

# Recruitment and selection in the energy industry

## Introduction

Businesses need to recruit and select the best people. This helps them achieve their aims and objectives. This is particularly relevant in the fast-moving energy industry that plays such a significant role in powering the UK. ScottishPower, which is part of the wider Iberdrola Group, is a leading international energy company. It focuses on three key areas: growth, safety and service. There are three main business units:

- Energy Networks/UK - providing a secure and growing network to supply energy across the UK
- Energy Retail/UK - one of the UK's top suppliers of gas and electricity selling to 5.2 million UK customers
- Energy Wholesale/UK - trading large quantities of energy and supplying energy in bulk to the UK market.

ScottishPower's sister company, ScottishPower Renewables, is also part of the Iberdrola Group. It provides renewable energy and is the leading provider of green energy products in the UK. These have low carbon emissions and use renewable sources of energy, such as wind power. ScottishPower and ScottishPower Renewables are at the forefront of innovation and are involved in major engineering challenges. These range from wind farms and **hydro-electric power** to **tidal turbines**, gas power stations and new technology to produce clean energy, such as the groundbreaking **carbon capture** development.

ScottishPower and ScottishPower Renewables offer a diverse range of career opportunities.

Careers with ScottishPower			
Energy Networks	Energy Wholesale	Energy Retail	Corporate Team (Head Office)
e.g. Project Manager, Civil Engineer, Apprentices, Tradespeople	e.g. Mechanical Engineer, Financial Controller, Tradespeople	e.g. Call Centre Agent or Team Managers	e.g. Human Resources Manager

ScottishPower understands that **employability** is at the heart of an economically prosperous and vibrant society. The company actively engages with its communities by delivering a number of educational and vocational programmes. These programmes are aimed at improving the employability of young people and providing potential workforce talent. This approach means that ScottishPower is viewed as an 'employer of choice'.

## The role of Human Resource Management

People are one of the most important resources used by any organisation. ScottishPower recognises that it is 'powered by people'. **Human Resource Management (HRM)** is concerned with organising and looking after people in the workplace. On a day-to-day basis this includes recruitment, selection, training and development and assessing staff performance. An important part of HRM is workforce planning. This involves getting the right people in the right place at the right time. It also involves identifying the numbers of people required to enable the business to operate at full efficiency. These people need to have the right skills to do the job. Part of workforce planning therefore involves planning development opportunities. Development increases the skills of the current workforce. The energy industry is changing quickly which means it is important to recruit and train people with the capability to carry out new jobs. This is particularly essential in the growing renewable energy sector.



### CURRICULUM TOPICS

- Human resource management
- Recruitment
- Selection
- Skills and competencies

### GLOSSARY

**Hydroelectric power:** electricity generated through the power of the gravitational force of falling water.

**Tidal turbines:** used to harness the power of tides and turn it into a useful form of energy, e.g. electricity.

**Carbon capture:** technology that filters out carbon emissions from power station gases before release into the environment.

**Employability:** a person has enough skills and abilities so that a company wants to employ them.

**Human resource management:** the management and development of an organisation and its people.



**GLOSSARY**

**Recruitment:** the process of identifying the need for a new employee, defining the job, attracting candidates and selecting those best suited for the job.

**Selection:** the process of choosing which person to appoint from those that apply for a job vacancy.

**Entry levels:** different points in a company's structure at which people may join.

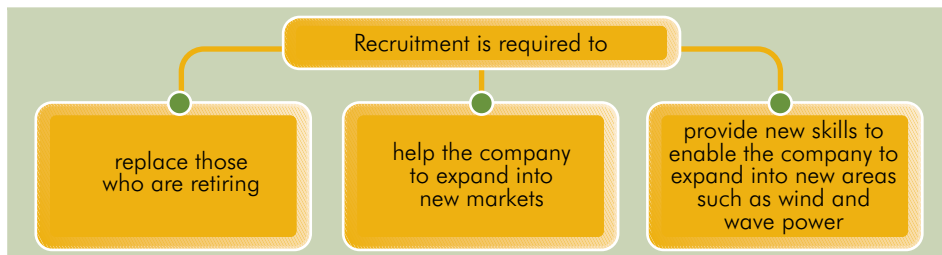
**Apprenticeship:** individuals taken on by a business, which agrees to train them for a particular trade or role, to gain a recognised qualification within that industry.

**Skills:** specific abilities, attributes and techniques.

**Assessment centre:** the place where the final evaluation and testing of candidates takes place, which may be run by the recruiting company or an external body on its behalf.

