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# How-to Guide | Applying for advertised jobs

### Use this guide to help you:

- Find jobs that are being advertised
- Understand a job advertisement and decide if you should apply
- Write your job application
- Follow up your job application

**NOTE:** This guide can be used along with the [Using job search websites guide](#) (found in our [additional resources](#)) to help you learn how to use job websites, set job alerts and apply for jobs online.

## Step 1 | Find jobs that are being advertised

You can find advertisements for jobs in your local or national newspaper, on shop windows or on community notice boards, but the most popular way to advertise jobs is now online. Employers use a range of online channels to share job vacancies, including their own company's website and external job search websites.

Job search websites (e.g. [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)) usually advertise a number of roles across a wide range of industries and functions. Other job boards focus on a specific industries or sectors (e.g. Australian Government jobs on [www.apsjobs.gov.au](http://www.apsjobs.gov.au)).

Job search engines (e.g. [www.simplyhired.com.au](http://www.simplyhired.com.au)) work slightly differently. They search many job and employer sites to collect job ads and create a list of them all in the one place.

Use our [Using job search websites guide](#) in our [additional resources](#) section to help you understand and use these websites effectively.

**Step 2 | Understand a job advertisement and decide if you should apply**

When you find a job advertisement that looks interesting, you should spend some time considering if the opportunity is right for you. What are they offering and does it meet your needs? What are they requesting and does it fit your skills and experience? Use the template in this guide to help you work this out.

<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Application/Contact Information:</b>	
<b>What they are offering?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Company</li> <li>● Conditions</li> <li>● Job</li> <li>● Environment</li> </ul>	<b>How does this fit with my needs or interests? (rating out of 10)</b>  <b>Is there anything else I need to know?</b>
<b>What skills do they want?</b>  Must have   Prefer	<b>How does this fit with my skills? (rating out of 10)</b>   <b>Is there anything else I need to know?</b>

**What does the job offer?** What type of company is it? What does the job ad say about work conditions, tasks/duties, environment, pay, and location? How does it fit your needs? Do you need more information about things like team structure, hours, and training? Write down your questions.

**What do they want from you?** What are they looking for in terms of skills, qualities, experience and qualifications? Would they consider applicants who don't have all of these skills? Is there a job description? Write down your questions. Remember this is the employer's wish list and they may hire people who don't meet all of their criteria.

Most advertisements list a contact number and a name. Consider getting in touch with the hirer to find out more about the role and to introduce yourself.

*'Hi my name is Sally, I'm considering applying for the Administration role with Ableco and wanted to learn a bit more about the job before putting forward an application. Can I ask you a few quick questions?'*

**Use the template above to guide your discussion when you call the hirer. When you call:**

- Have a list of three to five questions ready
- Tell them who you are and the position you are interested in
- Speak clearly and at a comfortable speed
- Use the information you have prepared to answer questions like 'What experience do you have?' or 'What interests you about this role?'
- Have a pen handy so that you can make notes

If you are asked about your wage preferences, try suggesting a range. For example 'My understanding is that roles like this can pay anywhere between \$40,000 and \$55,000 annually. Is that similar to what you had in mind?' Recruiters are also great at helping you understand pay rates, and many recruitment companies create salary surveys for different areas of work.

## Other questions

- ✓ Why is this position vacant? (e.g. new role/departure?)
- ✓ Is there a position description for this role? (Check if one is readily available before asking this).
- ✓ Is it possible to give me an idea of the size, industry and location of the company? (if dealing with a recruiter)
- ✓ Can you tell me a bit about the team I will be working with?
- ✓ Who should I address my application to?
- ✓ Are there set expectations in terms of hours and overtime?
- ✓ I want to make sure I have the right expectations of salary on offer. Do you have a rough range you are considering for this role?
- ✓ When are you holding interviews for this role?
- ✓ How quickly does the company want to fill this position?

## Step 3 | Write your application (cover letter or key selection criteria response)

You should now have all the information you need to write your job application. Applications are usually done in one of the following two ways;

1. **Application (cover) Letter + Resume**
2. **Key Selection Criteria Response + Resume**

### Sample application letter (cover letter)

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Job Seeker Name  
Job Seeker Address  
Vermont VIC 3133  
Phone Number  
Email address  
25 June 2017

Karen Sutherland  
Rathdowne Heating and Cooling  
1/967 Drive Highway  
Jobville VIC 3222

Dear Karen,

**Re: Administration Officer position (Rathdowne Heating and Cooling)**

I am excited to submit this application for the Administration role with Rathdowne Heating and Cooling. I would love to work for your company as I am aware that the company recently won an Australian Achiever Award and your are a family-run business.

