

RESPONDING TO SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection Criteria are the key elements of a job that you will need to be able cover off with confidence. They may include specific personal qualities, skills, abilities, knowledge and qualifications needed to perform a role effectively. Sometimes the Selection Criteria are divided into:

- *most* important (the things that are absolutely essential for the role). These are weighted equally when evaluating your application.
- *less* important, which are weighted lower.

They may also refer to these differently. They can also be classed as *essential* (must have) and *desirable* (nice to have).

The panel assessing applications will rate applicants against the Criteria in order to select the person they feel is most suited to the job.

Of course it's very important that you meet *all* the essential Criteria to be a front runner for any position. Your chances of progressing through the selection process will be much higher if you meet all the Selection Criteria as there's more than likely going to be quite a few applicants vying for the same job.

HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS THE CRITERIA?

Simply stating you're 'good' at things won't get you through. What the panel will be looking for is *evidence of your capabilities*. Give real life examples of what you have achieved and/or your experiences that show you understand what is being asked and how you have managed those issues in the past. So by all means give short, to-the-point details of past examples and where possible indicate how successful the outcomes may have been.

If you find this a little hard, then using the **STAR** model should help.

Situation – provide a brief outline of the situation

Task – outline what you did

Approach – how you actioned it

Result – describe the outcomes

STEP ONE – UNDERSTANDING THE CRITERIA

As an example, using the **STAR** model, if one of the Selection Criteria was to demonstrate sound verbal and written communication skills, your response could be something like this:

My customer service work at ABC Sports Stores meant that I was able to develop and apply my communication skills to the highest level.

My job entailed dealing directly with customers, suppliers and staff in person and over the phone.

Part of this role was to field customer enquiries, which enabled me to use all my communication skills.

Dealing with a customer request to order particular items involved talking to the supplier over the phone, entering the order details and customer's information into the computer database, ordering the goods and recontacting the customer when the book arrived.

In addition, I concisely documented this information in our filing system for the benefit of other staff. Using clear communication, in verbal and written forms, I ensured a good relationship with our suppliers was maintained and provided efficient and effective customer service.

As a result, my manager commended my communication skills at my first performance appraisal, and I was promoted to the role of staff trainer.

(More info overleaf)

SOME LEARNINGS

From the example above you can see that it opens strongly with a claim to the Criterion and is then supported by real life, relevant examples. (*More info overleaf*)

You should be very specific about your experience and ensure you show an outcome at the end.

It's important to ensure all your statements are accurate and up to date. It's not much use using an example that's fifteen years old. If you can't cite an example to cover a Criterion from your work experience there may be an example from your involvement in a club, charity or community activity.

You may have a number of examples you could use. Carefully think through each one and decide which will demonstrate your capacity to meet the Criterion best.

Write down quick *dot points* before you actually include the response formally so you can prioritise, include or delete as necessary. Once you're happy with points you've written down, expand on them as part of your 'finished' response. They can still be dot points where appropriate. This helps keep the document easy to read and to the point.

Once you have covered off all the Criteria requested it is essential to review what you have said.

- Is it clear and unambiguous?
- Is it concise and to the point?
- Have I used strong action (doing) words?
- Have I completely covered all aspects of the Criteria?
- Have I *really* understood the Criteria? (If you're not sure get someone else to read both the Criteria and your responses).

STRUCTURING THE DOCUMENT

Layout and Presentation:

Make sure the document looks presentable.

- Don't mix up styles
- Use highly legible fonts
- Make sure the point size is not too big or small (around 11 -12 point is usually best).
- The document should be formatted neatly
- Don't use overly long sentences
- Keep any paragraphs short
- Check your spelling and grammar. If you're unsure, ask someone else to look over it for you

Length:

It's important to be concise in a document such as this.

As a guide, probably no more than 250 words would be about right in response to each Criterion.