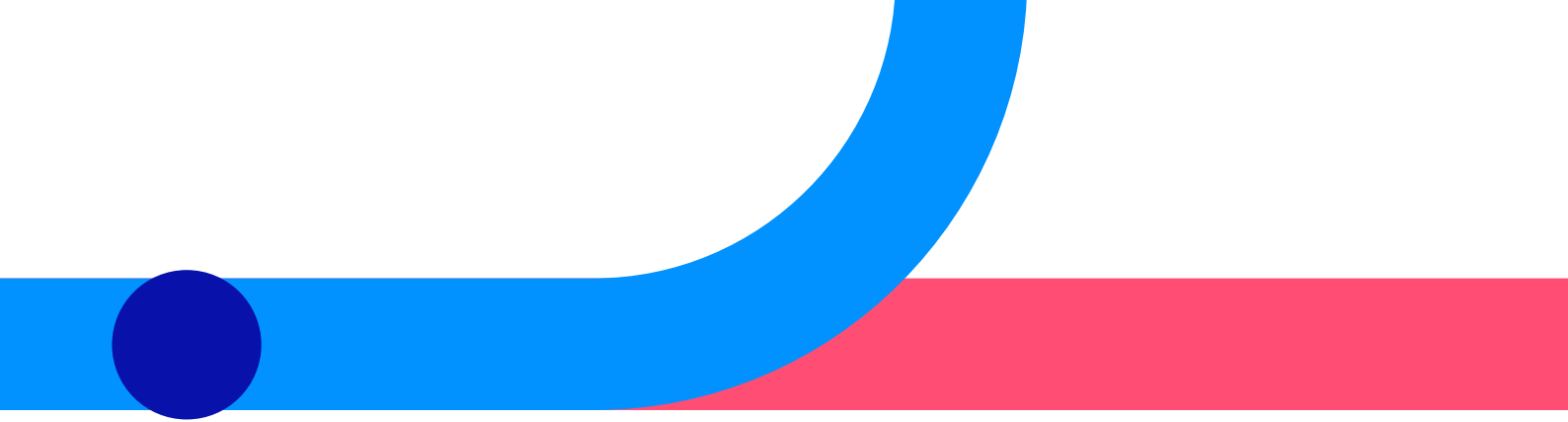# Implicit Bias Handbook

For Interviewers

stuart.

Diversity
Equity
Inclusion

Hi Stuwies! As a manager within our amazing company, you will be responsible for nurturing and growing your team. To make sure that you have the best possible experience and a positive impact on your teams, we have created this resource as a way to discuss / share an important topic.

This workbook will explore Implicit Bias and its effect on diversity. At present, Stuart is an international melting pot with people from 90+ countries. We like to celebrate what makes us different and encourage even more diversity for the future!

Below is a list of some of the things that make us diverse. This list is non exhaustive but will help you visualise some of the groups our Stuwies are part of!

- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Neurodiversity**
- **Sexuality**
- **Religion**
- **Educational background**
- **Physical Disability**

Diversity of people brings diversity of thought, this has been repeatedly studied and described by numerous organisations throughout the years. In particular Gender diversity benefits organizations regardless of size, studies, McKinsey & Co.'s *"Delivering Through Diversity"* report links gender diversity and financial performance, and companies in the top quartile for gender diversity in 2017 were 21 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability - which is great for Stuart!

After reading this document, our hope is that you will have some of the tools needed to better facilitate a more inclusive and aligned recruitment process with our lovely TA team!

How to put this into action!

We can facilitate an awareness of Bias in a number of ways within the Recruitment process. Bias is common, not something to be ashamed of as we all have our Biases' (whether they are conscious or not!) but we must do as much as we can, to actively eradicate bias from our Stuart Interview Processes.

There are more than 150 types of biases, here are the ones you are most likely to encounter within Recruitment!

Cognitive biases

Halo / Horns Effect

This is the tendency to quickly like (or dislike) everything about a person – especially on traits or competencies you have not observed or evaluated. For example, automatically favouring or disliking a candidate based on a company they have worked for or a university they have attended

For example: "when you connect with someone over a common love of dogs" or "remember the time when x happened in the professor's lecture"

Over valuing passion

There is a tendency in interviews to equate charm and enthusiasm with a candidate's passion for the job. Passion is better defined by grit – demonstrating resilience, persistence, and determination, which may not be immediately apparent in less extroverted candidates.

For example "when you bond with someone in an interview and spend a lot of time chatting, but not as much time assessing the skills they need to be successful in the role !"

