

Addressing Selection Criteria

WORKING WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the key competencies required for a position; they include the skills, knowledge, experience, values and personal attributes required.

Some common examples of selection criteria include:

- Well-developed communication skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to work under pressure
- Ability to prioritise tasks
- Administrative and financial experience

When selection criteria are provided

Commonwealth and state government departments throughout Australia have a system whereby all the details of a position are available for applicants to help them prepare their application. This includes a position description and the skills and knowledge required (often referred to as the Selection Criteria or Knowledge and Skills Required). Non-government and many industry employers also produce formal selection criteria for applicants to address.

There are two types of criterion: essential and desirable. As an applicant you must address each criterion.

When selection criteria are not provided

If the organisation does not have any formal selection criteria for you to address, you must still tailor your application to their needs. You can do this by using some of the key words in the advertisement and attaching a supporting statement which is prepared in the same way as formal selection criteria.

When minimal information is provided

In very rare circumstances you will be provided with little or no information about the knowledge and skills that are required. In this case all you can do is prepare a very strong covering letter setting out your particular claims to the position.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING SELECTION CRITERIA

The basic guidelines for addressing selection criteria are as follows:

Collect the information

Ensure you gather all necessary material from the employer:

- get the position description;
- find out the knowledge and skills required;
- ask further questions to clarify issues by contacting personnel (indicated in the advertisement or position description); and
- don't assume any details without checking.

Identify each criterion

Write down each criterion and break it up into distinct, workable parts. For example, if one of the criterion statements reads "must have strong written and oral communication skills, the ability to work well in a team as well as high level negotiation and liaison skills", you need to divide the statement up as follows:

- strong written and oral communication skills;
- the ability to work well in a team;
- high level negotiation skills; and
- high level liaison skills.

Brainstorm your examples

You must address each part of all of the criteria listed, giving fairly equal attention to each. For each part, brainstorm as many examples as possible of your background in this area. Don't be too selective at this stage about what to include.

Revise and refine

When you have completed the brainstorm for each criterion, go back and select the examples that you think best address each one. You'll find you'll do a bit of 'cutting and pasting' before you end up with the most appropriate and powerful examples under each heading. Make sure that you use a variety of experiences throughout your statement. Be careful not to use your involvement in a particular activity (no matter how significant) as the only evidence for every criterion.

WRITING UP THE SELECTION CRITERIA

When addressing selection criteria, it is useful to apply the STAR model. Placing examples of how you have demonstrated your skills into the STAR model is critical for developing an effective statement.

The STAR acronym stands for:

- **S**ituation (briefly describe the context)
- **T**ask (what were your responsibilities or initiatives?)
- **A**ction (what did you do?)
- **R**esult (what were the outcomes?)

For each criterion:

- write the name of each criterion exactly as it is worded in the application package;
- start with a positive claim;

- give a specific example;
- describe how you acted; and
- describe the result.

For example:

Excellent verbal communication skills

I have highly-developed verbal communication skills, which have been enhanced through a number of experiences. [POSITIVE CLAIM]
 In my role as Vice-President of the Seacliff Tennis Club during 2005 [SITUATION], I was asked to speak to the local Rotary club in support of an application for sponsorship [TASK]. I gave a 20-minute presentation outlining the Club's aims, and responded to questions from Rotary members [ACTION].
 The tennis club's application was successful and we received a \$5000 sponsorship from Rotary [RESULT].

Other tips to keep in mind when addressing selection criteria

- Dot point form and/or concise sentences make your application easier to read.
- Use examples to back up every statement you make (use examples that can be visualised).
- Don't just feed their words back to them – make every sentence count by focusing on what you have to offer.
- For a listing of words you can use in your statements, see the list of buzz words at the end of this fact sheet.
- Each criterion should be approximately half a page.
- When each criterion is given a weighting of importance you should dedicate a proportionate amount of detail to each part.

- When a statement asks for qualifications or some other information that is finite, the length can be shorter.

EDITING CHECKLIST

Before submitting your application you should check your selection criteria against the following checklist:

- responses sound professional and active
- information is logical and consistent
- checked for grammatical errors
- verb tenses are accurate and consistent
- sentences are concise
- avoid abbreviations or unexplained acronyms
- avoid weakening qualifiers
- put most important information first

A FINAL NOTE

Once you have addressed the selection criteria you will be well prepared for the next stage of the job search process – the interview. This is because selection criteria usually form the basis of interview questions.

At interviews candidates are usually asked questions that are directly related to the selection criteria. This allows you to prepare responses that are an extension of what you have written in your Statement Addressing Selection Criteria.

FURTHER READING

Write a Winning Job Application: A Guide to Responding to Selection Criteria, L. White, 2008

www.seek.com.au (click on 'Career Resources').

Buzz words for job applications

The following vocabulary is a useful reference list of 'active' language:

<p>A accelerated accomplished accounted for achieved acquired acted adapted addressed administered adopted advanced advised aided allocated allowed analysed applied appointed appraised approved arranged assembled assessed assigned assisted assured attained attuned to audited authored automated avoided awarded</p> <p>B balanced began believed broadened brought in/about budgeted</p> <p>C calculated catalogued characterised clarified collaborated competent with compiled concentrated conceptualised</p>	<p>C conducted configured consolidated constructed consulted contacted contained contemplated continued contracted contributed coordinated critiqued curtailed</p> <p>D delegated demonstrated designed despatched determined developed devised diagnosed differentiated directed disseminated distinguished diversified diverted documented</p> <p>E edited eliminated employed empowered enabled enacted encouraged engaged engineered enhanced enlisted enrolled ensured equated established evaluated examined executed exhibited expedited</p>	<p>E experienced experimented extracted</p> <p>F facilitated familiarised fashioned financed fine-tuned focused forecast formulated founded</p> <p>G gained generated grouped guided</p> <p>H handled harmonised headed held hosted</p> <p>I identified illustrated implemented indexed influenced initiated instigated integrated interpreted introduced investigated issued</p> <p>J K L joined judged kept launched lectured led liaised lowered</p> <p>M made maintained</p>	<p>M managed manipulated manufactured mapped marketed master-minded measured mediated mentored modelled moderated modified monitored motivated</p> <p>N named navigated negotiated networked nominated noted</p> <p>O obtained opened operated organised originated overcame overhauled oversaw</p> <p>P packaged participated perfected performed permitted persuaded pioneered planned presided over processed produced programmed projected promoted proposed</p>	<p>P provided publicised published purchased</p> <p>Q qualified quantified</p> <p>R ratified recognised recommended reconciled recruited rectified referred reformed regulated rehabilitated reorganised represented researched restructured retrieved reversed revised revitalised</p> <p>S scheduled screened selected served as settled simplified solved specified streamlined strengthened structured succeeded suggested summarised supervised surpassed surveyed systemised</p>	<p>T tabulated taken part theorised trained transcribed translated trimmed turned around</p> <p>U V W undertook unified upgraded used utilised validated verified versed viable voted widened won wrote</p>
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