How To Address Selection Criteria

Selection criteria or key requirements are typically requested by employers to ensure applicants have the qualifications, skills, attributes and knowledge required to successfully achieve the desired results for the existing position. Not all employment advertisements will clearly outline the selection criteria, so it may be necessary to analyse the advertisement in more detail carefully reviewing the position description or statement of duties to identify the key requirements the employer is looking for.

Addressing your selection criteria is the most important aspect of your application because your ability to successfully identify, understand and respond to each criteria will most likely impact your chances of being short listed for an interview. In addition, carefully thought out and well-structured answers will be beneficial should you be invited to attend an interview, as questions from the panel are often based around the selection criteria.

Now with an understanding about the significance of producing first-class responses to the selection criteria, it’s no wonder the task of addressing these criteria often seems daunting and overwhelming. However, if you have read the materials clearly and have the required qualifications, experience, skills and attributes for the position being advertised, you are in good stead to produce replies that will encourage the employer to want to meet you.

There are several components to keep in mind when addressing the selection criteria:

- Read the instructions carefully and set out your replies as instructed in the documentation provided.
  - Where an advert asks you to address the selection criteria in a separate document, make sure you title the document *Statement Addressing the Selection Criteria* or *Claims against the Selection Criteria*. Be mindful that some advertisements may require you to address the selection criteria within your *Cover Letter*.
  - Usually applicants are asked to address each criterion separately. To ensure clarity on which criteria you are answering, it is a good idea to write the criteria as advertised at the top of each answer.
  - If the advert suggests that you do not exceed two pages (for example) when addressing the criteria, ensure you are able to address each criteria within the space limitations provided.
  - Some advertisements may list essential criteria and desirable criteria. Whilst the essential criteria are the core competencies the employer is looking for, the desirable criteria are just that – desirable. It is important to address both the essential and the desirable criteria as applicants who successfully answer all the criteria will usually be favoured over those who focus only on the essential criteria.

- When addressing the selection criteria remember the following:
  - Clearly state how your skills, knowledge and attributes match the requirements for the position being advertised.
o Provide evidence describing how your skills, knowledge and attributes have been developed or applied using detailed examples from your studies and other activities such as relevant volunteer work, community engagement activities, involvement with university clubs and external societies.

o Offer clear and relevant examples to support your statements to illustrate your ability to meet the criteria. Vague or unambiguous answers will not influence an employer to arrange an interview.

o Select a range of experiences to promote your skills, attributes and experiences to describe your qualities and use recent and motivating examples. Specific, real life examples usually have a positive impact with employers because it gives them the opportunity to learn more about you, instead of what you think they would like to hear from you.

o When outlining specific examples to demonstrate your skills, attributes and knowledge it can be helpful to use the STAR method

**Methods of responding to criteria:**

1) **The Skills Method**

*Describe a situation where you have had to use good judgement when responding to a complaint about a particular aspect of program delivery.*

Always use STAR

2) **The Knowledge Method**

*Demonstrated knowledge of current trends and issues in the delivery of community services.*

Here you are required to indicate or demonstrate how you successfully applied your knowledge in a particular situation. STAR is appropriate to use in this instance however if the questions simply asks for “knowledge of...” show where you acquired that knowledge – examples are not required under these circumstances.

3) **The Experience Method**

*Experience in...*

This is different to the skills and knowledge criteria as the question is asking “When have you done this before?” You do not need to give detailed examples of how you applied your skills, but rather what you have done in the past.

*Demonstrated Experience in...*
Describe specific involvement in your example – you are being asked to demonstrate how you acquired the experience.

Tip: If you feel you don’t have that particular experience but feel you have done something similar, then explain that. To get a better idea on key words and phrases to use in your selection criteria, see the handout on “Action Words” (for Resumes, Cover Letters and Selection Criteria). Never leave a criterion blank or state that you don’t meet it.

Examples of common skills and attributes employers look for in graduates;
- Communication skills (both oral and written).
- Teamwork skills (including an understanding of team dynamics).
- Problem Solving skills.
- Leadership and Influencing skills
- Research and Analytical skills
- Project Co-ordination/Management
- Information Technology / Computing skills
- Adaptability
- Initiative

See the “Identifying and Developing Your Employability Skills” resource document for details regarding skills and attributes employers look for in graduates.

Selection Criteria Examples

**Demonstrated ability to work as an effective team member and the potential to lead work teams.**

Team work was emphasised in the Marine Biology degree at Murdoch University, where my ability to work effectively as a team member was examined on numerous occasions. All practical activities and fieldwork was carried out in groups ranging from 2 -6. It was essential while working in small groups that friction did not arise. As a regular Team Leader at university I was capable of listening and implementing the suggestions of others, while also ensuring that I effectively communicated my own point of view in a respectful manner. I often took the lead in following through on a coordinated course of action. I was awarded either a “High Distinction” or “Distinction” for my practical units at university.

**Well-developed verbal and communication skills.**

I have exercised my ability to communicate effectively on a number of different occasions within the context of my university experience. Excellent communication skills include my ability to actively listen to others and communicate detailed information clearly and concisely in tutorial discussions. I am also a comfortable public speaker and can adapt my presentation style to suit different audiences. Subsequently, I was encouraged by a lecturer to participate in this year’s Deloitte “Dream Team” competition. Our final presentation was well received by Deloitte partners.
Knowledge of epidemiological research designs for public health policy purposes.

I have gained knowledge of epidemiological research designs through my current degree program. Units specific to such study have included:
- Issues in Occupational and Environmental Health;
- Pollutants and the Human Environment;
- Statistical Data Analysis and Databases.

These units have introduced me to research designs including:
- Cohort;
- Cross-sectional;
- Retrospective / case-control studies.

I feel I have a good understanding of what epidemiological studies are aimed at achieving, that being:
- Recognition of risk factors of a given disease;
- To identify protective factors against the disease;
- Recognition of the speed and degree of spread of a disease, this may be through collection and recording or morbidity and mortality data;
- Identification of trends in rates of morbidity and mortality over a period of time.

Ability to show initiative.

My ability to show initiative is evidenced by:
- Offering peer to peer support by introducing online discussion forums for students;
- Actively participating in student advisory committees and employment discussion panels, resulting in improved outcomes for graduates;
- Organising multiple student events and establishing clear targeted outcomes for each, with the view to continually improving ways of organising and marketing such events within a small team, resulting in increased student attendance and engagement.

Experience in the use of information and technology / Computer software.

My experience in utilising and staying up-to-date with developments in IT can be demonstrated through both my part-time employment and university study. In my work I undertake Office Administration / Reception duties both face-to-face and online, using Outlook for daily communication and Internet Explorer / Mozilla for internet navigation. As a student I use a variety of software for university assessment purposes such as: MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel as well as SPSS to undertake statistical analysis.