Ingroup bias

Ingroup bias refers to the unfair favouring of someone from one's own group, whether this be, race, gender, work experience, educational history etc. It is the mirroring effect, sometimes it is very easy to hire other versions of ourselves!

For example, favouring a candidate because they studied an MBA in the same University as you over someone with similar qualifications!

Confirmation bias

Confirmation bias is when we focus our attention on what we already think and know.

For example, refusing to interview a candidate from a particular company due to having a bad previous experience with another candidate from the same company.

Conformity bias

Conformity bias is the tendency people have to act similarly to the people around them. Strategies to avoid conformity bias will include enabling a safe environment where people feel

safe to speak up and are not afraid of making mistakes. Such as individual blind submission of feedback!

For example, if you are one of 3 interviewers on a panel and you felt that the candidate had potential, so were about to vote (Yes). However, just before your submission you see that the other interviewers vote to say (NO) to hire the candidate. Seeing this you decide to change your initial vote.

Negativity Bias

Negativity bias provides us with a much worse outlook on things than the actual reality. Our mood can trigger negativity bias, and the same applies if we are hungry or tired. It is essential to be aware of this influence and avoid making important decisions then. Equally, there are a few powerful questions to quiet negativity bias.

What are the positives related to the person or situation?

What opportunities would I be missing out on if I say no to this person, decision or situation?

What is the worst that could happen? What does it mean in practical terms, and what would I do?

Step One:
Qualifying the Role!

Once we've decided that there is a definite need for a new Stuwie within the team, we need to identify the qualities we would like candidates to demonstrate to prove their suitability for our vacancy. The easiest way of ensuring we are fair in our assessment of potential candidates is to outline the qualities we feel are the most important/ relevant for this job rather than relying on subjectivity or personality traits.

These are called competencies. Competencies can either be classified as hard or soft skills. Hard skills are the things you either "have" or "don't have". For example, technical skills, when thinking about the hard skills for a Business Analyst role, we can consider:

Excel - Is there a particular formula or technique we need the candidate to have experience with?

Python - what is the level of proficiency needed for a candidate to be successful in this role?

Tableau - Does the candidate need commercial experience with this or can we support/ can they learn this on the job?

Soft skills can also be described as transferable skills. These are the skills you can pick up from working in a variety of roles, but are especially important in the world of business and internally for us at Stuart!

Many of us work on projects with other teams / departments and rely on these skills more than we realise! Examples of these skills are:

- **Communication**
- **Stakeholder Management**
- **People Management**
- **Empathy**
- **Negotiation / Influence**
- **Teamwork**
- **Problem Solving**

When looking to assess these competencies, it is important to remember that there is no one solution for every situation. It can be very helpful to use Situational Questioning to assess this. Situation questioning allows you to directly see into the mind of the candidate, exploring how they would approach a problem or scenario.

For example to assess the soft skill:

Project Management

Tell me about something smart you've implemented when you have a

high workload. (Here, we can expect examples around Technology have implemented or techniques/systems they came up with)

Negotiation / Influence

Tell me about a time when you have influenced an internal or external stakeholder. How did you influence them and what was the outcome of this influence? (From this, we are looking for them to discuss, the steps they took to persuade someone to take their idea/project into consideration, and what they did/ said/ demonstrated to convince the stakeholder)

Step Two:
Attracting the right profile

Candidate attraction pretty much does what it says on the tin, and we as TA use a variety of techniques to entice people to apply, and potentially join us one being Job Descriptions or Adverts!

As a Hiring Manager it is important for you to be conscious of three things when setting out to create a job description:

- **Making it exciting**
- **Inclusive Language**
- **Gender Bias**

Make it exciting!!

It may seem obvious, but try to make the Job advert as exciting as possible!

