



# How do I address selection criteria?

## Introduction

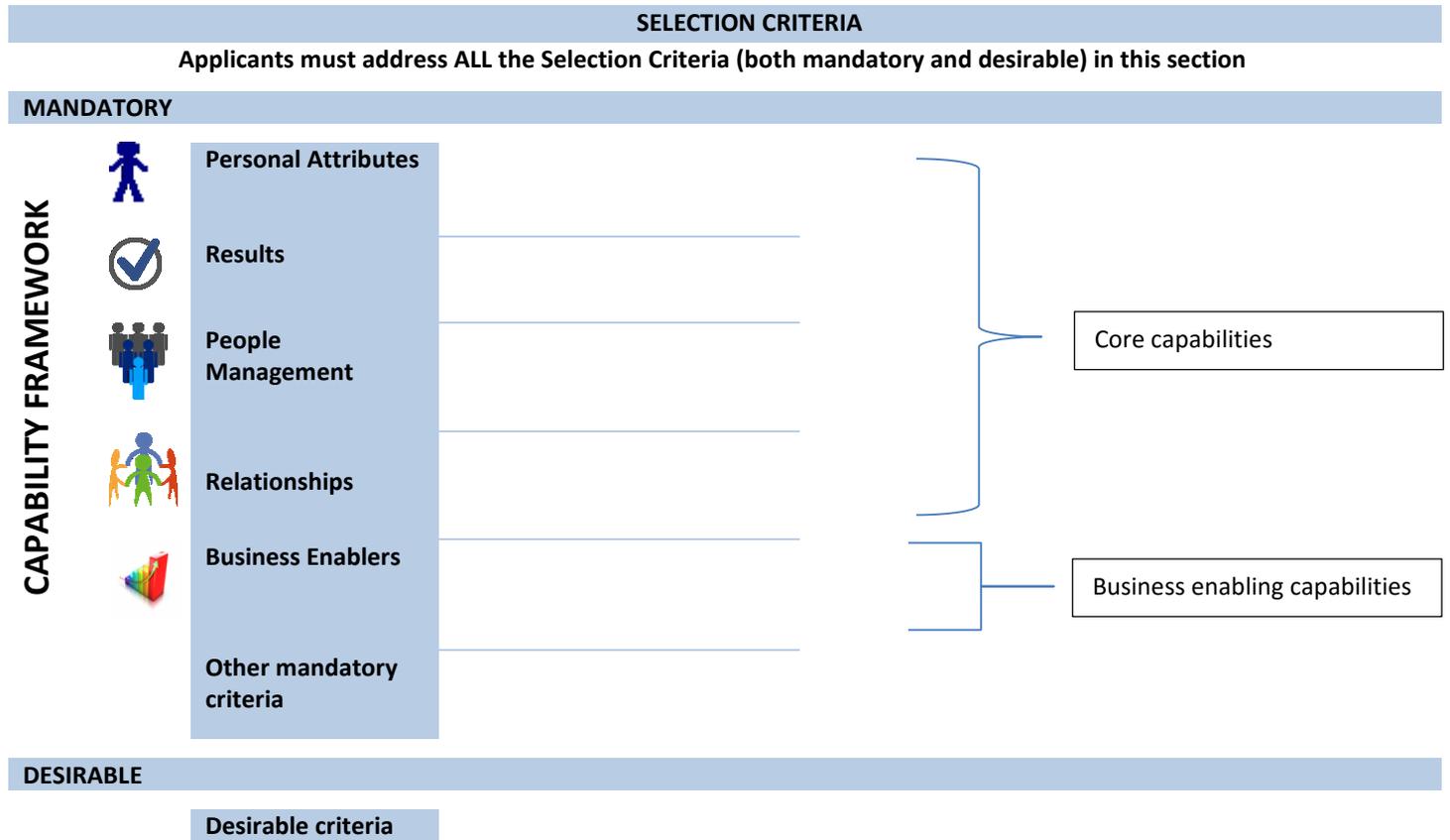
North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) strives to undertake all recruitment and selection processes in a fair and consistent manner. To achieve this, every job that is advertised has a Position Description (PD) that lists the key duties of the position as well as a number of selection criteria. If you apply for a job with NCPHN you **MUST** address **ALL** the selection criteria to be considered for the vacancy. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to assist applicants applying for NCPHN positions to address selection criteria in a concise and focused way.

## What is the purpose of selection criteria?

Selection criteria are the skills, abilities, knowledge, qualities and qualifications that the organisation thinks you will need to perform the job well. The selection panel uses them to identify the right person for the job (first to select who to interview and then to develop interview questions or other selection tools). The number of criteria can vary and includes the categories of mandatory and desirable criteria.

## Selection Criteria and the NCPHN Capability Framework

NCPHN has developed a Capability Framework on which it has based all its people practices. These practices include developing selection criteria and assessing applicants in relation to them. The image below demonstrates the format of selection criteria in NCPHN PDs. The selection criteria that are based on the NCPHN Capability Framework are essential to the role.



**Core capabilities** are the vital skills, knowledge and abilities that are common across ALL positions within NCPHN.

**Business enabler capabilities** allow an employee to undertake an element of their position and may, or may not, be the key focus of the role.

**Other mandatory criteria** are selection criteria important to the role but are not based on the NCPHN Capability Framework. They include mandatory qualifications or registration requirements; identified positions and a mandatory NCPHN criterion - "Knowledge of and commitment to Work Health and Safety, Equal Employment Opportunity, and continuous improvement principles" that is included in all PDs.



