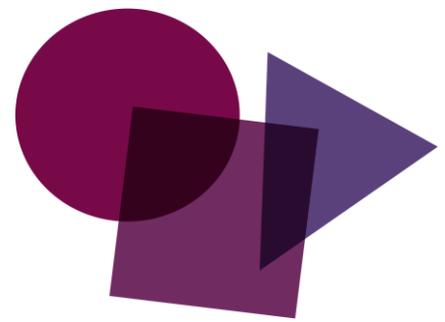




Applicant Guide

Recruitment in the Department of Communities Tasmania

Version: August 2019



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Foreword

It is my pleasure to tell you about the Department of Communities Tasmania as your potential employer.

Communities Tasmania works with the community services sector to support vulnerable children and their families; people living with disability; and people who need social and affordable housing. Our Agency also provides support for Tasmanians to participate in sport and recreation; for athletes to train and succeed; and for all members of our community to have their voices heard.

Communities Tasmania has many opportunities for you to undertake a role where you can make a significant difference to peoples' lives. You could work in the provision of statutory services to children and young people, develop and implement policy, interact with Tasmanians who need housing, work with our community sporting and recreation organisations or develop high-performing athletes – these are just some of the many roles we have to offer.

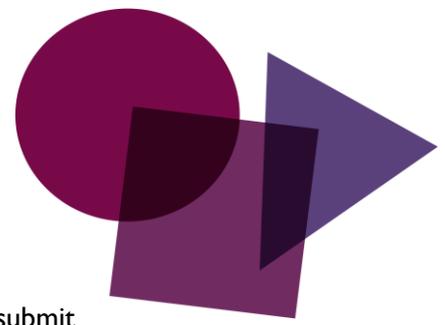
As an Agency we work to improve the lives of Tasmanians. We do this by the way we think and the way we behave, which is shown by our Agency Values. Our Values are that we behave, interact and support each other to be respectful, committed, kind and connected.

We are connected with communities, with our partners in the community, sport and recreation sectors and with families, children, young people and carers. We will work to support and empower Tasmanians to lead active and inclusive lives.

Good luck with your application and I look forward to us all making a difference!

Secretary

Department of Communities Tasmania



Introduction

The guide is provided to assist applicants for roles in Communities Tasmania to submit applications which ensure a fair and equal chance to gain employment within the Agency.

If you have general queries about vacancies and employment, the application process or anything contained in this guide, please email workforce.strategy@communities.tas.gov.au

Merit Selection

Communities Tasmania undertakes employment decisions according to the merit principle. Merit selection involves comparing an applicant's work-related qualities with the work-related qualities genuinely required to perform the duties of the position. By basing employment decisions on merit, all applicants are given a fair and equal chance to gain employment within Communities Tasmania.

The selection criteria is the primary source for identifying the work-related qualities required for a position. The selection criteria are contained in the Statement of Duties (SoD), also known as a position description.

Work-related qualities can include:

- skills and abilities
- qualifications, training and competencies
- standard of work performance
- capacity to produce required outcomes
- relevant personal qualities
- demonstrated potential for further development
- ability to contribute to team performance

Reasonable Adjustments

Communities Tasmania is supportive of reasonable adjustment, where required as a result of a physical, psychological or neurological disease or disorder, illness or injury, to enable applicants to compete for employment on an equal basis. If you require any adjustments during the selection process, you are encouraged to advise the contact person at any point.

Essential Requirements

Essential requirements

Essential requirements are additional elements which the successful applicant must hold in order to successfully undertake the duties and responsibilities of the position. Some examples of the most common essential requirements are:

- academic or professional qualifications
- driver's licence
- professional registration/licensing
- pre-employment checks (such as convictions)

Where a role includes an essential requirement, the occupant must have and maintain the requirement to be, or continue to be, employed in the role.

Applicants cannot be shortlisted for a role if they do not meet the essential requirements (with the exception of pre-employment checks and Working with Vulnerable People registration).

