



Job Application Guide

Human Resource Services

September 2009

Principles of recruitment and selection

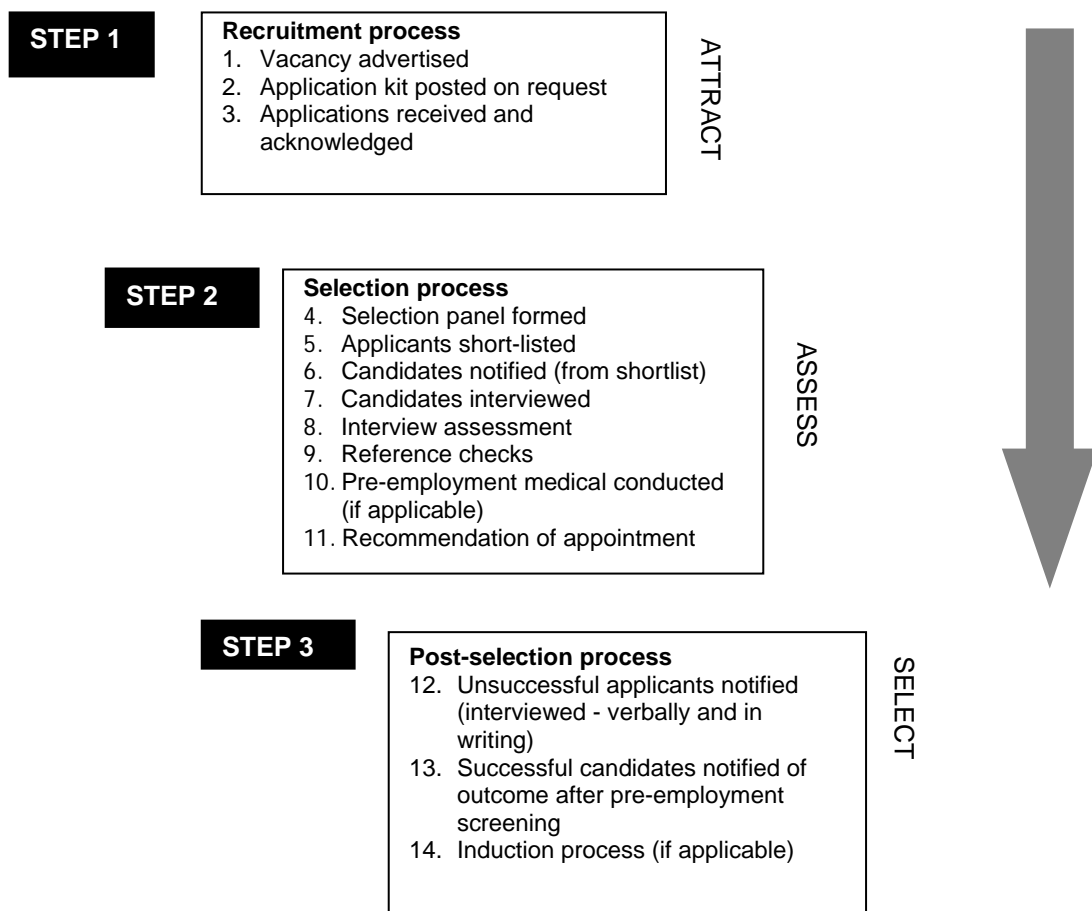
Gold Coast City Council is an equal opportunity employer. The Council's recruitment and selection policy and procedures are based on the principles of equity and merit.

Equal employment opportunity

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) is the assurance of conditions in which all applicants have an equal chance to seek and obtain employment. EEO reinforces merit-based selection as it requires applicants to be selected and treated on the basis of their ability to do the job. Merit-based selection is an assessment of an applicant's abilities, skills, knowledge, qualifications, and potential, relative to those of other applicants against selection criteria set down in the position description. A merit-based recruitment and selection process involves a range of activities designed to ensure:

- Fair and open competition;
- A systematic and consistent process;
- Processes that do not unfairly discriminate at any stage;
- Skilled and impartial selection panels;
- Selection criteria that reflect the actual and realistic requirements of the position.

