

Addressing Selection Criteria

Selection criteria are used by the public sector and some organisations to short-list applicants for interviews. They are typically a summary of the key requirements of a position and are a chance for the applicant to match their skills and experience to the requirements specified by the employer. The employer determines standards for each selection criterion and applicants are ranked according to how closely they meet the selection criteria in comparison to the standards. You must satisfactorily address each selection criterion to be considered for an interview.

This information sheet provides some general guidelines about how to address selection criteria, however, it is most important to follow the information provided in the job advertisement to see what the employer is specifically asking for.

Key Selection Criteria Terms

Selection criteria may be categorised as essential or desirable.

- **Essential criteria** are considered to be mandatory.
- **Desirable criteria** are those considered to be important but not essential.

Always address every criterion. Even if you don't have the direct experience being asked for, make an attempt to draw the skills they are looking for from an area of your life experience, or at least show you are keen and have the ability to learn the required skills.

The major types of selection criteria may relate to:

- **Qualifications** – educational and professional.
- **Experience** – direct involvement in an area.
- **Knowledge, understanding** – theory, application and implications.
- **Skills** – provide details of competency and proficiency.
- **Abilities** – expertise you have developed and your potential to develop skills.

Skills may be required at different levels, including *excellent, highly developed, demonstrated, and ability to develop*. The **table below** shows the type of wording typically used indicating the level sought for that criterion.

General knowledge/ Awareness of	A basic understanding
Knowledge of	Familiarity gained from experience
Sound knowledge of	A good working knowledge, specific application
Thorough knowledge of	A comprehensive grasp of information and application
Demonstrated ability	Provide specific examples of performing the function
Ability to rapidly acquire	Prove you have the capacity to learn

Requirements

- Individually address each criterion under a separate heading - the heading should be the selection criterion wording.
- Unless specified otherwise, each response should be ¾ to 1 page in length.
- Carefully read each selection criterion. Break down each criterion into parts and address each aspect thoroughly.
- Be aware of key expressions and levels required in each criterion. See the table at left for more information about criterion levels.
- Use relevant academic, employment, social, committee participation, voluntary work, or hobby examples to support your claim to meet the criterion.
- Use the STAR (L) formula (details on next page) to compose your answers, and where possible, substantiate your examples with indicators of how well you did them. This might include results, comments, extended contracts, happy customers, etc.
- In your response to the selection criteria do not refer the reader to information in your resume. Your response to a selection criterion will be building on the information in your resume and giving a fuller picture of your skills and experience.
- Ensure that your application is written clearly and concisely, that it is grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors.
- Use active rather than passive verbs – e.g. “I managed...” rather than “I was responsible for...”

Steps To Take When Addressing Selection Criteria

The criterion *High level of written and oral communication skills* is referred to below to illustrate the process. (*Italics below refer to this example*)

4. **Analyse each selection criterion** according to the type and level required. In the example, *two skill types are required – written communication skills and oral communication skills. Both are required at a high level.*
 5. **Read the job description thoroughly.** Understand what is involved in the position and give **relevant examples** of how you meet every part of each criterion. *If you were in the position, how would you apply your high-level oral and written communication skills? What will the panel be looking for?*
 6. **Research the position.** Gain a good understanding of the position before you apply. If possible **contact the contact person** in the organisation to clarify requirements and expectations. *Develop an understanding of communication skills required in the position.*
 7. Start developing your responses by **recording notes about each selection criterion.** Brainstorm as many ideas and relevant examples of how you can meet each criterion. Even if it seems even slightly related write it down at this stage.
 8. **Develop your response** to each criterion drawing from ideas you have previously recorded.
 9. When writing your responses **use a separate heading for each criterion.** Use the **STAR (L) formula** with a combination of sentences and bullet points. Read the application material or contact the organisation to determine if the panel has a preferred style.
1. Make sure you **answer specifically what they are asking for** – don't go off on tangents.
 2. **Have someone check each response.** Ask them to read for clarity of expression, correct grammar and spelling as well as how adequately the response addresses the selection criterion.
 3. **Include a letter of application and resume** with your response to selection criteria.



Using STAR (L) to show evidence of your experiences

Situation: The context of your experience – where did it occur and what was the relevant environment? (e.g., during a university assessment).

Task: What was required of you? This may have been a technical performance, project, or dealing with a problem.

Action: **Most important step – focus on this in your answers.**
What action did you take to deliver the task, resolve the problem, or present a case?

Result: What was the outcome and how did your actions affect this positive result?

Learning: **This step is optional.**
What did you learn from this process / what would you do differently next time / how could you apply this learning to other tasks? This will show the employer evidence of the application of your skills and how this activity contributed to your personal and professional development.

