



Skillmax Resource Guide

PUBLIC SECTOR

JOB APPLICATIONS



Pathways to
Employment

SKILLMAX
RESOURCE
GUIDE 2012



AMES

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Welcome to Unit 8

Unit 8 will only be of interest to those who wish to apply for public sector jobs in commonwealth, state or local government. The unit focuses on preparing public sector job applications which involves carefully addressing selection criteria. You will analyse job advertisements and sample applications and how well they respond to the selection criteria.

Assessment

There is no formal assessment task in Unit 8.

Understanding public sector selection procedures

All equal employment opportunity (EEO) organisations are required to follow set procedures when advertising a position, receiving applications and interviewing prospective employees. EEO organisations include federal, state and local government departments, universities, community and not-for-profit organisations.

Applying for a job in any public sector area is a complex process. It requires thorough research and preparation, familiarity with the format of public sector applications and an understanding of the selection process. The success of the written application is an important step towards being considered for the all-important interview.

Where to find public sector advertisements	
<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> Saturday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday <i>The Australian</i> Saturday Wednesday Thursday <i>The Australian Local Government Job Directory</i> <i>(magazine in Job Search Centre)</i> Jobs online Public Service Notices Local newspapers Websites of each council	Generally all positions in NSW and the Sydney area Local government positions My Career job information, local government and general positions Local council positions Commonwealth government positions Higher education Medical www.job-directory.com.au www.jobs.nsw.gov.au Websites of each department or authority www.gaa.dpws.nsw.gov.au Local council positions

Activity 1

The NSW public sector is made up of several government organisations referred to as *departments* or *authorities*.

Read the following information about applying for a position in the public sector:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The NSW public sector values the diversity of its workforce and has an equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy. This means that in recruitment all applications are considered fairly and without discrimination and the person most capable of doing the job will be chosen.

Selection for NSW government jobs is based on merit and a person's ability to perform the work. Merit selection ensures that all eligible members of the community have a fair chance to gain a job with the government, without discrimination based on age, sex, pregnancy, disability, race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or nationality, marital status, homosexuality, transgender identity or carer's responsibilities. The best person is selected, resulting in a quality public sector workforce capable of effectively designing and delivering services and programs to the people of NSW.

Applicants for permanent jobs must be Australian citizens or permanent residents. Overseas applicants for temporary positions must have a work visa.

Some positions are available on a part-time or job-share basis. For more information, please ask the inquiries person.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All NSW government job advertisements list *selection criteria* which describe the skills, knowledge, personal qualities and experience needed for the job. In your application, use a separate heading for each of the criteria, and describe how your achievements, skills, knowledge and experience meet the criteria. Information on selection criteria and applying for government jobs is also available from <http://www.eeo.nsw.gov.au>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is important to refer to the particular job information online at <http://www.jobs.nsw.gov.au> or obtain an information package from the inquiries contact person. The package will include information on how to apply for a NSW government job, selection criteria and additional information relevant to the position. All NSW Government advertisements include a brief description of the job, the name of the inquiries person to contact for more details, information on how to apply and a closing date for applications.

You will have a much better chance of getting the job you want if you **read the job advertisement carefully** and make a note of anything you don't understand so you can ask the inquiries contact person. Further helpful tips can be found on the following websites: <http://www.jobs.nsw.gov.au/findingjob/tips.html> and <http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/>.

In small groups answer the questions.

- 1 The NSW public sector is described as an equal opportunity employer. What does this mean?
- 2 What do you understand by merit selection?
- 3 Who can apply for a permanent position?
- 4 What are selection criteria? How are they addressed in the job application?
- 5 Where can you find information about selection criteria?
- 6 What does the information package include?
- 7 How do you apply for a government position in your country of origin?
- 8 Have you applied for a public sector position here? Were you clear about how to apply for the position?

The format of a public sector application

A written application for a public sector position is very different from a private sector application.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR APPLICATIONS:

Application	Public sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover letter • application form • résumé • claim for the position 	Private sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover letter • résumé
Important part of application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim for the position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letter and résumé
Selection criteria in order of importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience • skills • qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience • skills • ability to fit in technically and personally with company profile • ability to achieve results • qualifications

In general, a public sector application consists of several parts:

- cover letter
- application form
- résumé
- claim for position
- other attachments, eg educational qualifications

The requirements can vary with each job application; therefore it is important to read each package thoroughly to make sure you complete each section of the particular application.

The **claim for position** is the most important part of your written application. Each selection criteria must be addressed as a separate heading. Examples of your previous employment experience must be included under each heading.

The selection process

Positions in the public sector are obtained on **merit**. The job advertisement and the position description provide the basis for the whole selection process since they specify precisely the skills required for the satisfactory performance of the position.

These attributes and skills could be described in terms of: **qualifications, knowledge, abilities, experience, personal qualities, standard of work performance, potential for further career development and the ability to perform the duties of other positions.**

The most **efficient** person of those who have applied must be selected. The meaning of efficiency for a specific position is reflected in the Selection Criteria, which consists of a list of items, usually five to eight.

Shortlisting, interviews, assessment, referee comments and comparison of applicants are all made against the **Selection Criteria**. No new criteria can be introduced during the selection process.

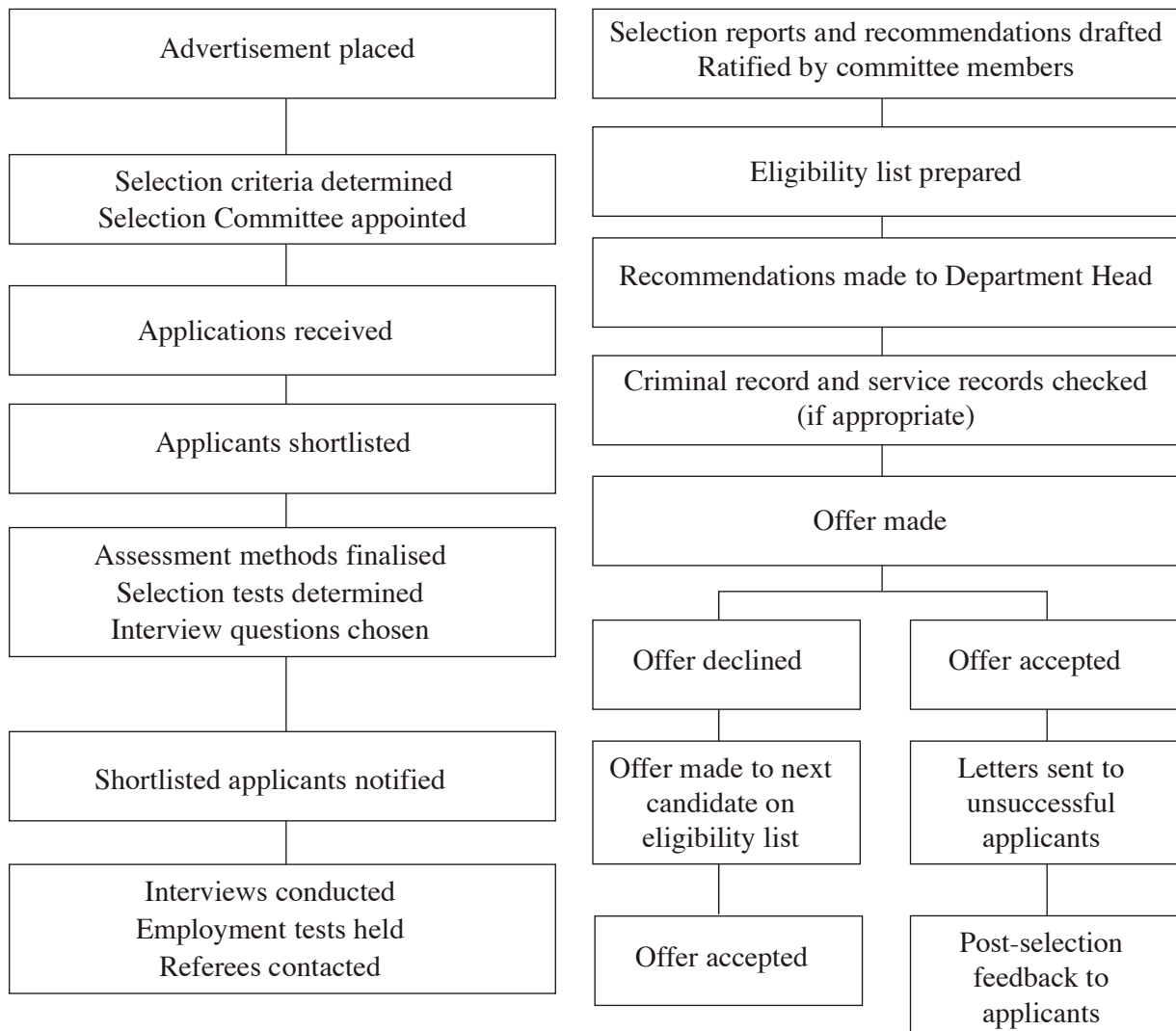
The **Selection Panel** consists of two or three people (at least one male and one female): one person from the section in which the vacancy occurs, one person from another organisation or another section of the department, and another person who may be familiar with the work.

