



**THE  
INVESTMENT20/20  
GUIDE TO  
HIRING FOR  
POTENTIAL**

**INVESTMENT** 20/20

*See your future in finance*

Part of The Investment Association

# RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & PRODUCTIVITY

Investment20/20 is an industry careers service with a specific focus on widening access to diverse talent at entry level.

This guide is for hiring managers looking to recruit entry level talent. It comprises input from established Investment20/20 employers and will equip you with the tools to feel more confident in hiring school/college leavers and graduates with 'potential' from as wide a pool as possible.

Investment20/20's aim is to put diversity and inclusion at the centre of your grassroots talent strategy – a strategy which can lead to significant improvements in your business's productivity and enrich its culture. We are looking to open a career in investment management to everyone with potential regardless of their background.

The case for ensuring a diverse workforce is widely accepted due to its value in providing a new perspective in complex decision making. Diversity of thought increases the chances of creative ideas being found and decreases the chances of poor solutions being adopted.

This guide provides a framework to help you be more inclusive in your recruitment process and to avoid common problems when you interview candidates. It is not a standalone guide, or a substitute for training on recruitment techniques and it does not give advice on the recruitment of specific diversity groups. But it should make you feel comfortable in putting away your usual script and adopting a less structured, but proven approach.

# WHAT IS A GOOD INVESTMENT TRAINEE?

“**‘Good’ is someone who demonstrates transferable skills, interest in the job and a desire to embrace the programme.**”

**Investment20/20 trainees can fill a range of junior roles.**

- They are keen to learn, adaptable and excited by the opportunity.
- They challenge accepted practice and embrace new approaches.
- They come with the skills and diversity of thought that will help you meet future market demands.
- They are typically on the London Living Wage or just above taking into account regional weighting.
- They are employed in a defined entry-level role with clear objectives where they can quickly add value.

# THE GUIDELINES



## 1 IMPLEMENT A ONE YEAR TRAINEE PROGRAMME

The one-year programme gives you the opportunity to gain extensive knowledge of the candidate and their suitability for a full-time role before offering them a permanent position. If they deliver and you offer them a permanent contract, you know who you are getting.

It also gives the young people you hire time to consider if this is the career path they would like to pursue before you start to invest significant amounts in their long term development. The percentage of trainees that have been offered permanent roles to date is 77%.

## 2 TAILORED APPROACHABLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

**Content:** Ask yourself what essential skills are needed for the role, e.g. numerical skills for settlements and writing skills for marketing. What is desirable but not essential? Identify the skills that the trainee could learn on the job and through training. The more skills you list as essential, and the more barriers you put in place, the more you narrow the diversity of your applicant base. Be mindful of skills that might favour young people with networks and connections, e.g. a requirement that the trainee must be comfortable communicating with senior people. This will naturally favour candidates who have had exposure to senior people either through work experience or in their personal capacity.

“ **Changing our recruitment process has given us access to raw talent, and more diversity than we get with experienced entrants and graduate trainees** ”

**Terminology:** Write clearly and use simple terminology appropriate to people with no experience of financial services. People who are not familiar with the industry are unlikely for example to know what ‘institutional investor’ means or what a ‘bond’ is.

**Language:** Online gender decoders can help you screen for gendered language. For example, ‘ambitious’ and ‘analytical’ are masculine coded words. Research has shown that to encourage more females to apply, it may be better to write ‘proactive and delivery focused with a real can-do attitude’ instead of ‘ambitious’. ‘Analytical’ can be replaced with ‘curious, likes interpreting information and problem solving’.

**Tone:** We know from our research with young people that we are perceived as having a distinct mould that doesn’t welcome difference and people worry that they won’t fit in. To counter this, can you come across as relevant and welcoming and say what is important in your department? Students will relate more to your culture and attitude to servicing your customers than to how many assets under management you have.

**Distribution:** Reach as wide and as rich a range of candidates as possible contacting schools, colleges and universities that you don’t typically hire from. Investment20/20 has 3,700 contacts and its goal is to continue to enrich the diversity and flow of applicants for your posts.

“ **Remember your audience and outline what the trainee needs to start the programme, not what you expect at the end** ”

### 3 LOOK FOR THE SPARK

Ask applicants to answer 2 or 3 open-ended questions in a limited number of words, so they can show you their 'spark' even though they may have a limited experience. Their answers tell you more about a person than a CV and is a leveller! The best potential trainees may not have been taught how to produce a CV. They may have had a tough time at school and not have had the opportunity to do work experience or extra-curricular activities.

#### SAMPLE QUESTIONS AT APPLICATION STAGE:

- Tell us about the most interesting project or piece of work you have completed as part of your studies at either school/college or university. What did you have to do and what interested you most about it?
- Give an example of a time when you have had a number of tasks to deliver at the same time and how you prioritised and ensured you did not miss any deadlines?
- Describe a team project that you have delivered successfully. What did you accomplish? How did the team work together?
- Why are you applying to us for this traineeship programme?
- Tell us what you think it means to make a difference, and describe a time when you have demonstrated this?
- Tell us about a news story that you found interesting and why?
- What is the most challenging situation you have faced and how did you deal with it?

