

# Selection Criteria

## Tips

- Type out each selection criteria exactly
- Use examples, examples, examples
- Check spelling and grammar
- Book an appointment with a Career Consultant
- Don't be deterred from applying for a job if you only meet most of the criteria. Demonstrate the ones you meet and show a willingness to learn.

## Contacting Employers

It is always good practice to contact the employer or recruiter submitting your application. Research the organisation and study the position before making contact. Have a set of questions to ask but be prepared to answer any question the employer may ask you; they may be using the opportunity to screen applicants.

## What are selection criteria?

Selection criteria are the factors against which candidates are compared and will determine the selection decision. They may include qualifications, skills, personal attributes and level of experience needed to perform the advertised role. The selection criteria provide a framework for the structure of your application and allow you to demonstrate how well you match the employer's needs.

## How do you identify the Selection Criteria?

Selection criteria may appear as lists in a job ad under a label such as Selection Criteria; Essential and Desirable; or Requirements. However, some job ads will describe the criteria in prose form, e.g. Strategically focused with strong analytical and management reporting skills, you will have a sound understanding of governing laws and legislations.

## Where do you address Selection Criteria?

Once you have identified the criteria, you then need to determine how the employer wants them addressed. In general, most private sector employers (for-profit) expect the criteria to be addressed in a one page cover letter, with evidence clearly identified in the resume.

Most public sector employers (local, state, federal), and employers operating in the not-for-profit sector (eg. charities, research organisations) have a very different expectation; these employers expect the criteria to be addressed separately to the letter and resume, in a formal and systematic style.

*Tip: This is not a hard and fast rule. If directions are not provided in the ad or on the employer's website, contact them to clarify. Getting this part wrong may cost you the interview.*

## Don't forget the position description.

Most ads will outline the main duties of the position. For public sector style jobs, there will be a position or role description that is separate to the job ad. Since the selection criteria are derived from the duties, it is important to have a full understanding of the role before addressing the criteria.

## Common Selection Criteria

Look at a number of ads for similar roles and you will discover selection criteria that commonly appear. Here are some examples:

- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to liaise with people at all levels of the organisation.

- Demonstrated ability to work effectively in a team environment.
- Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to meet tight deadlines and prioritise work tasks.
- Knowledge and competence in the use of computer based word processing systems.
- Self-motivated with an ability to display initiative.

You may build a bank of responses to these selection criteria that will speed up future applications.

## Addressing public sector style Selection Criteria

Start a document call Selection Criteria and make each criterion a subheading under which you will write your responses.

Pay attention to the words in the criteria that denote the level of the skill or knowledge required.

**Demonstrated** = you must have successfully performed this activity or displayed this competence in the past.

**Ability** = is generally used in relation to a person's potential to handle certain aspects of the work. NB: You may possess the required skills through actual experience or readily transferable skills obtained in a similar position.

**Experience in** = you have to show when and how you have done this work before.

**Effective, Proven, Highly Developed, Superior** = these ask you to show your level of achievement. Give as much detail as you can, using examples of your achievements to show your skills, knowledge and experience.

**Knowledge of** = refers to awareness gained from experience or from learning

## Evidence based responses to Selection Criteria

- Highlight all words which indicate the level and type of skill required
- Note if there is more than one requirement in the criterion to ensure the whole criterion is addressed
- Brainstorm all the experiences you have had which could be relevant to each criterion
- Think laterally and use some of your transferable skills where you do not have relevant experience.
- Draft your response, using relevant (similar to position duties) specific examples to support your claims
- Try to be results/outcomes-oriented in your

## STAR examples

Examples should have the following structure:

**Situation:** setting the scene, context eg university group assignment

**Task:** outline the problem or activity

**Action:** describe your personal contribution – how did you go about solving the problem, completing the activity?

**Result(s):** describe the outcome(s)

examples and quantify results: describe Situation, Task, Action, Result(s) (STAR)

- Have someone check the final copy. It must be written in good English and have no spelling or grammatical errors. Use powerful language, with active verbs. After all, it is an example of your communication skills.

## Villiers (2005) has outlined the key writing style tips to consider when addressing selection criteria:

- Avoid unsupported self-aggrandisement – writing about yourself in glowing terms alone does not tell the selection panel much, other than you think highly of yourself. E.g. "I possess superior liaison and presentation skills".
- Watch your verbs – avoid passive language such as "was required to"; use positives like managed, liaised, designed, assessed
- Address all parts of the selection criteria – some criteria contain several parts e.g. "An organised and highly motivated approach to work with the ability to prioritise and work under pressure."
- Order of information – when describing more than one example for a criterion, start with the most relevant one.
- Be results or outcomes oriented with your examples. It is no longer sufficient to demonstrate a variety of experience or that you work long hours on multiple projects. Increasingly, what matters is what impact you have, what difference you make, what results you achieve. This is particularly so as you reach more senior levels.

## Finally

- Write a powerful cover letter to include with your supporting statement and resume.
- Keep a copy and check it arrived on time.

## Reference

Villiers, A (2005), (4th ed.) How to Write and Talk to Selection Criteria, Mental Nutrition, Hawker ACT