Confirm your ability to satisfy an essential requirement in your application (not including pre-employment checks). Communities Tasmania will verify essential requirements prior to the finalisation of a selection process.

Desirable requirements

Positions may also include desirable requirements. Desirable requirements are not essential but may be beneficial to the position. A person does not have to hold the desirable requirement in order to be the successful applicant.

Your Application

Preparation

To help prepare your application, read the advertisement and the SoD and discuss any queries you may have with the contact person listed in the advertisement. It is important to be fully informed of the position requirements before submitting your application.

It may also be helpful to research more about the position. This may include:

- meeting with the contact person to gain an overview of the work environment
- talking to people in similar roles
- reading relevant information, such as annual reports and strategic plans.

Application

Your application may include:

- a covering letter (optional)
- statement addressing the selection criteria (recommended)

- a copy of your current resume (recommended)
- a completed *Application for Employment* form. This is required if you are not submitting your application online.
- any additional information requested (recommended).

Any information provided in a language other than English should include an official translation. This includes information provided as part of your application or throughout the selection process.

Selection criteria

Selection criteria are a set of measurable standards against which selection panels can assess your suitability for the position.

A useful way of demonstrating that you possess the work-related qualities required for the position is by providing a statement addressing the selection criteria. This is a written response against the selection criteria contained in a SoD.

All of the selection criteria are important, so do not miss any. If your application does not demonstrate your skills/ability you may reduce your opportunity of progressing to further selection methods.

Understanding and addressing the selection criteria

Selection criteria usually contain common key words or phrases that can guide you in drafting your response. A good first step is to highlight these.

It can be valuable to read and reread the advertisement and SoD, highlight keywords in each selection criterion and relate them to the duties of the position.



Keywords/phrases you may find in selection criteria include:

- ‘Demonstrated knowledge’: provide examples that show you have this area of knowledge.
- ‘Demonstrated ability to’: you do not need to have done this kind of work before, but you need to describe how your skills, knowledge and experience show that you are capable of doing the work.
- ‘Experience in’: provide examples of where you have done this work before.
- ‘Effective, Proven, Highly Developed, Superior’: you need to show your level of skill. Provide relevant detail, using examples of your achievements to illustrate your level of skills, knowledge and experience.

When addressing the selection criteria concentrate on the quality rather than the quantity of information. Highlight the achievements which you believe will best demonstrate your claims against each criterion giving consideration to the type of work required in the role.

It is not sufficient to simply state that you meet the criteria, this needs to be supported by specific examples of these skills in action.

Some examples of how to address the selection criteria are provided in Attachment One.

TIP!

Some jobs attract very large numbers of applications. To make yours stand out, show that you understand what the role entails and include examples that detail how your previous experience will help you undertake the duties.

The STAR approach

The STAR approach is a useful tool to effectively address the selection criteria.

Situation— provide a brief outline of the situation or setting. What was the context?

Task—what was your role? What did you have to do?

Actions—what did you do and how did you do it?

Results—what did you achieve? How do the results relate to the job you are applying for?

Use the attached table to assist in creating your examples. Make a separate heading for each criterion and write down dot points under each that demonstrate your ability to meet that criterion. Try to address each part of the STAR approach in just a few sentences.

Once you have completed this, use your notes to write out full paragraphs.

Example

*As Research Support Officer at the Department of XYZ, I needed to ensure that managers were kept informed of policies and procedures (**Situation**). To do this, I initiated a monthly newsletter, which was emailed to each manager. I took responsibility for writing the main articles in each publication (**Task**). This involved obtaining ideas and input from other stakeholders to ensure that the articles reflected the needs of managers, both in terms of content and language. (**Actions**) I consistently received excellent feedback in relation to this newsletter from internal clients and my own manager. I received a divisional achievement award for the quality of this newsletter from management. Importantly, this initiative resulted in improved lines of communication between managers and the Research Support Unit (**Results**).*

All parts of the STAR model are important, however the **Results** are crucial. You may have been doing a particular task for years but the selection panel need to know how well you have been doing that task.

