



Writing a Winning Job Application

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) appreciates that applicants are busy and want the job application process to be as efficient as possible.

This package has been developed to help applicants develop a more time effective way of applying for positions at DIA.

Of course it is still important for applicants to demonstrate that they meet the selection criteria and are competitive for the advertised position, but DIA believes written claims can be adequately addressed in **three pages**. This package provides tips and examples to help applicants to write concise applications.

How to Address the Selection Criteria in Three Pages.....	page 2
▪ Tips to developing an effective CV	
▪ Using your CV to address selection criteria	
▪ The advantage of developing your CV	
Sample CV as an Example	page 3 -5
Sample Selection Criteria as Example	page 6-8

Your application will be assessed against the selection criteria listed in the job description form (JDF) but if you use your Curriculum Vitae (CV) effectively as a key component of your application, you will find you do not need to develop a long statement addressing the selection criteria. This saves you time and saves the selection panel time.

How to Address Selection Criteria in Three Pages

By effectively laying out your CV and referring back to it in your statement addressing the selection criteria, you will be able to keep your claims down to a paragraph (5-6 sentences) for each selection criterion. DIA positions usually have between 5 and 7 selection criteria so the required paragraphs will fit into three pages.

Tips to develop an effective CV

The selection panel will review your CV to understand what kind of work you have done, at what level you have worked and what you have accomplished.

To help the selection panel with its assessment, please ensure you have clearly outlined:

- Periods of employment
- Name of organisation in which you are/were employed
- Position title
- Role description (e.g. who you report to, the size of the team, duties)
- Achievements (i.e. things you were proud of achieving at work)
- Education
- Professional or industry memberships

Please refer to the sample CV that follows.

Using your CV to address your selection criteria

1. Have your CV and the selection criteria in front of you. Underline parts on a draft CV that provide evidence of your ability to meet the selection criteria.
2. When addressing the selection criteria, draw attention to your work that best demonstrates your competency and refer to your CV. You don't have to repeat everything you have written in the CV, just make sure the selection panel can look at your CV to confirm the claims that you make.
3. After you have written your statement addressing the selection criteria, check it to make sure you have addressed each of the selection criteria. Re-read each selection criterion then go back to your claims and mark a tick where you think you have addressed each selection criterion. The selection panel will do the same thing.

Please refer to page 6 for examples of how selection criteria can be written using your CV.

The advantage of developing your CV

Your CV is your personal record of your professional development and achievement. Selection criteria change considerably from position to position but if you continuously work on your CV it will develop as you do. You can use your CV to develop insight into your work and achievements and this will help you explain your strengths to others. Even if you are not regularly applying for jobs, you should be reviewing your CV periodically.

Joanne Smith – Curriculum Vitae (CV)

ADDRESS

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Our Town WA 6999

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EDUCATION

1999 - Bachelor of Arts History
Curtin University of Technology

WORK HISTORY

Department of Indigenous Affairs

Project Officer, Level 5

Nov 2004 – current

Role Description

In this position I report to the Manager Regional Services and am part of a team of four project officers. My role is to undertake projects that will develop strategic partnerships in government planning to improve services to Indigenous Australians. In this role I undertake project management, liaison & coordination and support strategic business processes within DIA.

Achievements

- Acted as Senior Project Officer Nov 2005 – Feb 2006; liaised with Port Hedland community leaders during period of high media interest.
- Initiated and undertook research into community acceptance of Community Patrols; presented results at Regional Management staff meeting.
- Worked with Senior Project Officer to develop an educational package to be distributed to Government; this package has been well received and several agencies have asked to meet with DIA for further information.

Employer and position stand out

Time in position is clear

Responsibilities clear

You take initiative for important work on Indigenous issues

Department of Health

Research Officer, Level 4

Jul 2002 – Nov 2004

Employer and position stand out

Time in position is clear

Responsibilities clear

Role Description

In this position, I reported to the Manager Policy & Liaison in the Office of Aboriginal Health. The Office of Aboriginal Health was established to improve effectiveness of health services to Indigenous Australians. My role was to undertake research as directed by my Manager to support the development of Indigenous health policy. My work includes developing research proposals, completing progress reports and analysing data. Some projects involved consultation with Indigenous people.

Achievements

- Undertook research into Indigenous ear health and developed an information package for remote communities.
- Completed initial scoping for a research project on culturally appropriate training for hospital staff which included resource requirements and milestones.

Work adds value

Department of Health

Research Assistant, Level 3

Jan 2000 – Jul 2002

Employer and position stand out

Time in position is clear

Responsibilities clear

Role Description

In this position I reported the Senior Project Officer in WA Country Health Services as part of the National Health Department Funding Grant. My role was to support the development of an outreach service as part of a larger project. My work in this role included organizing data for analysis and presentation and finding resources as requested by my Manager.

Achievements

- I used my computer skills to help follow-up outreach activities; I added value by developing spreadsheets and graphs so the Senior Project Officer could make more effective presentations to stakeholder groups;
- I made special note of sensitive stakeholders and ensured personalised service when they came to the office. This helped the Senior Project officer develop stronger relationships to complete her project.

Demonstrated initiative early in career

Training courses

Microsoft Excel – Introductory and Advanced Modules – 2001
Project Management - 2004
Microsoft Publisher - 2005

Shows initiative to do a better job – be selective and only list training relevant to role.

