



Australian Government
Australian Public Service
Commission

CRACKING the code.

Shape Australia. Create your future.



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Welcome to **CRACKING** the code.

How to apply for jobs in the Australian Public Service

Get the facts

The Australian Public Service (APS) is not just a job. It's a great career choice for a wide range of people, including graduates, people returning to the workforce or those looking for a career change.

The APS has a strong connection with all Australians. Being in the APS means you will be actively shaping this country and, as such, we must be reflective of the community we serve; we must work across borders and through barriers; we must always think of the future, and we must impartially serve the government of the day and, through it, all Australians.

Most Australians are eligible to work in the APS, which employs over 150,000 people across Australia and overseas—and it's not as hard to get an APS job as you may think.

This guide will help you understand:

- who we are
- what we do
- where to look for jobs
- who to talk to
- how to apply.

So, if you are interested in:

- developing professional and personal skills
- a diverse career through a range of jobs
- good working conditions in a job that gives you personal satisfaction
- an opportunity to shape Australia and actively contribute to the Australian community

read on to find out more about applying for jobs in the APS.

Glossary

Agency: APS organisations may be referred to as agencies, and some are departments. This guide uses the term 'agency'.

APSjobs: ongoing vacancies and longer-term non-ongoing vacancies are advertised on the www.APSjobs.gov.au website.

APS Values and Code of Conduct: the APS Values and Code of Conduct are set out in legislation. Read about them at **info sheet 1**.

Classification: refers to the level of the job, based on its work value. See **info sheet 2**.

Contact officer: often a manager or supervisor, they can tell you more about the job, the roles and responsibilities, the agency and so on. They are there for the specific purpose of answering your questions. Don't hesitate to contact them and ask them to explain anything about the job or recruitment process that is unclear. If you are a person with disability and need adjustments made to the recruitment process, this is a good person to contact.

Cover sheet (may be part of the online application form): a form asking for your contact details, recent work history, details of your referee/s and citizenship status. You may be invited to provide other information, such as whether you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, a person with disability, or are from a non-English speaking background.

Disability measures: some jobs may be advertised under the RecruitAbility scheme or as an Affirmative measure—Disability employment. See **info sheet 6**.

Indigenous measures: jobs may be advertised as identified positions or under the Affirmative measure—Indigenous employment. See **info sheet 5**.

Information or application pack: this provides information about the job, the agency, the job description and how to apply.

Job description: describes the work you would do in the role, including the key tasks and responsibilities of the job.

Mandatory qualifications: some jobs require specific qualifications that you must have to be considered for the job—for example, a driver's license or professional qualification.

Merit: means you will be assessed on your skills, abilities and experience and how well they meet the requirements of the job, compared to other applicants. See **info sheet 1**.

Non-ongoing: means temporary employment for a specified time period or to complete a specific task. Non-ongoing employment may also be for irregular or intermittent duties (often referred to as casual employment).

Ongoing: permanent employment, subject to termination in certain circumstances.

Security clearance: some APS jobs require a security clearance. You do not need to hold a current security clearance to apply for these jobs—though you must be willing and able to obtain a clearance at the specified level.

Selection criteria: detail the skills and qualities required by the person to perform the job—the criteria that will be used to make selection decisions. Not all agencies use detailed criteria—you might be asked to answer some questions or provide a short 'pitch' telling the agency how your skills, abilities and experience make you the best person for the job. See **info sheet 3**.

Vacancy: a job which an agency is looking to fill, either on an ongoing or non-ongoing basis, including casual employment.

Find out more

Get the big picture about what we do and why you should work with us at **info sheet 1**.

If you need help finding an APS job or want more information about APS jobs, see **info sheet 2**.

Find out how to apply for APS jobs and write applications at **info sheet 3**.

If you are beginning your career, or thinking about a new one, see **info sheet 4** for information on entry level recruitment.

Information about employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for people with disability, is covered at **info sheets 5 and 6**.