It is important to use 'I' statements and specify your exact contribution to the situation. If you use 'we' statements the selection panel will not be able to determine your individual contribution.

Resume

The purpose of a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) is to provide a potential employer with a summary of information about you. It should be concise, and provide a snapshot of yourself and your experience and abilities. Remember that this is a sales document, and that you are selling yourself. The following describes what should be included in your resume.

Name and Contact Details

Full name and contact details. This does not need to include date of birth, gender or family status. Include your preferred mailing address, phone contact details and email address.

Education and Training

List (beginning with the most recent) your education and training. In most cases it is unnecessary to provide significant detail such as marks or grades.

Employment History

List (beginning with the most recent) your employment history. This can contain information like position title, employment dates, employer name, employer description (what was the primary business of the employer), your main duties and your achievements. When listing your duties and achievements just a brief paragraph or dot points outlining the main duties and/or achievements should be sufficient.

Volunteer / Community Involvement History / Affiliations

If you have previously been or are currently involved with any volunteer or community organisation be sure to mention this on your resume.

Work-Related Qualities

Provide brief information describing your work-related qualities, such as your skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities.

Referees

Generally, vacancies require two referee contacts. Listing the name, position title, address, and contact phone numbers of both your referees is recommended. Selection panels generally prefer to speak to your current or most recent supervisor. If you do not have any work-related referees, provide referees who know you from other environments and can comment on your work-related qualities.

The selection panel contact your referees to verify claims you have made, or more broadly to provide comment on your work-related qualities in relation to the position. It is therefore important that you nominate referees who are able to discuss your suitability in relation to the selection criteria.

By placing the referees on your application you are providing consent for Communities Tasmania to contact them. It is good practice to speak to your referees prior to nominating them, alerting them to the vacancy you are applying for, and discussing the required work-related qualities. It may be beneficial to send them a copy of the statement of duties and your application.

In most cases written references from your referees are not required.

Presentation

Your application should be professionally presented without unnecessary fancy fonts, colours, images, banners or other elements.

Submitting your Application

Communities Tasmania use an online recruitment system in which all applications are submitted electronically. By applying online, you receive immediate confirmation that your application is received.

A further benefit to applying online is that you can build your profile with your resume, copies of your qualifications and credentials to use when applying for positions in the future.

Submit a separate application for each position you wish to apply for.

You can also apply by emailing your application to workforce.strategy@communities.tas.gov.au or sending your hard copy application to the recruitment address in the job advertisement. If sending a hard copy application it is important to consider delivery times to ensure that your application is received before the closing deadline.

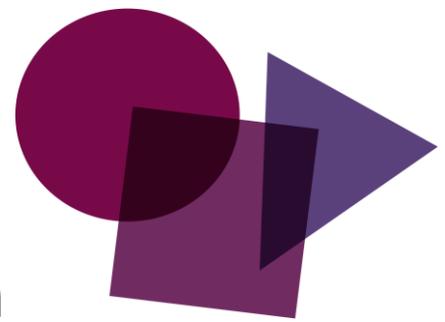
If you have any queries regarding how to apply, contact the contact person listed in the advertisement.

Tip!

Proofread your application, then proofread again. It can also be beneficial to ask someone else to proofread your application for you.

Late applications

Applications should be submitted by the closing date. The acceptance of late applications is at the selection panel's discretion and you must call the contact officer to confirm if it can be accepted.



Selection Process

When a decision is made to fill a vacancy, the recruitment and selection process commences. The recruitment process commonly includes:

- 1 Advertising the vacancy
- 2 Receiving applications
- 3 Short listing applicants
- 4 Assessing applicants suitability for the role via interview or other method
- 5 Conducting referee checks
- 6 Undertaking employment screening (including identity and criminal record checks)
- 7 Offering the position to the preferred applicant.

A selection panel, of at least three people, will undertake the selection process. The composition of the panel will vary depending on the scope and nature of the position to be filled.

