job specification** differ in **what they describe**. A **job description** sets out the **job itself** — its **duties, tasks and responsibilities**, its **title** and its **reporting lines** (who the role reports to and who reports to it), and usually its hours, location and conditions; it answers “*what does this job involve?*” A **job specification** sets out the **person needed to do the job** — the **qualifications, skills, experience and personal attributes** a candidate must have; it answers “*what kind of person do we need?*” The difference, then, is that the job description describes the **position and the work**, whereas the job specification describes the **individual and the requirements they must meet** — the job versus the person.

Q7. **Job analysis** is the **process of studying a role in order to identify and record the tasks, duties and responsibilities it involves, and the skills, qualifications, knowledge and personal attributes a person needs to perform it well**. It is an information-gathering step — carried out by means such as observing the work, interviewing the jobholder or supervisor, or reviewing existing records — that provides the accurate picture of a role on which all later staffing decisions depend.

Q8. **Job analysis and job design are directly related as consecutive steps**, with analysis informing design. **Job analysis** comes first: the business **studies the role and gathers information** about the tasks, duties, responsibilities and requirements it involves. **Job design** then uses that information to **structure and organise those tasks and responsibilities into a defined role** — deciding what the position contains, how much responsibility it carries and how it fits with other jobs. The relationship is therefore one of **foundation and outcome**: job analysis supplies the accurate understanding of the role, and job design applies that understanding to build the role sensibly. Without the analysis, the business would be structuring a job without knowing what it truly requires.

Q9. (*Distinguish — both terms must be addressed.*) A **job description** is a document that sets out the **job itself**: its **duties, tasks and responsibilities**, its **title** and its **reporting lines**, together with details such as hours, location and conditions. It focuses on **the work to be done**. A **job specification** is a document that sets out the **person needed to do that job**: the **qualifications, skills, experience, knowledge and personal attributes** a candidate must possess. It focuses on **the individual required**. The two are prepared from the same job analysis but describe different things — the job description defines the **position**, while the job specification defines the **person** who could fill it. ∴ the key distinction is *job versus person*: the description lists what the role involves, the specification lists what the applicant must have.

Q10. (*Explain — the causal use of the analysis.*) A **job analysis** is used to produce both hiring documents because it **generates the information each document contains**. When the business studies the role, it identifies two kinds of information: **what the job involves** (its tasks, duties, responsibilities and reporting relationships) and **what the person needs** (the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes required to do it). The first kind of information is written up as the **job description**, which records the duties, responsibilities and reporting lines of the role; the second kind is written up as the **job specification**, which records the qualifications, skills and attributes the person must have. In this way the single analysis **feeds both documents** — the job’s requirements become the description, and the person’s requirements become the specification — which is why an accurate analysis produces accurate documents, and a careless one produces flawed documents that mislead the whole recruitment process.

Q11. (*Compare — both a similarity and a difference are required.*) A **similarity** is that job analysis and job design are **both early staffing steps used to define a role before recruitment**, and **both rely on the same understanding of what the role needs to achieve** — indeed design depends on the information analysis provides. A **difference** lies in **what each actually does**: **job analysis** is the process of **studying the role and gathering information** about its tasks, responsibilities and requirements — it *investigates and records*; whereas **job design** is the process of **structuring and organising** those tasks and responsibilities **into a defined position** — it *shapes and builds*. In short, both are foundational steps that work from the same information, but analysis *finds out what the role involves* while design *decides how the role is put together*.

Q12. (*Analyse — show the causal effect, not a list of pros and cons.*) A thorough job analysis improves a business’s ability to select the right employee through a **chain of effects**. First, by studying the role closely, the analysis produces an **accurate job specification** — a clear statement of the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes the role genuinely requires. This accurate specification then becomes the **criteria against which applicants are assessed**, so the business can judge each candidate against a **precise, agreed standard** rather than a vague impression. Because the criteria are clear, the business can also **advertise the role accurately**, attracting applicants who actually match what the role needs and deterring those who do not, which **improves the quality of the applicant pool** before selection even begins. With a strong pool and clear criteria, interviewers and other selection methods can **compare candidates**

objectively and identify the person who best fits the role. Each step depends on the one before it, so the accuracy established at the analysis stage flows through advertising and into selection. ∴ a thorough job analysis raises the chance of selecting the right employee because it produces the clear criteria and accurate advertising on which sound selection depends, whereas a weak analysis would leave the business choosing against unclear standards and a poorly matched pool.

Q13. (*Discuss — advantages and disadvantages; no judgement required; avoid double-dipping.*) Preparing a **detailed job description and job specification** before advertising a position has real **advantages**. Because the documents clearly set out the duties of the role and the attributes the person needs, the business can **write a targeted, accurate advertisement** that attracts suitable applicants, and can **assess candidates against clear, consistent criteria** during selection, making a good match — and avoiding the wrong hire — far more likely. Clear documents also give the successful employee a **precise understanding of what the role involves**, supporting their performance once hired. However, there are also **disadvantages**. Preparing detailed documents **takes time and effort**, and may require input from managers or even external advice, which **costs the business** — a burden that can feel heavy for a small business filling a simple role quickly. Detailed documents can also become **out of date or overly rigid**: if the role changes, or if the specification is drawn so tightly that good all-round applicants are screened out, the documents may work against the business. On balance, detailed job descriptions and specifications offer clear benefits for targeting and selecting the right person, but they carry a real cost in time and can date, so the level of detail should suit the importance and stability of the role.

Q14. (*Justify — argue why, with reasoning.*) Conducting a **job analysis before designing a new role** is justified because the design of a role is only as good as the understanding it is built on. First, a new role is, by definition, **not yet understood** — the business does not have an existing description of what it involves — so without an analysis to identify the role's tasks, responsibilities and requirements, any design would be **guesswork**, risking a job that is overloaded, has gaps, or duplicates other roles. Second, the analysis ensures the role is **structured around what the business genuinely needs the position to achieve**, producing a realistic, workable job rather than one shaped by assumption. Third, because the analysis also produces the **job description and specification**, designing the role after analysing it means the documents, the advertising and the later selection are all built on the **same accurate foundation**, so recruitment effort is not wasted attracting and assessing the wrong people. The modest time the analysis takes is therefore repaid many times over by a soundly designed role and a well-targeted hiring process. ∴ analysing before designing is justified because it replaces guesswork with an accurate understanding of the role, which is essential to designing the job well and staffing it effectively.

Q15. (*Propose and justify — do more than name the method; argue why it suits the situation.*) One effective method for a business carrying out a job analysis for a **newly created role** would be to **interview the manager who will supervise the role and, where a similar role already exists elsewhere, observe how that work is performed** — combining a structured conversation about what the new position must achieve with first-hand observation of comparable tasks. This method is **well-suited to a new role** because there is no current jobholder to consult, so the business must draw on the person who best understands what the role needs to deliver (the supervising manager) and on the closest available example of the actual work (a similar role). The interview captures the **intended duties, responsibilities and requirements**, while the observation grounds those in the **real tasks and skills** the work involves, so together they produce an accurate picture of both the job and the person needed. This accuracy then flows into a sound job design and reliable hiring documents. ∴ interviewing the supervising manager and observing a comparable role is an appropriate job-analysis method for a new position because it gathers accurate information about a role that no one is yet doing, giving the business a dependable basis for design, advertising and selection.

Q16. (a) Either a **job description** or a **job specification** (either document is acceptable). (b) (*Explain — causal, linked to the case study.*) Conducting a **job analysis** could help Terrain & Trail recruit a suitable store manager by giving Nadia, for the first time, an **accurate, detailed understanding of what this more senior role involves and what kind of person it needs**. By studying the role — for example by identifying the duties of running a store (managing staff, stock, sales and customer service) and the skills and experience a manager must have — Nadia can produce **accurate hiring documents and a well-targeted advertisement**, rather than relying on the informal, friends-and-family approach that produced a poor fit last time. This means the vacancy will attract **applicants who actually match the demands of a store-manager role**, improving her chance of recruiting someone suitable for the new location. (c) (*Analyse — the causal effect on avoiding a poor fit.*) Preparing an accurate **job description and job specification** could help Terrain & Trail avoid another poor hiring fit through a clear causal chain. The **job description** would set out exactly what the store-manager role involves — its duties, responsibilities and reporting

lines — so applicants understand the real demands of the job and **self-select accordingly**, while the **job specification** would state the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes a suitable manager needs. Because the specification provides **clear criteria**, Nadia can **assess each applicant against the actual requirements of the role** instead of hiring on personal familiarity, as she did with the hire who left within two months. Judging candidates against accurate, role-based criteria makes it far more likely she identifies someone who genuinely fits, and far less likely she repeats the earlier mismatch. ∴ accurate documents convert Nadia's hiring from an informal guess into a criteria-based decision, which is precisely what reduces the risk of another costly poor fit.

Q17. (*Evaluate — usefulness and limitations plus an evidence-based judgement.*) **Job analysis** is highly useful as the **first step in staffing a new position**. Its **usefulness** is that it provides the **accurate foundation on which every later staffing decision rests**: by studying the role, the business can **design the job sensibly**, produce accurate **job description and job specification** documents, **advertise the role in a targeted way**, and **select applicants against clear criteria** — all of which raise the chance of hiring the right person and reduce the risk of a costly wrong hire and the turnover that follows. Because these later steps all depend on it, a good analysis benefits the whole process, while skipping it undermines everything downstream. There are, however, **limitations**. A job analysis **takes time and effort** and, for a very simple or well-understood role, a lengthy formal analysis may add little beyond what the business already knows; and an analysis captures the role **at a point in time**, so if the position later changes, the information — and the documents built on it — can **date**. Weighing these, the benefits clearly dominate for any **significant or unfamiliar role**, because the cost of a poor hire (lost productivity, re-recruitment, disruption) far exceeds the modest cost of analysing the role first; the limitations mainly suggest that the *depth* of analysis should be matched to the role, not that it should be skipped. ∴ job analysis is a genuinely useful and, for important roles, essential first step in staffing — the effort it requires is a small price for the accurate foundation it gives design, advertising and selection, and a business should scale the analysis to the role rather than omit it.

Q18. (*Explain a problem, then recommend an improvement.*) One **problem a vague job description and inaccurate job specification** could create is that the business **attracts and hires the wrong person**. If the description does not make the role's duties clear and the specification misstates the qualifications, skills or attributes required, the advertisement will draw in **poorly matched applicants**, and the business will have **no accurate criteria** to assess them against — so it may select someone who cannot perform the role, leading to poor performance, wasted training and possibly early termination and re-hiring. To **improve the documents**, the business should **conduct (or redo) a proper job analysis** — studying the role by interviewing the supervisor and observing or reviewing the work — and then **rewrite the job description and job specification accurately** from that analysis, so the description clearly states the real duties and reporting lines and the specification precisely states the qualifications, skills and attributes genuinely needed. Accurate documents built on a sound analysis would then attract suitable applicants and give clear criteria for selection.

