



**CHURCHILL  
EDUCATION**  
BRAVE HEARTS AND MINDS



# 8 ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR WRITING JOB APPLICATIONS

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## Tip 1: Review the Job Ad

The best place to start with writing job applications is reviewing the job advertisement in full. It sounds obvious but too many people do not read the full advertisement and miss key instructions.

As you are reading, keep your eyes open for the points that give you a solid insight to this role. A good advertisement will have a solid statement about what this position is all about.

For example, this WHS Inspector position advertised by the Queensland Government:

About the role This position plays an important role in the implementation of the Best Practice Review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and ensuring we meet the expectations of compliance and enforcement that the community expects of us as a regulator. As part of a multi-disciplinary team, Inspectors work with industry to improve health and safety in Queensland workplaces.

Always begin by breaking this down into components to ensure you have used the employer's language to reflect these attributes in your application, your resume and even your Linked In profile.

So, if we looked at the example of the WHS Inspector above, you would need to demonstrate:

1. Implementing best practice in Work Health and Safety (WHS) – show them you are experienced in WHS at a best practice level. Choose examples of positions that you have held in your career that covered this and highlight these on your resume and LI profile.
2. Compliance and enforcement – show the reader that you are compliance and enforcement focused, and have the WHS operational skills to do this role.
3. Multi-disciplinary team – true team players are always sought after so include this language in your application.
4. Improve health and safety practices in the workplace – find a way to give them data that shows you have the WHS wins to align with the organisation's objectives.

### Suggestion:

Use the key phrases in your application documents. It makes it easier for the reader to tick off that you meet the criteria and where automated systems are reading your application, key phrases will assist your application to get in front of a pair of human eyes.

## Tip 2: Review the Mandated Requirements & Key Responsibilities

Advertisements often include a list of the mandated requirements (for example, how many years of service in the industry, licences or qualifications) and key responsibilities for the role.

Requirement	Alignment with Listed Duties	Comment
At least 7+ years' experience ideally in a service-based organization		It is best practice to cover the last 10 years of your working life and emphasise your experience during this time.
Advanced people and event management experience including event design/strategy and execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively communicating with key internal stakeholders to provide leading practice event advice and guidance to ensure effective engagement of the National Marketing Events team.</li> <li>Leading the development and execution of the firm's ICON client event programs in collaboration with firm leadership.</li> <li>Delivering a national events program that supports the firm's growth agenda – including demand creation, relationship building and brand positioning events.</li> <li>Reviewing, identifying and implementing initiatives to improve event strategy, design, delivery processes and ROI metrics.</li> </ul>	<p>Pull out the big sexy examples here.</p> <p>Cover how you have managed people and how you have managed your key responsibilities: the importance of keeping a balanced focus.</p> <p>Address your continuous improvement to ensure that your projects and team are delivering best practice in this area.</p> <p>Emphasis on importance of collaboration and teamwork.</p>
Degree qualified in Marketing or Commerce		Add in all your qualifications that match the job.

Before writing job applications for a new role, we recommend breaking these down into a table so you can see them clearly. You can even offset the requirements and match against the listed duties. For example, a job advertised with KPMG had both key requirements and duties listed so we matched them up to make it easier to tackle in writing a job application. We add a column to add our thoughts as we were pulling apart the requirements and duties. A quick excerpt from our table for this position looked like this:

### Suggestion:

Use the key phrases in your application documents. It makes it easier for the reader to tick off that you meet the criteria and where automated systems are reading your application, key phrases will assist your application to get in front of a pair of human eyes.



## Tip 3: Responding to Key Selection Criteria

Government jobs always come with key selection criteria. When I was a young public servant, I had a mentor who spent time with me teaching me how to write responses to key selection criteria. Once she had taught me her secret sauce for Government jobs, I always landed every job I applied for and so did my friends who I taught too.

This is what she told me: when writing job applications – responding to key selection criteria is not the time to be modest. This is your one shot at shining in the pack and that means giving your very best examples in your application.

She recommended sitting down with a big piece of paper and drawing up a table on it.

Down the left hand side, list every key selection criteria in the advertisement. If a selection criteria has multiple parts, you can even break it down a little, like this:

Key Selection Criteria	Job	Job
Utilise the powers appointed to inspectors according to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to assist the government in meeting the objectives of these Acts.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in state-wide compliance campaigns (e.g. safety blitzes and industry audits), workplace assessments (e.g. audits and inspections) and</li> <li>provide innovative strategies for practical guidance and compliance support based on risk management principles and industry experience.</li> </ul>		
Conduct investigations of work incidents, injuries and complaints, prepare investigations reports, and implement the most effective enforcement options according to the Compliance and Enforcement Policy and existing policies and procedures.		

Then along the top line of the table, list every job you have held in this field over the last 10 years. With all of your positions listed, go along and jot down examples of projects (or investigations in this case) that you did that meet this selection criteria.

Once you have filled this out, you now have a guide to choose your best examples from in writing your response to the key selection criteria. I often found it helpful to talk through your examples with a good friend, colleague or your partner because sometimes you can have done so much work that you overlook some of your best examples. Other people who know you well often remember the stand out achievements in your life and they can remind you of great examples.