The panel decides who will be shortlisted, conducts the interviews, seeks referee reports and prepares a report with a recommendation about filling the vacancy. It is responsible for choosing fairly the applicant who best satisfies the specification in the job description. The position is readvertised if no applicant meets the minimum criteria.

Feedback is an important part of the selection process. As an applicant, you are entitled to obtain a copy of the section of the report relevant to you and comments about your interview performance.

Activity 2

- a Read through the selection process on the previous page and the flow-chart below. Discuss as a class. Is there a similar procedure in your country of origin?
- b Make sure you know the meaning of these words: *Criterion, criteria, shortlisted, drafted, ratified, eligibility list, criminal record, service record, post-selection feedback*.



Analysing a public sector job advertisement

A public sector job advertisement may look straightforward but it is important to read the advertisement thoroughly **before** you start to apply.

The key points to note in a public sector advertisement are:

- 1 **The name of the organisation or department**
It is easy to make assumptions about an organisation or department. You need to find out as much as possible from their website, newspaper articles, annual reports and the contact or inquiries officer.
- 2 **Title of position and position number**
Make sure the position is relevant and matches your background. Read *Job Guide* and ASCO (Australian Standard Classification of Occupations).
- 3 **Location**
Check that the geographical location of the position is a possibility before you start preparing your application. Always check a street directory or map.
- 4 **Classification and salary**
Clerical staff are structured from Grades 1 to 12. Senior staff are also classified in various professional streams. Each classification has its own salary structure.
- 5 **Description of position**
A brief description appears in the advertisement. Full information will be in the job package.
- 6 **Selection criteria**
These are mentioned in the advertisement. They often appear deceptively easy, but each one has to be addressed separately and in concise detail. Information about any specific EEO criteria (eg knowledge of and commitment to the Department's (Education) Aboriginal education policies) are usually provided in the Job Information Package.
- 7 **Notes**
Additional relevant information.
- 8 **Inquiries and information packages**
The contact person may be different from the person for the information package. Check pronunciation of names before telephoning.
- 9 **Applications marked 'Confidential' to:**
Apply for the position online or by post. In some cases, you may be able to hand in your application in person.
- 10 **Closing date**
You will need as much time as possible to complete your application. Do not start the night before!

Activity 3

Look at the job advertisement below and answer the following questions.

FIRE BRIGADES, NSW

CLERK - RECRUIT TRAINING UNIT,

Clerk Grade 3/4. Alexandria. Full-time. 852005. Total remuneration package valued to: \$67,675 pa (\$56,009 - \$61,328) includes employer contribution to superannuation and leave loading. This position provides clerical and administrative assistance to the Recruit Training Unit. Selection Criteria: Demonstrated computer literacy and the ability to perform advanced word processing functions, including macros, spreadsheets and the maintenance of databases in a Windows environment. Extensive knowledge of and experience in clerical and administrative functions combined with the ability to work independently. Excellent spoken and written communication skills. Knowledge of accounts payable and purchasing procedures. Ability to maintain confidentiality.

Notes: Online applications must be MS Word compatible. **Inquiries:** Julie Gray (02) 9318 4306

Email: julie.gray@nswfire.nsw.gov.au. **Information Packages:** Joanne McKeough (02) 9318 4399

Email: joanne.mckeough@nswfire.nsw.gov.au.

Applications marked 'Confidential' to: Applicants can apply for this position online at www.jobs.nsw.gov.au or by post to the following address: Marked 'Confidential'.

Administration Manager, Training College. PO Box 559, Alexandria NSW 1435.

Closing Date: Friday, 26 July 2009 PSN/C 919707.

- 1 What is the name of the department? How would you find out more information?
- 2 What is the title of the position?
- 3 Where is the job located?
- 4 What is the classification and salary of this position?
- 5 Which selection criteria will you have to address in the claim for this position?
- 6 Who is the inquiries officer?
- 7 Who will you ring for the information package?
- 8 How will you apply?
- 9 When is the closing date for this application?
- 10 Is this a permanent or temporary position?

Expressions used in selection criteria

Understanding the language used in public sector advertisements is vital in preparing an application. Below is a list of the most commonly used expressions.

Qualifications	Education and/or training which must be possessed by the applicant to effectively undertake the duties of the position (essential). Education and/or training which would greatly assist the applicant, but a lack of these would not hinder them in undertaking the duties of the position (desirable).
Appreciation of	Conscious of/informed about issues/concerns.
Awareness of	Conscious of/informed about.
Knowledge of	Familiarity with facts, principles, procedures and regulations and how to apply these to the job.
Detailed/sound knowledge	Extensive knowledge of facts, principles and procedures.
Ability/capacity to	Able to do the job competently and implement relevant policies and/or procedures
Effective/proven/demonstrated/highly-developed ability	Proven aptitude through having done a similar job, or having applied similar knowledge and skills.
Experience	Knowledge and practical skills gained in employment.
Proven/extensive/developed ability	Evidence/demonstration of knowledge and practical skills gained in employment.
Demonstrated competence	Evidence/demonstration of effective and efficient use of knowledge and skills.
Commitment to	Proven implementation and review of policies, principles and procedures. Willingness to see the job through to the end.
Effective/high-level/superior communication skills	The meaning will vary with the position. Some examples may be: Spoken - debating, making a presentation, public speaking, interviews, negotiating, dealing with a broad cross-section of people, persuading, interpersonal and counselling skills; Written - composition of letters, fluent and articulate reports, clear and factual statements, press releases, financial reports, preparation of teaching or training materials.

Asking for the information package

After you have read the advertisement thoroughly and decided to apply, you need to obtain the information package. Read the advertisement on page 15 again, then read the outline of the telephone call below.

Ring the appropriate person. Check pronunciation of officer's name:

Good afternoon I would like to speak to Joanne McKeough, please.

Ask for the information package giving name of organisation, title of position, reference number and where advertised:

I'm interested in applying for the position of Recruit Training Clerk, advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald last Saturday. The position number is 852005. Would you mind sending me the information package, please?

Give personal details stating name and address slowly and clearly. Use telephone alphabet if necessary. Pause between phrases when giving address or telephone numbers:

My name is Andre Petrov. My surname is Petrov. P for Peter, E for egg, T for Tom, R for Robert, O for Orange, V for Victor. I live at Flat 2.....33..... Greenfield Street..... Bankstown Postcode..... 22....00.

Repeat if necessary:

Thirty three, that's right.

Thank the person. Use the person's name as it will make a good impression:

Thank you very much Ms McKeough. Goodbye.

Refer to **UNIT 5: Telephone skills** for further information.

Activity 4

Even though this is a straightforward phone call, there are several strategies you must use to make sure that you receive the package.

Underline the words or phrases in the transcript above which are strategies for:

- politeness
- speaking clearly
- clarifying information

What you can expect to find in the job package

Activity 5

a List eight things you think an information package would contain.

- i _____
- ii _____
- iii _____
- iv _____
- v _____
- vi _____
- vii _____
- viii _____

b Compare your list with the rest of the class.

Interpreting the advertisement

Activity 6

Read the advertisement for a local council position. How does this differ from a NSW public sector advertisement?

- Identify the selection criteria with a highlighter.
- Make a list of essential requirements.

CITY OF RYDE

Drainage Investigations Engineer

REF No 2009/20

An opportunity exists for a qualified and highly motivated Drainage Investigations Engineer to join the Council's Stormwater Facilities and Services team.