Q19. *Model response (10 marks).* Effective staffing begins with understanding the role, and that understanding comes from **job analysis** — the process of **studying a role to identify its tasks, duties and responsibilities and the skills, qualifications and attributes a person needs to perform it**. Job analysis sits at the start of recruitment and selection because it produces the information on which three later things depend: the **design** of the role, the **job description** and the **job specification**.

Job analysis **informs job design** by supplying the accurate picture of the role that design requires. **Job design** is the process of **structuring and organising the tasks and responsibilities identified by the analysis into a defined position** — deciding what the role contains, how much responsibility it carries and how it fits with other jobs. A business can only design a realistic, workable role once the analysis has revealed what the role genuinely needs to achieve; without it, design would be guesswork. The same analysis is then **used to produce the two documents**. The information about *what the job involves* — its duties, responsibilities and reporting lines — is written up as the **job description**, which describes the **job** itself. The information about *what the person needs* — the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes — is written up as the **job specification**, which describes the **person** required. So a single analysis feeds design and both documents, and because recruitment advertising is drawn from the documents and selection judges applicants against them, the accuracy established at the analysis stage flows through the entire staffing process.

The view that **time spent on job analysis is essential to staffing a business effectively** is **strongly supported**, with a qualification. On one hand, the analysis is the **foundation for everything that follows**: it enables a sound job design, accurate hiring documents, targeted advertising and criteria-based selection, all of which raise the chance of hiring the

right person and avoiding the substantial costs of a wrong hire — poor performance, disruption, re-recruitment and early turnover. Because each later step depends on the analysis, time saved by skipping it tends to be lost many times over in a poor hiring outcome, which strongly supports the claim. On the other hand, the claim should be **qualified**: for a **very simple or already well-understood role**, an exhaustive formal analysis may add little, and an analysis captures a role at a moment in time, so it can date if the role changes. These points do not overturn the claim so much as **refine** it — they suggest the *depth* of analysis should match the importance and stability of the role, not that analysis should be skipped. ∴ on balance, time spent on job analysis is **essential to effective staffing for any significant role**, because it supplies the accurate foundation on which design, documentation, advertising and selection all rest; the only sensible limit is to scale the effort to the role rather than to omit a step that determines whether the business hires the right person. *(Full marks require: accurate definitions of job analysis, job design, job description and job specification; analysis of how analysis informs design and produces the two documents; and a sustained, two-sided evaluation of the “essential” view reaching a justified judgement.)*

Q20. *(Analyse — show the causal effect on the role and its documentation; do not merely describe the change.)* The change to Australia Post’s postie role is an example of **job design**, which is the process of **structuring and organising tasks, duties and responsibilities into a defined role or position**. What changed on **15 April 2024** was not who held the job or how it was filled, but **how the job itself was put together**: the same position, with the same title, was rebuilt around a **different mix of tasks** (parcels and priority mail every business day, regular letters every second business day), a **different sequence of work** through the day, and a **different round** covering more delivery points. This is precisely what job design does — it decides which tasks belong in a role and how they are grouped, rather than studying the role (job analysis) or finding a person to fill it (recruitment). Because the **designed role determines the content of the job description**, redesigning the job necessarily makes the existing description **inaccurate**: the duties, daily workload and round it records are no longer the duties the role actually involves. Australia Post would therefore need to **rewrite the job description** so that it sets out the revised duties and responsibilities of the redesigned position. The consequences run further, because an out-of-date description would leave both existing posties and any future applicants with a **misleading picture of the work**, and would give the business no accurate basis for advertising or assessing candidates for the role. ∴ the change demonstrates job design because an existing role was restructured rather than replaced, and the direct effect is that the job description — the document that records what the job involves — must be revised to match the redesigned job.

Theory

Once a business knows exactly what a job involves and the qualities it is looking for — the work of **job analysis, job design, the job description and the job specification** covered in 15A — it must actually **find people to apply**.

Recruitment is the process of **seeking out and attracting a pool of suitable applicants** for a job vacancy. Its purpose is not to *choose* an employee — that later step of sifting the applicants and picking the best one is **selection** — but simply to **generate a group of interested, appropriately qualified candidates** from which a good selection can be made. Good recruitment matters because a business can only ever select from the people it manages to attract: a poor, narrow or badly targeted recruitment effort leaves the business choosing “the best of a weak field”, while effective recruitment produces a strong pool and a far better chance of hiring the right person.

Internal and external recruitment. Every recruitment method falls into one of two categories, defined by **where the applicants are drawn from**.

- **Internal recruitment** attracts applicants from **inside the business** — from the people it **already employs**. The vacancy is filled by moving an existing employee into it, usually through **promotion** (to a more senior role) or **transfer** (sideways to a different role). The pool is limited to current staff.
- **External recruitment** attracts applicants from **outside the business** — from the wider **labour market** of people the business does not currently employ. The pool is, in principle, everyone in the workforce who might be interested and qualified.

The **key distinction** is simply **the source of the applicants**: internal recruitment looks *inward* to existing employees, whereas external recruitment looks *outward* to the labour market. A business will often use both at once — advertising a vacancy internally **and** externally — but the two draw on different pools and carry different advantages, so it is worth understanding each.

Internal recruitment methods. The study design highlights two.

- **Intranet.** An **intranet** is a business’s **private, internal computer network**, accessible only to its own staff. A vacancy is posted there — on an internal jobs board, staff portal or company-wide email — so that current employees can see it and apply. It is a **fast, cheap and targeted** way to reach the whole workforce at once. Its limitation is that it reaches **only current employees**, and staff who rarely use the intranet (for example, floor or field staff without regular computer access) may miss the notice.
- **Word of mouth.** Here the vacancy is spread **informally**, by people **talking about it** — managers or staff mention the opening to colleagues, and existing employees may **refer** people they know. It costs almost nothing and can fill a role quickly, and a candidate **recommended by a trusted employee** often turns out to be a good fit. Its weakness is that it is **unstructured** and depends entirely on who happens to hear about the role; because people tend to recommend others **like themselves**, heavy reliance on word of mouth can **reduce the diversity** of applicants and risks overlooking stronger candidates who were never told. (*Word of mouth is classified as internal because it works through the business’s existing staff and their networks, though those networks can extend to people outside the business.*)

Advantages of internal recruitment.

- **Cheaper and faster** — no need to pay for external advertising or agencies, and the process is quicker because the candidates are already on hand.
- **Motivating** — offering existing staff the chance of promotion **rewards loyalty**, signals that there are **career paths** within the business and can **improve morale and retention**.
- **Lower risk** — the business already **knows the candidate’s ability, work ethic and cultural fit** from their track record, so there are fewer surprises than with an outside hire.
- **Faster to become productive** — the person already **knows the business**, its systems, culture and colleagues, so induction is shorter and they can contribute sooner.

Disadvantages of internal recruitment.

- **A smaller pool** — choice is limited to existing staff, so the business may **miss out on stronger candidates** available externally.
- **No “new blood”** — it brings **no fresh ideas, skills or perspectives** from outside, which can entrench existing ways of doing things and stifle innovation.
- **It creates another vacancy** — promoting or transferring an employee simply **shifts the gap** to the role they have left, which must then also be filled.
- **Rivalry and resentment** — staff who applied and **missed out** may feel overlooked or demotivated, creating tension in the team.

External recruitment methods. The study design highlights three.

- **Websites.** The business advertises the vacancy on its **own website** — typically a “careers” or “work with us” page. It is **low-cost** once the site exists, lets the business **control the message and present its brand**, and is available to anyone, anytime. However, it only reaches people who **already know of the business and think to visit its site**, so on its own its reach can be narrow.
- **Online recruitment agencies.** A **recruitment agency** is a specialist third party that **sources, screens and shortlists** candidates on the business’s behalf, often drawing on a large database of registered jobseekers and posting to major online job boards. It **saves the business time and expertise** and gives access to a **wide pool**, which is especially valuable for **specialised or hard-to-fill roles**. The drawback is **cost** — agencies charge fees or a commission, commonly a percentage of the successful candidate’s salary — and the agency may not understand the business’s **culture** as well as the business itself.
- **Social media.** The business advertises the vacancy, or actively searches for candidates, on **social media platforms** — including **professional networking sites** and general social platforms. Reach is **enormous and the cost low**; it can reach **passive candidates** (people not actively job-hunting) and, on professional networks, allows targeting by **skills and experience**. The downsides are a possible **flood of unsuitable applicants** to screen, the **time** required to manage it, and the **risk of unfair or discriminatory screening** if managers judge applicants on personal profile content rather than job-relevant criteria.

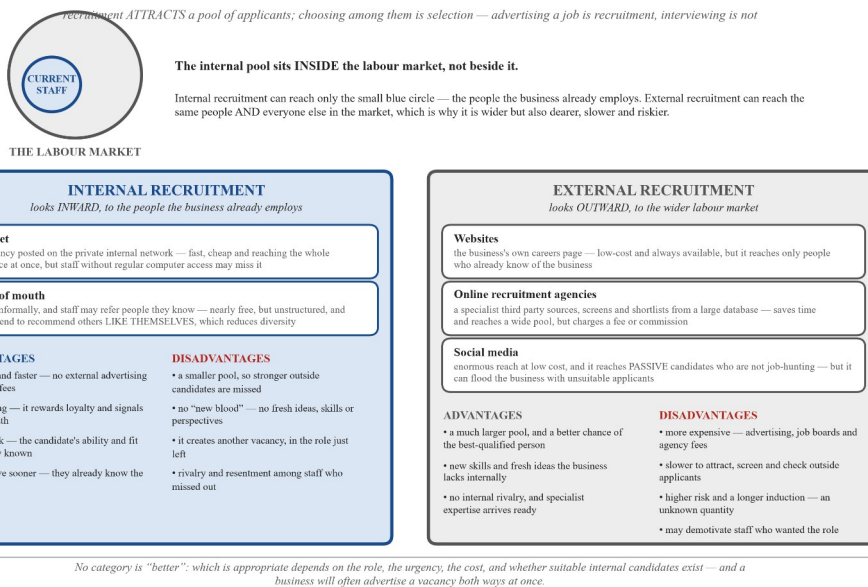
Advantages of external recruitment.