Council's recruitment and selection process



Position descriptions

You must obtain a copy of the position description (PD) for the job you are interested in applying for. The PD is the major source of information regarding the job, and therefore you should read this document carefully. It generally includes the following information:

- Purpose of position;
- Organisational relationships;
- Corporate values and accountabilities
- Key accountabilities and outcomes
- Key selection criteria

Your application

There is no right or wrong way to set out your written application, and you are certainly free to use your imagination and do it your own way. This is your opportunity to impress the selection panel so ensure your application is concise and relevant to the position you are applying for. All applications will be kept in a secure place and treated as confidential.

All applications should:

- Be typed or clearly handwritten;
- Be addressed correctly;
- Clearly quote the job title and reference number (found on the advertisement);
- Include only photocopies of certificates and references as Council retains all documentation.
- Refrain from using presentation folders, plastic covers, binding etc.

A preferred application format would include:

- A job application form (attachment 1);
- A statement addressing each of the selection criteria;
- A résumé (curriculum vitae); and
- Other relevant information, e.g. qualifications, licences, etc.

Job application form

It is essential to complete a job application form as it will ensure you provide us with all the necessary information to fully assess your application and suitability for the role...

Key selection criteria

The key selection criteria are those skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and qualifications, which are considered essential to be able to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively and efficiently.

The degree to which applicants meet the key selection criteria is a fundamental component of the overall selection process. Failure to address the key selection criteria prevents the panel from being able to easily and accurately assess your competencies, and may exclude you from further consideration.

A selection panel determines your suitability for the job based on how your skills and experience align to the requirements of the job, and how you are able to demonstrate that you can meet the selection criteria. You are therefore required to address and reply to each of the selection criteria separately.

Notes to remember when addressing the key selection criteria

- Directly addressing the key selection criteria is your opportunity to show the selection panel that you are the best person for the job;
- Make sure that you specifically address each of the selection criteria by outlining how your qualifications, skills, abilities, experience and knowledge meet the requirements of the job. To do this properly, you must read the selection criteria carefully, and determine what each one is actually asking;
- When considering the length of your statement to address the selection criteria, you should remember that it is **quality** not quantity that counts. **Critically go through your statement and if a paragraph does not relate directly to the selection criteria, consider leaving it out;**
- The statement should consist of each of the key selection criteria as a heading and your written response underneath. Some good hints for addressing the selection criteria are:
 - Read the key selection criteria very carefully and determine what each one is asking. Ensure that you address all components of the selection criteria.
 - Look for words and determine what they mean. Some examples of key words frequently used are:

Demonstrated or proven ability means that you should have successfully performed the duty or used the skill in the past. Actual experience rather than potential to perform the duty is required.

An ability to rapidly acquire means that if you do not already have the skills, knowledge and abilities, you may demonstrate your potential to acquire these by comparing them to relevant tasks or responsibilities you have undertaken in previous positions or through study.

Thorough, sound or high level indicates that advanced skill or knowledge is required.

You should address each key selection criteria by outlining how your qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge and abilities meet the requirements of the position. State each of the key selection criteria as a heading and write your response underneath it.

To complete each statement, Council recommends that the S.T.A.R. method be utilised:

- ★ Situation
- ★ Task
- ★ Activity / Action
- ★ Result

Carefully read the key selection criteria then describe a situation in which you have demonstrated this competency, write about the actual situation, what the task was, what activity or action you undertook (including delegation or team work), and the result of your efforts.

It is important to be very clear and concise in your response, ideally you will **not exceed one page** per selection criteria.

When using the S.T.A.R. method it may be useful to incorporate the below:

1. **An initial statement – (situation)**

This should be a clear statement of how you meet the criterion. For example:

“I demonstrate my ability to ... by ...”

“I possess these skills ...”

“My role as X demands that I...”

2. **Supporting argument – (task, activity, result)**

Justify your initial statement by showing how you meet the criterion. Identify the key issues for each selection criterion and include these in your response. Provide 1 or 2 examples that best demonstrate your skills, knowledge or abilities and cover as many of the relevant key issues as possible. The examples to include:

- Content – *what occurred and what you did;*
- Context – *your responsibility: whether you were in charge, responsible or part of a team;*
- Outcome – *what happened as a result? Was your work approved? Adopted? Successful? What difference did your work make to the organisation?*

3. **Validity statement**

Validate your examples by showing supporting evidence. For example:

“Attached testimonials verify...”

“Feedback from customers was...”

“In support of my claims please contact...”

4. **Concluding statement**

Reinforce again why and how you meet the criterion. Relate your responses back to the criterion. For example:

“I believe that through this I have gained...”