The position involves obtaining and analysing data for asset and floodplain management, developing drainage augmentation programs, hydraulic model analysis and the provision of advice on overland and piped flow issues.

ESSENTIAL:

- Degree in Civil Engineering;
- Proven ability to undertake field investigations;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- Ability to confidently liaise with internal and external customers;
- Competent word processing and data analysis skills.

DESIRABLE:

- Confined spaces qualification;
- Undertaking postgraduate studies in water engineering;
- Competent computer skills, including AutoCad/CivicCad;
- Competent in spreadsheet, database and hydraulic model analysis.

SALARY:

The commencing salary for this position will be between \$812.10 per week to \$933.92 per week dependent on experience. Further progression within the grade is subject to performance and competency up to \$1055.73 per week. Other conditions include a 14-day/3-week working cycle. An information package is available from **Lyn Matherson on 9952 8102** or on the Internet at **www.ryde.nsw.gov.au**. Further enquiries can be directed to **Greg Hunt on 9952 8140**.

Applications addressing the selection criteria should be received by Friday 26 July 2009 and addressed to:

Mr Michael G McMahon
Chief Executive
Ryde City Council
Locked Bag 2069
North Ryde NSW 1670

City of Ryde is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

When you find a job advertisement you are interested in, you will need to assess whether you have the relevant skills for the position. You need to make sure that you can fulfil the **essential requirements** before you apply. However, it is also necessary not to underestimate your abilities and define your experience and skills in only one way. You may have **transferable skills**. For example, the position may be for an Administration Officer and you have worked as a Roster Clerk. You would certainly have some of the organisational skills needed for administrative duties such as compiling rosters.

Activity 7

- a Read the advertisement on the previous page again. A Skillmax student has analysed and assessed the advertisement (see below) to see if he has the relevant qualifications and experience.
- b Should he apply for the position? Have you any suggestions?

What the employer wants	What I can offer
Qualifications Degree in Civil Engineering	Degree in Civil Engineering assessed by the Institute of Engineers
Experience <i>Essential</i> Field investigations and ability to give advice on overland and piped flow issues <i>Desirable</i> Confined spaces qualification Currently undertaking postgraduate studies in water engineering	More than 12 years experience in Bangladesh in an international company No, but have investigated suitable courses Intend to study next year
Technical skills <i>Essential</i> Competent word processing and data analysis skills <i>Desirable</i> Competency in AutoCad/CivicCad Spreadsheet/database/hydraulic model analysis	Basic skills only Have some limited experience
Personal skills <i>Essential</i> Highly motivated Excellent written and verbal communication skills Ability to liaise with internal and external customers	Yes, can show initiative in previous position Spoken English in international company, wrote reports to supervisor Can demonstrate this in updated résumé

Activity 8

a Choose a public sector advertisement which you intend to apply for. Read and interpret the advertisement (see page 13).

b Write down the following details:

- What do you know about the organisation?
- What do you know about the responsibilities of the position?

c Fill in the assessment form below.

What the employer wants	What I can offer
Qualifications	
Experience <i>Essential</i> <i>Desirable</i>	
Technical skills <i>Essential</i> <i>Desirable</i>	
Personal skills	

Preparing for a public sector application

Activity 9

Read the list of tasks you need to do when preparing an application for a public sector position and put them in the order you would do them.

- ☐ Fill in the application form.
- ☐ Telephone for a job package.
- ☐ Send application form, letter, résumé and claim for position in time to reach the contact officer before closing date.
- ☐ Write several drafts of your claim for the position using the headings and notes you made.
- ☐ Edit all sections of your application. Check presentation. Read information in job package thoroughly.
- ☐ Write final draft.
- ☐ Research the organisation. Use as many sources as possible.
- ☐ Read the advertisement. Then decide whether the job is suitable for you by making notes under the headings: **What the employer wants** and **What I can offer**.
- ☐ Write a cover letter.
- ☐ Ring the contact person mentioned in the job ad to find out more information about the position and the workplace. Ask prepared questions.
- ☐ If necessary, change your résumé to highlight the essential selection criteria.
- ☐ Make notes under each criteria about relevant experience, training, skills and achievements. Give relevant examples.
- ☐ If appropriate, ask to visit the department and talk to the contact person.

Speaking to the contact officer by telephone

It is normal practice for an applicant to speak to a contact officer to make further inquiries about a public sector position, as this indicates real interest in the specific position. This additional information will also help you understand how to improve the quality of your application, by defining what relevant experience to include. You should not wait until the interview to make these inquiries.

BEFORE TELEPHONING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- make sure you have read the job package
- prepare a list of questions to clarify information or to ask further questions about the position or the workplace

Remember, first impressions are crucial, even over the telephone.

- sound interested and alert
- make sure you have the prepared questions, paper and a pen in front of you
- be prepared to talk about your previous work and your qualifications. You may be asked!

Address the appropriate contact person by name, checking pronunciation first:

Good morning, Mr.....My name is.....
I'm interested in applying for the position of..... reference number
advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald last Saturday. I received the job package yesterday.
I was wondering if you could give me some more information about this position?

Here are some examples of some questions you might like to ask:

I would like to know.....
Is this a new position? Has someone been acting in this position?
What are the key responsibilities of the position?
How many people would I be working with?
What direction is the organisation/department taking?
What are the key obstacles that the person in the job may need to face?
Which people or sections would I be working with?
Who would I be responsible to?
What is the composition of the workforce?
What is the organisation's/department's approach to training?
Could you tell me something about the culture and general atmosphere of the organisation?
What are the key priorities for the position in the next six months?

Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time.

Refer to **UNIT 5: Telephone skills for jobseeking** for further information.

Activity 10

- a Role play making a telephone call to a contact officer with a partner. Use the checklist below to assess your telephone call.
- b Practise again with a new partner. Make a tape. Assess for improvements.
- c Make a real phone call to an inquiries officer. Review your own phone call using the checklist.

Was the call successful?	RP1	RP2	Ph Call
Obtaining information Did you get through to the appropriate person? Did you find out the information you asked for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the contact Did you have trouble understanding the other person? What questions or language caused difficulty? If you didn't understand or a problem occurred, did you clarify? eg: <i>Sorry what was that? Did you say.....? Would you mind repeating that please?</i> Did you repeat the phrase as a question?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being understood by the contact Did you feel your questions were clear? Did the other person ask you to clarify or repeat? If the other person did not understand you, were you able to clarify what you wanted to say?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving feedback Did you give feedback while you were listening? eg: <i>Mmmm.... Yes.... I see.... Right.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politeness strategies Did you use appropriate politeness strategies? eg: <i>I wonder if... I was wondering ... Could you possibly... Would you mind... Could I just...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unexpected Did the contact officer ask you unexpected questions? Did anything else unexpected happen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preparing answers to possible questions

When you make a telephone call to the inquiries/contact officer, there is a possibility that you will be asked to answer some specific questions about your previous experience. This is like a mini interview. Be prepared!

I've had 6 years experience as a
I was responsible for.....
My work included.....
I was involved in.....
I am familiar with.....

Refer to Unit 5: *Telephone skills* for further information.

Asking the contact officer relevant questions

Activity 11

Make a list of ten questions you would ask a contact officer next time you apply for a public sector position.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Preparing to write your application

You have analysed the job advertisement, read the job information package, spoken to the contact officer and you have now decided to apply for the public sector position. Your written application should include:

- Application form
- Cover letter
- Résumé
- Claim for the position addressing all selection criteria
- Other attachments as required

WHAT TO DO AND WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN WRITING YOUR APPLICATION!

Do:

- Organise your application.
- Be concise. Every section of your job application should relate to the specific position you are applying for.
- Give current relevant personal details, including a contact number where you can be reached at all times (voicemail or mobile phone, email address).
- Take care with your presentation; your application should be neat and easy to read.
- List each of the criteria as headings and under each heading write about your qualifications, experience and skills, using examples where necessary.
- Leave sufficient space between paragraphs and highlight important points.
- Check every section of your application for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Only send a quality printout.
- Use a word processor for your résumé, cover letter and claim for position.
- Print neatly on application form.
- Make sure you sign the cover letter and application form.
- Keep copies of everything.
- Ask someone else to edit your work.
- Make sure you send your résumé and cover letter as attachments if you email your application; name attachments appropriately.

