

ADDRESSING SELECTION CRITERIA

Understanding how to read, interpret and respond to selection criteria is the key to securing an interview in the South Australian public sector. As previously mentioned, once a position is made available, a role description is created, which includes the selection criteria that you are required to respond to as the main component of your application.

What are selection criteria?

Selection criteria represent the skills and abilities, knowledge, experience, qualifications and work related qualities a person needs to perform a role effectively. They set out the standards by which each candidate will be assessed. Selection criteria generally come in the form of statements, however they can also be a list of competencies found in the role description.

For each criteria or statement, you are required to provide a response that highlights your skills, and or experience and an example to show your competence or ability to perform the task. You are required to address each criteria as directed by the application instructions.

Often, selection criteria are divided into essential criteria and desirable criteria.

You must meet the essential criteria to be considered for a position because without having the relevant qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience you would not be able to do the job.

It is not necessary for you to have the qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience described by the desirable criteria. Where there are several applicants who meet the essential criteria, the selection panel may defer to the applicant's ability to meet the desirable criteria.

Examples of selection criteria

- analysis and research
- accuracy and attention to detail
- decision making
- independence
- initiative
- interpersonal/verbal communication
- knowledge/experience of specific software or equipment
- knowledge/experience of University organisation, policies or procedures
- leadership
- negotiation
- organisational/planning/prioritising/time management/ability to meet deadlines
- proficiency in a range of computing skills
- presentation/public speaking
- problem-solving
- supervisory/management
- teamwork
- written communication skills

Why selection criteria must be addressed

The selection panel is required to assess each applicant in terms of how well they meet the selection criteria. By addressing the selection criteria you will assist the panel to rate your application against the selection criteria and against other applicants, and to decide who to shortlist for interview. Many good applicants are overlooked because they don't clearly address the selection criteria and assume that the panel will be able to "read between the lines" in their résumé.

Writing a selection criteria response

The length, content and how you write your selection criteria response will largely depend on the type of positions you are applying for and also which government department you are applying to. For public sector positions you are generally required to either complete the selection criteria through the department's online jobs portal or send your application as a word/PDF document in an email.

In your selection criteria response, you need to address each criteria to demonstrate specifically how your knowledge, skills and experience make you suitable and capable of fulfilling the requirements of the position. If you do not address all the required criteria, or provide brief and general responses your application may be precluded.

Address each criterion separately:

- give each a title, using exactly the same wording as appears on the selection criteria form, e.g. 'Excellent verbal communication skills' (copy and paste)
- list each criterion in the same order as the selection criteria form
- indicate whether the criterion is essential or desirable
- under each heading, write one or two short paragraphs explaining how you meet that particular criterion.

Example

Good written communication skills (Essential)

In my current job I regularly write letters and memos on behalf of my supervisor. I have also produced two short reports on the use of computers within the department. Last year I developed a leaflet containing information about the department to help in the induction of new staff. Staff have said that they found the leaflet clear, concise and easy to read. I also assisted in writing a procedures manual for the department. The one-day workshop I attended recently called 'How to write clear, concise letters and reports' has further enhanced my skills.

Things to remember

- Use key words from the role description, be concise and avoid being too general
- Always relate your previous experience to the requirements of the job you are applying for
- Match your examples to the key criteria and outcomes of the position.