- **A much larger pool** — access to the **whole labour market** means more applicants and a better chance of finding the **best-qualified** person.
- **New skills and fresh ideas** — an outside hire brings **“new blood”**: different experience, perspectives and skills the business may lack internally, which can drive innovation.
- **No internal rivalry** from promotion, and it can bring in **specialist expertise** quickly rather than waiting to train an existing employee.

Disadvantages of external recruitment.

- **More expensive** — advertising, job-board listings and agency fees all cost money.
- **Slower** — attracting, screening and checking outside applicants takes longer than promoting from within.
- **Higher risk and longer induction** — the candidate is an **unknown quantity** whose real ability and cultural fit are unproven, and once hired they need **more time to learn the business** before becoming fully productive.
- **May demotivate existing staff** who wanted the role and feel passed over for an outsider.

Internal or external recruitment: the difference is who can see and apply



When each is appropriate.

- **Internal recruitment suits** situations where the business wants to **reward and retain** capable staff, has **suitable candidates already employed**, needs to fill the role **quickly and cheaply**, and values **continuity** of culture and knowledge — for example, promoting an experienced supervisor to store manager.
- **External recruitment suits** situations where the business needs **skills or experience it does not have internally**, wants **fresh ideas** or to **change its culture**, is **growing or creating new roles** (so there is no one internal to promote), or simply wants the **widest possible field** of candidates for an important position.

Key ideas to keep straight.

- **Recruitment attracts; selection chooses.** Recruitment ends when a pool of applicants exists; choosing among them is selection (15C). Advertising a job is recruitment; interviewing and hiring is not.
- **Internal vs external is about the *source* of applicants**, not the method's format. A job advertised on the intranet is internal; the same job advertised on the business's public website is external — the difference is *who can see and apply*.
- **No category is "better".** Internal recruitment is cheaper, faster, safer and motivating but narrow; external recruitment is wider and brings fresh talent but is dearer, slower and riskier. Which is appropriate depends on the **role, the urgency, the cost, and whether suitable internal candidates exist**.

Contemporary example — Amazon Australia, September 2025

Amazon Australia is the Australian arm of a global e-commerce and fulfilment business, operating fulfilment centres and logistics sites around the country.

On 22 September 2025 it announced that it planned to take on **1,800 seasonal workers** across those sites in nine locations — Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Newcastle, Gold Coast, Gosford and Geelong — ahead of its Prime Big Deal Days sale, which ran from 7 to 13 October 2025. The roles involved picking, packing and shipping customer orders. The business stated that **no previous experience was required** because on-the-job training would be provided, and directed applicants to its own careers website.

This is **external recruitment**: the applicants were drawn from the **wider labour market** rather than from people the business already employed. The scale explains why. Neither an **intranet** posting nor **word of mouth** could produce 1,800 additional workers in time: the intranet reaches **only current employees**, while word of mouth spreads no further than staff and the people they personally know — **far too few, far too slowly**, for 1,800 roles across nine sites. Only the **much larger pool** of the outside labour market could meet the need. Advertising the vacancies on the business's **own website** is the **low-cost**, business-controlled external method described above, and setting **no experience requirement** widens the pool further, which suits **short-term** roles trained on the job. The trade-off is the one external recruitment always carries: a **larger but unknown** field of applicants, and **induction** for everyone hired.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Kingfisher Physiotherapy, a three-clinic practice, needs a new **senior clinic coordinator**. The owner wants to reward loyal staff, fill the role quickly and keep costs down, and already has several experienced receptionists who understand the clinics well. Propose a recruitment method for Kingfisher and justify your choice.

Working	Comment
The owner wants to reward loyal staff , act quickly and keep costs down , and has suitable experienced staff already employed .	Read the scenario for the clues that point to a category.
These conditions all favour internal recruitment — specifically, posting the vacancy on the clinics’ intranet so current staff can apply.	“Propose” = name the specific method, not just “recruit someone”.
Internal recruitment is cheap and fast (no external advertising), directly rewards and motivates the experienced receptionists by offering promotion, and is low-risk because the owner already knows their ability and fit.	Justify = argue <i>why</i> it suits, linking each feature to a stated need.
∴ posting the role internally via the intranet best meets Kingfisher’s goals of speed, low cost and rewarding loyal, capable staff.	Conclude with a clear recommendation tied to the scenario.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Discuss the use of **word of mouth** as a recruitment method.

Working	Comment
<i>Advantage</i> : word of mouth is almost free and can fill a vacancy quickly , and a candidate referred by a trusted employee is often a good cultural fit because the referrer knows both the person and the business.	“Discuss” = advantages and disadvantages. Start with a genuine advantage and explain <i>why</i> it is one.
<i>Disadvantage</i> : it is informal and unstructured , reaching only whoever happens to be told; because people tend to recommend others similar to themselves , it can reduce diversity and cause the business to overlook stronger candidates who never heard of the role.	Give a distinct disadvantage — not just the reverse of the advantage (avoid “double-dipping”).
Both points stand on their own: the low cost and fit are real strengths, while the narrow, informal reach is a real weakness.	Discuss does not require a final judgement, but the two sides must be independent.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Distinguish between internal and external recruitment.

Internal recruitment attracts applicants from **inside the business** — that is, from the people it **already employs** — filling the vacancy by promoting or transferring an existing employee. **External recruitment** attracts applicants from **outside the business**, drawing on the **wider labour market** of people it does not currently employ. The essential difference is the **source of the applicant pool**: internal recruitment looks **inward** to current staff and so offers a **smaller, known** pool that is cheaper and faster to access, whereas external recruitment looks **outward** to the labour

market and so offers a **larger, unknown** pool that brings fresh skills but costs more and carries more risk. ∴ the two differ in **where the candidates come from** and, as a result, in the size, cost and risk of the pool they produce.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Evaluate the use of **social media** as a recruitment method for a small business.

Using social media to recruit has significant strengths. Its **reach is enormous** and the **cost very low**, which is valuable for a small business with a limited budget; it can reach **passive candidates** who are not actively job-hunting, and professional networking platforms allow the business to **target people by their skills and experience**, improving the quality of the pool. **However**, there are real weaknesses. A widely shared post can attract a **flood of unsuitable applicants** who are **time-consuming to screen**, a burden a small business with no dedicated HR staff may struggle to carry; and judging applicants on their **personal social-media content** risks **unfair or discriminatory decisions** based on job-irrelevant information. **On balance**, social media is an **appropriate and cost-effective** method for a small business *provided it is used to advertise the role and target relevant skills* rather than to vet applicants' private lives, and provided the business has a plan to manage the volume of responses — because without that screening capacity, the low cost is quickly offset by the time cost of sorting the applicants. ∴ social media is worthwhile for a small business, but its value depends on disciplined, job-focused use.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

- Q1.** Define the term *recruitment*, and name the **two** categories into which all recruitment methods fall.
- Q2.** (a) Give **two** examples of **internal** recruitment methods. (b) Give **two** examples of **external** recruitment methods.
- Q3.** For each description, name the recruitment method: (a) a vacancy posted on the business's private internal staff network; (b) a vacancy advertised on a specialist third party's job board, with that party screening applicants for a fee; (c) a vacancy spread informally as employees tell colleagues and refer people they know.
- Q4.** A growing café chain wants to hire a head roaster with specialist coffee-roasting expertise that none of its current staff possess. (a) Identify whether internal or external recruitment is more appropriate. (b) Explain why.
- Q5.** Outline **one** difference between **internal** and **external** recruitment.
- Q6.** Explain **one** advantage **and** one disadvantage of internal recruitment.

Unscaffolded

- Q7.** Define the term *internal recruitment*. (2 marks)
- Q8.** Distinguish between internal and external recruitment. (4 marks)
- Q9.** Describe how an **intranet** can be used as a recruitment method. (2 marks)
- Q10.** Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using **word of mouth** to recruit. (4 marks)
- Q11.** Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using an **online recruitment agency**. (4 marks)
- Q12.** Compare internal and external recruitment. (4 marks)
- Q13.** Discuss the use of **social media** as a recruitment method. (6 marks)
- Q14.** A long-established hardware store wants to fill a supervisor's role by promoting from within. Justify the use of **internal** recruitment in this situation. (4 marks)
- Q15. Case study. Loom & Larder** is a homewares and specialty-grocery retailer with four Melbourne stores. The business is opening a fifth store and needs to fill **twelve** new positions quickly: eight casual sales assistants and four experienced roles (a store manager, a visual merchandiser, a duty manager and a stock controller). The owner, Priya, has a tight opening budget. She has several capable assistant managers across the existing stores who are "ready for more responsibility", but no one internally with visual-merchandising experience. Priya is considering advertising

every role on the company intranet only, to save money. (a) Identify the recruitment category Priya is proposing to rely on. (1 mark) (b) Explain **one** problem with using **only** the intranet to fill **all twelve** roles. (3 marks) (c) Propose and justify a recruitment approach that would better suit Loom & Larder's situation. (4 marks)

Q16. Analyse how a business's choice of recruitment method can affect the **cost and speed** of filling a vacancy. (4 marks)

Q17. Evaluate the use of **external** recruitment for filling a senior management position. (6 marks)

Q18. A veterinary clinic urgently needs a locum vet with specialist surgical skills for a three-month period and has no suitable staff internally. Propose and justify a recruitment method. (4 marks)

Q19. Extended response. Businesses must decide whether to recruit from inside their existing workforce or from the external labour market. Analyse how the choice between internal and external recruitment methods affects a business, and evaluate the view that a business should always advertise a vacancy both internally and externally. (10 marks)

Q20. Contemporary example. On 22 September 2025, **Amazon Australia** announced that it planned to take on 1,800 seasonal workers across its fulfilment and logistics sites in nine locations, ahead of a sale period running from 7 to 13 October 2025. It stated that no previous experience was required because training would be given on the job, and directed applicants to its own careers website. Analyse why **external** recruitment methods, rather than internal ones, suited this situation. (6 marks)