Don't:

- Write generally; give specific examples.
- Include details about duties performed many years ago.
- Be late with your application!
- Change the time of the interview; always be available.
- Send any original documentation.

Writing a public sector application

a Completing an application form

The application form varies in format. The NSW public sector uses a standard form: *Application form for NSW Government jobs*. Some organisations, particularly local councils, use their own application forms.

NSW public sector standard application form



Application form for NSW Government jobs

Position applied for _____ Vacancy ref _____

Agency _____ Location (if applicable) _____

Family name _____

Other names _____ Title (Dr, Mr, Ms etc) _____

Contact address (include postcode) _____

Phone number Home _____ Work _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Are you a NSW Government employee? ☐ No ☐ Yes — Permanent ☐ Yes — Temporary

If you ticked 'yes' state your current agency, position and grade _____

About this form

NSW government jobs are advertised on the internet at [jobs.nsw \(www.jobs.nsw.gov.au\)](http://jobs.nsw.gov.au) where you can register as a user, search for jobs, receive e-mail alerts and apply online. When you apply online you do not need to complete this form. **If you are unable to apply online you should complete this application form which is usually included in the information package.**

Applying for a job in NSW Government

Selection for NSW Government jobs is based on merit. This means that the person whose skills, knowledge, personal qualities and experience best match the job requirements will be selected.

You can obtain information about applying for NSW Government jobs in the brochure called: **Finding a great job in NSW Government**. You can usually find this brochure in the information package for the job or you can download it through jobs.nsw. A few of the important steps when applying are:

- obtain the information package for the job. You can usually download the package from the job advertisement on jobs.nsw or you can phone the inquiries person named in the advertisement and they can send you a copy
- speak to the inquiries person named in the advertisement for more information after you have read the information package
- write a good application to get an interview. You need to include your **claim for the position, résumé and completed application form**. **Your claim for the position is the most important part of the application.** To write this, make a separate heading for each selection criterion and describe your skills, knowledge, personal qualities and experience and how you can use them in the job.
- send your application to the address shown in the advertisement by the closing date.

Any statement on your application that is found to be deliberately misleading could make you, if employed, liable to dismissal.

Equality of employment opportunity and selection on merit are NSW Government policy

The interview and the selection process

A selection panel usually interviews and selects. The panel includes at least one man and one woman and one of these members usually works in a different area to the job. The selection panel assesses applications against the selection criteria. Applicants who best meet the selection criteria will be called for further assessment. The selection panel may use a number of methods to assess your ability to do the job including interview questions, work samples, tests and referee checks.

Referee check

The selection panel will phone your referees if you are one of the best applicants interviewed for the job. Your nominated referees should be able to comment on your recent work performance. The selection panel will ask your referees to comment on your work behaviour and performance and can be asked to verify or comment on claims made by you.

Criminal records check

The NSW Government requires that a criminal record check be carried out on applicants recommended for some positions. If a criminal records check is to be done, you will be asked to provide your date and place of birth. A criminal records check does not necessarily disqualify you from selection. You will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter before any final decision is made about your selection.

Working with children check

When applying for a position in child-related employment a working with children check will also be undertaken. This is a formal process of checks to help determine your suitability to work with children or have unsupervised access to children in your work. The check takes into account relevant criminal records, relevant apprehended violence orders and relevant completed disciplinary proceedings.

It is an offence under the *NSW Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* for a prohibited person to apply for a child-related position. Information on the working with children check is located at www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/check.cfm.

Permanent appointment

To be permanently appointed in the NSW Government you need to satisfy all of the following conditions:

- be an Australian citizen or have the status of permanent residence in Australia. If you do not fit this category, you are only eligible for employment in temporary vacancies
- have your fitness assessed by a health assessment, to ensure you can carry out the duties of the position. This assessment is not concerned with disabilities you might have that do not affect your work. You may be required to provide a declaration or undertake a medical examination
- provide proof of identity.

If you are offered employment you may be asked about your current salary to determine your commencement rate.

Further information

The inquiries person (named on the advertisement) can provide more information. They can also help if you have any requirements for the interview (for example: mobility access, or interpreter for hearing impaired people).

Signature

I understand that, if I am employed, I will be liable to dismissal if any of the statements in my application are found to be deliberately misleading.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

All personal information being collected will be dealt with in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

This document can be accessed on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website : www.dpc.nsw.gov.au

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UNIT 8: PUBLIC SECTOR JOB APPLICATIONS

Many government departments no longer separate selection criteria into essential and desirable. However, some do retain the old division.

Local council application form

			
Application for Employment			
POSITION DETAILS			
Position Title:			
Position Reference Number:			
APPLICANT DETAILS			
Title (please circle): Miss / Ms / Mrs / Mr / Dr		Given name:	
		Surname:	
Address:		Address Line 1	
		Address Line 2, State, Post Code	
Telephone:		Home:	Work:
			Mobile:
Email:			
Are you an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
REFEREES			
To assist your application, please provide the names and telephone numbers of two people who may be contacted about your application. Preferably, one of these referees should be your current supervisor.			
Name:		Name:	
Position held:		Position held:	
Employer:		Employer:	
Telephone:		Telephone:	
Email:		Email:	
ATTACHMENTS			
I have included the following in my application:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover letter			
<input type="checkbox"/> Resume or CV detailing your qualifications and employment history			
<input type="checkbox"/> A statement against each selection criteria (as detailed in the advertisement).			
PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU BECAME AWARE OF THIS VACANCY			
<input type="checkbox"/> Sydney Morning Herald <input type="checkbox"/> The Daily Telegraph <input type="checkbox"/> Northern District Times <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Job Directory			
<input type="checkbox"/> LG Jobs <input type="checkbox"/> City of Ryde website <input type="checkbox"/> Seek.com.au <input type="checkbox"/> My Career.com.au <input type="checkbox"/> Council Jobs			
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral from friend/family <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)			
DECLARATION			
I declare that the information provided in my application is true and correct.			
Signature:*		Date:	
*Please note that if you are submitting your application and this form electronically that you will be deemed to have signed this form by typing your name in the signature field.			
PLEASE SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO:			
Post: General Manager City of Ryde Locked Bag 2069 North Ryde NSW 1670		Email: jobs@ryde.nsw.gov.au Fax: 02 9952 8070	

Activity 12

Fill in the application forms for both the NSW public sector and the local council.

List the three conditions which apply to permanent employment in the NSW public sector:

i _____

ii _____

iii _____

What are the differences between these forms?

b Writing a covering letter

A covering letter for a public sector application is not the same as a covering letter intended for a position in the private sector.

Activity 13

Read the following letters. Discuss the similarities and differences in format and content.

Letter 1 - Public sector

10/564 Fairview Road
ARTARMON NSW 2064
Ph 0412 456 787

6 November 2009

Mr Rory Arthur
Program Leader
NSW DPI
Locked Bag 21
ORANGE NSW 2800

Dear Mr Arthur

Re: Application for Veterinary Officer's Position (Ref no: 0122/09/090-095)

I would like to apply for the above position which was advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on October 13 2009.

To support my claim for the position I have included the following:

- Application for Employment form
- Résumé
- Claim for position - selection criteria
- Copies of educational qualifications

I am confident that my qualifications, training and previous experience have provided me with a solid background to carry out the responsibilities of the above position.

I look forward to discussing my application with you further and can be contacted on 0412 456 787.

Yours sincerely

L Miranda

Louis Felipe Miranda

enc: Application Form, Résumé, Qualifications

Letter 2 - Private sector

240 Macombe Avenue
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
Ph: 0418 563 245

Mr Graham Neilson
EPR Consultancy
Level 12, 60 Margaret St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Neilson

Re: Position for Civil Engineer

Following our phone conversation this morning, I would like to confirm my interest in the position of Civil Engineer advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on 29 July 2009.

I am confident that I can offer:

- self-motivation, enthusiasm and the drive to work hard
- ability to work efficiently and effectively with people
- more than four years' experience in the fields of construction project management and master plan preparation

My previous responsibilities as a civil engineer included construction management of diversified kinds of projects where time, quality and cost were the main considerations. I achieved significant success in completing the projects within a stipulated time and budget.