**SCREENING APPLICATIONS:** Remember this programme is designed to capture a more diverse candidate base.

- Look for the ‘spark’ in their answers to open-ended questions; essentially, you are looking for mental agility, integrity and drive – for barometers of future potential, that you can explore more deeply during the interview stage.
- Use CVs sparingly, if at all – to check for essential skills relevant to the role and any threshold qualifications you may have chosen, for example, A to C GCSE Maths and English, and maybe for some extra-curricular activities. Some employers may use blind CVs – anonymising personal details and removing any information that might indicate gender or ethnicity. You can also take out school and university names to help avoid any unconscious biases.
- Telephone interviews can be another helpful tool at this stage as are video interviews.
- Flag anything that leads you to think they might be a risky hire, such as not following the instructions, careless mistakes, or, no indication they have read the job spec. Be mindful though that spelling errors may be due to dyslexia rather than lack of attention to detail.
- Focus on candidates who have the skills the rest of the team lacks rather than replacing the person who has left.
- Avoid duplication with your more traditional graduate recruitment. Ask yourself if the candidate could be successful on a more traditional graduate programme and if this programme is right for them. Actively seek those from ‘new’ universities (former polytechnics) who are less likely to come through traditional graduate programmes.

## 4 'BEYOND THE SCRIPT' FLEXIBLE INTERVIEWS

**INTERVIEWS:** Line managers have a key role in ensuring that there is no unconscious bias – any inherent tendency to gravitate towards people like yourself – because you know the purpose is to tap into a broader talent pool. Be careful in using traditional recruitment tools as they may not be tuned in to creating greater diversity.

- While you may start with a prepared script to ensure that all applicants receive a similar and fair interview, it is important to be engaging and flexible and probe beyond the script to assess for potential. Being interviewed is a learnt skill and young applicants, who have not been coached and supported by adults with experience, are unlikely to be adept at providing information unprompted and often will not have had any interview practice. They may be nervous and shy – slouching or not making eye contact does not mean they are disinterested.

“ It may seem like a ‘leap of faith’ – risky ”

- Remember what it felt like in your first job interview. Very few potential trainees will have had ‘relevant’ work experience – try not to favour those who do as they are likely to have gained their experience from their network. Applicants are likely to be confused between investment management and investment banking

and they may not know what a ‘bond’ is, though you should expect them to have read the job spec and learnt a little from your website. The questions they ask you will be evidence of their preparation and their enthusiasm.

- How they look is not important, though you might expect them to have made an effort to look tidy.
- Rather than ask if they will fit into the team, ask yourself if they bring a fresh lens that your existing team is missing.
- Find out what they enjoy doing – for example, what have they chosen to do outside school or university and why. You are learning about their aptitude as well as discovering what they are good at. You are assessing their strengths as well as their competencies.
- Some firms use assessment centres for their Investment20/20 trainees, but many don’t. In any case, group exercises for the candidates can demonstrate their contribution in a team.

**“ If they have experienced difficult circumstances at home, and yet are still achieving at school, this speaks volumes – far better than three A\*s ”**

## FINAL SELECTION

- Be ready to explain your choices with colleagues.
- Document your reasons for selecting particular applicants.
- Have post interview meetings with all the line managers involved in case two or more teams want the same person and to check that your aims for diversity and talent are being met.
- Offer feedback to applicants, particularly those who have not been successful, to help them to prepare for future interviews.
- Track your process and refer back to it. What has worked well, what less so? Learn from it before you start again next year.

# LOOKING AFTER INVESTMENT20/20 TRAINEES

- Be transparent and open – communicate frequently.
- Pay a fair wage to every trainee you take adhering to the London Living Wage benchmark.
- You are offering them 12 months work experience with the intention of employing them at the end and scope to learn on the job.
- Familiarise them with your systems and train them to use them.
- Aim to give them the best chance of success and to build their confidence in their abilities and scope to learn.
- Non-rotational work allows them to gain expertise in a particular area and start to contribute to the business as soon as possible.
- Appoint a line manager and a mentor who gives feedback and guidance.
- Encourage trainees to participate in Investment20/20's networking and training events.
- Allow them to start an introductory qualification.
- Set them an objective to go back to their schools/colleges and universities as 'ambassadors' to talk about their experience with you and Investment20/20.

## THE PROCESS



**3**

**Screening**

**4**

**Interviews**

**5**

**Group review before  
making offer**

**GO TO THE  
DIFFERENCE –  
OPEN YOUR  
DOORS WIDE**

**NURTURE  
NEWCOMERS**

**BE OBJECTIVE  
AS YOU  
RECRUIT**

Investment20/20 is an industry careers service promoting entry-level talent, diversity and inclusion within the investment industry.

We have supported over 1,350 trainees and apprentices for our 40+ partner firms from the sector since we were founded in 2013.

Our aims are to ensure an increasingly wide range of students can access the knowledge they need to make an informed decision; to make opportunities easier to find and applications more straightforward; and to engender a positive perception of the industry amongst all the students in 3,700 schools, colleges and universities with which the programme communicates. We also provide valuable training and networking opportunities in London and Edinburgh to new recruits into the sector.

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