Key Selection Criteria	WHS Coordinator with ABC	WHS Manager with DefAid
Utilise the powers appointed to inspectors according to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to assist the government in meeting the objectives of these Acts.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in state-wide compliance campaigns (e.g. safety blitzes and industry audits), workplace assessments (e.g. audits and inspections) and</li> <li>provide innovative strategies for practical guidance and compliance support based on risk management principles and industry experience.</li> </ul>		



## Tip 4: Write your Responses to Key Selection Criteria

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Once you have your handy reference list of best examples, you are now ready to start writing. Here's the formula I was given to write my responses.

Where you have direct examples, start with a statement like, "I have the proven ability to [restate the key selection criteria; for example, utilise the powers appointed to inspectors according to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Electrical Safety Act 2002 to assist the government in meeting the objectives of these Acts], and can demonstrate this by:

- Then bullet point your best example – "In the role of WHS Inspector at WHS Qld, I ..."
- Tell the reader about what you did.

In setting out your example, follow this formula: explain what you did, why you did it, how you did it and how well you did it. Do your best to keep it to one or two paragraphs and be straight to the point.

Where you have transferable skills, start with a statement like "I have the transferable skills to successfully [restate the key selection criteria] and can demonstrate this by" and then give your example.

## Tip 5: Brief your Referees

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Before you submit your application, make sure you have let your referees know that you are applying for the role and what it entails.

You want to make sure that these referees are going to support your application in advance.



## Tip 6: Update Your Resume

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1. Consider the layout and colours you use in your resume template. Keep it clean and to the point. Remember that reading resumes gets boring fast so make it easy for the reader to add ticks against your application.
2. You also want to make sure that the resume layout is easy to follow and demonstrates your straight to the point and effective communication style. When it comes to the copy think concise (communication is often an important attribute in most positions) but also remember that most applications are run through a resume bot looking for keywords so use the terms we highlighted above in your resume.
3. Keep the length to two pages.
4. Find ways to paint your professionalism from the very beginning.
5. Help future employers find you. Put this information right at the top of your resume so it is easy for them when they decide you are the candidate they want to see.

### Name

- Use your professional name
- Think about whether you are commonly known by a shortened version of your name and whether it is appropriate to use this here
- Make sure it matches your Linked In profile name

### Internet Presence

- Include a URL where prospective employers can read more about you.
- LinkedIn is a well known platform for this – see if you can claim the LinkedIn URL for just your name rather than the name with numbers.

Lock down the privacy on other social media accounts you have and think about the photographs that are publicly accessible. Do these match the professional image you are projecting?

### Email Address

- Include a single email address.
- Make sure you have a professional email address: we have seen a number of email addresses that are best kept for personal emails.
- Keep an eye on your inbox so you can respond in a timely fashion to any job responses.

### Strategic Summary

This is an opportunity to highlight the employer's key criteria with subtlety – talk about your experience but use phrases that match their desired attributes.

### Skills & Expertise

This is an opportunity to mirror their requirements in a mix of their words and your words as bullet points.

### Current & Past Positions

- I would work backwards from most current to cover the last 10 years of your working life.
- Flag your key achievements in each role.
- This is where spending some time on the table linking positions to criteria can help make it easier to pick your best examples.

### Qualifications

Make sure your qualifications are up to date and match the role you are applying for.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a great tool for getting your skills and knowledge recognised as nationally accredited qualifications. The team here at Churchill is always happy to help you work on short timelines if you want to apply for a job and need a faster RPL assessment completed. Think about the right level of qualification for the role. For example, a Senior WHS Investigator would be looking at a Diploma or Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety.

Once you have your qualifications in order, make room for your qualifications at the bottom of your resume and list them in order of seniority.

Leave out any outdated qualifications or qualifications that are not relevant to the role, and non-accredited training.

### Referees

Some people don't include referees but as someone who has read a lot of applications in my time, I always like to see who is prepared to stick their hand up for the candidate.



## Tip 7: Write a Covering Letter

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Before you start writing job applications, make sure you actually want this role. It always comes across in the tone of the letter when someone is genuinely interested and excited by the role.

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Make sure you have spent time tailoring your covering letter and application for the role – not just pushing a generic application out the door to waste the reader's time.

Think about the value you have to bring and what excites you about the role.

If you can get clear on this, then you are ready to begin writing.

Be professional and also be you. People also like to work with people they like so be personable.

Make sure your contact details are easy to locate on the covering letter too.

Leave out any outdated qualifications or qualifications that are not relevant to the role, and non-accredited training.

### Referees

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## Tip 8: Update Your LinkedIn Profile

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In the digital era, you need to assume that you will be researched online so take the time to update your LinkedIn profile.

For more information on how to improve your LinkedIn Profile, check out Churchill's LinkedIn guide.

### DOWNLOAD OUR LINKEDIN GUIDE

(<https://www.churchilleducation.edu.au/how-to-create-a-great-linkedin-profile>)

## Good Luck!

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With all of the writing done, it is time to hit submit and wait for the call to say you have been shortlisted for interview!

Let us know how you go – we'd love to hear from you:

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