Got a call for an interview or other form of assessment? Check out **info sheet 7** to see what might happen on the day.

While most information sheets include tips and hints, more top tips and frequently asked questions are at **info sheet 8**.

in the know

Understanding our recruitment processes and knowing how to apply can increase your chances of getting a job in the APS.

myth vs reality

Public service careers are boring, limited and unproductive

Some people think that the public service is a place where you get stuck in a dead end job. In fact the APS provides one of the most flexible and diverse career paths available. Our jobs are varied, rewarding and we work on issues that affect many aspects of Australian life.

We employ people from a variety of backgrounds, experiences and qualifications and provide access to a range of professional development opportunities. The APS is a great place to work and build the skills needed to be a senior leader in either the public or private sector.

The big picture



Get the facts

So you think you want to work in the APS but don't know much about us?

There are three levels of government in Australia—local, state/territory and Australian (or Commonwealth/Federal) Government. Each state and territory government is supported by its own public service, with the Australian Public Service (APS) being part of the Australian Government.

There are more than 100 separate APS organisations, employing more than 150,000 people. The APS ranges from large agencies that provide a broad range of services across the country through to small agencies working on specialised issues in one sector of society.

The APS is responsible for developing and regulating laws, developing policies and programs to support many areas of the community, protecting Australia's borders and enhancing Australia's economy. Behind almost every facet of life in Australia is an APS job.

Why should you join us?

- The APS has a range of career opportunities, while also providing the scope for you to change career direction. So you can start in an administrative support or client service role and then develop your skills for managerial, technical or professional careers. The APS supports professional and personal development, further study, and career and leadership development.
- We offer great working conditions including competitive salaries and superannuation, excellent leave conditions, and flexible work practices.
- The APS has jobs across Australia, as well as overseas. Our workforce includes accountants, biologists, contract managers, customer service officers, economists, graphic designers, information technology specialists, lawyers and policy advisers to name a few.
- We provide the opportunity for you to pursue your interests while contributing to the Australian community.
- We value and encourage supportive workplace environments based on fair and equitable treatment. How we work and treat each other is governed by the **APS Values** and **Code of Conduct**.
- We are committed to providing an inclusive and diverse workplace where all employees are valued. We appreciate the experiences, skills and perspectives of all individuals and harness a collaborative environment. We actively encourage applications from people with diverse backgrounds.

Find out more

What are the APS Values and Code of Conduct?

The [APS Values and Code of Conduct](#) apply to all APS employees and provide a framework for the integrity and professionalism of the public service. The Values and Code guide how we act in our relationships with the government, parliament, the public and colleagues. The Code sets the standards of personal behaviour expected of APS employees. For more information see the [APS Values and Code of Conduct](#) webpages.

When applying for an APS job you may be asked to demonstrate how you would uphold the Values. Describing how you have acted and behaved in previous employment or other areas of your life is a good way of showing you understand the Values and Code.

in the know

There is no standard process for filling APS jobs. The application process can vary greatly between agencies, and between jobs. A core requirement is that recruitment decisions for the engagement of a new employee or promotion of an existing employee are based on merit.

What is merit?

We recruit staff based on merit, which means that from a field of applicants, we select the best person for the job. To do this we compare and weigh-up the skills, abilities and experience of each applicant. We use different tools and techniques, such as written applications, CVs, interviews and/or work-sample tests, to collect the evidence we need to make a merit-based decision. We may ask you to provide the name of a referee or two for us to contact—someone you have worked with recently or who knows your skills and abilities.

myth vs reality

You have to know someone to get a job in the APS

Getting a job in the APS is based on merit. This means looking at your skills, abilities and experience, how well they fit the requirements of the job and how you compare to other applicants.

You need lots of public sector experience to get a job in the APS

Some jobs require specific experience or qualifications, but many don't. It comes down to the skills required for the job. Some key skills for the APS include communication, problem solving and analytical skills. Your skills can be drawn from school, work, study, committees, volunteering, and community events.

