

Let's Get Ready

Career Hacks

Selection criteria identify the specific skills, abilities, knowledge, and qualifications required to be successful within any given position. As part of the job application process, you may be asked to provide responses to selection criteria to determine if you are a suitable candidate for the job. This fact sheet will provide you with hints and tips on how to successfully address selection criteria.



Selection criteria

Pro Tips

- The job advert will usually specify if you need to address selection criteria and whether a separate cover letter is required. If the process isn't clear, always call the organisation to clarify.
- Selection criteria are usually stated within the advert, but the full criteria will be outlined in the position description. Failure to address all criteria may disqualify you from consideration.
- Check the application requirements carefully. Some organisations will ask for a statement addressing selection criteria in addition to a separate cover letter as well as a résumé. Some employers, particularly in government roles, will request a two-page pitch (a cover letter and selection criteria within the one document) instead of a separate cover letter and separate selection criteria statement. If you are unsure always call the organisation and ask them to clarify what they want.
- Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) are widely used to filter applications. Ensure you incorporate keywords from the job description into your responses to increase your chances of passing automated screening.
- Have someone proofread your responses for spelling, grammar, and clarity.

Customisation

- Read the supplementary information contained in the position description to give you an idea about the type of work and order of priority (certain job functions will have a higher percentage of workload). Let this information guide the type of responses you provide, aligning your information to the organisation's priority areas of work.
- Always provide context and examples to support your claims to each criterion. There are two methods you can follow to ensure you do this correctly; using the STAR or SAO framework (refer overleaf).
- Recruiters use selection criteria to assess your suitability for the role using a marking key, ranging from failure to meet criteria to exceeds criteria. Make sure your responses to each criterion meet or exceed the essential requirements. A good way of doing this is matching your knowledge, skills and experience to the position requirements, company's services, objectives and values. Doing this will provide relevant context and evidence of suitability for the role.
- Demonstrate complimentary behaviour and competency from a different role, either paid or not paid unpaid, to provide the recruiter insight into your performance in the role.
- No direct industry experience? Showcase relevant transferrable skills gained through university projects, volunteering, internships, or online learning.

Visual

Put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter who may be reviewing hundreds of selection criteria (SC). Be kind and don't cram information in; utilise white space around the page. In general terms, and unless otherwise stated:

- Use a sans serif font (such as Arial or Calibri) in 11-point type, unless otherwise specified.
- Use left justification, with margins no less than 1.8cm.
- The top of the first page should state 'Response to selection criteria for position XYZ, position number 12345' bolded and underlined or italicised, slightly larger than the remainder of text. Following, each criterion should be fully typed out and bolded with your response directly under each criterion.
- Use approximately a ¼ to a 1/3 of a page to address each criterion if there is no page restriction. Behavioural selection criteria will more than likely require a 1/3 of a page.
- Insert page number and your full name as a footer per page.

To Consider

- Understand and identify the different categories of selection criteria used, including: qualifications, experience, knowledge/understanding, skills, abilities and values. There are differences in how some criterion are answered regarding use of STAR/SAO framework.
- You need to meet most, if not all, of the essential selection criteria as this is what the employer determines is essential to do the job. Where numerous applicants meet the essential criteria, recruiters will defer to desirable criteria to establish the most competitive candidate.
- Desirable criteria are not optional; you must fully address desirable criteria, even if you lack competency or experience (refer to example on last page as a guide on how to successfully do this).
- Use industry-specific language from the job description to mirror organisational priorities and increase your ATS ranking.

Avoid

- Copying other people's (or online sites') selection criteria data.
- Overly wordy answers; try and keep it concise and clear, particularly if there is a word or page limit.
- Referring the reader to your résumé; your selection criteria responses should hold all necessary information.

Selection criteria are the **skills, abilities, knowledge, experiences, qualifications and personal qualities** the employer requires for the position. Your response to each criterion needs to clearly demonstrate how well you meet each requirement.

Types of Selection Criteria

Real Examples of Selection Criteria

Knowledge/Understanding Knowledge/Understanding Theory, application and implications.	• Awareness of relevant WA Government procurement legislation and policies applicable to the position. • Sound knowledge and understanding of current trends and developments in information technology. • Demonstrated knowledge in the contract administration function.
Experience Direct involvement in an area.	• Demonstrated experience in Government procurement policies and procedures, including competitive processes. • Demonstrated practical experience in developing and implementing user-training procedures.
Ability Expertise you have developed and your potential to develop skills.	• Ability to apply relevant legislation, policy and procedures. • Sound conceptual, analytical and research skills, including the ability to identify appropriate solutions. • Demonstrated ability to work with limited supervision, make sound decisions and prioritise tasks in an environment with competing priorities.
Skills Provide details of competency and proficiency.	• Sound organisational skills and initiative, including the ability to meet deadlines and prioritise tasks. • Effective interpersonal skills and ability to work within a team. • Good working knowledge of Excel (experience with SPSS, Survey Monkey, CD MOTA analytical software). • Well-developed computer application skills, including experience in web technology.
Qualifications Qualifications, professional registrations, essential eligibility requirements.	• Tertiary qualification in Business, Marketing, Economics or a Social Science discipline. • Eligible for full registration with Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). • Possess a Working with Children Check or have the ability to apply for a check.
Values Demonstrate how your values align to the organisation's.	• A commitment to and understanding of the principles and practice of cultural competence. • Demonstrated understanding and commitment to the mission and values of company xyz, including a commitment to service delivery from a client centred, solution focused and competency-based philosophy.
Personal Attributes Demonstrate how your personal attributes will enhance work practice.	• Displaying empathy and professionalism when dealing with sensitive issues. • Ability to act with honesty and integrity in the workplace.