During my career I developed excellent working relationships with my executive management, those working under my leadership, other personnel and government authorities, and was able to communicate effectively with them. This included conducting periodical coordination meetings with the main contractors as well as liaising with other agencies involved in the projects. As a project engineer, I was also responsible for obtaining government approval, arranging for inspections by utility authorities and regularly reported the overall progress of the projects directly to my directors.

I have enclosed a copy of my résumé for further details.

With my strong background in the construction industry and project management as well as my ability to relate well to people at all levels, I believe I would make a valuable contribution to your client's company. I would be happy to attend an interview at any time convenient to you. I can be contacted on 0418 563 245.

Yours sincerely
Nagim Lahoud

Nagim Lahoud
3 August 2009

Refer to **Module 2: Can prepare cover letter** for further information

c Preparing the résumé

Your résumé must be constantly updated. When you decide to apply for a public sector position your résumé must closely reflect the selection criteria of the position advertised. Only those duties or responsibilities which you have achieved should be included. It may be necessary to omit some of your qualifications or work experience to highlight the appropriate skills. Refer to **Unit 2: Résumé preparation**.

d Claim for the position - addressing selection criteria

Each public sector job advertisement has its own particular list of selection criteria, tailored to the job specification. To write a response to each criterion, you need to give evidence of your **experience**, **achievements** and **competence**. You also need to address **all the parts of the criterion**. This method allows you to express your suitability for the position clearly and fully.

Activity 14

Read the following and discuss as a class.

KEY POINTS IN WRITING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC SECTOR APPLICATION

Your application must address the selection criteria.

The primary function of the application is to provide sufficient relevant information about yourself to allow a Selection Panel to interview you.

The onus is **on you** to demonstrate your value - it is not up to the Selection Panel to decipher this from your résumé.

From *How to write and talk to selection criteria* by Dr Ann D Villiers

Steps in addressing selection criteria

1 CREATE A NEW DOCUMENT

Include a header or title that includes your **name**, the **job title** and **position number** and a brief title indicating the purpose of the document, eg *Addressing Selection Criteria*.

2 USE EACH OF THE SELECTION CRITERIA AS HEADINGS

Enter each selection criterion as a **separate heading** in a new document, leaving space after the heading to address that particular selection criterion. Make **notes** under each heading.

3 PROVE YOUR ABILITY TO MEET THE CRITERION

This is time consuming and requires some thought. In addressing each criterion, **summarise** the way in which your skills - qualifications, experience and personal attributes - are relevant for that criterion. For public sector applications in particular, this is a **specialised** process using particular **phrases** and **concepts**. Refer to the statement of duties to see how the skills and attributes asked for in the selection criteria will be used in the workplace.

4 HINTS FOR WRITING TO THE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Use **short sentences** and **dot points**.
- Use **specific, active verbs** to highlight your skills, eg *achieved, advised, administered, analysed, collaborated, controlled, consulted with, designed, developed, devised, distributed, expanded, increased, installed, initiated, instructed, implemented, liaised, maintained, modified, organised, prepared, processed, recommended, researched, supervised, streamlined*.
- Verbs like *helped* or *assisted* are often not specific enough to demonstrate clear evidence. Avoid use of words which reduce your credibility, eg *I have some little limited experience in*
- Understand the **key phrases**, eg *experience in, knowledge of*, and use these correctly in your application. Often there can be subtle differences in meaning that can be crucial to selection.
- Provide **evidence** and **concrete examples** to illustrate you meet the required **quality**, eg *I have 7 years' experience in.....* Use actual examples from your academic background, employment history or social experience. You must show:
 - **what you did**
 - **how you did it**
 - **outcome achieved**
- Address all parts of the selection criteria; some criteria are made up of different sections.
- Understand the difference between the roles of managing, leading, supervising, organising and administering.
- Do not make unsubstantiated claims or sales pitches based on personal opinion eg: *My excellent management ability is demonstrated by.....* is better than *I have well developed presentation skills*.

Key skills and abilities in selection criteria

The **key skills** and **abilities** most often mentioned in the selection criteria are based on the following areas of competence:

MANAGEMENT

eg: demonstrated successful record of achievement at a senior management level

SUPERVISORY

eg: ability to supervise and motivate others

ADMINISTRATION

eg: capacity to plan and coordinate projects

USING TECHNOLOGY

eg: competent computer skills including AutoCad/CivilCad

USING MATHEMATICAL IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES

eg: knowledge of accounts payable and purchasing procedures

COMMUNICATING IDEAS AND INFORMATION

eg: experience in talking at meetings, reporting daily work to superiors, writing letters/reports

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

eg: effective interpersonal, communication and liaison skills; ability to manage time effectively

WORKING WITH OTHERS AND IN TEAMS

eg: proven capacity to work effectively in a team environment

TEACHING/TRAINING

eg: demonstrated success in planning, teaching and assessment of postgraduates

FLEXIBILITY AND A WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

eg: ability to adapt to new technology and methods

HANDLING CONFLICT AND STRESS

eg: dealing with challenging situations successfully

Activity 15

- Write down examples from your own previous employment in each of these areas.
- Find some selection criteria which may apply to your own experience.

Using transferable skills in addressing selection criteria

- If you do not have strong examples of your skills and achievements in the field, you could use an example from another context.
- You can demonstrate that you learn quickly even though you may not be strong in the particular skill or knowledge. For example, you may have had to grasp a complex issue within two weeks of arriving at a previous position. Even if you are not familiar with the requirements of the present position, you can use this example to demonstrate that you are a fast learner.
- You can indicate a willingness to learn, eg you may have begun a course at TAFE to gain local course experience as part of your career development.

Addressing selection criteria fully

Activity 16

Read the following selection criterion and the two responses.

Extensive management experience working with information technology teams.

RESPONSE 1

During the last 8 years, I have had progressively more responsible positions working with both small and large information technology teams. These positions involved managing the teams in all aspects of their work.

This response is vague and non-specific. The applicant has not used dot points, active verbs or relevant examples.

RESPONSE 2

Extensive management experience demonstrated by:

- current position as Assistant, Resource Management Branch, Department of Public Works, responsible for 85 staff across three sub-programs
- reorganising branch to achieve 10% increase in annual revenue and cost savings of 5%
- completing a major program review on time and within budget with 90% recommendations adopted by the executive
- 3 years as Manager IT Services, Department of Public Works, responsible for a team of 10 staff, including budgeting and business planning, with an annual turnover of \$1.5M
- 4 years as Project Officer Specialised IT Services, supervising 5 staff, developing specialised IT services and products for small businesses with a budget of \$0.75M

This response addresses the criteria in terms of extensive management experience. It uses dot points appropriately, strong verbs and provides concrete examples of achievements and results.

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Activity 17

A selection criterion on communication skills is included in most lists of criteria. Communication skills are closely linked with interpersonal skills.

- Look at the example of the criterion below, written to assess communication skills.
- How many parts are there in this criterion?
- Compare how two applicants responded to this criterion by using the checklist on page 40.

Selection criterion

Well-developed written and spoken communication skills, particularly an ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals and organisations.

RESPONSE 1

I have excellent communication skills. Spoken and written communication skills are essential parts of my duties. My current position involves a high level of communication with a wide range of individuals and organisations, including the Minister's office, health professionals, other departmental branches and sections. I have always given special attention to my personal contacts with other staff and external clients, as achieving a successful outcome in my position requires the cooperation of many people.

RESPONSE 2

My well-developed written communication skills have been demonstrated by:

- drafting responses to Ministerials, both simple and complex
- drafting Cabinet submissions and preparing minutes for executive meetings
- drafting speeches for government officials on a wide range of telecommunications issues
- writing research reports on the results of research projects concerned with long-term, quantitative issues in public health
- writing a regular column for twelve months for the Sydney Morning Herald on lifestyle issues

My well-developed spoken communication skills have been demonstrated by:

- presenting outcomes of a working group reviewing section accommodation needs to senior management
- chairing section meetings
- introducing speakers at the monthly departmental Women's Forum

My ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals and organisations is demonstrated by:

- successfully completing a consultation process with parent/teacher and union groups concerning closure of three schools
- representing staff on a working group to review accommodation
- coordinating agenda papers for fortnightly executive meetings

My ability to reach shared and agreed meanings with people of diverse backgrounds and levels of seniority is demonstrated by my reaching agreed recommendations on the closure of schools and on the section accommodation needs. My success is due to my ability to listen carefully, ask useful questions and discuss viewpoints until a consensus is reached.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING TO SELECTION CRITERIA

	Response 1	Response 2
Uses appropriate format Separate headings for each criterion (in bold)		
Uses word processor Paragraphs Spacing Dot points (where appropriate) Consistent headings and font sizes		
Uses appropriate language Formal Short, correct sentences Specific, active verbs Positive nouns and phrases		
Answers each part of selection criterion Gives relevant examples of: Knowledge Experience Achievements Skills Competence/commitment		
Checks and edits Punctuation Grammar Spelling		
Uses appropriate tone Professional Positive Confident		

Examples of written responses to selection criteria

Here are some examples of how former Skillmax students from different career backgrounds addressed the selection criteria in their claims for positions. These responses, from the key skills areas, are examples which may assist you in preparing your application. Remember you need to tailor your own responses to the position you are applying for.