“This demonstrates...”

Addressing the key selection criteria of the job is the most important part of your application. The panel will use all the information provided in your application and attachments provided, but will concentrate on the key selection criteria for an analysis of your qualifications, skills, ability, experience and knowledge.

**Remember to address each of the key selection criteria
so the panel can fully assess your application.**

The resume (curriculum vitae)

The resume is a summary of details of yourself, education, qualifications, work experience, demonstrated application of skills and other relevant material. Information, which may be included in your resume:

- Personal details - name, address, phone numbers;
- Education background - list details from most recent to past; include your university, college, and/or school and any training courses, qualifications or other experience.
- Work history - list details from the most recent to the past - include both paid and unpaid (voluntary/community) work; state the employers name and length of service; state your position, the key duties involved in the job, skills gained from that position and mention some of your greatest challenges and how you went about managing them;
- Additional information - first-aid certificate, drivers licence, etc;
- Interests - this is optional;
- Referees - you are required to give the name and contact phone/fax/email of referees who can provide objective and honest feedback about your work experience and performance, where possible, related to the selection criteria.

Notes to remember when providing referees

You have several responsibilities to your referees:

- Ask if they will act as a referee for you;
- Notify your referees that you are applying for the job;
- If you are short listed, give them a copy of the position description and advertisement (for the selection criteria) to allow them time to think about any responses they may need to give;
- You may wish to give them a copy of your application as well.

In your application, nominate at least two (2) referees who have first-hand knowledge of your work performance, preferably your current or most recent supervisor. Be sure to state their name, position, department and/or organisation, and contact details.

The checking of references is a technique that confirms or clarifies issues and claims you have made in your application, interview or other selection techniques.

It is a requirement that information provided by an applicant can be verified, if necessary, by referees before an appointment is made.

Your interview

The selection panel's task is to establish whether you possess the necessary qualifications, skills, ability, experience and knowledge to perform the duties and requirements of the job. The task is then to select the most suitable person for the job.

Your task is to convince the selection panel on how well you meet the selection criteria and to determine if the job is suitable for you. The best indicator of future success is past performance on the job. Hence, the selection panel will use the interview to ask you specific job related questions to investigate your past achievements and your acquired skills and abilities. Interview questions will be related to the key selection criteria and will ask that you draw from previous experience or knowledge to answer the question appropriately.

It is imperative that you advise us of any special requirements/assistance that you need for the interview (if applicable).

Preparing yourself

Plan and prepare for your interview. You have the same access to the key selection criteria as the selection panel, so with thought and preparation there should be no surprises.

Carefully read the position description, and in particular the key selection criteria and accountabilities and outcomes. List key issues relating to each, and think of likely questions that would directly apply to the position description. There will be a focus on proof of your ability so think of your previous exposure to similar work situations that were successful. Be prepared to provide examples.

You should also prepare answers to some of the other more general types of questions such as:

- Why did you apply for the job?
- What has been your biggest achievement(s) to date?
- What have you done that demonstrates initiative in your career?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in past / present job?
- Why are you the best person for this job?

Answering and asking questions

This is a very important aspect of the selection process. It is imperative that you are honest, and answer the questions clearly and concisely. It is helpful to be able to give examples of what you have done. Act positively and informatively, and be enthusiastic about what you have to offer.

Listen carefully to the questions being put to you, and query anything you do not understand.

Remember, the interview is a two-way process, and as well as the interviewer asking questions, you may ask questions as well. Be prepared and have well thought out questions for the panel.

The selection process used by Council

There are four (4) main events in the selection process.

Short listing applications

Short listing is a process of determining which applicants, based on their applications, have the strongest claim to the advertised job and who should be selected for further consideration.

The information in each application is compared with the requirements of the position description, especially the selection criteria, and your suitability in terms of the criteria is noted and compared with other applicants. The most suitable applicants, as determined by the panel, are then detailed on a shortlist. The short listed applicants are then contacted for further assessment.