Give insight into the wider team the person will be joining, the mission of that team and anything else that will help a potential Stuwie to visualise themselves in the role!
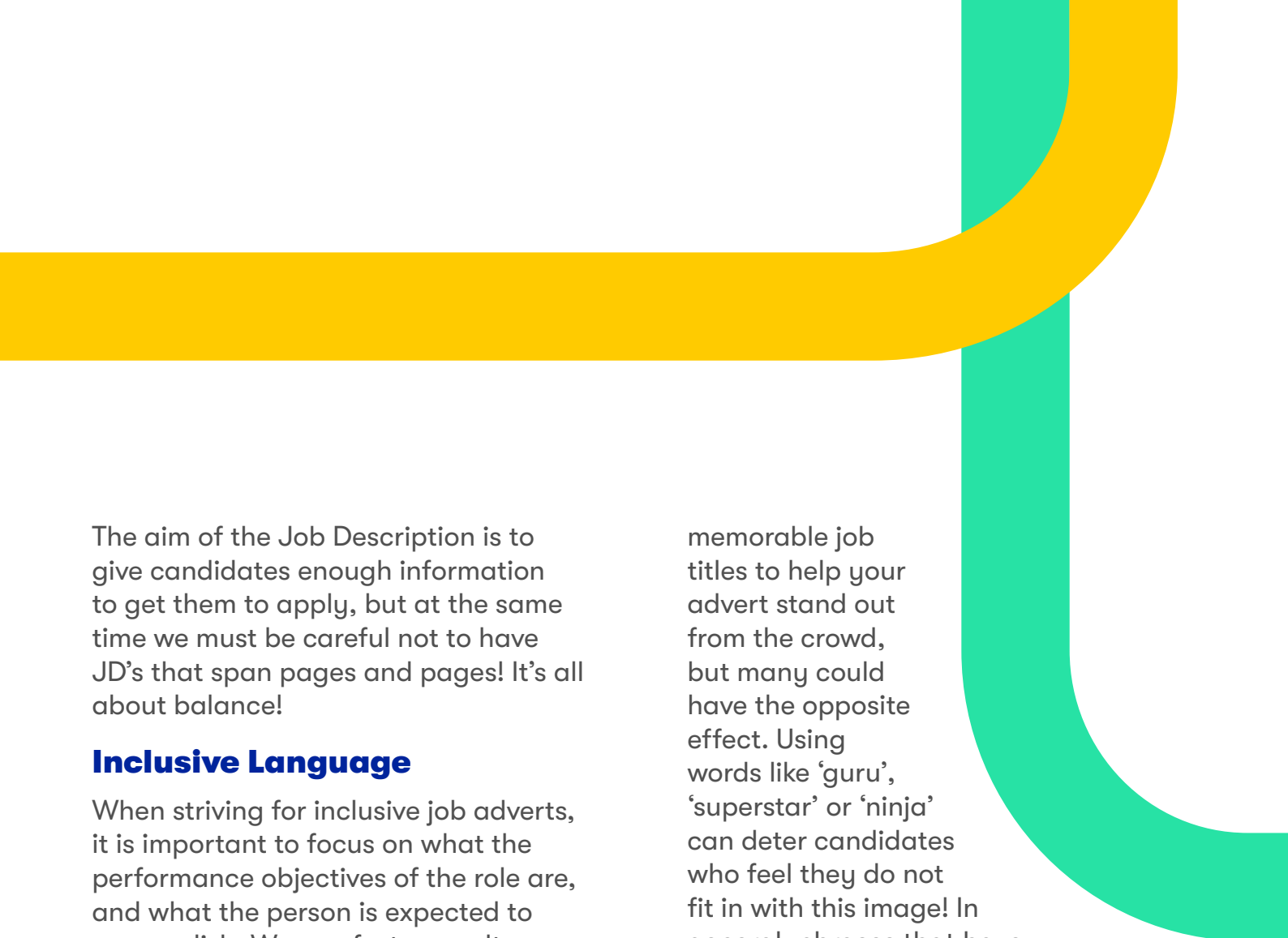
Go into detail about the type of profile you would like to see apply. Instead of just saying "Team Player"

You can say something like "We have fostered a collaborative environment, working closely together to share ideas and would love for you to do the same!"

OR

Instead of having a bullet point simply saying "Independent" You could say something like:

We're looking for a self starter - Able to take ownership of projects & meet deadlines;

The aim of the Job Description is to give candidates enough information to get them to apply, but at the same time we must be careful not to have JD's that span pages and pages! It's all about balance!

Inclusive Language

When striving for inclusive job adverts, it is important to focus on what the performance objectives of the role are, and what the person is expected to accomplish. We can foster a culture of inclusivity within our adverts by emphasising some points as 'desirable but not vital' and promoting the importance of training and development development! We have amazing resources with the StuAcademy!

A study carried out in Belgium highlighted that women are less likely to apply to job adverts that include personality requirements that are phrased "in a task directed way", as opposed to a trait. For example, instead of writing 'you are calm', it is better to use 'you are able to remain calm under pressure'. Such preference is linked to the way females are typically stereotyped, so avoid this.

As discussed above, we need to make our JDs as exciting as possible so it might be tempting to use catchy or memorable job titles to help your advert stand out from the crowd, but many could have the opposite effect. Using words like 'guru', 'superstar' or 'ninja' can deter candidates who feel they do not fit in with this image! In general, phrases that have combative connotations, like ninja, can indicate a hostile working environment to applicants who do not fall within majority demographics. It is also good practice to avoid the use of heavy jargon or strict seniority demands.