The role of the panel is to develop a recommendation on which applicant(s) are most suited for the position based on their work-related qualities and applying the merit principle.

Shortlisting

Once the application period has closed, the panel will review the applications and decide which candidates they will shortlist for further selection methods based on merit.

The purpose of shortlisting is to determine which applicants, based on their written application, will progress to further selection methods.

Selection methods

The panel may use a range of selection methods to assess shortlisted applicants' suitability for the position. Selection methods may include:

- interviews
- work-sample tests
- reference checks
- case studies
- analysis/judgment experiences
- presentations

Interviews

Interviews are a common selection method. Interviews usually include a series of questions based on the work-related qualities required for the position.

The purpose of the interview is to provide the applicant with the opportunity to expand on information presented in the application and to enable the selection panel to gather further information for the assessment process.

You may need to bring the following to your interview or provide it in advance of your interview:

- referee details
- original or certified documentation required to satisfy essential requirements, if listed
- evidence of eligibility to work in Australia (e.g. passport, birth certificate, citizenship, current working visa)
- any other relevant information as requested by the selection panel.

It is natural to be nervous prior to and during interviews but being prepared can help ease these nerves.

The contact person should provide you with the names of persons on the selection panel, and any others who may be present in the interview. Let

the contact person know if you have any concerns about selection panel members.

It is important to advise the contact person if you have any special needs.

Before the interview

Research the Communities Tasmania website and the working area or unit as much as possible. Look at the website or search through newspaper archives for any relevant material.

The more knowledge you have, the better prepared you will be

Prepare what you are going to say about your strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Practice general responses but not answers to specific questions as you may find it hard if they don't ask the precise questions you have prepared for.

Re-familiarise yourself with the information provided in the position's statement of duties.

Advise the contact person if you have any special needs or require any reasonable adjustments.

Arrive early to avoid getting stressed or flustered. Know where the interview is and how long it will take to get there. Arrive at least 10 minutes early to find the right office.

Bring any information you have been asked to provide. A pen and notepad for taking notes may also be a good idea.

Dress appropriately. A professional and well-groomed appearance is critical to making a good impression, even if you know the work location is casual.

During the interview

Act appropriately. Try to use the names of the people interviewing you.

Display positive body language – smile, shake hands firmly, make frequent eye contact and sit up straight.

Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. Do not be afraid to ask the interviewer to repeat

them if necessary. If you are stuck for an answer, ask if you can come back to that question later.

Answer questions as succinctly as possible – cover all your prepared points but do not go into unnecessary detail about people or events that are not strictly relevant.

Ask the interviewers some questions about the responsibilities of the role and/or the focus of their roles. This demonstrates that you are enthusiastic about the organisation and the position.

Pre-employment Checks

Proof of identity

It is fundamental to employment safety and security that Communities Tasmania possesses complete assurance that the identity claimed by an individual who is intending to be employed is their true identity.

If you are the recommended appointee, you will be asked to provide documentation to verify your identity. The selection panel will advise you of the categories of documentation that satisfy this requirement. An offer of employment is conditional on provision of the original documents (or certified copies).

Commonly, an identity check is completed as part of the conviction check process (see below).

Conviction check

Communities Tasmania undertakes conviction checks to help protect the safety and security of our workers and clients.

If you are the recommended appointee, and a conviction check is required, a *Conviction Check Consent* form will be provided and must be returned as soon as possible. Unsuccessful applicants are not required to have a conviction check and conviction check information does not form part of, or influence, a selection decision.

Conviction history information is assessed with any relevant conviction(s)/offences(s) considered in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the position and any information provided by the recommended appointee.

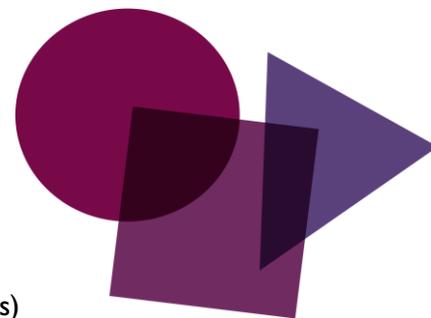
Conviction for an offence does not make an individual automatically ineligible for employment – all decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and depend on a broad range of factors.