About jobs in the APS



Get the facts

Vacancies

APS jobs can be advertised as:

- individual vacancies
- multiple vacancies
- anticipated vacancies
- internships and graduate positions
- traineeships and school leaver programs.

In most cases, APS agencies run their own recruitment processes. Agencies advertise jobs in the Public Service Gazette on www.APSjobs.gov.au, on their own websites, through recruitment agencies, and on websites such as www.jobactive.gov.au.

Types of jobs

The APS has a wide range of jobs corresponding to different roles and levels of responsibility (grouped as classification levels). These include:

- service delivery and advice to the public
- policy advice, program design or implementation, stakeholder management, and strategic decision-making
- corporate services such as information technology, human resources, records management, accounts processing and ministerial and parliamentary processes
- technical and professional jobs such as lawyers, journalists, accountants, scientists, engineers, librarians, inspectors and economists
- a range of project and administrative support jobs.

We offer full-time and part-time jobs on either a non-ongoing (temporary) or ongoing (permanent) basis. If you are interested in part-time work, speak with the **contact officer** about the possibility of flexible or part-time hours, even if the job is advertised as a full-time position.

Some jobs are available on an irregular or intermittent (casual) basis.

Non-ongoing (temporary) jobs

Many APS agencies have a non-ongoing/temporary employment register to fill short-term vacancies, often at short notice. Also, some recruitment companies specialise in placing people in temporary government jobs. People are selected for such work based on the skills and abilities needed for the job. These jobs provide a good opportunity to gain experience in the public service. You can contact recruitment companies directly, or if you are interested in a particular APS agency, check the agency's website to see if they have an online register.

Find out more

What is the Public Service Gazette?

The Gazette is an official journal that lists vacancies in the APS and some other non-APS Australian Government organisations as well. It also lists some employment decisions such as promotions. The online Gazette allows you to search for vacancies by job category, location, classification level, agency or salary range. New vacancies are advertised daily at www.APSjobs.gov.au.

What are classifications?

Jobs in the APS are separated into classifications based on the work value of the duties being performed. Jobs are classified and paid at different levels according to the complexity, responsibility and skills involved. Note that each agency has its own rates of pay, generally set out in a schedule in the Enterprise Agreement available on its website.

The most common classifications are:

- Training classifications—jobs that include completion of a training program, including trainee and graduate positions
- APS 1 and 2—general administrative and service positions
- APS 3 and 4—general administrative, technical, project, public contact and service positions
- APS 5 and 6—senior administrative, technical, project, policy and service positions, which may have supervisory responsibilities
- Executive Level 1 and 2—middle management or professional positions
- Senior Executive Service Band 1, 2 and 3—senior leadership and management positions.

Classifications grouped together, such as APS 3 to APS 4, are called broadbands. Some agencies advertise their jobs as broadbands, and this means it is easier to move from one level to the next, for example from an APS 3 to an APS 4. Work at the higher level would need to be available, and you would need to have the right skills and to be performing well to progress through a broadband.

Agencies may also use different job titles and terminology to describe their jobs. The job description and information pack can help you understand whether you have the skills and experience needed for that role. The contact officer should be able to provide further information on the roles and responsibilities of the job.

Where can I find agency websites?

As well as advertising on APSjobs, most agencies also advertise vacancies on their own websites. You can find a list of APS agencies and other Australian Government organisations with links to their websites at www.australia.gov.au.

in the know

If an agency has multiple vacancies to fill, they sometimes advertise them all at once. If the jobs are at the same classification level, agencies may ask for a general application based on your core skills and abilities, and run an assessment centre or use other assessment methods to assess a number of candidates at once. Written exercises, computer skills tests, group activities or job simulations may be used in an assessment centre.

myth vs reality

I'll have to move to Canberra

Although Canberra is typically seen as the 'home' of the APS, around two-thirds of employees are located outside Canberra. In Australia, APS employees work from Bourke to Geraldton and from the Snowy Mountains to Norfolk Island. Overseas, APS staff work in such places as London, Beirut, Beijing, Port Moresby and Jakarta.