Gender Bias

Certain words we use, regardless of whether we realise it or not can be perceived to be Masculine and some to be Feminine. We must be careful when writing Job Descriptions, if the majority of the words used are classified as "Masculine" for example, we are subsequently likely to have a higher proportion of male applicants!

Studies have shown that male and female applicants browse jobs in a similar way, but the way they apply is different. Men apply for a job when

they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them. This simple fact could help us to understand why Females are typically underrepresented in Tech. So selecting a higher proportion of "Female coded" words to be used in a Job Description or Advert, could help us bridge the gap and encourage more females to apply to our open roles!

If you're ever unsure, you can use an online gender decoder! This tool uses AI to read and tally the number of "masculine coded" words against "feminine coded words". The aim would be to have a neutrally coded job advertisement, but studies have also shown that male candidates will apply to roles that are "strongly feminine" coded as well. So we can attract male and female candidates with either neutral or feminine coded adverts! (**http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/**)
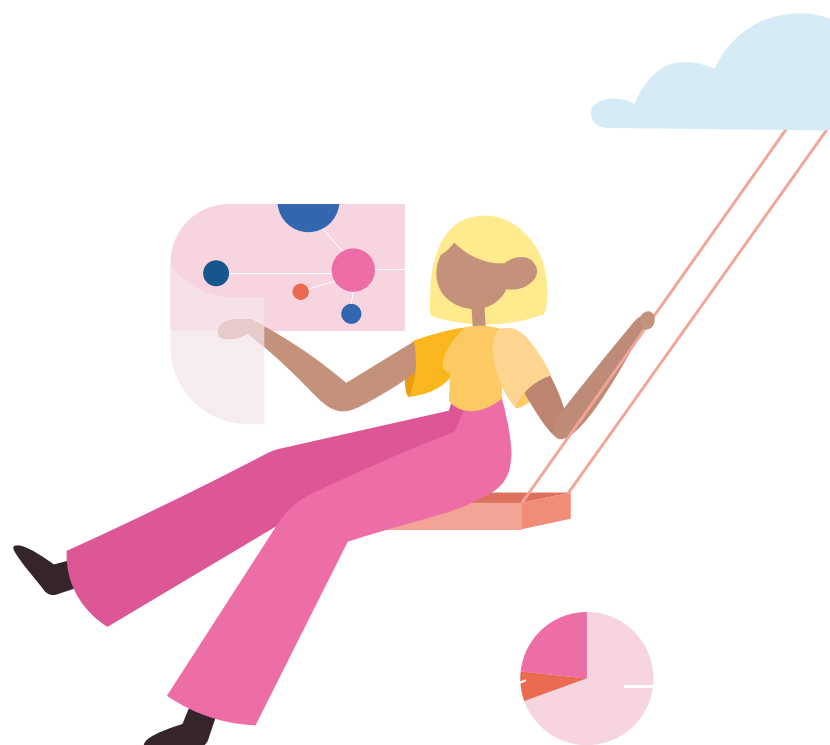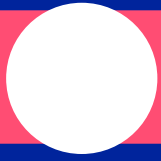
Below are some examples of masculine coded words.
The words in brackets show gender neutral alternatives to these words:

strong
(able, proven, exceptional,
sound, steady, excellent, solid)

lead
(head, top person, manager, run,
head up, manage, steer, grow, pioneer)

analysis
(investigation, study, test,
testing, research, data)

individuals
(people, team members, applicants)

decisions
(choices, conclusions, judgments,
moves, outcomes, steps, actions)

driven
(passionate, inspired, energized,
motivated, spirited, guided, fueled, oriented)

competitive
(attractive, fair, results-oriented,
enthusiastic, comparative)

expert
(professional, pro, experienced,
vadept, skilled, trained)

objectives
(priorities, targets, goals,
aims, intentions, purposes)

principles
(values, beliefs, rules, benefits, ideas,
practices, morals, ideals, standards)

The success of 'Candidate Attraction' can be influenced by many factors, some we as Stuwies will not have too much say over like, company pension, maternity/ paternity schemes, flexible working policy or other company benefits. But others we can directly influence, such as Employer Branding! Employer success by using techniques to entice!

Employer Branding will directly influence the notability of our brand and company. Some candidates are more likely to apply to a role if they have heard of the company, or seen their logo beforehand. This is potentially one of the hardest factors to overcome when launching a new office location, and trying to recruit Stuwies to join a brand new office! When this happens, we can use targeted marketing to bring brand awareness. Things like speaking at conferences, hosting forums on topics that interest/ concern the Stuart brand or even something small like liking or sharing Stuart blog or job posts with your wider network all help to get our name out there!

