



Addressing Selection Criteria

This information is provided to assist you in submitting applications for advertised vacancies within Queensland Treasury

ANSWERING SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria contained in the job description, describe the particular skills, abilities, knowledge and qualifications (if any) required to achieve the outcomes of a job. Applicants are rated against the selection criteria, in order to select the most meritorious applicant.

The following process is a guide to assist you in answering selection criteria.

THE WRITING PROCESS

- 1. Read the selection criteria carefully.**
- 2. Identify the specific factors in each selection criterion.**
- 3. Determine how you meet each criterion.**
 - (a) The introductory assertion may be 'I possess a high level of skill in...'
 - (b) You should then support this statement, such as 'In my role of, I have'. This is an example of a previous situation where you have demonstrated a particular skill or ability giving consideration to what tasks were involved, or how you would apply the skill or ability.
 - (c) Expand your previous statement by describing (step by step), what was involved in the process.
 - (d) You should then provide support or evidence of achievements, such as 'the attached statement from...'; this resulted in...'; 'I have improved ...'. These are the results or outcomes of your supporting statement and show how you were successful.
- 4. Check you have used positive and specific language.**

Instead of saying "We produced a newsletter", outline specifically what you did, for example, "I formatted and edited the newsletter".
- 5. Check that you have addressed the specific factors.**
- 6. Check that you have not undersold or oversold yourself.**

SAMPLE ANSWER

Let's have a look at a selection criterion common to many public sector jobs. The wording may vary and depend on the level of the classification applied for.

'Well developed oral and written communication skills as evidenced by the ability to liaise with a range of clients at all levels.'

Many answers received by selection panels are not sufficiently detailed for panels to make a full assessment of the applicants' claims. Generally a three of four sentence response would not be considered sufficient. Here is an example of a response which would **not be** sufficient based on the above selection criteria.

'I possess well developed oral and written communication skills which I have utilised throughout my working career. At XYZ Corporation I was required to liaise regularly with people at all levels ranging from senior managers to staff, on a range of recruitment and procedural matters. I have written a large number of documents including memos and articles in an office newsletter.'

In this example, the broader view has been taken without the applicant outlining how they specifically met the criteria.

Using the **Writing Process** described earlier, let's try to improve this answer so the applicant has the best chance of being invited to interview.

1. Reread the selection criteria.
2. Identify specific factors – underlining keywords may be useful so you can break them down into meaningful components. For example, the word 'communication' can include meanings such as verbal, non-verbal, listening, negotiation, questioning and feedback. (This is not an exhaustive list – you can probably think of additional examples).
3. To outline how you meet the criterion, expand on what you did but ensure it is concise. To help you expand, think of a situation in relation to the criterion in which you were involved, taking into account where it was, what you did, how you did it, and what the outcome was.

Let's have a look at the reworked answer.

I possess well developed communication skills which I have gained throughout my working career. In particular, in my role as Administration Support Officer at XYZ Corporation, I liaised on a daily basis with senior managers, staff at all levels, recruitment agencies and members of the general public. Most of the communication was face-to-face and by telephone and I was frequently commended for the professional manner in which I carried out these duties.

For example, one of my key responsibilities was to recruit office support staff for various areas within XYZ Corporation. Senior managers would phone me to request a new staff member and I would personally meet with them to discuss their requirements. I would update the job description and brief the agency on all aspects of the job to ensure they understood our requirements

This process required well developed communication skills to ensure I acquired an accurate understanding of the job and clearly communicated this to the agency. As a result, highly suitable applicants were referred for interview.

My written communication skills are also well developed and I have utilised these skills in writing the following documents:

- *Updating job descriptions;*
- *Writing articles in a monthly newsletter; and*
- *Writing memos to office staff.*

As Administration Support Officer I was required to keep managers informed of policies and procedures. To do this, I initiated a monthly newsletter. I wrote an article in each publication and encouraged other staff members to submit an article or I obtained their ideas and input. Feedback received in relation to this newsletter was excellent and resulted in improved lines of communication between managers and the Administration Support Branch.

The above response shows how the applicant gained relevant skills, gives examples and outlines details of what they did. The response also gives successful outcomes for all the people involved. This response could continue by expanding upon further examples.

TIPS

Layout

- Where appropriate use dot points in your answers to help with clarity – it will make your application easier to read.
- Place each selection criterion on a separate page with the selection criterion stated at the top of every page.

Length

- Although there are no hard and fast rules, the suggested length of the response be between ½ and 1 ½ pages per selection criterion, although this will depend on the level of the position being applied for.

Other Presentation Tips

- Put your name and the vacancy reference number on each page.
- Ensure there are no errors and that sentences are grammatically correct.
- Number every page.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Some useful books in relation to answering selection criteria are available. Here are two, but please check with your library or bookshop for others.

Lupton, T. (1996) *Answering Selection Criteria*, 2nd edition, Lupton Publishing, Nambour, Australia.

Villiers, Ann D. Dr., (1996) *How to Write to Selection Criteria*, 2nd edition, National Library of Australia.