

Top Tips

Applying for a position

Job description and person specification

Job Description

- Key responsibilities

Person Specification

- The main skills/attributes the successful candidate is required to have on entry to the role
 - Contains experience and pre-qualification section which is specific to the role
 - The experience and pre-qualification criteria are essential
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Answering competency questions

- Don't assume we know your employment history
 - Focus on the essential criteria in the experience and pre-qualification section
 - Provide real-life examples
 - Avoid simply writing statements or saying "please refer to my CV"
 - How to address the experience and pre-qualification criteria
 - Significant achievements
 - Relevant qualifications
 - Use the **STAR** approach
 - Situation
 - Task
 - Action
 - Result
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What is the "STAR" technique?

The STAR technique is a technique used to gather job relevant information about experiences, skills, styles, and other qualities the candidate has.

The strength of the approach is that it enables a shortlisting panel to acquire very concrete information about the applicant.

The acronym **STAR** stands for:

Situation: What was the situation in which you found yourself?

Task: What was the specific task you had to achieve?

Action: What action did you take?

Result: What was the outcome of your action?

Preparing with the STAR technique is an excellent option when applying for a job. The STAR approach helps you to develop narratives about what you did in situations that are relevant for the job you are applying for.

Remember - the focus should be on you even if the situation involved a group; the shortlisting panel will want to know what was your specific role in achieving the desired result.

An example of using the STAR approach is as follows:

(SITUATION) During my time as a Labour Market Recruitment Advisor, I manned a Work Trial Hub, which I had implemented in order to increase exposure of Work Trials to employers and customers. One particular jobseeker visited me, who had attended one of my Back to Work Sessions - she had been made redundant from her long service job and was feeling very anxious about finding a new role and was struggling with confidence.

(TASK) I took the time to sit with her in private and help identify her transferable skills and asked what aspects of her previous role she had enjoyed the most and which, she hadn't.

(ACTION) I assisted her in searching the Job Centre website for live vacancies and printed off a selection. I explained in more detail the benefits of a Work Trial and she liked the idea of trialling a job before committing to it. I telephoned a local bridal company, who I had built a good relationship with and explained I was with the jobseeker and she'd expressed a particular interest in their vacancy.

(RESULT) The jobseeker met with the employer and started a Work Trial the following week. The employer was extremely impressed with her enthusiasm and customer service skills and offered her a permanent role.

Providing Examples

Imagine that you are the shortlisting panel

- ✓ Study the job description and think about how your knowledge, skills and experience relate to the position
- ✓ Always think of good recent examples
- ✓ Provide examples using the STAR technique
- ✓ Remember to include specifics, not in general terms
- ✓ Talk about what 'you' have done rather than other people's contributions

Shortlisting

The Hiring Manager will shortlist against the essential 'experience and pre-qualification' criteria contained within the role profile.

- 0 – Criteria not met
- 1 – Basic application submitted
- 2 – Good application submitted
- 3 – Very good applications submitted
- 4 – Outstanding application submitted

You will be shortlisted against the competency questions we set in the application and the essential criteria contained in the Role Profile; it is important you focus on these sections for your answers.

You will be scored between 0 - 4 against each competency question, and again between 0-4 for your CV.

As a Disability Confident Committed Employer we understand that people with disabilities are underrepresented in the workplace and that, as a result, we are missing vital skills and knowledge in our organisation. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have a disability or long-term health condition so that we can automatically shortlist you for an interview, as long as you meet the basic criteria for the position.

Once the position has closed, shortlisting usually takes around 7 working days to be completed by the hiring manager. We will be in touch with you by email to confirm whether you've been selected for an interview or not.