Answers

Q1. Recruitment = the process of seeking and attracting a pool of suitable applicants for a vacancy. Categories: **internal** and **external** recruitment. **Q2.** (a) Internal: intranet; word of mouth. (b) External: the business's website; online recruitment agencies; social media (any two). **Q3.** (a) intranet; (b) online recruitment agency; (c) word of mouth. **Q4.** (a) External. (b) The needed expertise does not exist internally, so only the wider labour market can supply a qualified specialist roaster. See solutions. **Q5.** Internal draws applicants from current employees; external draws them from the outside labour market. See solutions. **Q6.** Advantage: cheaper/faster/motivating/lower-risk. Disadvantage: smaller pool / no fresh ideas / creates another vacancy / rivalry. See solutions. **Q7.** Model response in solutions. **Q8.** Internal = from inside (existing staff); external = from outside (labour market); differ in source, and thus pool size, cost and risk. See solutions. **Q9.** A vacancy is posted on the private internal staff network so current employees can see and apply. See solutions. **Q10.** Advantage: cheap/fast/trusted referral fit. Disadvantage: informal, narrow reach, reduced diversity. See solutions. **Q11.** Advantage: agency sources/screens a wide pool, saving time/expertise. Disadvantage: costly fees; agency may not know the culture. See solutions. **Q12.** Both attract applicants to fill a vacancy (similarity); differ in source and in pool size/cost/risk (difference). See solutions. **Q13.** Strengths (reach, low cost, targeting, passive candidates) and weaknesses (unsuitable-applicant volume, time, discrimination risk). See solutions. **Q14.** Argue internal suits: rewards/retains staff, cheap, fast, low-risk, known ability. See solutions. **Q15.** (a) Internal. (b) e.g. no internal visual-merchandiser exists, so the intranet cannot fill that role / pool too small for 12 roles. (c) Mix: internal for assistant-manager promotions, external (website/agency/social media) for the specialist and casual roles. See solutions. **Q16.** Internal = lower cost, faster; external = higher cost (advertising/agency fees), slower. Causal links required. See solutions. **Q17.** Weigh external's wider pool/fresh expertise against cost, risk and possible staff demotivation; reach a judgement. See solutions. **Q18.** External (online recruitment agency), justified by urgency + specialist skills absent internally. See solutions. **Q19.** Model response in solutions. **Q20.** External recruitment → 1,800 extra workers needed, but the intranet reaches only current employees and internal moves merely shift vacancies, while word-of-mouth referrals spread far too narrowly and slowly for 1,800 roles → only the wider labour market can supply the numbers; own website = low-cost, controlled, wide-reach external method; no-experience requirement widens the pool for short-term roles trained on the job; trade-off = large unknown field plus induction. See solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q4. (a) **External** recruitment is more appropriate. (b) The chain needs **specialist coffee-roasting expertise that none of its current staff possess**, and internal recruitment draws only on **people the business already employs** — so the internal pool simply **cannot supply a qualified head roaster**. Relying on it would mean either appointing someone who cannot yet do the job or waiting while they are trained, neither of which suits a **growing** chain that needs the role filled properly. **External recruitment**, by contrast, draws on the **wider labour market**, giving the chain access to experienced roasters and to the **skills it lacks internally** — the very situation external recruitment exists to solve — even though it will cost more and take longer than promoting from within.

Q5. The key difference is the **source of the applicants**. **Internal recruitment** attracts applicants from **inside the business** — from the staff it **already employs** — filling the vacancy by promoting or transferring an existing worker, whereas **external recruitment** attracts applicants from **outside the business**, from the **wider labour market** of people it does **not** currently employ. *(Any one clearly stated difference earns the mark — for example, that internal recruitment yields a smaller pool of already-known candidates while external recruitment yields a larger pool of unknown ones, or that internal recruitment is cheaper and faster than external recruitment.)*

Q6. *Advantage:* internal recruitment is **motivating**. Offering existing staff the chance of **promotion rewards their loyalty** and shows that there are **career paths** within the business, which lifts **morale** and helps the business **retain** capable employees who might otherwise leave in order to advance elsewhere. *Disadvantage:* it gives the business a **smaller applicant pool**, because choice is limited to the people it already employs. The business may therefore **miss out on stronger candidates** available in the wider labour market, and it gains **no “new blood”** — no fresh ideas, skills or perspectives from outside — which can entrench existing ways of working. *(Any one advantage and any one genuinely distinct disadvantage is acceptable, provided each is explained rather than merely named.)*

Q7. **Internal recruitment** is the process of **seeking and attracting applicants for a vacancy from within the business's own workforce** — that is, from the people it **already employs**. The position is then filled by **moving an**

existing employee into it, usually through **promotion** or **transfer**. (Two elements: the applicant pool is drawn from current staff + the vacancy is filled by promoting or transferring one of them.)

Q8. Internal recruitment attracts applicants from **inside the business** — from the employees it **already has** — usually by promoting or transferring an existing worker. **External recruitment** attracts applicants from **outside the business**, from the **wider labour market** of people it does not currently employ. They therefore differ in the **source of the applicant pool**: internal looks **inward** and yields a **smaller, already-known** pool, while external looks **outward** and yields a **larger, unknown** pool. This makes internal recruitment cheaper, faster and lower-risk but narrower, and external recruitment wider and fresher but dearer and riskier.

Q9. An **intranet** is the business's **private internal computer network**, used only by staff. To recruit with it, the business **posts the vacancy on the intranet** — for example on a staff jobs board or through a company-wide email — so that **current employees can see the role and apply** for it. It is a fast, low-cost way of reaching the whole existing workforce.

Q10. Advantage: word of mouth is **almost free and very fast** — a manager simply tells staff of the opening, and a candidate **referred by a trusted employee** is often a strong cultural fit because the referrer knows both the person and the workplace, lowering the risk of a poor hire. **Disadvantage:** it is **informal and reaches only whoever happens to be told**, so the business may **miss stronger candidates** who never heard of the role; and because people tend to recommend others **like themselves**, relying on it can **reduce the diversity** of the applicant pool.

Q11. Advantage: an **online recruitment agency sources, screens and shortlists candidates** on the business's behalf, drawing on a large database and job boards, which **saves the business time and recruiting expertise** and gives access to a **wide pool** — particularly useful for specialised or hard-to-fill roles. **Disadvantage:** agencies are **expensive**, charging a fee or a commission (often a percentage of the salary), and because they are outsiders they **may not understand the business's culture** well, so the shortlist may be a weaker fit than the business would choose itself.

Q12. (A comparison needs both a similarity and a difference, signposted.) A **similarity** is that both internal and external recruitment are recruitment methods with the **same purpose** — to **attract a pool of suitable applicants** for a vacancy so the business can then select from them. A **difference** is the **source of that pool**: internal recruitment attracts applicants from the business's **current employees**, giving a **smaller, known, cheaper and faster** pool, whereas external recruitment attracts them from the **outside labour market**, giving a **larger, unknown pool** that brings fresh skills but costs more and takes longer. So they share a purpose but differ in where the applicants come from and therefore in pool size, cost and risk.

Q13. (Discuss = advantages and disadvantages; no judgement required, but sides must be independent.) Recruiting through **social media** has clear **advantages**. Its **reach is very large and the cost low**, so a business can advertise a vacancy to a huge audience cheaply; it can reach **passive candidates** who are not actively looking but might be tempted; and on **professional networking platforms** the business can **target people by their skills and experience**, improving the quality of the pool. There are also **disadvantages**. A widely shared post can generate a **large volume of unsuitable applicants** who are **time-consuming to sort through**; managing the platform and responding to enquiries takes **time and effort**; and screening applicants by their **personal profiles** risks **unfair or discriminatory judgements** based on information unrelated to the job. Used well, social media is a cheap, far-reaching method; used carelessly it creates a screening burden and a fairness risk.

Q14. (Justify = argue why it is appropriate, with reasons.) Internal recruitment is appropriate here because the store is **long-established** and therefore already employs staff who **know the business, its products and its customers** — ideal candidates for a supervisor's role. Promoting from within **rewards and motivates** loyal employees, signalling that effort leads to advancement, which **improves morale and retention** across the store. It is also **cheaper and faster** than an external search, as there is no advertising cost or delay, and it is **lower-risk** because the owner has already **seen the candidates' ability and reliability** on the job, unlike an unknown outside hire. For a supervisor's role that depends on knowing the store and its team, these benefits make internal recruitment well justified.

Q15. (a) **Internal recruitment.** (b) Relying **only on the intranet** would be a problem because the intranet reaches **only current employees**, and Priya has **no one internally with visual-merchandising experience** — so that specialist role (and very likely the eight extra casual positions needed for a whole new store) **cannot be filled from within**. The internal pool is simply **too small** to supply twelve people at once, so intranet-only recruitment would leave key roles **unfilled and delay the store opening**. (c) A **mixed approach** would suit Loom & Larder better. Priya should use

internal recruitment (the intranet) to fill the **experienced management roles** — the store manager and duty manager — by promoting the assistant managers who are “ready for more responsibility”; this is **cheap, fast, motivating and low-risk** because their ability is already known. At the same time she should use **external recruitment** for the roles she cannot fill internally: the **casual sales assistants** and the **stock controller** through the business’s **website and social media** (low-cost, wide reach), and the **visual merchandiser** — a specialist role — through an **online recruitment agency** that can quickly source that expertise. This combination fills all twelve roles in time for the opening, rewards internal staff, keeps costs down where possible, and still reaches the outside talent the intranet cannot. ∴ a blend of internal and external recruitment, matched to each role, best fits the situation.

Q16. (*Analyse = show causal relationships, not a pros-and-cons list.*) The choice of recruitment method **directly affects both cost and speed** because different methods draw on different pools and involve different processes. Choosing **internal** methods such as the intranet or word of mouth **lowers cost**, because the business pays **no external advertising or agency fees**, and **increases speed**, because the candidates are **already on hand and known** — current staff, or people an employee can personally vouch for — so there is no wait while a field of strangers is attracted and vetted, and the role can be filled almost immediately. Choosing **external** methods has the opposite effect: advertising on job boards or engaging an **agency incurs fees** (raising cost), and attracting applicants, screening an unknown field and checking references **takes longer** (reducing speed). The **causal chain** is therefore: internal methods → no advertising spend + known candidates → **cheaper and faster**; external methods → advertising/agency spend + unknown, larger field → **dearer and slower**. In this way the method a business selects is a key determinant of how much a vacancy costs to fill and how quickly it can be filled.

Q17. (*Evaluate = weigh advantages and disadvantages and reach an evidence-based judgement.*) Using **external recruitment** for a **senior management position** has strong advantages. It opens the role to the **whole labour market**, giving access to a **large pool** of experienced candidates and a far better chance of finding someone with the **proven leadership skills** the position demands; it brings “**new blood**” — fresh strategic ideas and outside experience — which is often exactly what a business wants at senior level, and it avoids the internal **rivalry** that promoting one manager over another can create. **However**, there are real disadvantages. External recruitment for a senior role is **expensive** (executive advertising and agency fees are high) and **slow**, leaving the position vacant longer; the candidate is an **unknown quantity** whose real ability and **cultural fit are unproven**, so the risk of a costly mis-hire is greater at senior level; and passing over capable internal managers can **demotivate** them and prompt them to leave. **On balance**, external recruitment is **appropriate and often preferable for a senior position when the business genuinely lacks a suitable internal candidate or deliberately wants fresh strategic direction**, because the value of getting the right leader outweighs the extra cost and time. But where a strong internal successor exists, the risk and demotivation costs mean external recruitment should not be used automatically. ∴ external recruitment is well suited to senior roles only when the internal field is weak or a change of direction is wanted; otherwise its costs may outweigh its benefits.