It's rare to see only one element contained within a single criterion. Most criterion contain two, three or four elements. An example of this is: Experience in assisting with coordination of events, marketing activities, associated financial management and budgeting requirements. Your response needs to **include all elements** of each criterion.

Selection criteria

Key Words and Phrases Used In Selection Criteria

"Appreciation of"	means that you are required to make a value judgement about the content of the matter.
"Awareness of"	means that you need to demonstrate familiarity with the topic to a small extent.
"Ability or ability to"	means you must display your potential to perform a task you may not have performed before.
"Ability to rapidly acquire"	means you prove that you are able to acquire what is required.
"Capacity to"	means you have knowledge or have capacity to learn quickly or within short timeframes.
	"Capacity to" suggests that you have the necessary skills but may not have applied them practically.
"Basic understanding"	means you are required to have a general understanding or know the basic concepts.
"Capacity"	means you have the ability or are qualified to perform a task.
"Demonstrated"	means you must be able to give specific examples from your work.
"Proven experience"	means you have work experience that demonstrates your practical skills and abilities.
"General knowledge"	means you possess a basic knowledge of the topic and can apply the information broadly.
"Knowledge"	means you must be able to show familiarity with content of material gained from learning and experiences.
"High level/superior"	means you must be able to give specific examples that exhibit well developed/advanced knowledge, skills, abilities and effectiveness in the given area.
"Mandatory/possession"	means it is obligatory to have this in order to apply for the position, e.g. education degree.
"Sound knowledge"	means you need good working knowledge or are able to provide detail to prove you have the knowledge required.
"Thorough/extensive knowledge"	means you must have a comprehensive grasp of the information.
"Understanding"	means more than knowledge. Requires you to comprehend matter, show understanding of significance.

Source: <http://career-advice.careerone.com.au/job-hunting-strategy/the-job-hunt/deciphering-selection-criteria-20090224/article.aspx>

Provide an example per criterion to support your claims that you have the skills required for the position. The best way to do this is by using the STAR or SAO method.

The STAR and SAO acronyms refer to:

STAR		SAO	
Situation	briefly explain the context i.e. work/university/volunteer environment.	Situation	briefly describe the context.
Task	what was your role (your responsibilities)?	Action	what were the actions you took?
Action	what were the actions you took?	Outcome	what was the outcome?
Result	what was the outcome?		

When to use STAR vs SAO?

Use STAR for when you have one strong and robust example to showcase your experience/skills/abilities.

Use SAO for a weaker example (you may need to use two SAO examples to demonstrate evidence of suitability) or have been asked to limit your words or apply a page limit.

Your response:

- Not dissimilar to responding to an assignment (from the initial research stage to final product), it will take you a similar amount of time.

A general rule of thumb is a set of standard selection criteria consisting of four essential and two desirable criteria will equate to 4 – 6 hours of work.

- How much information should you have in each part of the STAR/SAO framework:



The process

Question 1: Excellent verbal communication skills

Situation	Task	Action	Result	Demonstrated verbal communication skills and competencies.
Setting the scene, explaining the purpose of why you were there, what you were doing.	Clearly explain the TASK – what is it that you were trying to achieve, what is it that you were planning to do?	Provide detail on the ACTIONS you implemented. Do not forget to drill down and fully explain each step. For example, rather than say you clearly communicated, try “I communicated clearly by... ..”.	Demonstrate the evidence of a positive result.	
Example: Participating in voluntary work: What was the volunteer program called? How long have you been involved?	What was my responsibility?	How did I do this?	Evidence of this?	
• ECU Peer Mentor Program • 1 year	• Provide information and support on the first year university experience • Provide correct and relevant information on services and support ECU offers	• I was friendly and welcoming • Didn't use jargon • Aware of my tone • Adjusted my talking speed with students who used English as a second language • Explained myself clearly • Used open questions • Checked that students understood the information by asking them questions	• I received thanks (by email and face to face) from students about the information I provided to them • Asked/emailed students following-up if they needed additional resources or if they were happy with the services I had already recommended • Student replies stating that 68% had connected to other services	• Convey information clearly and effectively • Actively listen to others • Interpret messages and act appropriately • Respond with respect

Selection criteria

Next step:

- Start to build your story fully, still using the STAR framework.
- Where possible, echo or mirror the language used within the position description within your selection criteria responses.
- Format the story into paragraphs, making sure there is good flow between each paragraph.
- Introduce your response to the criterion by paraphrasing the question with a positive introduction. This will give the reader a good indication that you have understood the criterion. (See completed example on next page).
- Add a sentence to close, assuring the reader that you possess the necessary skill/ability/experience etc. to fulfil the criterion.

