

How to Prepare a Good Application

This page contains a lot of information. Read it all carefully. Studying this page will make you more likely to get an interview. If you can, print out this page and keep it by you while you are writing your application. Remember that applying for government jobs is different to applying for a job elsewhere.

Get information

You will have a much better chance of getting the job you want if you take the following steps:

Read the Job Advertisement Carefully

All NSW Government job advertisements list 'selection criteria'. The selection criteria describe the skills, knowledge and experience needed to do the job.

Advertisements also have a brief description of the job, the name of the inquiries person, an address and a closing date for applications.

Read the advertisement and make a note of anything you don't understand so you can ask questions. Keep a copy of the advertisement for future use.

Get the Information Package

Ring the number given for the information package. The package will include a detailed description of the duties of the job, plus other documents (such as an organisation chart) which will help you with your application.

Telephone the Inquiries Person

You can get more information about the job by phoning the inquiries person named in the advertisement. Speak to them after you read the information package so your questions will be more relevant.

Speaking to the inquiries person will help you decide whether to apply for the job, and which of your skills, knowledge and experience to emphasise in your application.

Other Information

Get as much extra information as you can to write a good application. You might want to meet with the inquiries person at the workplace.

If possible, search the Internet, visit the agency's library or talk to people who work in similar areas. This will give you a better idea of the workplace.

Write Your Application

You need to apply in writing to the agency advertising the job. It is important to prepare a good application as it will be used to decide whether you get an interview. A good application shows why you are the best person for the job and how your skills, knowledge and experience match the selection criteria. It contains:

- a brief covering letter
- your claim for the position
- your resume
- a completed job application form.

Your Claim for the Position — the Most Important Part of Your Application

You must include a 'claim for the position' in your application. If not, you are unlikely to get an interview.

You write a claim for the position to show the selection panel that you have the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. You need to write a specific claim for each job you apply for in the NSW Public Sector.

Make a separate heading for each selection criterion. For each one, describe your skills, knowledge and experience and show how they could be used in the job. Emphasise your major achievements. Use positive language, for example: 'In my current role I take responsibility for ...' is better than 'I have limited experience in ...'.

Selection Criteria

All NSW Government job advertisements list 'selection criteria'. The selection criteria describe the skills, knowledge and experience needed to do the job.

There are two crucial things you need to know about selection criteria:

- you will be expected to include a separate **claim for the position** with your application. For this, you make a separate heading for each selection criterion. For each one, describe your skills, knowledge and experience and show how they could be used in the job.
- all job applicants must show how they meet the **common selection criteria**.

The Common Selection Criteria

People who work for the NSW Government are not just doing a job — they are representing the Government. They are expected to behave fairly and correctly when carrying out their duties and when dealing with the public and fellow employees.

For this reason, job applicants are required to have an understanding of:

- **equal employment opportunity (EEO)**
- **ethical practice**
- **ethnic affairs and cultural diversity (EAPS)**
- **occupational health and safety (OH&S)**.

This page is designed to help you gain an understanding of these areas. Studying this information will be enough to enable most job applicants to address the selection criteria and prepare for the kinds of questions they will be asked at interview.

All job applicants should read each topic carefully.

If you are applying for a job as a manager or supervisor, you should think about how you would make sure these principles are effectively applied in the new work area.

Note: A few specialised jobs require an even deeper level of understanding. For these jobs, you will need to do further research. For example, an EEO Co-ordinator needs to know much more about EEO; a building work supervisor needs to know all about safety in building work.

Some Key Words Used In Selection Criteria

- *Demonstrated knowledge:*
You need to give examples that prove you have this area of knowledge.
- *Ability to:*
You do not need to have done this kind of work before, but your skills, knowledge and experience must show that you are capable of doing this part of the job. Describe things you have done which prove you could do this kind of work.
- *Experience in:*
You have to show you have done this work before. Give examples.
- *Effective, Proven, Highly developed, Superior:*
These are all asking you to show your level of achievement. Give as much detail as you can, using examples of your achievements to show your level of skills, knowledge and experience.
- *Good communication skills:*
This is not about whether you speak English with an accent. This is about showing you have the communication skills needed to do the job. You could include: experience in dealing with people, details of things you have written, and examples of problems you have solved using your communication skills.

Your Résumé

Prepare a résumé (that is, curriculum vitae) which is clear, concise, up to date and includes:

- personal details
- education and training
- employment history (name of organisation, period of employment, job title, major duties and responsibilities, main achievements)
- skills/experience gained outside of paid work
- contact details for two referees, including complete phone and fax numbers and whether an interpreter is needed.

Ideally, your referees will be able to comment on your recent work performance. If you can, give them a copy of the job advertisement.

The Application Form

A job application form will be in the information package. Complete this form and enclose it with your application.