Applying for jobs — top tips
Applying for jobs — top tips

The tips in this document bring together important points to consider when applying for jobs in the Civil Service.

Think about your career aspirations and keep yourself up to date with the latest jobs

Do some thinking about where you want your career to go. Consider using a SCOT (Successes, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to help you. What roles will help you get to your dream job?

Once you’ve done this, keep yourself informed of new jobs as they arise. Set up some job alerts on Civil Service Jobs so you don’t miss out!

When it’s time to apply for a new job, think about the skills you’ve already developed

Once you’ve identified a job that you wish to apply for, you need to consider how suitable you are for the role. What skills do you already have and how will you transfer them to a new role?

Think about the application process and ensure you have enough time to do yourself justice

You’ll need to complete an online application form or submit a CV (more commonly required for senior roles) and a personal statement.

Present yourself in the best light by double-checking that there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes.

If you are completing an online form, type your answers into Microsoft Word first so you can run the spell-checker and make sure you haven’t exceeded the character limit. Then, when you’re happy with it, copy and paste it into the form.

Ensure your job history or CV is up to date

Make sure your job history or CV is up to date and accounts for any periods where you weren’t working.
Think of how you can best address the competencies

Most applications are based around competencies. This is what your application will be assessed on, so it’s important to get this right. Don’t be afraid to sell yourself – this is your time to shine!

Start by reading each competency carefully – underline each one in the job advert so you can concentrate on them more clearly. Think of a specific situation where you’ve demonstrated the competency.

Keep another one up your sleeve for the interview should your interviewer ask for more examples. If you can’t think of any work examples, think about your life outside work; such as personal projects or volunteering experience.

Use the first person pronoun ‘I’ when describing what you did.

The Civil Service Competency Framework goes across the whole Civil Service – you can find out more on the Civil Service website. Check the band details of the competencies that relate to the new job before you start working on your application.

Use the STAR model to demonstrate your competencies

Competencies require you to explain what it was you did in a particular situation. When completing the application, try using the STAR model to help you to structure your responses.

• Situation – what was happening?
• Task – what needed to happen?
• Action – what did you do?
• Result – how was your action successful?

Spend more time focusing on the Action and Result parts of STAR – this tells the vacancy holder what you did and what happened as a result.

Apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme

Many departments have signed up to the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, which ensures that applicants with a disability progress to the next stage of selection on meeting the minimum requirements. If you have a disability, consider applying under this scheme.