Example: Response to Selection Criteria

The example provided below is to be used as a guide only. It's important to make your responses your own.

Response to selection criteria for position XYZ (position number 12345)	Cite position name and reference number (where provided).
Essential:	
1. Excellent verbal communication skills	STAR
I have highly developed verbal communication skills, which have been enhanced through a number of employment, voluntary and academic experiences.	Positive introduction, one sentence.
An example of my excellent verbal communication skills can be demonstrated through my volunteer work as a Peer Mentor for Edith Cowan University's Peer Mentoring Program.	Situation Where did you do it?
As a Peer Mentor I met and worked with a diverse range of domestic and international first year students providing customised information and support to assist new students integrate into university life. First year students' ages range from 18 years of age through to 60+ years of age so my ability to customise information to different audiences was important.	Task Describe the task you had to complete.
In all my verbal interactions with mentee students I used a friendly and open manner, adjusting my tone, style and speed of speech to suit the student. I communicated clearly by explaining the context of a situation and asked questions to check students' levels of understanding. I was mindful when communicating with students where English was not their first language and checked the student's level of understanding of typical Australian jargon or colloquialisms. I did this by effectively using open questioning techniques, being aware of closed body language and where appropriate I provided further explanation, clarification and context.	Action Describe how you do it (method) and why did you do it (purpose) or the value you brought.
I enjoyed working in the mentor role as I was able to assist students increase their level of understanding and confidence in orienteering themselves in a new environment and culture, while also expanding my understanding of different cultures.	
The mentees I assisted expressed their thanks and appreciation of my communication style, stating they were able to immediately relax and felt comfortable to ask me an array of questions. Where I wasn't able to provide information they required, I provided a facilitated referral to the relevant section of the university who could assist.	Result Outline the positive outcome and what you learned.
I both enjoy and am committed to ongoing opportunities to further refine my communication skills in a professional context.	Close (1 sentence)

Responding to desirable criteria when you don't have industry experience

Desirable criteria must always be answered, even if you don't have experience.

Looking at the question below, assume they are looking for a person who is familiar with the WA Health system, either through learning or direct experience. Meaning, previous employment in the sector is desirable.

However, if you don't have direct experience, showcase your relevant transferrable knowledge and skill (i.e. research skills) to demonstrate while you may currently lack direct experience, you possess the ability/skill/knowledge to research, accurately identify and source relevant information about the system/service/program, etc.

This is perfectly acceptable to do, as long as it's in response to desirable criteria, not essential criteria.

Desirable:	SAO
2. Knowledge of the WA Health system (or health related industries).	Don't start with a negative i.e. "I don't have experience in"
While studying the Bachelor of Health Science, I successfully completed units in Health Research Methods and Community Nutrition where I gained valuable knowledge and experience in performing literature reviews, interpreting data and using quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods strategies in researching health topics.	Intro
An example of this is during my third year of study I volunteered on a casual basis with Nutrition Australia where I created presentations which were used at functions and education seminars; covering topics such as healthy eating for adolescents, adults and children, allergies and intolerances and healthy snack ideas.	Situation
While researching data on food allergies and intolerances, to populate a presentation I used analytical and qualitative research methodology sourcing up-to-date and relevant data using Department of Health annual reports, journals and print and online media. I grew my awareness of Australia's National Dietary Guidelines and WA's Health policies surrounding catering for allergies and intolerances. During this research, I was able to gain a broader understanding of strategic framework and health promotion principles of the WA health system, in relation to the services available to the general public.	Action
My ability to source, collate and analyse information is a strength I am confident in, and where I don't possess knowledge of a process, procedure or system I possess the skills necessary to accurately identify and source the correct information so I can complete my work to a high standard.	Outcome
My knowledge of the WA health system is continually building and by using the above strategies and proactively seeking opportunities to increase my knowledge through studying and volunteering in the sector, I hope to develop further into the future as a health department employee.	Close

Useful Links

Visit ECU **CareerHub** at careerhub.ecu.edu.au for a list of useful website links to assist with the development of your résumé. You can book drop-in sessions and workshops to develop your employability skills. For additional information to become a career ready graduate, see the **Get Career Ready Online Module**.

Hack Series

Résumé

Interview Skills

Selection Criteria

Cover Letter

Finding Work Experience

Contact

E careers@ecu.edu.au
W ecu.edu.au/careers
W careerhub.ecu.edu.au

Student Hub

Joondalup Campus: Learning and Career Hub, Building 31
City Campus: Learning Commons Area, Level 4.
ECU South West: Building 1

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