Activity 18

- Read the article below by Karalyn Brown
- Read and analyse, using the responses to the selection criteria (on pages 42 to 44).
- In small groups discuss these responses and if/how you would improve them in any way.

It is important for public sector positions that you address all of the job criteria, otherwise your application will not be considered. Karalyn Brown, Manager of Interview IQ, a consultancy assisting job seekers find employment, provides the following advice from her website www.interviewiq.com.au.

MASTERING SELECTION CRITERIA

A public sector career can be an attractive option offering security and a set of solid working conditions. The days of needing to know someone to get a look through the door are long gone. All levels of government now use a recruitment system called *merit selection* where, all things being fair, the best qualified candidate gets the job.

Merit selection centres around selection criteria which is a list of essential and desirable skills you'll need to perform the role. You'll be asked to address the selection criteria in your *claim for the position*. A panel of (usually) three people will assess your application against the criteria and decide whether to invite you in to interview.

Sounds easy on paper, but you may find this daunting, particularly if you are a first timer to the public sector. You need to get your head around and address the selection criteria.

If you are serious about the role, then there is no way around it, you'll need to tackle the criteria. It takes time and you'll need to spend the time if you are to convince three different panelists with three different opinions that you meet the acceptable standard.

With criteria numbering well into the multiples, there are lots of traps for all applicants, no matter how experienced they are. So here are a few pointers to get you started.

Do I need to address the criteria?

The answer to this is, absolutely. The reason for this is simple. If it's not obvious from your résumé how you meet the criteria, you're an easy elimination. Although you may get a look in if you only supply your résumé, this depends on how kind the panel is feeling, the quality of other applicants and the number of other applicants; all variables outside your control.

Do I need to answer all the selection criteria?

Yes, for pretty much the same reasons as in point one.

What does demonstrate mean?

Selection criteria often say *demonstrate* your skills or *demonstrated experience*. However, even the most seasoned public sector applicants struggle to do this effectively. When the selection criteria says *demonstrate* you shouldn't just say *refer to my résumé*. You'll need to pull examples out of your experience to show you have used those skills. Like an answer in a behavioural interview, you can give a specific example of what the situation was, how you handled it and the outcome you achieved. You could also list some environments and situations where you've worked where those skills were required or highlight achievements where you needed to draw upon these skills.

How long should the selection criteria be?

This really depends on the seniority of your position and the extent of your experience. Having waded through hundreds of claims, I would lean towards brevity.

It's worthwhile keeping in mind that recruitment in the public sector is often not centralised to an area of internal expertise. With three people on the panel, there's usually only one person who is recruiting directly for their area. They will be the person with the most interest in filling the position and they may spend longer squinting over your application.

Why am I telling you this? It's a pretty safe bet that at least two out of three panel members will appreciate it if you are not long winded. And all panel members will love you if you can explain your skills concisely and clearly. You won't impress by volume. You will impress by the way you communicate your experience.

Is it worth the bother?

At this point you may well be asking with so much work involved in answering selection criteria is it really worth the effort? The answer is an obvious yes if you are interested in the job and yes if you revisit the purpose of criteria, You can use the criteria to assess if you are truly suitable for the role. If you are struggling on more than one or two criteria, have a long and hard think about whether it's the right job for you.

Having said this all the above assumes that the criteria is well written. Quite often there can be many hands in the process of putting them together, which means they can be confusing and repetitive. If you don't understand one criteria, always clarify with a panel member. Even if you think you're okay on the criteria, it's a good idea to check the exact meaning.

Should I do it myself?

Some people are comfortable responding to the selection criteria themselves, but as your responses will be detailed it's easy to make mistakes, so if you do this you might want to ask a good friend to read through it. Find a friend with a good eye for detail.

What can I expect once I've submitted my application?

A wait. For a couple of weeks at least, possibly longer. With three panel members to coordinate and for a whole host of other reasons, including rules around panels, public sector recruitment is unavoidably slow.

Should I chase up my application?

You can chase it up, but not hurry it up. You'd need to get all three people moving faster. The point to remember about merit selection is the government is mindful of fairness to all applicants. The panelists also may not understand the type of skills market they are dealing in. If recruitment is not something they do every day, a call from you to say you have another job offer may elicit empathy, but no action.

The bottom line about this point is that no news can be good news. Be aware that the process of recruitment in the public sector may take longer than in the private sector.

Final word on feedback

So, what can you do if despite your best efforts you're not successful? Always ask for feedback; in terms of improving your performance, you may be surprised at what you find out. The government is required to document their processes so as a general rule anyone who's been shortlisted for interview may have a paragraph or two written about them.

Administration selection criterion

Ability to organise and prioritise workloads

Excellent time management skills and the ability to prioritise workflow are important when dealing with many tasks at once, especially in a high-volume environment. Managing company affairs for Harris Landsdowne whilst simultaneously assisting Sydney Freight with their large security screening project, shows many areas where this skill has been maintained. As a typical example, prior to the Olympic Games there was a period where the new baggage-handling system at Sydney Freight was being implemented for the first time. This meant preparing airlines, security organisations and other stakeholders for the change by organising training sessions to make the transition as smooth as possible. This was an extremely busy time as additional deadlines in insurance also had to be met.

Using technology selection criterion

Demonstrated experience of MS Word, Access and Excel

Throughout my work history; I have extensively used Microsoft Office which includes Word, Excel and Access. Word has been used in the preparation of reports and letters. Excel has been used in collating data for management reporting, creating graphs and quotation systems for insurance. Access has been used for creating useful databases, such as a company contacts database I created for Harris Landsdowne and a potential client database of over 800 film production companies while I was at Cinesure.

Using mathematical ideas and techniques selection criteria

Conceptual, investigative and analytical skills, with an ability to conduct statistical research projects

I have always had the ability to quickly understand new concepts. I have used my well-developed investigative and analytical skills during both my university studies and my professional career as an assistant auditor, assistant accountant and accountant. I am confident that with such experience as that specified in the following criteria, I am well qualified to undertake statistical research projects.

Experience in financial recordkeeping, invoicing and ordering

In my present role as office manager, I am required to:

- record accounts receivable and accounts payable
- issue invoices to clients for project-management services
- order stationery to maintain the office

In my previous position in the insurance industry, I invoiced clients, ordered goods directly and recorded all accounts.

Communication selection criterion

Effective interpersonal, communication and liaison skills

I have demonstrated proficient interpersonal skills in my previous employment. As an assistant to the manager at Universal Retailers Ltd, I was able to deal sensitively with both members of staff and members of the public. I understand the need to be an effective communicator. I am flexible and a good listener and willing to accept constructive criticism in order to improve my interpersonal skills. Within the office I make myself approachable and am always ready to contribute and share my knowledge with my colleagues. I always help junior or other staff who ask me for assistance. I have provided our clients with sympathetic and empathic service and used tact and patience to alleviate stressful situations.

During my past course of employment in the Bankstown Local Court and currently in the State Debt

Recovery Office my responsibilities have included answering inquiries relating to all aspects of the local court systems and general debt recovery procedures.

As a good communicator I always:

- listen attentively without interrupting
- use plain English to explain clearly and concisely
- focus on the needs of the clients
- give reasonable explanations quietly and reassuringly
- try to work out a win-win plan
- use Language Link, an interpreter service to assist non-English speaking clients

My written communication skills were developed by answering correspondence in a professional manner. I always try to choose the correct format, use the right tone and use short simple sentences.