Professional Associations, Voluntary Work or Awards

Mentor to Indigenous Student in Smith Family Charity (2003 – current)
Member of the Australian Archaeological Association (2003- current)
Volunteer for local government research on sustainability (2003)

Shows commitment to values of organisation – be selective and only list things related to Indigenous affairs, community or research.

After reading your CV, the selection panel can see:

- You have worked with Indigenous people.
- You have experience with research and projects.
- You have added value with your achievements.
- You have undertaken training to develop your skills.
- Your commitment to community and Indigenous issues is apparent by activities outside of work.

→ You seem to be a good fit; the selection panel will read your statement addressing the selection criteria with even more interest.

Sample Statement Addressing the Selection Criteria

Tips to develop a concise and effective statement addressing the selection criteria. An example of a statement addressing the selection criteria developed for a Senior Project Officer Level 6 at DIA prepared in the shortened format is shown in the following pages. These statements of claims are based on the sample CV of Joanne Smith.

Suggestions for developing this format

- Print out your CV and the JDF so you can refer to them easily.
- If you are unsure whether your skills and experience are relevant for this role, call the DIA contact officer nominated in the advertisement.
- Think about what makes you generally suitable for the role and jot down a few points.
- Use these points to start your claims with a sentence or two that explains why you think you would be good in this position.
- Go through each selection criteria one at a time and before you address the criteria ensure you understand what the selection panel is seeking; jot down a few points.
- When you address each selection criteria ensure you give the selection panel relevant information; refer back to the points you jotted down earlier.
- Make it easy for the selection panel to refer back to your CV. Use the same position titles and organisation names. When the selection panel reads your written claims they should feel your claims are backed up with evidence.
- When you have finished your written claims, re-read them as if you were a selection panel member. Make sure it is easy for the selection panel to give you

The point of the statement addressing the selection criteria is to make it as easy as possible for the selection panel to see that you meet the position requirements and are the best person for the job. More words are not necessarily better.

When you read these statements against the selection criteria, try to think like a selection panel member.

Things that selection panel members look for include:

- A well-written document that is easy to understand.
- Efforts to make the document as concise as possible (selection panel members are as busy as you).
- That the applicant understands the objectives of the organisation and the challenges of the position.
- Evidence the applicant has demonstrated their skills, knowledge and abilities with the essential selection criteria.

Joanne Smith Application for Senior Project Officer, L6 - DIA

Brief statement addressing the selection criteria

I would like to apply for the role of Senior Project Officer, Level 6 at DIA as I feel I would be well suited to this role. I have a strong sense of social justice, have experience in project management and have worked with Indigenous Australians for over five years, and have a track record of success both working individually and in a team environment.

Applicant has thought about DIA and how she fits the role

Demonstrated experience in effectively and sensitively communicating with Indigenous Australians and/or diverse customer groups

Through my roles with the Office of Aboriginal Health and the Department of Indigenous Affairs over the past two years I have worked closely and effectively with Indigenous people, including Indigenous colleagues and community members and leaders in rural and remote areas. My CV refers to the successful liaison that I initiated with leaders in the Port Hedland community and the work I have undertaken more recently in relation to community patrols. In developing and undertaking the survey into community acceptance of patrols, it was imperative that I identified and involved key community stakeholders throughout the process. I organised and held discussions with Indigenous representatives from 10 Aboriginal communities, local government authorities, WA Police, the Department for Community Development and members of the patrols. I was able to successfully communicate the aims of the survey, gain excellent insights into the questions that needed to be included and more generally gain their support for it, resulting in a very good response rate. I was careful to feedback the results of the survey by way of the draft report. The final report was well received by all stakeholders and recommendations are currently being implemented.

Applicant shows insight into communication and has practical experience with Indigenous groups

Demonstrated experience in working both independently and in a team environment

I have shown flexibility in all my roles so that I can produce effective work on my own that contributes to the team objectives. For example in my first role at Department of Health, I researched and input data to support the outreach service. To do this, I ensured I understood what data my manager required for the project and then I liaised with all the support officers so I understood their relationships with the various service providers. People commented on how well I kept them informed and how effective the information was in the database. In my current role at Indigenous Affairs, I rotate with another Project Officer to act in the Senior Project Officer position when our supervisor is away. This works well as we are able to share the load (and the opportunity) and ensure that team performance is consistent even with staff absences.

Applicant understands team objectives and can work both autonomously and cooperatively

This statement addressing the selection criteria was developed to provide applicants an example of a concise statement of claims.

Additional tip: To ensure you've adequately covered each criterion, you can use the 'SAO' approach, i.e.:

Situation - Describe a challenge or situation at work requiring a solution

Action - Describe the action you took

Outcome - What was the outcome of the action you took? (e.g. positive and negative results)

The selection panel in all cases will assess your application against the selection criteria in the context of the position requirements. You can address the selection criteria anyway you like but try to ensure your application is

- As concise as possible
- Easy to read
- Backed by evidence (remember your CV is evidence)
- Relevant to the role being applied for
- Up to a professional standard (i.e. no spelling or typographical errors)

At DIA, we want the selection process to be a positive experience for all applicants. Whether or not your application is successful, take the opportunity to learn from the process. Obtain feedback from the selection panel and continually review and develop your CV.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact the Workforce Management Branch on (08) 9235 8000.