

Engineering Hiring Checklist

Eleven conditions to satisfy before an engineering requisition is released

Most failed engineering searches are not sourcing failures. They are specification failures that only become visible after the first shortlist misses. This checklist front-loads the decisions that otherwise get made implicitly, in the wrong order, four weeks late.

Work through it in the intake meeting with the hiring manager present. If an item cannot be answered, that is the finding: the requisition is not ready to release.

1. Scope decomposition

A job title is not a scope. Decompose the role into what the engineer will actually touch.

- Systems and equipment: which platforms, voltages, protocols, vendors
- Project phase: design, pre-functional, functional testing, integrated testing, operations
- Documents owned: test scripts, coordination studies, punchlists, sequences of operation, as-builts
- Standards applied: which codes, client specifications and acceptance criteria
- Interfaces: who the engineer reports to, signs off with, and hands over to

2. Technical bar

Separate what must arrive on day one from what a competent engineer will learn in three weeks. Requisitions that mark everything essential exclude most of the qualified market.

- Must-have evidence, expressed as work performed rather than years served
- Trainable items explicitly labelled as trainable
- Platform flexibility: is a comparable platform acceptable, and which ones
- Judgement test: one scenario question the candidate must be able to reason through
- Agreement recorded from every interviewer on the panel

3. Compliance and site readiness

An engineer who cannot legally or practically reach the site is not a solution, however strong the technical fit.

- Worker classification decision and rationale
- Background, drug and medical screening requirements and their lead times
- Site induction, badging and escort access requirements
- Safety training required before first shift, including arc-flash and confined space where relevant
- Travel, visa and rotation eligibility, with per-diem treatment defined

4. Budget sanity check

Compare like with like before comparing a contract rate to a salary.

- Pay rate versus bill rate versus fully burdened cost, written out
- Overtime, shift, travel and per-diem assumptions stated
- Band tested against at least one external reference point
- Approval already in place for the top of the band, not just the midpoint
- Conversion cost modelled if contract-to-hire is possible

5. Process and decision rights

Search speed is usually lost inside the client's own calendar, not in sourcing.

- Interview panel named, with each interviewer's assigned dimension
- Interview slots pre-held for the next three weeks
- Decision maker identified, and their delegation limits confirmed
- Feedback turnaround committed to in working days
- Offer approval path mapped, including who signs and who can be absent

Release gate

Do not begin sourcing until every line below is true. Each unchecked line is a predictable delay later.

- Scope decomposed into systems, phase, documents and standards
- Must-have versus trainable separation agreed by the whole panel
- One scenario question defined for the technical screen
- Classification decision made and documented
- Screening and induction lead times added to the timeline



- Fully burdened budget approved at the top of the band
- Panel named with assigned dimensions
- Interview slots held
- Feedback turnaround committed
- Offer approval path mapped
- Required start date validated against the timeline, not assumed

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