Q18. (*Propose = name a specific method and show what it entails; justify = argue why.*) The clinic should use an **external online recruitment agency** — specifically a **specialist medical/veterinary locum agency** that maintains a database of available, credentialed vets and can supply one at short notice. This method is justified because the need is **urgent** and the required **specialist surgical skills are not available internally**, so internal recruitment is impossible and a slow general advertisement would not fill the role in time. An agency can **source, screen and place a qualified locum quickly** from its existing pool, saving the clinic the time and expertise it does not have, which is exactly what a short-term, high-skill, time-critical vacancy requires. The agency fee is worth paying because the alternative — an unfilled surgical role — would cost the clinic far more in lost services. ∴ an external specialist locum agency best matches the urgency and specialised nature of the vacancy.

Q19. *Model response (10 marks).* Recruitment is the process of attracting a pool of suitable applicants for a vacancy, and a business must decide whether to draw that pool from **inside** its existing workforce (**internal recruitment**, using methods such as the intranet and word of mouth) or from the **outside labour market** (**external recruitment**, using its website, online recruitment agencies and social media). This choice **affects the business in several connected ways**. First, it affects **cost and speed**: internal methods avoid advertising and agency fees and use candidates who are already on hand, so they are **cheaper and faster**, whereas external methods incur fees and a longer attract-and-screen process, so they are **dearer and slower**. Second, it affects the **quality and breadth of the pool**: internal recruitment offers a **small pool of known** candidates, lowering the risk of a poor fit but limiting choice, while external recruitment offers a **large pool of unknown** candidates, widening choice and bringing **fresh skills and ideas** but raising the risk of a mis-hire. Third, it affects **staff motivation and culture**: promoting from within **rewards loyalty, builds morale and retains** capable staff and preserves the existing culture, whereas repeatedly hiring outsiders can **demotivate** staff

who wanted advancement — yet an all-internal approach can also **stagnate**, denying the business the new perspectives an outside hire provides. These effects interact: for a routine role with a ready internal successor, internal recruitment's low cost, speed and motivational benefit dominate; for a specialised or senior role with no internal candidate, external recruitment's wider, fresher pool is decisive despite its cost.

The view that a business should **always advertise a vacancy both internally and externally** has clear merit. Doing so combines the strengths of both: internal staff still feel **rewarded and able to apply**, while the business also reaches the **wider labour market** and can compare its internal candidates against outside talent, maximising the chance of the **best overall appointment**. However, “always” is too absolute. Advertising both ways **costs more and takes longer** than a quick internal promotion, which is wasteful when a business already has an obviously suitable internal candidate and wants to fill the role cheaply and fast; and inviting external applicants for a role that is, in practice, going to be filled internally can **waste applicants' time and even demotivate** internal staff who sense the outside search implies they are not trusted. Conversely, for a genuinely specialised role there may be no point advertising internally at all. **On balance**, advertising both internally and externally is a **sound default for important or contestable roles**, because the wider field and the fairness to internal staff usually justify the extra cost; but it should **not** be an inflexible rule — where a strong internal candidate exists and speed and cost matter, internal-only recruitment is more appropriate, and where the skills exist only outside, external-only recruitment is more appropriate. ∴ the choice of recruitment method has wide-ranging effects on a business's cost, pool quality and staff motivation, and while advertising both ways is often wise, the best approach is the one **matched to the specific role and circumstances**, not a single rule applied to every vacancy. *(Full marks require: an accurate account of internal and external methods; analysis of at least two or three distinct, causally-explained effects on the business; genuine engagement with the “always both” proposition on both sides; and a justified, evidence-based conclusion.)*

Q20. *(Analyse = trace causal links and apply them to the situation, not list generic advantages.)* Amazon Australia's announcement is an example of **external recruitment** — attracting applicants from the **wider labour market** of people the business does **not** already employ — and the **scale** and **timing** of the need are what made it appropriate. Neither **internal method** could have met it. The **intranet** reaches **only current employees**, so promoting or transferring staff would merely **shift the vacancy** to the role just left rather than **add** anyone to the workforce. **Word of mouth** can bring in an outsider through a staff referral, but it spreads no further than employees and the people they personally know — **far too narrow and too slow** a channel for **1,800 extra people across nine locations** within weeks. Only the **much larger external pool** of the labour market could supply the numbers required in the time available. The choice of **method** follows from this. Advertising on the business's **own website** is a **low-cost** external method that the business **controls** and that anyone can access at any time, which suits a high-volume campaign in a way that per-placement **agency** fees would not. Stating that **no previous experience was required**, with training given on the job, **widens the pool further** by removing a barrier that would otherwise exclude many applicants — sensible for **short-term, seasonal** roles where the business needs **volume and speed** rather than specialist expertise. The usual **costs of external recruitment** still apply: the applicants are an **unknown quantity** and each person hired needs **induction** before becoming productive, which is why on-the-job training formed part of the offer. ∴ external recruitment suited this situation because the number of workers needed **exceeded anything the internal pool could supply**, and the specific methods chosen — a controlled, low-cost website advertisement with minimal entry requirements — were **matched to a large, urgent and short-term staffing need**.

Theory

Once a business has advertised a vacancy and attracted a field of applicants, it must decide **which one to employ**. **Selection** is the process of **gathering information about each applicant and then choosing the most suitable person** from among those who applied, to fill the job vacancy. It is the step that turns a pool of applicants into a single appointment. Selection follows **recruitment** — the process of *attracting* applicants — and depends on it: recruitment **generates the field of applicants**, whereas selection **chooses the best applicant from within that field**. The two are easily confused but are distinct stages of staffing: recruitment fills the pool, selection empties it down to one. In selecting, a business assesses each applicant against the **job description** (the tasks and responsibilities of the role) and the **job specification** (the qualifications, skills and personal qualities needed), and tries to **predict who will perform the job best**. Because a poor appointment is expensive — weak performance, retraining, and the cost of terminating and re-recruiting — selecting well matters greatly. The study design identifies four selection methods: the **interview**, **psychological testing**, **work testing** and **online selection**, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Interviews. An interview is a **structured conversation between an applicant and one or more representatives of the business**, in which questions are asked to assess the applicant's suitability for the role. It is the most widely used selection method. Interviews take two broad forms:

- **Structured interview.** Every applicant is asked the **same predetermined set of questions in the same order**, and their answers are **scored against set criteria**. This makes the interview **consistent, fair and easy to compare** across applicants, and reduces the influence of interviewer bias.
- **Unstructured interview.** There is **no fixed script**; the conversation flows freely and the questions asked **vary from one applicant to the next**, following whatever the interviewer wishes to explore. This is **flexible** and allows the interviewer to **probe interesting responses**, but it is **inconsistent**, harder to compare fairly and more exposed to bias.

Advantages of interviews: they are conducted **face to face** (or by video), so the business can assess an applicant's **communication and interpersonal skills**, **clarify or expand on details** in their résumé, judge **cultural fit and enthusiasm**, and let the applicant ask questions about the role — making the process **two-way**. *Disadvantages:* they are **time-consuming and costly** when many applicants are seen; they are prone to **interviewer bias** (such as first impressions or the halo effect, where one good trait colours the whole judgement); a confident applicant can **rehearse answers and create a false impression**, while a nervous but capable applicant may **underperform**; and interview performance is **not always a reliable predictor of actual job performance**.

Psychological testing. Psychological testing uses **standardised, professionally designed tests to measure an applicant's abilities or personal characteristics** that are not easily observed in an interview. Because every applicant sits the same test under the same conditions, it produces **objective, comparable data**. Two common types are:

- **Aptitude tests.** These measure an applicant's **ability or potential to perform particular tasks or to learn new skills** — for example, **numerical, verbal, logical or mechanical reasoning** tests. They help predict **whether an applicant can actually do the work or be trained for it**.
- **Personality tests.** These assess an applicant's **traits, attitudes and behavioural style** — for example, whether they are outgoing, conscientious, calm under pressure or work well in a team — to judge **how well the person would fit the role and the business's culture**.

Advantages: testing generates **objective, standardised information** that reduces reliance on the interviewer's gut feeling, **reveals abilities and traits that an interview cannot**, allows applicants to be **compared on the same measures**, and can **predict job fit and performance**. *Disadvantages:* tests can be **costly to design, administer and interpret** (interpretation needs qualified people); applicants may **answer personality tests in a socially desirable way** ("faking good") rather than honestly; a test may **not reflect how a person actually behaves at work**; and a poorly designed or unvalidated test may be **culturally biased or discriminatory**, or seen by applicants as **intrusive**.

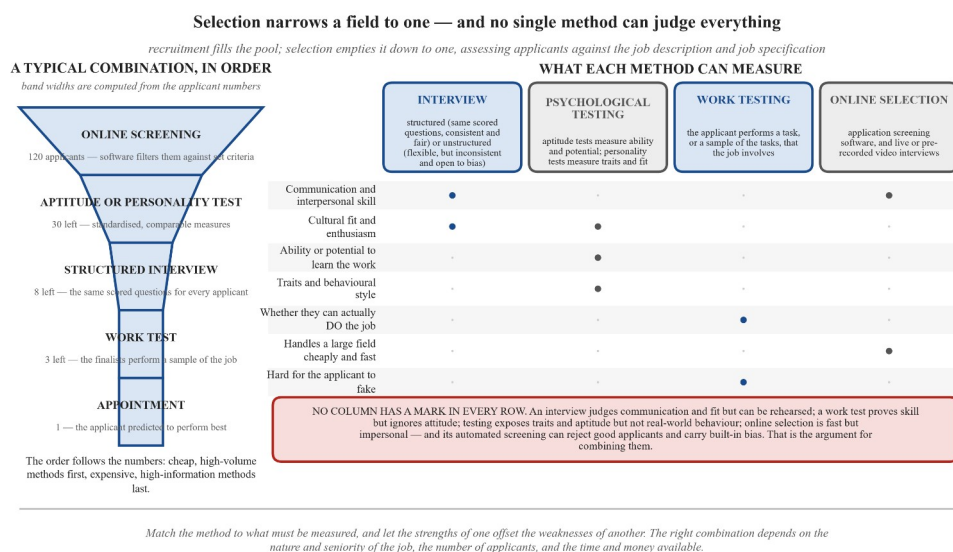
Work testing. Work testing (also called **skills testing** or a **work-sample test**) requires an applicant to **actually perform a task, or a sample of the tasks, that the job involves**, so the business can observe their skill directly. Examples include a **typing or data-entry test** for an administrative role, a **coding exercise** for a programmer,

preparing a dish for a chef, or **operating a machine** for a trades role. *Advantages:* work testing **directly demonstrates whether an applicant can genuinely do the job**, making it one of the **strongest predictors of on-the-job performance**; it is **objective and job-related**; and it is **hard to fake**, because the applicant must actually produce the work rather than describe it. *Disadvantages:* it tests only **specific skills**, not attitude, potential or cultural fit; it can be **time-consuming and costly to set up and supervise**; it may **not replicate real workplace conditions or pressure**; it is **unsuitable for roles where the skills are learned on the job**; and nervous applicants may **underperform in artificial test conditions**.