**Competencies:** areas of activity in which a firm or individual is particularly strong, e.g. research and development, product innovation.

**Psychometric testing:** a set of short questions which when analysed give an outline of a particular candidate's personality.



ScottishPower aims to provide a positive **recruitment** and **selection** experience for every employee and prospective employee. ScottishPower is committed to equal opportunities for everyone regardless of factors such as race, sex, age or disability.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment into ScottishPower takes place at a number of **entry levels**. Two of the most important of these are at the apprentice level and at that of graduate trainee. Since the 1990s recruitment activity for large companies often takes place online. In addition, specific jobs may be advertised in the local or national press. The ScottishPower website provides a wealth of detail about the company and careers. It makes it possible for applicants to download details and application forms for Modern Apprenticeships and Graduate Programmes. In both cases, applicants must meet minimum requirements of qualifications or experience. Literature about careers with ScottishPower is available through the Careers Service in schools and universities.

**Apprenticeships**

**Apprenticeships** allow new employees to earn a good wage while working and learning new skills. They lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The qualification is specifically related to job relevant **skills**. Apprenticeships are at two levels: Apprenticeships – Level 2 are equivalent to five good GCSE passes or Standard grades; Advanced Apprenticeships – Level 3 are equivalent to two A-level passes or Higher grades.

The Apprenticeship programme at ScottishPower lasts three to four years and blends training with work based learning and assessment. To apply for an Apprenticeship programme an applicant must complete an online application form. ScottishPower then invites applicants to attend an **assessment centre**. Here candidates undertake practical and written tests. They are then interviewed to check that they have the **competencies** required to fill the job. This is followed by a medical to check their fitness levels.

**Graduate programmes**

ScottishPower's Graduate programmes are for candidates with a university degree. The graduate programme lasts two years and is tailored to each graduate's individual aspirations and business requirements. Candidates need to be able to demonstrate in their application form their motivation (why they want the job) and competency (their ability to carry out the job). Those candidates who meet ScottishPower's requirements are invited to a one-day session at an assessment centre. Selecting suitable candidates currently involves:

- a group exercise
- an individual presentation
- **psychometric testing**
- a competency-based interview.

**Skills and competencies**

ScottishPower states that *'at the heart of all business visions and activities it is the people whose individual efforts and performance make it happen.'* Its people need to have the necessary skills and competencies in order to carry out their roles effectively. ScottishPower has developed a competency framework. This sets out what behaviours employees need to have to perform job-related tasks. There are three main areas of competency which reflect the key skills ScottishPower employees must have:

- **Planning for the Future** – includes Strategy, Change Orientation, Innovation and Creativity
- **Delivering for the Customer** – includes Customer Focus, Delivering Results, Analysis and Decision Making
- **Working with Others** – includes Communication, Leadership, Building Relationships.



The competency framework enables ScottishPower to set out the abilities that are required to do certain jobs. For example, in relation to 'Working with Others' – the competency framework is set out as follows:

Competency area	Summary
Communication	Interacts with others, understands and conveys information clearly, able to communicate effectively in individual and group situations. Creates and shares vision, empowering individuals and teams to develop their full potential.
Leadership	Creates and shares vision, empowering individuals and teams to develop their full potential. Uses personal motivation to generate enthusiasm, engagement and achievement.
Building Relationships	Able to establish, build and maintain effective relationships. Interacts with others, understanding and conveying ideas clearly and convincingly.

This framework can also be used as part of ongoing **performance reviews** to measure how well a person is performing in a particular job. The competencies are set at three levels according to the level of responsibility an individual has. This is illustrated by taking the example of the different levels an employee will achieve for 'Customer Focus'.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Customer Focus	Responds to customer requests	Improves service to customers	Anticipates future customer needs

When recruiting new employees ScottishPower sets out its skills requirements in two key documents.

### Job description

Key elements of the **job description** include:

- the purpose of the job and its main responsibilities and tasks
- who the job reports to
- its location and salary scale
- the skills and competencies needed to carry out the job.

### Person specification

The **person specification** describes:

- the personal qualities an individual will need to perform the job in question
- what qualifications, experience, skills and abilities are essential to carry out the key objectives of the job and which are desirable
- a candidate must have the 'essential' elements; being able to demonstrate the 'desirable' factors gives him or her an advantage during selection.

Together the person specification and the job description should contain enough information to attract appropriate people. Candidates are able to match their own skills and qualifications to what is specified. These documents also act as a checking device for the business, enabling recruiters to make sure that applicants with the right skills are chosen for interview.