Statement Addressing Selection Criteria – EXAMPLE ONLY

An example response to the selection criterion: *High level of written and oral communication skills* is presented below using a combination of text and bullet point format. Either or both are acceptable. When addressing selection criteria, use the style that best suits the position you are applying for. The example below highlights the use of the STAR technique, with S – situations, T – tasks, A – actions, and R – results marked and highlighted in bold.

Selection Criterion – High level of written and oral communication skills

S

R

Throughout **my university course** I have consistently achieved **high grades**. This achievement has required high levels of oral and written communication skills. For example, I gained credits or higher in written assessment items including detailed technical reports, analytical papers, and short answer and essay questions written under examination conditions. I have been required to present oral reports on several topics. For example, I **developed and presented a one-hour report on the advantages and disadvantages of working in a multidisciplinary team**. Fulfilment of this has included **research, development of an argument, production of a written paper, and presentation of the findings to seminar groups**. I **presented an orientation address to first year students in 2006, and received positive feedback from the program coordinator, and from the participating students and audience members**.

A

R

S

T

A

As **secretary, treasurer, and publicity officer of Young Achievers in 2007 and 2008**, high-level communication skills were necessary to execute my responsibilities effectively. For example, I **was responsible for developing a strategy to encourage new memberships**. It involved **making telephone contacts and group presentations as well as writing and distributing invitations, information sheets, and advertising posters**. This action contributed to a **20% increase in membership over a 12-month period**.

R

Other responsibilities included:

- **developing and presenting oral and written reports for fortnightly meetings**
- **recording and producing detailed minutes of meetings**
- **reading, recording and responding to correspondence**
- **developing both oral and written responses to club business**

A

S

I have worked an average of **12 hours per week in a customer service position in a pharmacy for three years**. This position has allowed me to develop **high-level communication skills through clear, assertive, and emphatic communication skills with a broad band cross section of the community**.

T

Communication skills demonstrated in this position include:

- **providing up to date information and advice at a level to match customer understanding**
- **providing assistance with decision making**
- **handling customer complaints and misunderstandings**
- **explaining directions relating to correct and safe product use**
- **undertaking written stock control**
- **completing administrative paperwork**

A

I know I have been doing my job well because:

- **the pharmacist has renewed my contract three times.**
- **my supervisor has consistently given me good comments about my work and my approach to work.**
- **I have a consistent group of customers who usually see me for service.**
- **I have a particularly strong relationship with two elderly, partially disabled customers.**

R

Selection Criteria Tips & Info

1. If you are applying for a job and the advertisement mentions requirements, but doesn't specify how to address these requirements in your application, call the organisation and ask them how they would like you to submit your responses, and also check the preferred depth or word length. Some may prefer you to have a separate Selection Criteria / Requirements response document, whereas others may prefer that you include this information in your cover letter.
2. Don't waffle!
3. Use the same or similar words as the criterion wording or the job ad. Your goal is to make it easy for the employer to be able to read your response and see that you have the skills and experience that they are looking for.
4. You may also see the term 'Statement of Claim' used to describe a 'Selection Criteria' response document.
5. Research has shown that the average amount of time required to prepare a set of responses to typical Selection Criteria is 14 hours – make sure you give yourself enough time to get yours ready. Remember that once you have prepared your first set of Selection Criteria, it will be easier the next time around – you will be more familiar with the process, and may have some example situations which can be modified for similar criteria.
6. One selection criterion (singular), many selection criteria (plural).
7. Australia is one of only a few countries where employers use selection criteria in their selection process.

QUT Student ePortfolio

Student ePortfolio is an electronic journal accessed via QUT Virtual, created to allow you to record experiences and reflections across your whole degree.

Why use Student ePortfolio?

Building a personal eportfolio can help you to develop a deeper **awareness of yourself and your abilities**. Reflecting on and recording your experiences will help you to recognise and review the **knowledge and skills** that you've developed as a result of those experiences. You'll also be better able to identify any skill areas in need of improvement.

Using Student ePortfolio to Address Selection Criteria

When prospective employers ask you for evidence of the **skills and attributes** they're looking for, you'll be able to **draw on the examples** documented in your ePortfolio to answer interview questions and respond to selection criteria. Having this information ready and organised will make the job application process easier and less daunting. The wide variety of information in your ePortfolio will convey a far **clearer and more complete** impression of you than your résumé or academic history could alone.



Want more help with Selection Criteria?

Further assistance with preparing your Selection Criteria responses is available through a free online module on Blackboard. A specific module on Selection Criteria will take you step-by-step through the selection criteria process. Have a look at it by clicking on **Career development programs** under **For Students/Graduates** on the Careers and Employment website, www.careers.qut.edu.au

The Career Development Programs are online modules to help you at each stage of your career development. Check them out!