Online selection. Online selection uses **digital and internet-based tools to screen and assess applicants** rather than doing everything in person. Its two common forms are:

- **Online application screening.** Software — such as an **applicant tracking system** or an online application form with “**knock-out**” **questions** — automatically **filters large numbers of applications against set criteria** (keywords, qualifications, minimum requirements) so that only the applicants who meet the criteria are passed on for human review.
- **Video interviews.** Interviews are conducted by **video conferencing (live)** or as **pre-recorded responses**, where the applicant records answers to set questions to be reviewed later, rather than meeting in person.

Advantages: online selection is **fast and efficient**, able to **process large volumes of applicants cheaply**, **saves time and travel costs**, is **convenient and flexible** to schedule, and **widens the applicant pool geographically** by allowing interstate, remote or overseas applicants to take part. *Disadvantages:* automated screening may **reject good applicants** who do not match rigid keyword criteria (missing potential or context); software can carry **built-in bias**, unfairly filtering applicants; the process is **impersonal**, losing the **rapport and non-verbal cues** of a face-to-face meeting; **technology problems** (poor connections, or unfamiliarity with the tools) can **disadvantage some applicants**; and it is **less able to assess deeper interpersonal qualities**.



Choosing an appropriate combination. No single method is complete — each reveals something different, and each has weaknesses. An interview judges communication and fit but can be faked; a work test proves skill but ignores attitude; psychological testing exposes traits and aptitude but not real-world behaviour; online selection is fast but impersonal. For this reason, businesses usually **combine several methods**, for example: **online screening** to shortlist a large field, then an **aptitude or personality test**, then a **structured interview**, then a **work test** for the final candidates. The appropriate combination depends on **the nature and seniority of the job** (skills-heavy roles favour work testing; people-facing roles favour interviews; analytical or safety-critical roles favour psychological testing), the **number of applicants** (a large field favours online screening first), and the **time and money available**. Combining methods gives a **fuller, more reliable picture** of each applicant and improves the chance of **choosing the best person**, because the strengths of one method compensate for the weaknesses of another.

Key ideas to keep straight.

- **Recruitment is not selection.** Recruitment **attracts** a pool of applicants; selection **chooses** the best applicant from that pool. Selection begins only once applicants have been recruited.
- **Match the method to what you need to measure.** Interviews measure communication and fit; **aptitude tests** measure ability/potential and **personality tests** measure traits/fit; **work tests** measure actual skill; **online selection** measures nothing new but screens and interviews efficiently at scale.
- **Structured vs unstructured, aptitude vs personality.** A **structured** interview uses the same scored questions for all (consistent, fair); an **unstructured** one varies (flexible but biased). An **aptitude** test measures ability/potential; a **personality** test measures traits and fit.
- **No method is perfect — combine them.** Each method has advantages and disadvantages, so businesses use a **combination** so the strengths of one offset the weaknesses of another, improving the accuracy of the final choice.

Contemporary example — SEEK, August 2024

SEEK Limited is an online employment marketplace listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX: SEK) and based in Cremorne, Melbourne, which runs job-advertising platforms across Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

SEEK released its **Annual Report 2024** on **13 August 2024**, the date its directors authorised the financial report for issue. Reporting on the 2023–24 financial year, the business said it had **enhanced its AI search and recommendations** and built **large language models** into its core search, and gave two measured results: a **10% increase in the relevancy of search**, and that **candidates recommended by its AI were five times more likely to be shortlisted than organic applications** (those arriving without such a recommendation). The report attributed both figures to SEEK’s own **internal analytics and management estimates**.

Shortlisting is a selection step, so this is **online selection** at work: a digital tool shapes which applicants a hirer sees, and its effect on **who reaches the next stage** has been measured. It shows both sides of the theory. The efficiency is genuine — software can sort a very large field of applicants far faster than a person can. But the figure records **which applicants were shortlisted**, not how they later performed, so it does not show that the appointment itself was better; and where the criteria a tool ranks on are **rigid or carry built-in bias**, a suitable applicant can be **passed over before any human sees them**. That is why online selection is generally used as a **first-stage filter** ahead of interviews, testing and work tests rather than as the whole of selection.

Source: SEEK Limited, Annual Report 2024, 13 August 2024 — <https://au.seek.com/content/media/2024-08-13-SEEK-2024-Annual-Report.pdf>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Copperpot Kitchens is a busy restaurant hiring a head chef. The owner wants to be sure the person appointed can genuinely cook to the required standard under pressure. Recommend a selection method and justify your choice.

Working	Comment
The owner’s key concern is proven cooking skill , and the best way to test a practical skill is to have the applicant actually perform it.	Identify what the business most needs to measure.
A work test — asking each shortlisted chef to prepare a set dish in the restaurant’s kitchen — directly demonstrates their skill.	Match the need to the most suitable selection method.
Because the applicant must actually produce the meal, work testing is hard to fake and is a strong predictor of on-the-job performance , unlike an interview where a chef could merely <i>describe</i> their ability.	Justify by linking the method’s advantages to the owner’s concern.
∴ a work test is the most appropriate method, as it provides direct, reliable evidence that the chef can perform the actual tasks of the role.	State the conclusion.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Vela Analytics is a data-consulting firm advertising a junior analyst position. It has received over 250 applications and needs to shortlist quickly and fairly. Recommend a selection method for this early stage and explain your choice.

Working	Comment
The problem is a very large field of applicants that must be narrowed down efficiently before more time-consuming methods are used.	Read the situation — volume and speed are the constraints.
Online application screening uses software to filter the 250 applications against set criteria (e.g. required qualifications and skills), passing only suitable applicants to the next stage.	Match the constraint to the appropriate method.
This is fast and low-cost , handles the large volume that interviewing everyone could not, and applies the same criteria to every applicant , making the shortlisting consistent.	Explain by linking the method's advantages to the situation.
Vela could then follow up with an aptitude test and interview for the shortlisted applicants, combining methods for a fuller picture.	Note that methods are combined across stages.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Distinguish between a **structured** and an **unstructured** interview.

In a **structured** interview, every applicant is asked the **same predetermined set of questions in the same order**, and their answers are **scored against fixed criteria**. This makes the interview **consistent and fair**, allows applicants to be **compared directly**, and **reduces interviewer bias**, although it is **less flexible**. In an **unstructured** interview, there is **no fixed script**: the questions **vary from applicant to applicant** and the conversation follows whatever the interviewer chooses to explore. This is **flexible** and lets the interviewer **probe interesting or unexpected responses**, but it is **inconsistent, harder to compare fairly and more prone to bias**. The key difference lies in **consistency**: a structured interview standardises the questions and scoring for all applicants, whereas an unstructured interview varies them. ∴ the two differ in whether the interview is the **same and comparable for every applicant** (structured) or **tailored and variable** (unstructured).

Example 4 — unscaffolded

A business owner states, “A single job interview is all I need to choose the best applicant.” Evaluate this statement.

The statement has some merit but is **too simplistic** and unreliable as a basis for selection. An interview does have genuine value: conducted face to face, it lets the owner assess an applicant's **communication and interpersonal skills, clarify their résumé and judge cultural fit**, and it is familiar and relatively quick. **However**, relying on an interview **alone** is risky. Interviews are prone to **interviewer bias** and first impressions; a confident applicant can **rehearse answers and present a false picture**, while a capable but nervous one may **underperform**; and crucially, interview performance is **not a reliable predictor of whether the person can actually do the job**. An interview **cannot directly test skill** the way a **work test** can, nor measure **aptitude or personality** the way psychological testing can. Because each method has weaknesses, the more reliable approach is to **combine** the interview with other methods — for example a work test to prove skill and an aptitude test to gauge potential — so that the strengths of one offset the weaknesses of another. ∴ while an interview is a useful part of selection, using it as the *only* method is unlikely to identify the best applicant reliably, so the owner should combine it with at least one other method.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Define the term *selection*.

Q2. List the **four** selection methods identified in the study design.

Q3. For each of the following, name the selection method (or type) being described: (a) an applicant is asked to prepare a sample of the work the job involves; (b) software filters a large number of applications against set keyword criteria; (c) a test that measures an applicant's ability or potential to learn a task.

Q4. Explain the difference between **recruitment** and **selection**.

Q5. Harbourview Hotel is hiring housekeeping staff and wants to confirm that applicants can clean rooms to its standard within set times. (a) Identify the most appropriate selection method. (b) Explain why this method suits the situation.