## Selection

The **selection** process involves identifying talented individuals. The company particularly requires individuals with a business or engineering background.



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### GLOSSARY

**Performance reviews:** regular meetings that take place between a job holder and their line manager to discuss how well the job holder is performing in relation to expected targets.

**Job description:** A document setting out the key responsibilities and tasks involved in performing a particular job.

**Person specification:** Details of the personal qualities an individual will need to perform a particular job.

**Selection:** the process of choosing which person to appoint from those that apply for a job vacancy.





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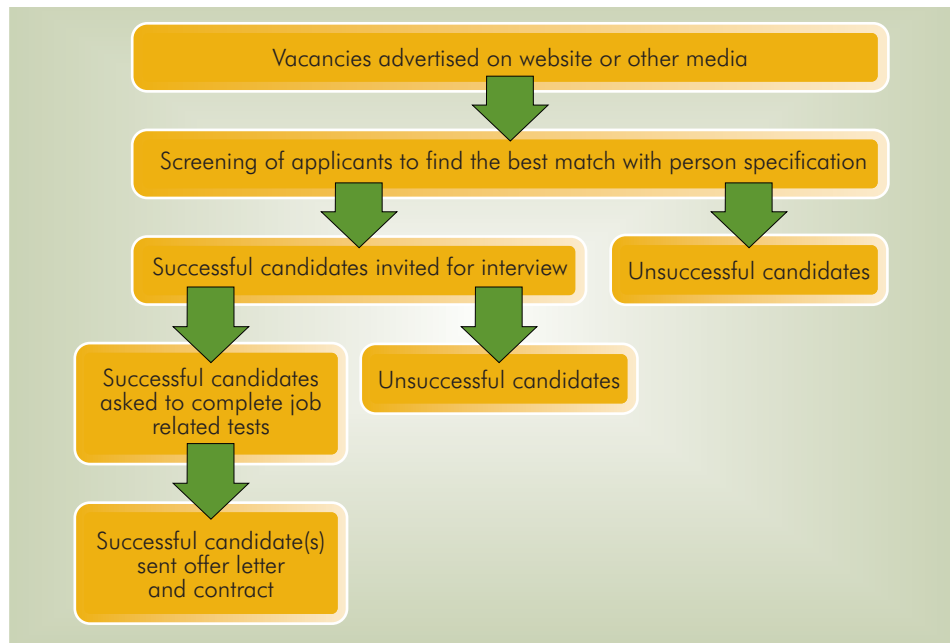
### GLOSSARY

**Aims:** the general end purposes towards which an organisation focuses its activities.

**Objectives:** the end purposes that an organisation or individual seeks to achieve.

**Competitive advantage:** a strategic element that enables an organisation to compete more effectively than its rivals.

The typical steps in the selection process are:



The process of selection gives candidates different ways of presenting themselves to best advantage. A clear and compelling application form showing what a candidate has achieved is the first element. At interview, he or she then has the opportunity of expanding and explaining their suitability for the role. In assessment and role play exercises, applicants can demonstrate key competencies such as team working, planning capabilities and leadership potential. This is important as ScottishPower looks for those people who will have the capacity to develop both themselves and the business.



Selection for ScottishPower also involves identifying people with particular personal qualities including a passion for achieving the highest standards. These include, for example, having the ability to communicate and influence others. Having these skills and capabilities within the business will help it meet its **aims** and **objectives**. It should also give it a **competitive advantage**. In return, the new recruit benefits from comprehensive training and will have the opportunity for personal development. For example, he or she may be able to undertake further study and work towards relevant professional qualifications.



## Conclusion

ScottishPower employees may join the company at a number of levels including Apprentice and Graduate Trainee. Determining how many people and what skills the business needs is a key element of workforce planning. Getting the right people to apply so that ScottishPower can select the best applicants requires a structured approach to recruitment and selection.

Detailed job descriptions and person specifications help ScottishPower to attract the appropriate skills and abilities. The selection process is supported by a range of appropriate tests to check the fit between a candidate and the competencies required by the business.

## Questions

1. Define the terms recruitment and selection.
2. What are the main differences between Apprentice and Graduate level entry at ScottishPower? What methods can ScottishPower use to recruit new employees at these levels?
3. What is meant by 'workforce planning'? How does this help an organisation like ScottishPower?
4. How are job descriptions and person specifications used as recruitment tools at ScottishPower?



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