I always make sure that the information is correct and complete.

My spoken skills were developed by liaising with solicitors, magistrates, police and staff of other departments, as well as the public. I also developed spoken skills when I was working unsupervised in a section and when training staff. My liaison skills ensure that the office runs smoothly and efficiently to provide the best service possible to both the public and other officers. I have also conducted staff meetings.

I also gained further spoken and written skills when I attended word-processing and reception-skills courses.

Teamwork selection criterion

Proven capacity to work effectively, independently and as part of a team

As a clerical officer I have proven that I am capable of working both independently and as part of a team. During the period of my employment at Bankstown Local Court, I took part in job rotations within the office. This allowed me to work in all sections of the registry with efficiency and competence. As an enthusiastic person, I always learn quickly from others which gives me the ability to approach my work in a professional and responsible manner.

When a solution to a problem is not readily available, I am aware of the various materials such as *Practice and Procedure, Jackson and Byron* and the *Treasury Directions*, as well as various statutes that are available to assist me.

I realise how important teamwork is and believe I have demonstrated that I am capable of working as part of a team. I ensure that I communicate effectively with other staff members and involve these staff in the decision-making process when necessary. I contribute and share information. I always provide assistance when I see it is necessary, for example when staff are busy or a client is having language difficulties, and to present high-quality client service and effective support to the judiciary.

Qualifications selection criterion

Degree in Civil Engineering or other qualifications acceptable for Graduate or Corporate membership of the Institution of Engineers

I am a qualified Civil Engineer. I have a Bachelor's degree with Honours from Kurukshetra University, India which has been assessed and recognised by the Institution of Engineers, Australia. I have been admitted as a full member.

Management selection criterion

Possess project management skills and the ability to manage and provide planning and estimating support for projects

In my position as a Project Engineer in Nepal, I managed two projects independently. By effective and efficient planning, I completed these projects before the scheduled time fixed by the client, meeting both the quality standard and estimated budget.

The projects were planned on CPM and Pert lines. Using computers and the Open Plan management package, I carried out Integrated Time and Resource Analysis and successfully achieved cost effectiveness.

To maintain high standards and minimise time loss, I tested the materials at their source before transporting them to the site. This precluded any chance of materials failing tests at the site and delaying the project. Before taking delivery of any plant/equipment, I would test it on the premises of the manufacturer/supplier at various stages of its manufacture and thus ensured that the equipment performed as expected and progress of the project was maintained.

Estimation and costing formed an integral part of all my previous positions. I prepared tenders and quotes, reviewed Bills of Quantity regularly and prepared variation claims. I was also required to coordinate with the site engineers and the stores department regarding the procurement of material.

Activity 19

- a Read the advertisement below for a job as an Operations Engineer with the Parramatta City Council.
- b Form a small group and discuss what you think are the important features of the advertisement. Discuss also whether any of the previous responses to criteria are useful or how they might be modified for this job.

PARRAMATTA CITY COUNCIL
OPERATIONS ENGINEER Position No 09/91

Parramatta is looking for a person with strong operational management experience and capabilities for the position of Operations Engineer. Parramatta has a large diverse commercial industrial, health and education environment. These environments stand alongside residential communities with a rich diversity of cultural and demographic characteristics. The Works Services Section of Infrastructure provides operational services of planning coordination and scheduling of construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair and cleansing of the civil infrastructure of roads and drainage systems. The Operations Engineer is responsible for the implementation and successful completion of civil infrastructure works programs and projects including construction, maintenance and rehabilitation works for roads and drainage systems, by day-labour and contract.

To succeed in this role you must have:

- a degree in Civil Engineering and be eligible for membership to the Institute of Engineers
- have well-developed project management and people management skills
- extensive experience in civil engineering construction and maintenance projects, including the supervision and coordination of staff, plant, materials and contracts
- experience in contract management, budgeting and cost control
- a demonstrated commitment to OH&S principles
- the ability to use computer systems for project management and reporting.

For an information package or further information, contact **Isabelle Marabello** on 9860 5616 or at i.marabello@parramattacouncil.gov.au. This position has been assessed as Band 3 Level 3 and has a salary range of \$70,900 to \$89,000 pa. The availability of a motor vehicle under Council's private leaseback scheme will be discussed with the successful applicant.

Activity 20

Below are a former Skillmax student's responses to the selection criteria for an administrative position in the Overseas Skills Advisory Service. This application was successful in that it gained him an interview.

Look at each response.

- Does he stick to the point of each criterion?
- Does he give enough detail of his own experience to supply sufficient evidence to meet the criterion?
- Does he use appropriate vocabulary and language structures?

Discuss your ideas with your teacher and other students.

Successful experience in all aspects of project/program management

As the head of a number of departments conducting research and development projects in applied superconductivity, I was responsible for all aspects of project management:

- writing proposals and applications
- budgeting
- recruitment of team members
- establishing and managing cooperation with internal and external stakeholders including investors, business partners, contractors, and government agencies
- planning schedules and follow up
- solving unforeseen problems
- reaching targets
- analysing results
- writing and editing annual and final reports

My successful experience in all aspects of project/program management has been demonstrated by:

- successful accomplishment of five scientific projects funded by the Russian Federal Government
- effective administration over 7 years of several international projects and programs concerned with the technical application of superconductivity, and involving dozens of institutions in five East-European countries
- successful management of an ambitious project on the development of a high-performance superconductor magnet for space application

Demonstrated experience in establishing and maintaining financial monitoring and reporting systems

In all organisations in the former USSR and the early years of Russia, duties relating to financial monitoring and reporting were executed by special planning and accounting departments. This situation changed in 1991 when Russia started to move towards a free-market model.

For six years I was director of a private company, Vortex, which conducted research and development projects in cryogenics for the Russian government. As Director, I established and maintained financial monitoring and reporting systems appropriate to the new economic environment and new regulations. In the first four years I supervised the company accountant in financial monitoring and in preparing financial quarterly and annual reports for the bank and the taxation authorities as well. Due to lack of project funding in the last three years I did all this work myself and gained much experience in that field, due to continual changes in taxation regulations. In addition I learned how to meet changing requirements and to prepare correct records.

I was also responsible for financial monitoring and reporting for the funding organisations. I did this according to their requirements and instructions, including collecting and analysing financial reports from partners and subcontractors, summarising them and preparing the final financial reports for government clients.

I believe that the experience I gained in such a challenging situation will help me in establishing and maintaining financial monitoring and reporting systems in the stable Australian financial environment.

Demonstrated high-level skills in report writing and drafting of high-level correspondence

My high-level skills in report writing have been demonstrated by:

- writing project proposals and applications for institutions at different levels such as Ministry of Power Industry, Ministry of Science and Technology, Academy of Sciences, private domestic and international funds and scientific centres
- writing interim and final reports on programs under administration for the bodies mentioned above, including feasibility studies, financial analyses and recommendations
- writing scientific papers for Russian and international journals (in both Russian and English)
- editing annual reports on all aspects of the functioning of the Coordination Centre, including the assessment of dozens of coordinating projects involving institutions in five East-European countries

My high-level skills in drafting of high-level correspondence have been demonstrated by:

- drafting of correspondence to ministries, councils, companies and scientific and financial institutions with reference to budgeting, project proposals, achievements, meetings and seminars
- drafting correspondence to scientists of many countries with reference to the exchange of scientific results and proposals for cooperation
- drafting correspondence to national representatives in the Cooperation Program of East-European countries with reference to program implementation and the organisation of forums and meetings

Successful experience in negotiating with internal and external stakeholders

As departmental head in a number of organisations, I gained extensive positive experience in negotiating with *internal* stakeholders. For example, as head of the High-Magnetic Field Laboratory in the company Energia, I constantly negotiated with people from my own and other departments including designers, cryogenic engineers, material developers, hardware manufacturers, internal political leaders and union representatives. The main subjects of negotiation were:

- reconciliation of technical approaches
- allocation of resources and funds
- utilisation of workforce
- planning the schedules

I also gained extensive experience in negotiating with *external* stakeholders when performing my duties as Head of Department at the Power Engineering Institute and especially as a Director of the Coordination Centre. In these positions I successfully negotiated with:

- officers of the Ministry of Power Industry
- officers and scientists of the Russian Academy of Science
- high-level officers in the Ministry of Science and Technology
- national representatives in Cooperation Program of five East-European countries
- managers of many companies and organisations

Used to the scientific way of thinking, I always try to analyse the subject of negotiation, define the goals and objectives, clarify the issues, gather all related information, humanise the climate and be prepared to compromise.

