

APPLYING FOR A POSITION

Once you have found a position that you are interested in, there are a few steps you need to take before you begin drafting an application.

RESEARCH	Researching the organisation, department, business unit and connecting with the contact person listed on the job advertisement will allow you to make a more informed decision about the position and assist you to write a better application.
IDENTIFY	Ensure you identify and understand the knowledge, skills and experience required for a job. If you cannot demonstrate your capabilities, competencies, skills and experience you will not be shortlisted.
FIT	Determine if this job is actually a good fit for you, your skills and that it supports your career and employment goals.
KNOW	Identify what information you need to gather to prepare your application, including length, separate attachments and how to submit.
LIAISE	Liaise with the contact person listed on the job advertisement to clarify any questions you have and to gain more information about the job requirements.

Things to remember:

- If you do not follow the application instructions carefully, your application may be rejected in the first phase.
- If you do choose to liaise with the contact person, plan your conversation as this conversation may end up as a phone interview. Before you call, ensure you know why you want the position and what your key skills and experience are
- Writing an application takes time, so make sure it is going to be worth it before starting
- Everything you write in your application can be challenged at interview.

LIAISING WITH THE POSITION CONTACT PERSON

It is always beneficial to make connection with the listed contact person to gain more information about the role, but it also allows you to develop a rapport with someone that may be on the selection panel and potentially a future colleague. Aside from demonstrating the required skills and experience required, successful job seeking often comes down to personality and relationship building.

Think carefully about the questions you want to ask before you make the phone call. Ensure the answers to your questions are not obviously outlined in the role description, included in the application pack or available online. There are no 'silly' questions, however you don't want to appear unprepared, or that you haven't taken the time to research, by asking questions that have answers already available to you.

Questions to ask the contact person:

What are the main day-to-day responsibilities of the position?

Developing a clearer understanding of the daily tasks and outcomes required of a position will allow you to include more detail and select more relevant examples in your application.

Why is the position vacant?

This may allow you to determine the security of the position. Knowing if the position is new or if you are replacing someone will provide you with added information to include in your application about how you can function in the role.

What is the structure of the organisation?

The more you know about the role, the structure of the team and outcomes the more you can relate your skills and experience to the selection criteria requirements.

- How many people are in the team?
- What is the hierarchy of the organisation?
- Are there development opportunities within the team/business unit?

What are the key priorities for this position, or the work area for the next 12 months?

This will allow you to provide more detail of how your previous experience not only makes you suitable for the job, but will allow you to contribute to future objectives and priorities.

If you need flexible work arrangements, ask what the working hours required are to determine the flexibility of the role.

If conditions of service, professional development and organisational culture are important to you, ensure you ask these questions up front as it may influence your final decision on whether you apply for this job. The South Australian public sector supports a range of flexible working options.

▼ WRITING THE APPLICATION

Your written application is the first formal contact between you and your prospective employer, and it is the most significant contact you will have until you meet at the interview. Applications need to be relevant, clear and concise and make reference to the selection criteria outlined in the role description.

The objective of the application is to provide detail of how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the job. Remain employer centric. Rather than focusing on why you want the job, focus on what you can do for your new employer.

Application tips:

- Review your resume for each application to ensure the most important skills and experience are up front. Role descriptions and job requirements vary, therefore your application should be tailored to ensure it matches the criteria for each role.
- Be specific. The panel members don't know you, your skills and experience, therefore you need to be descriptive in your application and provide detailed examples. Never assume.
- Ensure you address the criteria with relevant examples. Avoid providing a history lesson of what you have done in the past and not making reference to how that experience allows you to meet and fulfil the outcomes required for the position.
- Ensure you follow the application instructions and submit your application as directed.
- Check that your skills and/or experience is suitable for the role you apply for.

Application for a public sector position generally include:

- An application form
- An employee declaration form
- A cover letter – this may take the form of an email with attachments
- A resume – updated to meet the position requirements
- Responses to the selection criteria – this may be completed online or be a written attachment
- Referee details, this is usually included on the resume or application form
- Supplementary evidence as requested, e.g. copies of qualifications, police/security clearances, relevant licences.