

How to answer Key Selection Criteria like a pro!

Not every job advertisement will ask you to complete Key Selection Criteria (sometimes just called Selection Criteria) but some will.

The higher level the role is, the more important it is to address the criteria (and they will most likely insist this in their advertisement). Regardless though, if you do see an advertisement that lists selection criteria but doesn't specifically ask you to address them in the ad, it is still best practice to answer the criteria. Consider it a weeding out process on their end and, by answering the criteria, you are very likely to be put ahead of the pile of applications that didn't.

Our three steps to answering Key Selection Criteria like a pro include: 1. Read. 2. Describe and Prove. 3. Clear and concise language.

Read and Read Again!

Read the criteria at least twice, three times is even better.

On the first read, just read it. Think about whether you fit the criteria. Don't be too intimidated, recognize that criteria is a 'wish list' and that most successful applicants are unlikely to have a 100% fit. Having said that, the most important criteria is quite obvious and if it wants someone with a degree level or at least 2 year experience in a field, and you have neither, nor the transferrable skills to do the job, perhaps move onto the next job ad.

On the second read, take notes on how you believe they want you to answer the question. There are key words you need to pay attention to.

For instance, if it says 'Proven ability to manage busy workloads', you need to think about a time you did this, the key word being 'proven'. If the criteria states 'Ability to work outside of working hours as necessary', you just need to state that you are willing.

Another example of a key selection criteria may be 'ability to adapt quickly to changing workloads and manage priorities'. While this criteria doesn't have the word 'proven' in the sentence, you still need to give an example.

If the criteria says describe a time... you need to do just that.

When reading the criteria for the second time, take notes on each, writing down how you believe they want you to answer the question (ie prove, describe or just affirm), and start thinking about examples you can give. You can read the criteria a third time and then write down your examples (just in dot point form)

or do it simultaneously with the second read notes above.

If you need to describe a time – just describe one time, your best example. If asking for proven ability, you can choose one or two examples.

Describe or Prove like a champion

Describe your experience with managing busy workloads. Here is a possible answer to this: "My role as manager for a busy print firm involved prioritizing and managing busy workloads for myself and my team. With over 50 clients and competing deadlines this was imperative to ensuring customer satisfaction. During my six year tenure as manager at Print Express, I introduced a prioritization system with my team, as well as a reward structure for working after hours. This resulted in a 45% improvement on past customer satisfaction ratings". You get the drift? Think back to a working role where you needed to act in the way the question is asking. Then describe that experience and highlight your achievements.

In essence, proven ability is similar to describe, however you may need to add details that can be proven – for example, I have over 6 years' experience in project management tools that assisted in the creating the new prioritization methods implemented with the team.

Clear and Concise Language

Like all good writers do, while you are writing your criteria, it's important to think about your reader. Here are our tips:

- Have your criteria on a separate page to your resume, clearly headed **Response to Key Selection Criteria**
- Answer each criteria separately, with the criteria question as a sub-heading and your answer underneath.
- For some criteria you will only need a sentence (eg Current drivers license required, all you need to say is "I have a current Qld drivers license and a clean driving record"). However, if it is a 'describe' or 'proven ability' question, you will need between 1-3 paragraphs. You should never require more than half a page to answer a criteria question.
- Proof read your drafted version. If you are saying in three sentences what can be said in one sentence, change it. Check your grammar (sites like [Grammarly](#) are very helpful for this) and definitely make sure there are no spelling mistakes (no excuses as you should have spell checker).

Sometimes you may want some help with key selection criteria so don't be afraid to ask a parent or friend or even a resume expert. Getting key selection criteria right is a sure-fire way to get you an interview.