Q6. Explain the difference between an **aptitude test** and a **personality test**.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Describe the **interview** as a selection method. (2 marks)

Q8. Distinguish between **psychological testing** and **work testing** as selection methods. (4 marks)

Q9. Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using **psychological testing** as a selection method. (4 marks)

Q10. Explain how **work testing** can help a business select the most suitable applicant. (3 marks)

Q11. Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of **online selection**. (4 marks)

Q12. Compare the **interview** and **work testing** as selection methods. (4 marks)

Q13. Discuss the use of **psychological testing** in the selection of employees. (6 marks)

Q14. Justify a business's decision to use a **combination of selection methods** rather than relying on a single method. (4 marks)

Q15. A software company is selecting a programmer. Propose and justify **one** selection method it could use. (4 marks)

Q16. Analyse how the use of **online selection** methods could affect the quality of a business's selection decisions. (6 marks)

Q17. Case study. ClearLine Connect is a fast-growing telecommunications company opening a new customer-service centre. It needs to hire **30 phone-based customer service representatives** and has received **more than 600 applications**. The role requires **patience, clear communication and the ability to work in a team**, and new staff will handle live customer calls from their first week. The operations manager, Devi, has time and budget pressure and wants to appoint reliably. (a) Identify **one** selection method ClearLine Connect could use to manage the large number of applications. (1 mark) (b) Explain how **psychological testing** could help ClearLine Connect select suitable representatives. (3 marks) (c) Analyse how using a **combination of selection methods** could improve the quality of ClearLine Connect's appointments. (4 marks)

Q18. Evaluate the use of the **interview** as a method of selecting employees. (6 marks)

Q19. Extended response. Choosing the right applicant is one of the most important decisions a business makes. Analyse how the different selection methods — interviews, psychological testing, work testing and online selection — help a business choose the most suitable applicant, and evaluate the view that **no single selection method is sufficient** on its own. (10 marks)

Q20. Contemporary example. On **13 August 2024**, **SEEK Limited** released its **Annual Report 2024**, in which it reported that it had enhanced its **AI search and recommendations** and built large language models into its core search. It reported a **10% increase in the relevancy of search**, and that **candidates recommended by its AI were five times more likely to be shortlisted than organic applications**, attributing both figures to its own internal analytics. Analyse how a tool of this kind could affect **which applicants a hirer shortlists**, and what that means for the **other selection methods** the hirer uses. (6 marks)

Answers

Q1. The process of gathering information about, and choosing, the most suitable applicant from among those who applied, to fill a job vacancy. **Q2.** Interview; psychological testing; work testing; online selection. **Q3.** (a) work testing; (b) online (application) screening / online selection; (c) aptitude test. **Q4.** Recruitment attracts a pool of applicants to the business; selection chooses the best applicant from within that pool. See solutions. **Q5.** (a) Work testing. (b) It lets the hotel directly observe whether applicants can clean to the required standard within the time — proving actual skill, which is what the role needs. See solutions. **Q6.** Aptitude test = measures ability/potential to perform or learn a task; personality test = measures traits, attitudes and behavioural style / fit. See solutions. **Q7.** A structured conversation in which the business questions an applicant to assess their suitability; may be structured or unstructured. See solutions. **Q8.** Psychological testing = standardised tests measuring ability/potential (aptitude) or traits (personality) — an indirect measure of what an applicant *could* do or is *like*; work testing = actually performing a sample of the job's tasks — a direct measure of what the applicant *can already do*. Both terms required. See solutions. **Q9.** Advantage: objective, standardised data revealing abilities/traits an interview cannot. Disadvantage: costly, can be faked (“faking good”) or may not reflect real workplace behaviour. See solutions. **Q10.** It has applicants actually perform the job's tasks, giving direct, hard-to-fake evidence of skill and a strong predictor of job performance. See solutions. **Q11.** Advantage: fast, cheap, handles large volumes, widens the pool. Disadvantage: impersonal, may reject good applicants on rigid criteria, technology issues/bias. See solutions. **Q12.** Similarity: both assess an individual applicant's suitability for the role. Difference: interview measures communication/fit through conversation (can be faked); work testing measures actual skill by performing the task (hard to fake). Both sides required. See solutions. **Q13.** Discuss — advantages (objective, comparable data; reveals aptitude/traits) and disadvantages (cost, faking, may not reflect real behaviour, possible bias); no judgement required; don't double-dip. See solutions. **Q14.** Justify — argue why: each method has weaknesses and measures something different, so combining them gives a fuller, more reliable picture and improves the chance of choosing the best applicant, outweighing the extra time/cost. See solutions. **Q15.** Propose one method (e.g. a work test — a coding exercise) + argue why it suits selecting a programmer. See solutions. **Q16.** Analyse — causal chain: online selection speeds and widens screening but rigid criteria/bias and lost personal contact can affect who is shortlisted and the accuracy of decisions. See solutions. **Q17.** (a) e.g. online application screening. (b) Aptitude/personality testing can objectively measure patience, communication and teamwork fit across all applicants. (c) Combining methods offsets each method's weakness → more reliable appointments. See solutions. **Q18.** Evaluate — advantages (assesses communication/fit, two-way, clarifies résumé) vs disadvantages (bias, can be faked, poor predictor of performance) ending in an evidence-based judgement. See solutions. **Q19.** Model response in solutions. **Q20.** Causal: the tool ranks and surfaces candidates → recommended applicants are seen first and were five times more likely to be shortlisted → the shortlist entering interviews/testing/work testing is set largely by the software, quickly and on the same criteria for all; but rigid criteria or built-in bias can pass over a suitable applicant before any human review, and a shortlisting rate measures who was picked, not who performs → the other methods must still do the assessing. See solutions.

Fully-worked solutions

Q4. Recruitment and selection are two different stages of staffing a business. **Recruitment** is the process of **attracting a pool of suitable applicants** to apply for a vacancy — it *generates the field* of people to choose from. **Selection** is the process that follows: **gathering information about those applicants and choosing the most suitable one** to fill the job. In other words, recruitment **fills the applicant pool**, while selection **narrows that pool down to the person who is appointed**. The key difference is one of purpose and sequence: recruitment **attracts** applicants, whereas selection **chooses among** them, and selection can only begin once recruitment has produced a field of applicants.

Q5. (a) The most appropriate selection method is **work testing** (a work-sample or skills test). (b) (*Explain — link the method to what the hotel actually needs to establish.*) Harbourview Hotel's concern is a **practical standard performed against the clock**: whether an applicant can service a room to the hotel's required standard **within a set time**. A **work test** suits this because it asks each applicant to **carry out a sample of the job's real tasks** — cleaning a room while a housekeeping supervisor observes and times the work — so the hotel can judge **the finished room and the minutes taken**, which are precisely the two things the role is measured on. This produces **objective evidence gathered under conditions close to the job itself**, rather than an applicant's own account of how thorough or quick they are. Because the applicant must **produce the work rather than describe it**, a work test is **hard to fake**: an

interview would let a confident applicant overstate their experience, whereas cleaning to standard cannot be talked through. Housekeeping is also a role where the capability in question is **manual and observable**, so little is lost by not probing communication or personality at this stage. ∴ work testing suits Harbourview Hotel because it gives direct, timed evidence against the exact standard the job sets, making it a far more reliable guide to how an applicant will perform once employed.

Q6. Both are forms of **psychological testing**, but they measure different things. An **aptitude test** measures an applicant's **ability or potential to perform particular tasks or to learn new skills** — for example, tests of **numerical, verbal, logical or mechanical reasoning** — and so helps predict **whether the applicant can do the work or be trained to do it**. A **personality test** measures an applicant's **traits, attitudes and behavioural style** — such as whether they are conscientious, outgoing, calm under pressure or a good team member — and so helps judge **how well the person would fit the role and the business's culture**. The difference is therefore one of **what is being measured**: aptitude testing measures **capability and potential**, while personality testing measures **character and fit**.

Q7. An **interview** is a **structured conversation between an applicant and one or more representatives of the business**, in which the applicant is asked questions to **assess their suitability for a role**. It is the most commonly used selection method and may be **structured** (the same scored questions for every applicant) or **unstructured** (questions that vary from applicant to applicant). It allows the business to assess an applicant's communication and interpersonal skills face to face.

Q8. (*Distinguish — both terms must be addressed.*) **Psychological testing** uses **standardised, professionally designed tests** to measure qualities that cannot be observed directly: an **aptitude test** measures an applicant's **ability or potential** to perform tasks or learn new skills, while a **personality test** measures their **traits, attitudes and behavioural style**. It therefore assesses what an applicant **could do, or how they are likely to behave**, and its results are a **score that must be interpreted** by qualified people. **Work testing**, by contrast, requires an applicant to **carry out the real work of the role, or a representative sample of it** — a typing test, a coding exercise or preparing a dish — so the business judges the **finished work itself** rather than a test result. The two therefore differ in **what is measured and how directly**: psychological testing measures **underlying potential and personal qualities indirectly, through a proxy test**, whereas work testing measures **demonstrated skill directly, through the work**. They also differ in **what each cannot show**: a test score may **not reflect how a person actually behaves at work** and personality tests can be “**faked**”, while a work test proves skill but reveals **nothing about attitude, potential or fit**. ∴ psychological testing tells a business what an applicant **is like and might be capable of**, whereas work testing tells it what the applicant **can already do**.

Q9. (*One advantage and one disadvantage — kept as distinct points.*) One **advantage** of psychological testing is that it produces **objective, standardised information** about an applicant's abilities or traits that an interview cannot easily reveal — because every applicant sits the same test under the same conditions, the business can **compare applicants fairly** and reduce reliance on the interviewer's gut feeling. One **disadvantage** is that the tests can be **unreliable or misleading**: personality tests in particular can be “**faked**”, with applicants giving the answers they think the business wants rather than honest ones, and a test result may **not reflect how the person actually behaves at work** — so a business that leans too heavily on testing risks selecting on the basis of test performance rather than real-world suitability. (The tests can also be **costly to design, administer and interpret**.)

Q10. **Work testing** helps a business select the most suitable applicant because it requires each applicant to **actually perform a task, or a sample of the tasks, that the job involves**, so the business can **directly observe their skill** rather than relying on what the applicant *claims* they can do. Because the applicant must produce real work — such as a coding exercise, a typing test or preparing a dish — the method is **hard to fake** and gives **direct evidence of ability**, making it one of the **strongest predictors of on-the-job performance**. By showing which applicants can genuinely do the work to the required standard, work testing lets the business choose the person most likely to perform well in the role.

Q11. (*One advantage and one disadvantage.*) One **advantage** of **online selection** is that it is **fast and efficient**: software can screen or interview **large numbers of applicants cheaply**, saving the business time and travel costs and **widening the applicant pool** by allowing remote, interstate or overseas applicants to take part. One **disadvantage** is that it is **impersonal and can be inaccurate**: automated screening may **reject good applicants** who do not match rigid keyword criteria (missing potential or context), the software may carry **built-in bias**, and video or online interviews **lose the rapport and non-verbal cues** of a face-to-face meeting — so the business may overlook suitable people or misjudge those it does assess.

Q12. (*Compare — a similarity and a difference are both required.*) A **similarity** is that the **interview** and **work testing** are both selection methods used to **assess an individual applicant's suitability** for a role, and both are usually applied to a **shortlist** of applicants rather than the whole field. A **difference** lies in **what each measures and how reliably**: an **interview** assesses an applicant's **communication, interpersonal skills and fit through conversation**, but relies on what the applicant *says* and can therefore be **rehearsed or faked** and is a weaker predictor of actual performance; **work testing**, by contrast, has the applicant **actually perform the job's tasks**, so it measures **real, demonstrated skill**, is **hard to fake** and is a **strong predictor of on-the-job performance** — but it reveals little about attitude or fit. In short, both assess suitability, but the interview measures **what an applicant claims and how they present**, while work testing measures **what they can actually do**.

