

## **Applying for a Job with an Australian Embassy, High Commission or Other Post**

In general, selection decisions for jobs and promotions within Australian embassies, high commissions or other posts are based on three elements: a written application, referee report/s and an interview.

The following guidelines aim to assist staff prepare a written application, prepare for an interview and to prepare their referees to provide a comprehensive and supportive referee report.

### **The Written Application**

The aim of the application is to demonstrate your actual experience, qualities and skills.

You might wish to begin your application with a brief (one page) background summary. This could include your current position, previous positions (working backwards), academic qualifications, languages, and other relevant information– including publications, awards.

All advertised positions have a corresponding duty statement setting out the responsibilities and tasks required in the job. The selection panel will use this and, where provided, selection criteria, based on the duty statement, to assess applications. The selection criteria describe the personal qualities, skills, abilities, knowledge and qualifications (if any) a person needs to perform the role effectively.

The written application is your first opportunity to demonstrate your claims against the duty statement (and/or selection criteria). Read the duty statement carefully and ensure you address all elements. Use workplace achievements to demonstrate you have certain skills or experience rather assertions about skills or experience. Use recent examples as far as possible.

The following STAR points are useful guides in outlining your competency or experience against to each duty/criterion.

**Situation** - Set the context by describing the situation in which you demonstrated the skills or qualities and gained the experience.

**Task** – Describe the task

**Actions** - What did you do and how did you do it?

**Results** - What did you achieve? What was the end result and how does it relate to the job that you have applied for?

If you find it difficult to identify strong examples for each duty/criterion, you can still show you understand what's required and how it should be done.

The application is also used by the selection panel to assess an applicant's writing and organisational skills as well as their eagerness for the job. Make sure your application is succinct, focussed and well organised. Show that you are well prepared and thorough by ensuring it is sufficiently detailed and coherent as well as free of spelling or grammatical mistakes. Where possible, have someone, such as a colleague or supervisor, read over your application before lodging it.

## Referee Reports

Referee comments are a very important element of your application. You will be required to supply contact details of at least one referee. Your referee should be the person most familiar with your work, who can comment on your ability to perform against each duty/criterion. It is helpful if they are able to provide work-specific examples against each duty or selection criterion.

You should assist referees by providing them with a copy of your application, the duty statement for the job/selection criteria and any other relevant materials. It is your responsibility to advise your referee/s that they will be contacted and to prepare them to be in a position to answer well all the questions they are asked.

## The Interview

Many people are nervous about interviews. Solid preparation is the key to a successful interview.

On the basis of the duty statement and/or selection criteria, you may be asked a range of questions to demonstrate your skills and abilities. These could include behavioural-based questions and hypothetical scenario questions.

The following interview tips might be helpful:

- . Know your own story:
  - your key selling points;
  - examples of achievements relevant to the duty statement and selection criteria; and
  - what you might have done differently with the benefit of hindsight
- . Know the role and its broader context:
  - be familiar with the duty statement;
  - understand the work level standards required;
  - understand the broader context: the mission's and Department's priorities and how the job you are applying for fits into this picture; and
  - be aware of current affairs
- . Practice aloud to get comfortable with the wording of examples you might use, but don't learn responses by rote – you don't know what the questions are yet!
- . You may be given a copy of the questions a few minutes before interview. Be ready to jot down some notes
- . Dress appropriately for the interview and check your appearance in the mirror. You should feel comfortable and confident with your appearance
- . Questions tend to be broad, open, behaviour-based questions to allow you to convince the interviewer of your suitability for the job/promotion
- . Present clearly and confidently
- . Questions need to be answered as if you were already at the level
- . Follow the STAR principle – Situation, Task, Actions, Results
- . Manage your time. If you have a 20 minute interview, you can't afford to spend 15 minutes on your first answer
- . You may be asked if there is anything you want to add – be ready
- . Remember the 6 P rule:
  - Proper Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.