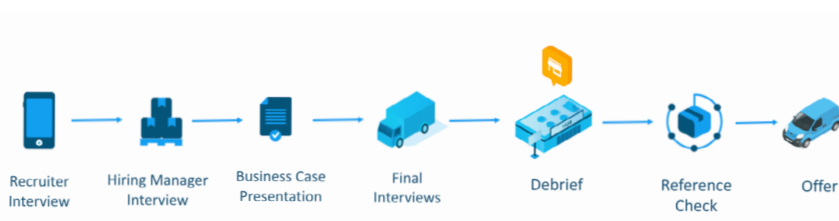## Step Three: Scoping the right profile!

Once we have identified the competencies we will be assessing we can use this as a way of screening CVs. Candidates often display their 'Hard' or Technical Skills on their CVs so this can be easy to look for. If a candidate has submitted a cover letter, they may mention their Soft skills so this could be one way of reviewing. If not, we can check their Soft skills via their application questions, or a screening call, this is where the TA team comes in to support you!

Step Four : Designing the Interview Process

Once we have clarity around which of the aspects of the role align to the competencies we will assess. We can start to put together a full recruitment process. For this to happen you must consider how many steps are necessary to confirm a candidate's suitability!

In Stuart we strive to ensure that all candidates have a really positive experience with us, and when asked, most candidates would prefer that employers aim to have as short an interview process as possible!

We aim to have a process similar in length to the below:

Recruiter Interview → Hiring Manager Interview → Business Case Presentation → Final Interviews → Debrief → Reference Check → Offer

For technical roles the Business case can be replaced with an appropriate step that will facilitate the review of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses (i.e Technical Test / Analytics Exercise etc.)

Unification

One of the easiest ways of removing Bias from a process, is to simply make each candidate's experience identical! Luckily we have a great way of ensuring this can happen! We use scorecards / feedback forms.

These scorecards will detail the title of the competency each interviewer will be assessing, as well as the questions you have chosen to be used to evidence this.

This prevents any deviation in an interview scenario, and will mitigate bias within your process. As an aside, there will be situations where you may need to question a candidate further, with the hopes of gaining clarification or deeper understanding, this is fine as the main stem would be identical for each participant.

The Panel

When selecting interviewers to aid you in your selection process, it is important to ensure you are demonstrating Stuart's internal diversity where possible! Diverse candidates may feel more comfortable if there are people from the same or other groups present! Whilst not all groups have visible traits, it's important to do what we can to showcase how open we are!

Make a conscious effort to try and have to have a balance of males and females in the interview process, but where this is not possible, to have at least one female interviewer in the process. This interviewer doesn't have to be in the direct team the candidate will be joining, they can be a stakeholder the candidate may interact with assessing a competency Communication or Stakeholder Manager or Team fit / Stuart Values alignment.

Scoring

We currently use a CRM system that focuses on a simple 'Thumbs Up' or "Thumbs Down' approach to rating candidates. Whilst this is a great visual way of displaying the overall suitability, it is important to reinforce the Growth Mindset that we have in Stuart! We must continue to ask ourselves questions about the process and challenge our mindset.

Do we need 100% candidates or will a 80% candidate also be able to succeed in the role?

By this, we mean that sometimes it can be tempting to look for that ever elusive candidate that is perfect. But these candidates can take weeks, if not months to find. In the time you spend looking for this 'unicorn' you may have interviewed 10 -15 candidates who were 80% there; strong enough to get the role and with your training and support they would become the perfect 100% within a couple of months!

One way of qualifying whether a candidate has potential is by expanding the scoring system. Consider adding a numerical component to the simple system.

Scoring a candidate out of 3 or 5 will help you quantify how much need to be done for the candidate to improve, this way you can identify the weaker areas a candidate has!

Step Five: Debriefing!

Always debrief! It's important to get into the habit of holding regular debriefs. Debriefs allow the panel to discuss and share their perspective with other interviewers. Debriefs should ONLY be held once all interviewers have formally submitted their feedback. If debriefs and feedback is discussed before each party has submitted their individual feedback, we may risk falling into Confirmation bias.

The TA team strongly recommends holding debrief sessions even if all the feedback is positive or negative, to make sure that the panel is in constant alignment with the Hiring Manager's needs. Sharing as well as verbally discussing feedback is a great way of highlighting one's own biases, so we can challenge each other! If possible, please always invite the TA to any debriefs you hold, we can help challenge, and steer the focus so it remains objective!