The experience gained in my past roles equips me well for what is required in this role.

- **Industrial industry experience** – Having worked in the water tank and solar services industry for nearly two years I am familiar with liaising with various trades and contractors. I also have a basic knowledge of pump systems and installations.
- **Administration/customer service experience** – I have worked closely with retail customers (showroom, phone, face-to-face) and have been involved in delivering large commercial projects to schools, aged care

facilities, and sporting groups, including quoting and handling complaints. I also have strong computer skills (Microsoft Office, SAP, internet).

- **Strong organisational capabilities** – I pride myself on my efficiency and on getting the job done. In my last role I introduced various new systems into the office that streamlined and simplified key processes.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my experience in more detail with you at an interview.

Yours sincerely,

Job Seeker Name

## Key selection criteria response

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If an employer wants you to produce a response based on **key selection criteria**, they will usually provide a job description that you can download. The job description will outline the values of the organisation and the selection criteria – the skills, responsibilities, experience or qualifications required for the role.

Some skills may be marked as ‘essential’ while others may just be ‘desirable’.

In your response, you need to provide examples of where and how you have used these skills in the past. The Victorian Government jobs site ([www.careers.vic.gov.au](http://www.careers.vic.gov.au)) suggests using a ‘situation – action – outcome’ format. The following examples come from their website.

### Example responses

**Problem Solving. Seeks all relevant facts. Liaises with stakeholders. Analyses issues from different perspectives and draws sound inferences from available data. Identifies and proposes workable solutions.**

*(General statement) Problem solving has been a critical part of my roles over the past five years. (Situation) While working as Customer Complaints Officer at ZYC Department Stores, I dealt with a variety of problems. While many could be resolved easily, 2–3 per week were*

*more complex and required a detailed process to resolve. **(Actions)** I had to investigate what had happened from both staff and customer point of view, clarify the facts and work out what had gone wrong and why. I then had to propose suitable solutions and negotiate a mutually satisfactory outcome. **(Outcome)** I was often commended by my manager for my sensitive handling and speedy resolution of these problems. Less than 1% of complaints had to be escalated.*

**Sound communication, interpersonal and negotiating skills, including well-developed written and oral skills, and the ability to develop and deliver interpretation and education services.**

*In my five years as a teacher, strong communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills have been essential. I have dealt with a wide range of people, including parents, colleagues and students. I was involved in a community project where I co-wrote a booklet on helping children learn and have fun. As part of this project, I led successful negotiations with the local council and three schools in the area who agreed to run a series of weekend family science programs for kids in the area.*

*Source: <http://careers.vic.gov.au/vacancies/key-selection-criteria>*

## Other approaches

If you want to include a lot of different examples, the following approach may work for you.

### **Excellent customer service skills**

*Many of my roles have required me to use my customer service skills including:*

- *As Clerical Worker at Australia Post I assisted employees of TAC with counter enquiries concerning postage costs and item delivery*
- *As Personal Carer (Oaktrees Home) and General Carer (Barredin Council) I was required to extensively interact with Aged Care clients showing empathy, care and a patient focus*
- *As Library Technician (Swinburne) I was required to handle telephone enquiries from library staff regarding readiness of books to be collected*
- *As Ward Clerk at the Royal Women's Hospital I handled enquiries from patients' families*

*In all of these roles I quickly identified the customer's needs and aimed to build a relationship with them by being warm and friendly. In all instances I maintained knowledge of our company policies so that I could manage customer expectations. As a result of my actions I often received positive customer feedback.*

## Step 4 | Follow up your application

Following up your application can increase your chances in the hiring process. There are two important questions to ask when following up a job application.

1. When do you plan on interviewing for this role?
2. When do you need someone to start in the role?

Use these scripts as a start.

*'My name is Sally and I recently applied for the Administrative Assistant position with Ableco. When I spoke to you last week you indicated you would be interviewing on Monday. I am calling to see if I have made the shortlist.'*

If not, move to a version of the second.

*'My name is Sally and I recently applied for the Administrative Assistant position with Ableco. Thank you for taking the time to inform me I haven't been successful. I was hoping that you might be able to help me by providing advice on what was lacking in my application so that I may have more success in the future.'*

## Handy hints

- Treat each job application and interview as a learning opportunity
- Try to get feedback from an employer when you are unsuccessful
- Remember that some hirers may have a policy of not providing feedback. They can also find it difficult to provide honest, valid, and useful information to candidates about why they were unsuccessful – particularly if it is perceived as negative.

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