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**Desirable selection criteria** are preferred qualifications or memberships and criteria that are nice to have and may be of assistance in the role. Often these are criteria that an applicant can develop skills in and/or knowledge of in a reasonable amount of time while 'on the job'.

If you apply for a job with NCPHN **you MUST address ALL the selection criteria** to be considered for the vacancy. While it is important to address all NCPHN criteria, you only need to briefly address the desirable criteria.

## How are selection criteria developed?

All essential criteria are based on the core and business enabler capabilities contained in the NCPHN Capability Framework. Usually the selection panel will go through the key responsibilities of the job and pick the capabilities that they believe an employee would need to do these duties effectively. For example, a position may have a duty included to provide counter service to clients in a busy service centre. In this case the associated selection criteria would probably be based on the capability of "Relationships" and its elements of "Communicates effectively" and "Commits to client service".

## How are selection criteria used?

**Shortlisting** - Initially the selection panel reviews each application, assessing the CV and reading through every response to selection criteria. The purpose of this is to determine if an applicant 'meets' the criteria. Meeting criteria means that based on the applicant's CV and response to the selection criteria, the panel considers the applicant has demonstrated their ability to do the job. You must 'meet' the essential criteria to be considered for the next stage of the selection process (usually a panel interview).

**Interviews** - Once the selection panel has decided who to interview, they will develop questions (or another type of selection activity) based on the selection criteria. These are often behavioural questions that reflect the duties of the job. For example, with the earlier example (the duty was to provide counter service to clients in a busy service centre and the associated selection criterion was based on the capability element of "communicates effectively"), the question could be "You are serving a client and they are getting frustrated and angry with the process they have to follow. How would you use your communication skills to manage or resolve this situation?"

**Referee reports** - Following the interview the Chairperson of the selection panel may choose to contact your referees. They will ask them questions concerning your professional abilities based on the selection criteria. This is predominately used to confirm the selection panel's assessment of your abilities based on the quality of your written application and your performance at interview. NCPHN often uses an online reference checking service where you will receive an email asking you to login to the reference check website, and enter names and contact details of at least two referees.

## How do I address selection criteria?

You are required to address each criterion separately, providing enough detail for the panel to assess your abilities in relation to them. While there is no specific word or character limit, the average response should be around 350 -500 words per criterion. The best approach is to:

1. Understand the Position Description (PD)
2. Provide evidence
3. Be positive and specific
4. Give outcomes

1. **Understand the Position Description (PD):** Read the **whole PD**, considering the responsibilities of the job and how they relate to the selection criteria. Make sure you understand what sort of responsibilities relate to every criterion. For example, writing reports, negotiating with colleagues and providing information to clients all relate to a selection criterion based on "communicates effectively". In your response to that criterion you should therefore cover your experience relating to writing, negotiating and providing information. You should make notes under each selection criteria regarding the types of things you should cover.

You should let the panel know what aspects of the criterion you are addressing. For example, the excerpt below from an applicant's response to the criteria uses the same terms (report writing, negotiating and providing information) to show how their experience relates to the role they are applying for:



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“In several positions I have been required to negotiate with colleagues in relation to deadlines. While working as a Finance Officer with ACME, I had to liaise regularly with clients to negotiate cut off dates for the submission of X and Y documents. I worked in partnership with them, clearly explaining the reasons for the deadline and adopting a flexible attitude if possible. I also gained a good understanding of my client’s business to ensure I understood and worked with their needs and business drivers. As a result of this approach I always received X and Y documents on time and was therefore able to submit the Z report by the set deadline.”

2. **Provide evidence** - Think about relevant examples from your work, study, life and/or volunteer experience that relate to each criterion and the associated duties. Decide which examples ‘fit’ best, then use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Approach and Result) to outline them. This approach ensures that you provide evidence of how you are suitable for the job, not just generic statements. With the example above:

- S** The **situation** was working as a Finance Officer with ACME  
**T** The **task** was negotiating the submission of data  
**A** The **approach** was explaining the reason for the deadline, being understanding of the clients needs and adopting a flexible attitude  
**R** The outcome or **result** was ensuring X and Y documents were always received on time to prepare and submit the Z report by the required deadline

Often the hard part is knowing which examples to use from your work history and what to emphasise or highlight. You might find that you have too much information to fit into just a couple of pages or you may struggle to write a paragraph. It is best to be concise and avoid going off on tangents. Every piece of information should link to the selection criteria.

3. **Be positive and specific** - Use positive and specific language and avoid ambiguous expressions, such as “I was involved in” or “I assisted in”. Use strong action terms and avoid passive language when describing your qualifications and experience, for example, say “I led the project” rather than “As part of my ongoing duties I participated in the project” (without over-stating the part you played, of course). Avoid negative terms, such as “dealing with problems”. Instead, use phrases such as “meeting challenges” or “resolving issues”.

#### 4. Check your work

Once you complete your response to the selection criteria, go back over your work and check that:

- You have covered all aspects of the criteria
- The structure of your response to each criterion is logical
- The information is concise and relates specifically to the criterion
- Your sentences are positive and clear
- Your grammar and spelling is correct
- The best approach is to ask someone else to read your work and ask that they consider the above points when assessing your response

#### Summary

The most important things to remember:

- Read and understand the whole PD
- Address all the selection criteria
- Focus on the criteria based on the Core and Business Enabler Capabilities
- Give examples and outcomes
- Try to keep to around 500 words per criterion
- Sell your capabilities confidently
- Check your work carefully

**Good luck!**