



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for
Child Protection

Job Application Guide

A guide to help you write better job applications
and do your very best in a job interview with the
Department for Child Protection.

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in applying for a role in the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

This guide provides information about working with DCP. Our aim is to help you find out about the role, prepare your application, and understand the recruitment and selection process used in the department.

Why work with DCP?

The Department for Child Protection plays a key role in the protection and support of children, young people and their families across South Australia.

We do this by:

- protecting children from abuse and harm
- supporting families to reduce risk to children
- providing alternative care for children and young people when living at home is no longer an option
- managing adoption processes

Our workplace reflects the diverse communities we serve. We encourage applications from all backgrounds, experiences, and abilities. This includes women, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the LGBTQI+ communities, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

We also encourage Aboriginal applicants and employees to consider registering with the [South Australian Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Register](#) which includes career advice and support. The register is an effective recruitment tool for agencies across the public sector.

We value our workforce and offer a wide variety of career prospects, flexibility, work-life balance, as well as promotional opportunities and excellent employment conditions. Working with DCP is a hugely rewarding experience, whatever role you choose. For more information, visit our [Career Portal](#).



Applying for a role in DCP

Recruitment and selection in DCP are guided by the *Public Sector Act 2009*, and the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector.

Selection of employees is based on merit – and is widely acknowledged as the key to ensuring the selection of the most appropriately skilled and qualified employees for vacancies.

Merit is the extent to which each applicant has the abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience (including community experience) and personal qualities to fulfil the role.

The applicant who demonstrates the most merit, across the selection process and against the requirements outlined in the role description, is recommended for appointment.

Before you start your application

For a full list of all current opportunities, visit our [Career Portal](#).

The advert for each vacancy provides a summary of the role and a role description. Each advert will also specify whether the vacancy is open to all job seekers or is exclusive to DCP or Public Sector employees only. The latter adverts will clearly state that they are seeking an EOI (Expressions of Interest) from current DCP employees or South Australian Public Sector employees only.

All adverts contain contact details of a person from whom you can obtain further information about the role. This will help you to decide if the role is of interest to you and if you are likely to meet the essential requirements.

The role description is broken down into the following sections:

About this role – Role Purpose

Provides a summary of the role, what is expected to be accomplished and the type of work to undertake.

You will be adding value by - Key Outcomes

Details the specific key outcomes that are critical to achieve the purpose of the role.

Who you will work with - Key Relationships/Interactions

Identifies the positions reporting to the role, as well as its internal and external working relationships.

Qualifications

A tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline may be required or the equivalent level of expertise gained from a combination of experience, training, or professional accreditation. Qualifications will either be essential or desirable.

Your Capabilities - Key Selection Criteria

The capabilities required to perform the role are listed in priority order, which are explored in the selection process.

Our Collective Responsibilities

These correspond to the classification of the role, with the behaviours most relevant checked.

Special Conditions

Prior to being employed, all those new to DCP are required to obtain a Working with Children Check from the [Department of Human Services](#), and if required. Further special conditions could include the requirement to hold a current South Australian issued Driver's Licence.

You will contribute to - DCP Expectations and Values

Applicants are required to demonstrate the values of the South Australian Public Sector, and model behaviour and practices consistent with the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector.

Preparing and submitting your application

Applications for vacancies in DCP are submitted through our [Career Portal](#).

A well-presented, easy-to-read application will allow the panel to assess the information they need from your application. To give yourself the best opportunity to reach an interview, your application should clearly and concisely demonstrate to the selection panel that you are suitably equipped to perform the role, and that you possess all of the stated minimum essential skills, abilities, knowledge, experience and educational qualifications (where required).

The claims of each applicant will be assessed against the Key Selection Criteria / Your Capabilities. Panel members and or Selection committees will assess applications against this criteria, taking into consideration the context of the role, key outcomes, and challenges that have been identified a being relevant/necessary for the role.

If your application does not successfully address each of the identified key capabilities, you may not be considered for short listing and further assessment.

Here are some tips on how to apply:

- Read the role description and any other information available. Understand the requirements and do some research. If you have any questions about the role, contact the 'Enquiries to' person.
- To apply, simply click on the 'Apply' button in the advert.

- You will need to create a Profile in our eRecruitment system, Pledge first, and provide the details requested. All mandatory questions must be completed to be able to apply.
- Next upload a copy of your resume. You will be able to upload an updated resume each time you apply for a role.
- Then attach your cover letter. This should outline how your skills, experience and knowledge meet the requirements detailed in the role description.
- Now click 'Apply'. An acknowledgment will display, and an automated email will be sent to you confirming your application has been received. Please note that the automated email may end up in your 'spam' or 'junk' folder, so please keep an eye on these folders as well.

Resume

This is your opportunity to showcase your results, achievements, and successes. Headings in your resume should be used to structure the document and highlight vital information. Here are some examples:

- Personal details
- Career objective or summary
- Key skills and experience
- Employment history and key achievements
- Training/qualifications/education
- Professional achievements
- Community service/volunteer work
- Referees

Keep your resume between three to four pages depending on years of experience **and relevance to the role you are applying for**, and check it for any spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.