Only public servants can apply for jobs listed on APSjobs

The vast majority of jobs are open to the Australian community. Only a very small number are for people already in the APS.

Applying for an APS job



Get the facts

APS job ads usually include the following, which will help you decide if it is the right job to apply for:

- the name or title of the job
- the location of the job
- the salary range and the **classification** level
- a description of the job
- whether it is **ongoing** or **non-ongoing** (temporary)
- a web link to the job description and **information pack**
- the name and contact details of a **contact officer**.

Good applications make a positive impression and can lead to an interview or further assessment. Don't apply just for the sake of it. Select the right job for you and prepare a strong (and accurate) application highlighting your skills, abilities and experience, and how they meet the requirements of the job. Your application will be assessed on the basis of merit.

It is important to provide all the information specified in the information pack. This may include some or all of the following:

- a cover sheet
- a copy of your **CV or resume**
- a statement or '**pitch**' about how your skills, abilities and experience meet the job requirements
- addressing the **selection criteria** or **answering any questions** if they have been included
- contact details for your **referees**.

You may be asked if you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, are from a non-English speaking background or are a person with disability. This information is used for statistical purposes—it will not be used to assess your suitability for the job. It is not compulsory to provide this information.

However, some jobs are advertised as only available to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, or people with disability. In these cases, if you wish to apply you will need to respond to questions about your eligibility. See **info sheets 5** and **6** for more information about these vacancies.

Writing your application

Most of the time, your CV alone will not be enough to get you an APS job. When applying for a job it is likely that you will be asked to submit a written application with your CV. This could be in the form of a statement addressing particular selection criteria, or a short 'pitch' or statement setting out your skills, abilities and experience relevant to the job.

Selection criteria, if they are used, describe the personal qualities, skills, abilities, knowledge and qualifications (if any) a person needs to perform the role effectively. Agencies may ask you to separately address a number of criteria or to write one general statement expressing your claims for the job. The job description will help you understand the responsibilities and tasks required in the job.

The agency's selection panel will assess the responses of all applicants. Sometimes, this will be enough to identify the best person for the role. More commonly though, this process will create a shortlist of applicants suitable to move to the next stage—usually an interview but it may be another form of assessment.

your cv

Most CVs are between two and six pages long. Sometimes a selection panel may request a specific length or that you include particular details. Otherwise, your CV should usually include:

- **Personal details**—your name, contact email address and phone numbers. There's no need to include your age, gender, or marital status.
- **Education**—details of relevant education and qualifications.
- **Work experience**—your work experience and highlight the main responsibilities and achievements that are relevant to the job you are applying for. Organise your employment history in chronological order, starting with the most recent, and indicate actual dates of employment. You should look to explain any gaps in employment.
- **Other experience**—if relevant, briefly mention any activities, interests or volunteer/community work that you participated in and highlight what you gained from that experience. If your hobbies aren't relevant to the job you are applying for, don't include them.
- **Referees**—the name and contact details of referees who can validate and support your application. Make a note if there are any sensitivities with contacting your referees, i.e. any referees who should not be contacted unless you are in contention for the job.



Addressing selection criteria

Some agencies will ask that your written application address specific selection criteria. Common examples of selection criteria include:

- demonstrated capacity to communicate effectively
- good organisational and administrative skills
- proven ability to work as part of a team
- well-developed customer service skills
- proven ability to manage projects.

You should respond to each criterion and, following any guidance in the information pack, explain how you have demonstrated the particular skill or quality. Provide relevant examples from your work, study or community roles. Be clear and to the point. If a word or page limit is set, make sure you stick to it, and edit your responses for grammar, spelling and punctuation.