Gathering information about applicants

The selection panel have a number of selection techniques available to them, and they will determine the technique, or combination of techniques, most suitable to the nature of the duties involved in the job and its skill requirements. The most commonly used selection techniques are:

- Written applications - especially where writing skill is part of the selection criteria;
- Structured interview (e.g. specific questions relating to selection criteria and requirements of the job, directed to each applicant);
- Case studies / role play (e.g. the panel will give the applicant a realistic scenario and ask him / her to respond with what they would do in that situation);
- Work samples (e.g. the applicant is required to carry out a task similar to what would be expected of the appointee to the job);
- Work samples from previous jobs as an example of work quality;
- Aptitude and ability testing (e.g. typing, shorthand, word processing, filing, decision-making, etc).

Verify information - referee check

When applying for any job, you will be asked to supply referees. The people you nominate should be individuals who can comment directly on your abilities in a work situation. If you are considered to be among the top contenders for the job, the interview panel will always conduct formal reference checks. The best referees are those that can discuss your previous work experience in line with the advertised selection criteria.

Post selection feedback

You are able to contact the appropriate officer from the interview panel and ask for feedback on how you went during interview. We do however request that you only ask for feedback if you have serious concerns about your application/interview. Gold Coast City Council receives hundreds of applications and it would be impossible to supply feedback to everyone. Feedback can only be given after someone has been appointed to the job. All feedback comments are based on your suitability compared to the key selection criteria.

Conclusion

If you carefully read and follow the suggestions outlined in the guide, your performance during the selection process should ensure that you give yourself the best possible chance of presenting your case for the position.

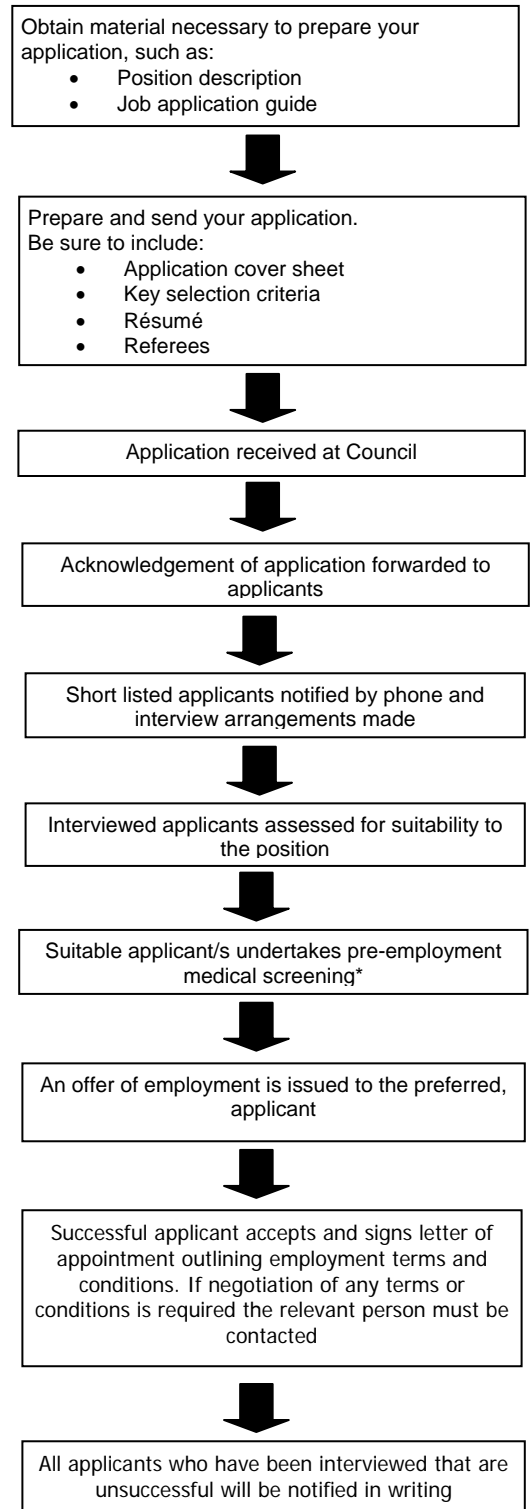
Where do I go for more assistance?

If you require further assistance regarding any of the details outlined in this guide, please contact the Recruitment & Appointments Team on 1300 737 962. For specific job enquiries contact the relevant person listed on the advertisement or position description.

Good luck!

Flowchart

The following flowchart depicts what you can anticipate to happen with your application:



* Before a prospective employee can commence with Gold Coast City Council, a pre-employment medical screening is conducted to ensure that the prospective employee is physically fit for employment in that particular field. Council will cover the costs of a pre-employment medical, where necessary.