Use a font that is easy to read and a professional style with consistent formatting. Dot points are helpful to ensure the message is clear.

Sections of your resume, such as work experience and education, should be in reverse chronological order, beginning with your most recent activities.

Certain roles in DCP require specific tertiary qualifications, certificates or registration, which will be outlined in the role description. If you progress to the next stage of the recruitment and selection process, you will be asked to provide an original academic record/transcript and/or proof of registration to support your application.

We recommend you list your referees on your resume and include your current (or most recent) supervisor/manager, as this is a requirement for being recommended for the role.

Cover letter

Your cover letter serves as a personal marketing tool, giving you the opportunity to showcase what you bring to the role and how you can contribute to DCP. Highlight your key achievements, explain why you are the best person for the role, and express your interest in working with DCP.

Start with a clear statement about the role and department you're applying for. In the body, demonstrate how your skills, experience, and attributes align with the job requirements. Use action words, link them to specific skills, and provide relevant examples. In your closing paragraph, reaffirm your suitability for the role.

Keep your cover letter concise and ensure it doesn't exceed two A4 pages.

Closing date for applications

DCP vacancies are open for a set period, with applications closing on the date specified in the advert. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

As technology isn't always reliable, we recommend submitting your application well before the deadline to avoid any last-minute issues.

If exceptional circumstances prevent you from submitting your application on time, contact the 'Enquiries to' person listed in the advert before the closing date.

Selection process

Applications received will be evaluated by a selection panel with shortlisting occurring after the advert has closed.

If you progress to the next stage of the selection process, you will be provided with details about what that may entail, whether it be a telephone screening, an interview, presentation and/or attendance at an Assessment Centre. You will also be required to complete a Pre-Employment Declaration to assess your eligibility to apply.

If you require any workplace modifications or additional support, such as adjustments to the physical environment or communication assistance, please advise the 'Enquiries to' contact, who will arrange the necessary accommodations wherever possible.

All applicants who apply for a vacancy will be notified of the status of their application. Once you are made aware of the outcome, you may request feedback from the panel chairperson. Feedback will be based on the selection panel's assessment of your suitability in relation to the selection criteria and the role description.

Preparing for interviews

- Make sure you have reviewed the advert and role description and understand the key elements of both
- Think about the strengths, skills and experience you could bring to the role, and the opportunities it presents for you
- Know your cover letter and resume. The selection panel will be assessing your verbal responses against these to see if they are a true representation of your skills and knowledge
- Some questions can be anticipated, so ensure you have thought of some relevant answers to demonstrate your experience in these areas
- Allow time to research the role and department
- Prepare a list of questions you would like answered about the role
- Know who you are meeting by making a note of their name and role in DCP, which will be stated in the interview invite
- Present in a positive and engaging manner
- Ensure you are on time for your interview and know where it will be held to check what the best transport mode will be. If you are running late, let the 'Enquiries to' person know
- Interview questions at DCP are generally behavioural-based because evidence suggests past performance is the best indicator of future performance. When answering behavioural questions, you can use examples taken from experience in your work, study, and/or involvement with community groups using the **S-T-A-R** (Situation–Task–Action–Result) approach:
 - **Situation**
What was the situation?
Provide a brief outline of the specific situation or setting.
 - **Task**
What did you have to achieve?
Describe your role and responsibilities.
 - **Action**
What did you do?
Consider the steps you took to resolve the situation/problem or complete the task.
 - **Result**
What was the outcome of your actions?
Share what you learnt from the experience and the feedback you received from everyone involved.

At the interview

The selection panel will provide you with further insight into the role, ask questions and give you the opportunity to ask any too. Here are some other tips for an interview:

- Be ready for a variety of interview questions, not just behavioural ones. It is completely acceptable to bring your own notes to the interview for reference.
- Provide answers in a clear and concise manner.
- Make sure you listen carefully to each question. If you need more clarity, don't hesitate to ask your interviewer to repeat or rephrase it.
- Be mindful of two-part questions and make sure you address both parts in your answer. Feel free to ask the interviewer to repeat the question if needed to provide a complete response.
- Avoid yes/no responses and interrupting questions being asked. It is fine to pause if you need to gather your thoughts.
- Show your motivation and interest in the role by asking relevant and thoughtful questions.
- Don't assume the panel members are familiar with your skills just because they have read your application or may have worked with you previously.
- At the end of the interview, be sure to thank the panel members for their time and for the opportunity.

Applicant Checklist

- Check your suitability and eligibility for the role by reading the full job ad, role description and any other documentation that has been provided.
- Direct any questions about the job or your application to the contact person named in the job listing.
- Ensure your cover letter uses real examples of your career/studies/life experience to demonstrate how you meet the Capabilities/Key Selection Criteria outlined in the role description. Use the S.T.A.R. method.
- Apply and submit your application online by answering all the questions, completing the Pre-Employment Declaration in the online application form, and uploading your cover letter, resume/CV, together with any other requested documentation.
- Provide the name and contact details of at least two referees. Preferably, one of these should be a current or former manager or supervisor from the past six months.

Still have questions?

Visit our [Career Portal](#) or contact the 'Enquires to' person on the advert for the role you are interested in.

We wish you every success with your application!