HOUSE OF COMMONS

Applying to the House of Commons

CONTENTS

Completing your application

About our selection process

Eligibility & pre-employment checks

Valuing diversity, equality & fairnesss

Further Information

Your application form provides the ONLY information we will use to decide whether you will be shortlisted for interview. This guidance is designed to help you complete it as effectively as possible.

Completing your application

Preparation

First, read the job information carefully. This is based on the job description and describes the main duties of the post and the skills, experience and qualifications we are looking for. Please make sure that you understand what the job involves and what's required.

Content

Fill in the form as completely and clearly as possible so that we can consider all candidates on the same basis. **Do not send us your CV instead of an application form: this will not be considered and your application will be rejected.**

Please type or use black ink, which produces clearer photocopies. You may continue your application on one or more separate sheets: please attach these to the form with your name and the job reference number clearly marked on the top. **Do not alter the application form. Each form is unique to its job, and any alteration to the questions or job title will mean your application is rejected.**

You should provide one or two **specific** examples of past achievement and/or training that demonstrate how you meet each criteria stated on the application form. Please do not generalise (e.g. *"My usual task is to..."* or *"I would normally..."*) or significantly exceed the word count per section as either could disadvantage your application.

We employ an external agency to handle initial recruitment administration. Details of where to send your application are on the final page of the form. Contact details are also on the form and on our recruitment website www.houseofcommons-careers.org.uk. **Applications must be received by the closing date stated on the job application: any received later than this will not be considered.**

About our selection process

Shortlisting

After the closing date we assess the application forms to see how your skills, qualifications and experience relate to the vacancy. Those who best match the criteria will be selected for interview.

Outcome of your application

If you are selected for interview, our recruitment team will write to you. If you are unsuccessful, we will let you know this within 3 weeks of the closing date.

Assessment

If you are shortlisted we may ask you to complete a task or a test either at or before the interview. If so, we will provide details to shortlisted candidates.

Interviews

The interview panel is normally made up of three or four people. They will each ask questions which enable you to expand on your application so that you can show how far you meet the essential requirements of the post. You will also have an opportunity to ask us about the job, the terms and conditions of service etc.

Please do not be concerned by the panel taking notes during the interview: they have to keep a full record of their assessment of each candidate so that they can show that their decisions are clear, consistent, and based only on the evidence which you provide.

Speaker's appointments

If a post is a Speaker's appointment, the selection panel will make recommendations to the Speaker based on performance at interview. The Speaker may then wish to interview one or more candidates himself before confirming the appointment.

Information for candidates with disabilities

We welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. We want to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity, and that our decisions are based only on your ability to do the job and not on any irrelevant factors. **If you consider that you have a disability you are invited to tell us on the application form: this helps us to make any particular arrangements that you may require if you are selected for interview.** We will contact you to confirm these. At each further stage of the process there will be an opportunity to discuss any specific questions that you may have.

All information will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Notice on the application form.

Travelling expenses

You can claim some expenses for travelling to the interview. These may not exceed the cost of the return fare and we expect candidates to take advantage of any cheap fares which may be available.

If you are travelling from overseas you can only claim expenses for travel between the place of arrival in the UK and the House of Commons. This does not include overnight expenses.

Eligibility & pre-employment checks

Confirming your appointment

Confirmation of your appointment will be subject to the satisfactory outcome of the normal pre-employment checks:

- security clearance to Counter Terrorist Check level;
- health clearance;
- references;
- proof of educational and professional qualifications.

You will be able to start work once our pre-employment checks have been completed.

Security clearance

If you are selected for interview, we will send you a green security clearance application form to complete.

Please note that a minimum 12 month period of residence is required in the UK for a non EU national or a national from a country where there is no vetting liaison with the UK. If you are unsure whether your country of origin has a vetting liaison with the UK, please state this on the security clearance form and we will check this for you. We will only inform you if there are likely to be any difficulties with obtaining security clearance.

In some cases we may need to request character references to assist with completion of security clearance. If so, one of our recruitment team will contact you.

References

We require references to cover the past three years; these should be from your current and previous employers and/or academic tutors. Please provide accurate and up to date contact details, and if possible let your referees know that we may contact them.
Please note that referees cannot be relatives.

Educational & professional qualifications

If selected for interview, you will need to provide original copies of all certificates for educational and professional qualifications listed as essential for the post.

Applicants from overseas

You will be required to provide evidence of your right to work in the UK. **If you are invited for interview, our recruitment team will ask you for the documents.**
If you have any queries about your eligibility to work please contact the Recruitment Team.
If you are a national from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia or Slovenia you may have to register with the UK Border Agency
if we offer you employment.

If you are a national of Bulgaria or Romania, please indicate this on your application form as you will need permission from the UK Border Agency before you take up employment.

