

SELECTION CRITERIA

What are selection criteria?

Selection criteria are a breakdown of the key elements of a position and your performance against them is the basis for your selection.

Many positions, particularly government and government-funded, require you to address selection criteria. These positions have a position description, which is a document that provides details such as the purpose of the position, the duties, the reporting relationships, the organisational environment *and the selection criteria*. Behind each of these positions advertised there is a selection committee that is responsible for screening the applications against the selection criteria for that position

The selection criteria specifies the skills, knowledge and abilities required to perform the duties of the job and comprise –

- mandatory requirements
- key selection criteria
- other selection criteria.

As part of your written application you should address all selection criteria outlined in the position/job description, as you will be scored on suitability or compatibility with the selection criteria. Interview questions are also based on these selection criteria.

Mandatory requirements

Mandatory levels of qualification, experience and or training or certification may be specified. In order for your application to be considered, you must meet these requirements.

Key Selection Criteria

These are the core competencies required to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the job and are the primary basis for selection. These are the statements you need to respond to.

Other Selection Criteria

These selection criteria are the requirements that are desirable for the job's outcome.

Key points to remember

- You will **not** get an interview unless you address the selection criteria fully.
- In many cases, the selection criteria are the only information use for shortlisting applicants.
- Getting shortlisted for interview is based on how well you address the selection criteria. It will not matter what experience you have unless you make reference to it in your response.

How do you answer selection criteria?

The following strategy is suggested –

- 1. Write each selection criteria on a separate sheet of paper and break each into subsections.**

Brainstorm examples of your experience, knowledge, skills, personal qualities etc that you think illustrate how you meet each selection criteria. Include specific, relevant examples to demonstrate how you meet each criteria. If you think a particular example fits more than one

selection criteria, include it in each criteria statement. With each example focus on the results that you achieved to turn them into 'winning' statements.

2. Read your resume to ensure that you have not missed any relevant information that needed to be identified in (1).

Ask someone to review your written material and seek their advice about the relevance and readability of your answers.

3. Word your examples using 'action' words.

- ensure that your responses are written clearly and succinctly
- 'bullet' points will make your application easier to read
- use 'action' words (see Action Words) to begin each point as this adds to the strength of your application and demonstrates that you get things done
- avoid generalisations that will reduce your credibility ie *'I always give clients excellent service'* is not so convincing as *'I provide high quality service to clients that includes responding to written inquiries within three working days. Feedback from my clients indicates they are pleased with the service I provide.'*

Generally speaking, each criteria statement should be similar in length - approximately one half to one page. However, don't include information that is not relevant just to fill up the page. See Selection Criteria Examples for sample responses to criteria.

4. Prioritise your points.

Keeping in mind the selection criteria you are addressing use a logical and easy-to-follow-format that strengthens the presentation of your application.

5. Make sure you can expand on all of your examples at interview.

Take a copy of your selection criteria, resume and covering letter to the interview. Refer to these if you need to. The interview is where you can get caught out if you have not been honest or stretched the truth. If you can't elaborate on an example the interviewer(s) may wonder if you have done it at all.

Example Selection Criteria:

Criteria: *Proven accounting ability in staff payroll and petty cash.*

Option 1 - Narrative style of response:

Selection Criteria 1. *Proven accounting ability in staff payroll and petty cash.*

I can competently carry out staff payment and petty cash accounting duties. I have recently completed the Certificate III Business Studies (Accounting) with Southbank Institute of TAFE. As a part of the course we studied several subjects associated with payroll and petty cash and I received excellent results for my assignment and tests. We used MYOB as the software package for both these activities.

During my course I undertook four months' work experience with Scouts Australia in the finance section of Head Office, where I gained experience with their petty cash and payroll systems. After two months I was given sole responsibility for processing petty cash while also providing support to the payroll officer.

As Treasurer of the Bardon State School P&C Association I manage a small payroll for four staff who are employed by the P&C. My duties with the P&C also include preparing group certificates, certificates of separation and superannuation contributions.

Option 2 - Note style of response:

Selection Criteria 1. *Proven accounting ability in staff payroll and petty cash.*

- Successfully completed Certificate III Business Studies - Accounting
Relevant subjects: MYOB
Payroll
Petty Cash
Manual accounting systems
- Completed work experience in Finance section of Scout Australia
Responsible for petty cash management
Supported payroll officer
- Managed payroll for staff of four - Bardon State School P&C
Responsible for: Superannuation
Certificates of Separation
Payment of Staff
Group Certificates

Writing selection criteria can be the most time consuming and stressful part of the job application process. It requires a clear mind, a good memory, persistence and a good deal of patience and application.

It is best tackled after you have prepared your resume but before you attempt the covering letter as it will provide great material for your covering letter.

Employers may decide to base their final selection on the written application as well as the interviews. In the government, they must design questions for an interview based on the advertised selection criteria. Therefore if you have gone through this process you will have already done a lot of the preparation for your interview. Prior preparation always prevents poor performance!