

# What are selection criteria and why are they used?

Selection criteria describe the qualifications, knowledge, skills, abilities and experience a person requires in order to do a job effectively. They are divided into:

- essential criteria
- 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. If you do not meet the essential criteria, you will not be shortlisted for interview.

It is not necessary for you to have the qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience described by the desirable criteria, but your chances of being shortlisted are better if you do. Where there are several applicants who meet the essential criteria, the selection panel will shortlist on the basis of the desirable criteria.

## Examples of selection criteria

Apart from qualifications and experience that may be specific to a particular job, there are several selection criteria that are common to many positions. These include:

- ability to work as part of a team
- ability to work under pressure
- attention to detail
- flexible and adaptable approach to work
- organisational/planning skills
- problem-solving ability
- written and verbal communication/interpersonal skills

## Why selection criteria must be addressed

For most positions, the selection panel is required to assess each applicant in terms of how well they meet the selection criteria. However, it is not up to the selection panel, who may have 100 applications to assess, to wade through your résumé and covering letter trying to find the relevant information about you, that relates to each criterion. It is up to you to summarise the relevant information about yourself and to present it in a form which is easily accessible to the panel.

This 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.

## Format and Layout

There are a number of things you can do to make your selection criteria statement effective and easy for the selection panel to read.

- Make it a separate attachment from your résumé and covering letter.

- Give the document a heading and include the following details:
  - title, e.g. 'Statement Addressing Selection Criteria'
  - name of the position
  - position reference number (e.g. 18/96)
- 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'
- 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 (how to do this is explained below).

## Content

Your statement addressing the selection criteria needs to demonstrate how your previous experience, skills, education and training have equipped you to meet the requirements of the position.

- Highlight your relevant skills and experience by describing your major responsibilities in current or previous employment (this may include relevant non-paid work). Where possible, mention the same kinds of tasks and responsibilities as are listed in the advertised duty statement.
- Indicate the extent of your experience in relation to a particular criterion, e.g. number of years' experience, number of staff supervised, etc.
- Briefly give details of one or two specific things you've done that are good examples of your ability to meet the criterion.
- Where possible, indicate how successfully you meet the criterion. You could do this by referring to feedback you've received from others, or things you've set up that are still being used.
- Mention any relevant qualifications and training you have, particularly if your experience is limited.
- Details of any relevant training courses you've attended, such as 'Effective Communication at Work', or 'Introduction to Microsoft Excel'
- Subjects studied as part of award courses, such as bookkeeping, office practice, etc.

## Providing Additional Information

At the end of your selection criteria statement you may like to add any extra information that you believe is relevant to the job. Alternatively you could refer to it in your covering letter. Examples of things you could mention include:

- skills and abilities which you think are important and which haven't been mentioned in the selection criteria, e.g. 'flexibility', 'ability to maintain confidentiality'
- knowledge or experience you have which you believe is important to the job, e.g. knowledge of particular University systems, policies or procedures.
- Make sure that any information you include is directly relevant to the position.

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