Q13. (*Discuss — advantages and disadvantages; no judgement required; avoid double-dipping.*) Psychological testing has real **advantages** as a selection method. Because every applicant sits the **same standardised test under the same conditions**, it produces **objective, comparable data** and reduces reliance on the interviewer's gut feeling. **Aptitude tests** reveal an applicant's **ability and potential** to do or learn the work, and **personality tests** reveal **traits and cultural fit** — both of which are **difficult to judge from an interview alone** — helping the business predict who will perform and fit well. However, there are also **disadvantages**. The tests can be **costly to design, administer and interpret**, and interpretation requires **qualified people**. Personality tests can be **"faked"**, with applicants giving socially desirable rather than honest answers, and a result may **not reflect how the person actually behaves at work**. A poorly designed or unvalidated test may also be **culturally biased or discriminatory**, and some applicants find testing **intrusive**. Psychological testing therefore offers a business valuable, objective insight into abilities and traits that other methods miss, but only where the tests are **well-designed, properly interpreted and used alongside other methods** rather than relied on in isolation.

Q14. (*Justify — argue why, with reasoning.*) Using a **combination of selection methods** can be justified because **no single method is complete** — each measures something different and each has weaknesses, so combining them gives a **fuller and more reliable picture** of every applicant. An **interview** assesses communication and fit but can be faked and is a weak predictor of performance; a **work test** proves skill but ignores attitude and potential; **psychological testing** reveals aptitude and traits but may not reflect real behaviour; **online selection** is fast but impersonal. By using several methods together — for example, online screening, then testing, then an interview and a work test — the **strengths of one method offset the weaknesses of another**, so the business is far more likely to **identify the applicant who is genuinely most suitable**. This matters because a **wrong appointment is expensive**: poor performance, retraining, and the cost of terminating and re-recruiting all follow a bad selection decision. Although using several methods costs **more time and money** than a single interview, that extra cost is small compared with the cost of appointing the wrong person. ∴ combining methods is justified because it **substantially improves the accuracy and reliability of the selection decision**, protecting the business from the far greater cost of a poor appointment.

Q15. (*Propose and justify — do more than name the method; argue why it suits the role.*) One selection method the software company could use is a **work test** in the form of a **practical coding exercise**, in which each shortlisted applicant is asked to **write or debug a piece of code** similar to the work the job involves, under observation. This method is **well-suited to selecting a programmer** because the core requirement of the role is a **demonstrable technical skill** that can be tested directly: by having applicants actually **produce working code**, the company gets **hard-to-fake, direct evidence** of who can genuinely program to the required standard, rather than relying on claims in a résumé or interview. Because a work test is one of the **strongest predictors of on-the-job performance** for a skills-based role, it greatly reduces the risk of appointing someone who interviews well but cannot actually do the work. ∴ a practical coding work test is an appropriate method because it measures exactly the demonstrable skill the programming role depends on, giving the company reliable evidence on which to base its choice (ideally combined with an interview to assess teamwork and fit).

Q16. (*Analyse — show the causal effects, not a list of pros and cons.*) Using **online selection** sets off a chain of effects on the quality of a business's selection decisions. First, because online screening and video interviews can **process large numbers of applicants quickly and cheaply**, the business can **consider a bigger and more geographically diverse field** than it otherwise could, and can **devote its remaining time to assessing shortlisted applicants more thoroughly** — both of which can **improve** the quality of the final decision. However, the same automation can also **degrade** decision quality. Because online screening filters applications against **rigid, pre-set criteria**, applicants who do not use the expected keywords or whose potential is not captured by the criteria may be **screened out before any human sees them**, so a genuinely suitable applicant can be **lost from the pool**, narrowing the choice. If the screening

software carries **built-in bias**, this can **systematically exclude certain applicants**, further distorting the field. In addition, conducting interviews online **removes much of the face-to-face rapport and non-verbal information**, so the business may **misjudge an applicant's communication skills or fit**, and technology problems can cause capable applicants to **present poorly**. The overall effect on decision quality therefore depends on **how online selection is used**: as an efficient first-stage filter feeding into other methods it tends to improve decisions, but if relied on too heavily its rigid criteria and loss of personal contact can cause the business to **overlook the best applicant**. ∴ online selection can either sharpen or weaken selection decisions, according to whether its speed is harnessed to widen and inform the process or is allowed to replace human judgement.

Q17. (a) Online application screening (online selection) — software to filter the 600+ applications against set criteria. (*Accept: a pre-recorded video interview stage.*) (b) (*Explain — causal, linked to the case study.*)

Psychological testing could help ClearLine Connect because the role requires **patience, clear communication and teamwork** — qualities that are **hard to judge reliably from an application form alone**. A **personality test** could **objectively measure** whether applicants have the temperament to stay **calm and patient on difficult customer calls** and to **work well in a team**, while an **aptitude test** could gauge their **communication and problem-solving ability**. Because every one of the 600 applicants sits the **same test under the same conditions**, the results are **objective and comparable**, helping Devi **shortlist the applicants best suited to phone-based customer service** from a very large field, rather than relying on gut feeling. (c) (*Analyse — the causal effect of combining methods on appointment quality.*) Using a **combination of selection methods** would improve the quality of ClearLine Connect's appointments because **each method covers a different weakness of the others**. Online screening would first **cut the 600 applications down to a manageable shortlist** quickly and consistently, but it reveals nothing about how an applicant behaves, so a **personality test** would then **measure the patience and teamwork** the role demands, and a **work test** — such as a **mock customer call** — would show whether the applicant can **actually handle a live call**, which neither screening nor testing proves. A **structured interview** would add an assessment of **communication and fit** face to face. Because new staff handle **live calls from their first week**, appointing someone who merely *looks* suitable on paper would be costly; by layering the methods so the **strengths of each offset the weaknesses of another**, Devi builds a **fuller, more reliable picture** of each applicant and is far more likely to appoint 30 representatives who can genuinely do the job. ∴ combining methods turns a large, hard-to-judge field into a set of well-evidenced appointments, directly reducing the risk of costly poor hires under Devi's time and budget pressure.

Q18. (Evaluate — advantages and disadvantages plus an evidence-based judgement.) The **interview** is a valuable but limited selection method. Its **advantages** are real: conducted face to face (or by video), it lets a business **assess an applicant's communication and interpersonal skills, clarify and expand on details in their résumé, and judge enthusiasm and cultural fit**, while giving the applicant a chance to ask questions — making it a **two-way** exchange. It is also **familiar and flexible**. However, the interview has serious **disadvantages**. It is **prone to interviewer bias** and first impressions; a confident applicant can **rehearse answers and create a false impression**, while a capable but nervous applicant may **underperform**; and, most importantly, interview performance is a **weak predictor of whether the person can actually do the job**, because talking about work is not the same as doing it. Weighing these, the interview is **useful but not sufficient on its own**: it assesses **how an applicant presents and communicates** well, but it **cannot directly test skill** (as a work test can) or **measure aptitude and traits objectively** (as psychological testing can). ∴ on balance, the interview should be judged a **necessary but incomplete** method — it is well worth using to assess communication and fit, but a business seeking to appoint the best applicant reliably should **combine it with at least one other method**, such as a work test, rather than treat the interview as the whole of selection.

Q19. Model response (10 marks). **Selection** is the process of **gathering information about, and choosing, the most suitable applicant** from among those who applied for a vacancy. It follows recruitment, which attracts the pool of applicants. The study design identifies four selection methods — **interviews, psychological testing, work testing and online selection** — and each helps a business choose the best applicant in a different way.

An **interview** is a structured conversation used to assess an applicant's **communication, interpersonal skills and cultural fit** face to face; it can be **structured** (the same scored questions for all, which is fair and comparable) or **unstructured** (flexible but less consistent). **Psychological testing** uses standardised tests to measure things an interview cannot: **aptitude tests** gauge an applicant's **ability and potential** to do or learn the work, while **personality tests** gauge **traits and fit**, both producing **objective, comparable data**. **Work testing** has applicants **actually perform the tasks of the job**, giving **direct, hard-to-fake evidence of skill** and a strong prediction of job performance. **Online selection** — automated application screening and video interviews — allows a business to **screen large numbers of applicants quickly and cheaply** and to **widen the applicant pool** geographically. Each

method therefore contributes a different piece of the picture: the interview shows how an applicant communicates and fits, testing reveals ability and character, a work test proves skill, and online tools bring speed and scale.

The view that **no single selection method is sufficient** on its own is **strongly supported**. Every method has weaknesses that the others do not: an **interview** can be **faked** and is a poor predictor of actual performance; a **work test** proves skill but ignores attitude, potential and fit; **psychological testing** can be **faked or may not reflect real workplace behaviour**, and needs expert interpretation; and **online selection** is **impersonal** and its rigid criteria can **screen out good applicants**. Relying on any one method therefore leaves a business exposed to that method's blind spot — an interview-only process might appoint a polished talker who cannot do the work, while a work-test-only process might appoint a skilled but poorly-suited team member. Because each method measures something different, **combining them** — for example, online screening to shortlist, then testing, an interview and a work test for the finalists — lets the **strengths of one method offset the weaknesses of another**, producing a **fuller and more reliable** assessment. This is important because a **wrong appointment is costly**: poor performance, retraining and the expense of re-recruiting all follow a bad choice. ∴ the evidence clearly supports the view that no single method is sufficient: while each method has genuine value, the most reliable way to choose the best applicant is to **combine several methods**, selected to suit the nature of the job, the number of applicants and the time and money available. *(Full marks require: an accurate definition of selection; analysis of how each of the four methods helps choose the best applicant; and a sustained, two-sided evaluation of the “no single method is sufficient” view reaching a justified judgement.)*

Q20. *(Analyse — trace the causal effects on the shortlist, not a list of advantages.)* A tool of this kind is a form of **online selection**, and it acts on the field of applicants **before any human assessment begins**. Because the software ranks and surfaces candidates to the hirer, those it recommends are the ones seen first — and SEEK reported them **five times more likely to be shortlisted than organic applications**. The immediate effect is that the **shortlist**, the small group who go on to be interviewed, tested or work-tested, is shaped **largely by the software rather than by the hirer reading every application**. This delivers the usual advantages of online selection: a very large field is sorted **quickly and cheaply** against the **same criteria for every applicant**, leaving the hirer's limited time for assessing the few. The same chain, however, creates risk. If the criteria the tool ranks on are **rigid or carry built-in bias**, a genuinely suitable applicant may be **passed over before any person reviews them**, and the hirer never learns what was lost from the pool. A shortlisting rate also measures only **who was chosen for the next stage, not who could do the job** — it says nothing about on-the-job performance. Consequently the **other methods must still do the real assessing**: an **interview** for communication and fit, **psychological testing** for aptitude and traits, and a **work test** to prove skill. ∴ such a tool changes **who reaches the later stages** rather than who is appointed, so it improves selection only as a **first-stage filter feeding into a combination of methods**, and weakens it if allowed to replace them.