Valuing diversity, equality & fairness

The House of Commons Service recognises and values the diversity of its staff and is committed to developing working practices which will allow everyone to contribute his or her best, regardless of race, sex, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other irrelevant factor.

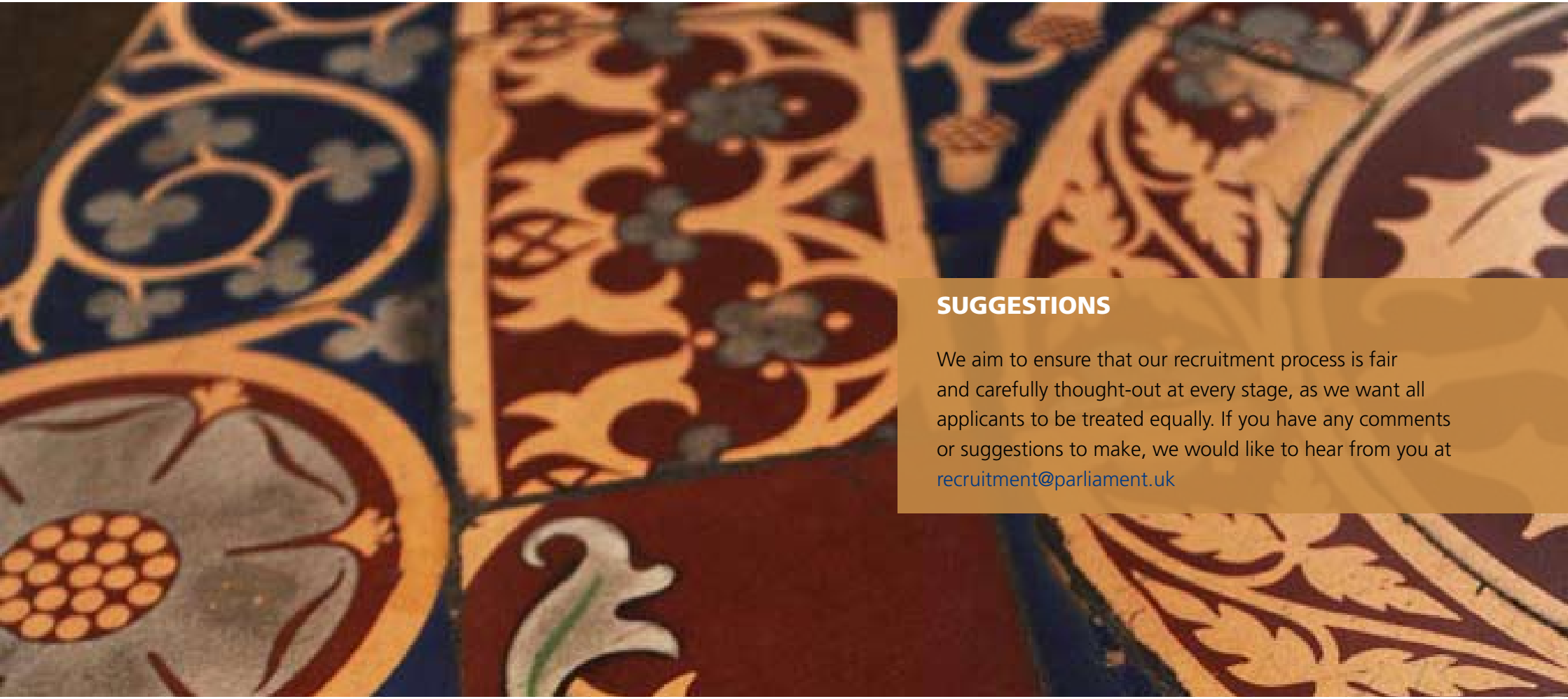
Staff are expected to behave in a way that promotes dignity and respect at work at all times, and to uphold the House's core values of integrity, professionalism, teamwork, recognition and commitment.

Current and prospective staff benefit from a range of policies, including:

1. House of Commons Single Equality Scheme. This promotes equality of opportunity and positive attitudes, encourages participation, and protects staff from unlawful discrimination and harassment
2. Training and development opportunities are available to all staff. We support many staff through higher and further education, professional qualifications and provide extensive personal and professional development opportunities at all levels.
3. Corporate Social Responsibility encourages staff to take part in our community volunteering programme and supports a range of parliamentary outreach initiatives.

Further information

You can read the House of Commons staff handbook at http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/HofCHandBk.pdf.



SUGGESTIONS

We aim to ensure that our recruitment process is fair and carefully thought-out at every stage, as we want all applicants to be treated equally. If you have any comments or suggestions to make, we would like to hear from you at recruitment@parliament.uk