An example of my successful experience in negotiating with both internal and external stakeholders is as follows:

The Director of the Institute was dissatisfied with the former head of my department because of his poor ability to negotiate with other members of the Russian scientific community in that particular field. Knowing my ability to negotiate with stakeholders at all levels, the Director invited me to take over the position. One of my main goals was to normalise relations with external stakeholders. I was very successful in this and the problem was solved within a couple of months. I reached a complete mutual understanding with the whole Russian superconductor fellowship.

The Director was prepared to dismiss my predecessor and suggested that I make the final decision. I decided to let my predecessor stay in the Institute and to give him a chance to work with people who trusted him. I negotiated with staff that were not satisfied with his leadership style and incorporated them into my department. The result was extremely successful.

Strong analytical abilities, excellent communication, administrative and time management skills

My strong analytical abilities have been demonstrated by:

- proficiency in analyzing extensive information proven by successful performance of my duties in a number of positions held
- most recently, my analytical abilities were exhibited in my work for one year in the, new for me, real estate business, where I succeeded in classifying extensive information on about 500 premium Moscow buildings
- finding new solutions and approaches in both administration and research areas proven by my career achievements and world-recognised scientific achievements
- writing my PhD thesis, more than 60 scientific publications, numerous reports, analytical notes and proposals
- developing a new concept of the fault current limiter for utility application

My excellent communication skills have been demonstrated by:

- successful liaising with internal and external stakeholders at different levels — from the staff under supervision to high government officials and business managers
- participating in discussions at meetings of different councils
- presenting papers and having talks at numerous meetings, conferences, seminars in scientific and organisational subjects
- chairing regular meetings of departments under supervision
- chairing annual board meetings of national representatives in the Cooperation Program of five East-European countries
- representing the Coordination Centre in different meetings of the Russian Ministry of Power Industry, Ministry of Science and Technology, Academy of Sciences

My strong administrative and time management skills have been demonstrated by:

- ability to plan, prioritise and monitor workflows and to work to tight deadlines resulting in on-time completion of
 - applications, project proposals
 - stages of program/projects
 - reports
 - organisation of meetings and seminars
- administering the Cooperation Program which involved more than 50 participants of different institutions and industries from five East-European countries
- experience in organising more than 20 regular meetings, seminars and forums in different subjects, including information exchange
- management of accounts, budgeting and finance operations
- experience in management of different sized teams
- ability to gain and manage allocated resources proven in successful results of more than 15 projects under my supervision

Knowledge of issues in the recognition and utilisation of overseas gained skills and qualifications

As an overseas qualified migrant and a student in the Skillmax Program for Jobseekers, I am aware of issues in the recognition and utilisation of overseas-gained skills and qualifications in Australia.

The NSW Government has developed a well-organised and all-embracing Migrant Skills strategy.

The Committee provides strategic policy and planning direction on migrant skills recognition and training issues in NSW. The Committee also reviews the way skills are assessed by bodies responsible for various trades and professions. Where the system is unfair or inadequate, the Committee negotiates improvements.

The Committee provides a range of programs and services under the Migrant Skills Strategy to assist migrants into their chosen careers. These initiatives provide migrants with access to information and advice on using their overseas skills and assistance with obtaining suitable training, work experience and job opportunities. They also provide assistance to employers by advising them on benefits of utilizing overseas qualifications and skills in the workplace.

There are many programs helping to fulfill the general goals of the Strategy including:

Information Program

An advisory service on overseas skills recognition which is provided through Industry Training Services Centres. Applicants can obtain advice over the telephone or during a personal interview with Migrant Advisory Officers.

Equity and Diversity in the Workplace Program

Equity and Diversity Officers are placed in employer/employee bodies such as Australian Business Limited, NSW Labor Council and the Premier's Department to develop and implement strategies aimed at increasing the utilisation of migrant skills. The Program also funds (through the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment) the Migrant Work Experience Project, which aims to assist Public Sector employees with overseas skills and qualifications to obtain experience in jobs that fully utilise their skills. Participants in this project undertake work experience opportunities in the public sector for periods of between 3 to 6 months.

Skilled Migrant Mentoring Program

The Program helps skilled and qualified migrants in finding jobs that best match their skills, qualifications and experience. It helps in preparing résumés, job applications, preparing for job interviews, approaching employers, placements into work experience, information about assessment and recognition of overseas qualifications.

Checklist for public sector applications

When you have drafted your application, use this checklist to ensure you have completed all the necessary steps.

Read the job information package thoroughly	
Spoken to the contact officer and asked relevant questions	
Determined exactly what is required in the written application	
Updated my résumé to highlight experience relevant to this specific position	
Written a cover letter which applies to the particular position	
Addressed each criterion under a separate heading in the claim for the position	
Addressed all criteria	
Addressed all parts of the criteria, giving clear examples of relevant experience	
Edited all prepared documentation for spelling, grammar and punctuation	
Kept copies of advertisement and application for interview preparation and future reference	
Sent my application by post, email or online by the closing date	

Activity 21

Form a group of four and discuss the assessment criteria in this grid.

Performance criteria	Achieved
a obtains package from contact person giving relevant personal details	
b demonstrates understanding of the function of application components, eg cover letter, selection criteria, references	
c addresses all criteria, using appropriate terminology	
d uses appropriate and accurate vocabulary and abbreviations	

Find an appropriate advertisement for a public sector position. Prepare an application for the position. Your teacher will assess your application using the assessment criteria.

Activity 22

Read the information about equal employment opportunity (EEO), which you can read on or download from the Internet (www.eeo.nsw.gov.au/about_eeo), and answer the following questions.

	T	F
a Public sector employees can decide not to employ someone because they are married or an Aboriginal person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b In the public sector, there are training programs to help people gain skills and confidence so that they have an equal chance of promotion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c You must apply for jobs in the public sector by filling in the correct form and going for an interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Bosses in the public sector have the right to promote or not promote anyone they feel like.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e The public sector tries to give everyone an equal chance of employment and promotion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f If you become pregnant, your employer can sack you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g If someone at work makes life difficult for you because they don't like your ethnic background, there is nothing you can do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h People in the public sector are promoted on merit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i If your public sector employer finds out that you are a homosexual, he or she can sack you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j If you have a disability, you probably won't get a job in the public sector.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k It is illegal in the public sector to harass anyone for whatever reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Work in small groups and answer the following questions.

- What is merit selection?
- What are your rights as a public sector employee?
- What are your responsibilities as a public sector employee?

Answers

ACTIVITY 4

- politeness – *I would like, please, would you mind, thank you very much, goodbye*
- speaking clearly – *P for Peter
pauses when giving address*
- clarifying info – *position number
repeating number (33)*

ACTIVITY 5

Answers will differ but some examples are:

- i job advertisement
- ii statement of duties
- iii information about selection procedure
- iv selection criteria
- v information about organisation/department
- vi organisation chart
- vii application form
- viii prohibited employment screening form

ACTIVITY 6

State ad

- denser
- sometimes splits info between
- essential and desirable
- gives annual salary

Council ad

- bullets
- essential/desirable
- gives weekly salary
- more details of duties

ACTIVITY 7

Yes, because has qualifications and essential experience, although weak on desirable experience and technical skills.

ACTIVITY 9

No precise order but 9, 11, 2, 6 and 8 obviously done near the beginning. Every task must be done, eg cannot leave out 4 and 5.

ACTIVITY 12

- a Australian citizenship or permanent residency
 - b Pass medical examination
 - c Provide proof of identity
- Council form needs attachments

UNIT 8: PUBLIC SECTOR JOB APPLICATIONS

ACTIVITY 13

Letter 1

Letter 2

	both refer to ad details	
lists attachments		only enclose résumé
no detail of experience/qualifications		much more detail of experience/qualifications
	both make reference to their suitability for the position	
no reference to personal skills		reference to personal skills++
	both give contact details for interview	

ACTIVITY 22

a	F
b	T
c	T
d	F
e	T
f	F
g	F
h	T
i	F
j	F
k	T