Conviction check information is treated as confidential and is securely managed within the Workforce Strategy team.

Eligibility to work check

All Communities Tasmania employees who are not Australian citizens must hold a valid visa that entitles them to work in Australia. Recommended appointees must provide evidence of citizenship or immigration status (including visa type, visa expiry date and visa number). Communities Tasmania will confirm these details.

You may also be required to confirm that you are not currently serving an exclusion period from the Tasmanian State Service and that you have not been subject to disciplinary action in previous employment.



Outcome Notification

Offer of appointment

If you are the successful applicant, you will receive an offer of employment by phone or email. Offers are conditional subject to the satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks and, where applicable, a review period.

Once the pre-employment checks have occurred, you will receive formal employment documentation, along with onboarding and payroll related documentation.

Unsuccessful applicants

If you are unsuccessful, we encourage you to take advantage of the invitation to receive feedback from the selection panel. This can help you to understand the panel's decision and to discuss ways in which you may improve future applications or interview performance.



Attachment One – Addressing Selection Criteria Template

Selection Criterion	Situation	Task	Approach	Result
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Ideas for addressing common selection criteria

If a selection criterion relates to **leadership**, consider describing a situation when you:

- accomplished something significant that wouldn't have been successful without your involvement.
- were able to step into a situation, lead effectively, manage stakeholders, and achieve set goals.
- could have managed a situation more effectively.

- had to address performance management issues with employees reporting to you.
- delegated a project or other responsibilities effectively. How did you go about this?

If a selection criterion relates to **communication skills**, consider writing about a situation when you :

- had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do so successfully.
- had to be persuasive and 'sell' your idea to a person or group of people. Did you meet

with resistance? How did you overcome this?

- had to communicate an idea to a range of target audiences. Which methods did you use and why?

If a selection criterion relates to **problem solving**, consider writing about a situation when you:

- had to analyse facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
- had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives. What were the obstacles? What strategies did you use to address them? Looking back, would you have done anything differently?
- anticipated problems coming up during the course of a project. Did you take preventative measures to address them? If yes, why did you choose those methods?

If a selection criterion relates to **working effectively with others**, consider writing about a situation when you:

- had to develop and maintain productive relationships with others who had differing points of view.
- had to deal with a difficult colleague or client issue. What strategies did you use to manage the issue(s)?
- played an integral role in getting a team (or work group) back on track.

If the selection criterion relates to the ability to **write effectively**, consider writing about:

- a key piece of written work that was well received. To which of your skills do you attribute the success?
- a key piece of written work that was not well received. What do you think you could have done differently to produce a better result?
- a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in

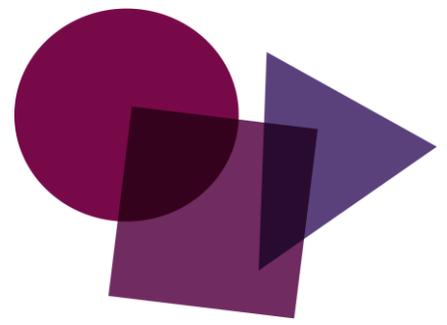
improvement in the quality and/or the structure of a major work area.

If the selection criterion relates to **priority setting**, consider writing about a time:

- when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully. What strategies and/or resources were needed to achieve this?
- in which you prioritised the elements of a complicated project.
- when you dealt with significant workplace change and how you managed your work priorities around this.

If the selection criterion relates to **decision-making**, consider writing about a time when:

- you had to make an important decision with limited facts. What factors did you consider?
- you were forced to make an unpopular decision. Were there alternatives? Why did you feel that it was the best choice? What was the result?





Department of Communities Tasmania

Capability and Resources

Email: workforce.strategy@communities.tas.gov.au

<https://intranet.communities.tas.gov.au/>