It is important to provide evidence to back up your claims. Where possible use actual, specific examples of what you have done, how well you did it, what you achieved, and how it relates to the requirements of the job. The STAR model can help you form your answer.

in the know

do

- be clear and to the point
- be honest and factual
- check what form your written application should be in
- use relevant examples
- make sure you provide all information requested.

don't

- write lengthy responses
- rely just on your CV

Find out more

What is the STAR model?

The STAR model is one way of presenting information against selection criteria. For each criterion, think about the following and use these points to form sentences:

- **Situation**—Set the context by describing the circumstance where you used the skills or qualities and gained the experience.
- **Task**—What was your role?
- **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 you are applying for?

Using the STAR method, we've come up with an example of how you might plan and set out your evidence.

Situation—role as Research Support Officer at XYZ Bank.

Task—needed to ensure that managers were kept informed of policies and procedures.

Action or approach—initiated monthly newsletter, which was emailed to each manager. Took responsibility for writing the main articles. This involved obtaining ideas and input from other stakeholders to ensure that the articles reflected managers' needs in terms of content and language.

Result—led to improved lines of communication between managers and the Research Support Unit. Feedback was consistently excellent. Received divisional achievement award for newsletter quality.

Once this has been achieved, you can then write the draft paragraph in full. For example:

“ As Research Support Officer at the XYZ Bank, I needed to ensure that managers were kept informed of policies and procedures. To do this, I initiated a monthly newsletter, which was emailed to each manager. I took responsibility for writing the main articles in each publication. This involved obtaining ideas and input from other stakeholders to ensure that the articles reflected the needs of managers, both in terms of content and language. I received consistently excellent feedback in relation to the newsletter from these internal stakeholders and my own manager. I received a divisional achievement award for the quality of the newsletter. Importantly, this initiative resulted in improved lines of communication between managers and the Research Support Unit.

Remember to use only one or two of your strongest examples to respond to the selection criteria.

What if I'm asked for a 'pitch'?

Some agencies ask for a 'pitch' or short statement of your claims for the job. Your pitch is a chance to tell the agency why you are the right person for the job. They might want to know why you want to work for them, why you are interested in that particular role, what you can offer, and how your skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications are applicable to the job. In a nutshell—why they should hire you.

Try not to duplicate information that can already be found in your CV, but do highlight any specific examples or achievements that will demonstrate your ability to perform the role.

Remember to stick to the word limit—are they asking for a one or two page pitch or 1,000 word limit?

myth vs reality

My application needs to be very detailed and address specific selection criteria

Long and complicated selection criteria are becoming a thing of the past. While some agencies still use selection criteria, many agencies now only want to see your CV and a one or two page document that sets out how your skills, abilities and experience fit the job. Read the information pack or call the contact officer to ensure you are providing the right information.

An internal person is already lined up for the job

The job may be vacant, or it may be temporarily filled by an APS employee. However, this does not guarantee them the job. All applicants, including people already working in the APS, have to apply through the same process and be assessed against the strengths of all other applicants. If you want the job and are confident you have the skills and abilities required, then you should apply.

Entry level jobs



Get the facts

The APS offers career opportunities for people who have previously worked in the private, community or other government sectors. For people just beginning their careers, or developing new skills to change jobs, the APS offers entry points for:

- school leavers
- apprentices
- trainees
- cadets/interns
- graduates.

School leaver programs, traineeships, apprenticeships and cadetship jobs are generally filled at levels equivalent to APS 1-2, while graduates are generally employed at levels equivalent to APS 3-4. See **info sheet 2** for information on job levels or classifications.

In most cases, agencies run their own entry level recruitment programs annually, advertising in the Public Service Gazette at www.APSjobs.gov.au, on agency websites, on social media or sometimes in newspapers.

You may be asked to complete an online application form. If your application is successful, you may be invited to an interview or assessment centre as part of the selection process. **Info sheet 7** will give you more advice on this.

If you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, you may also be interested in Indigenous career pathways for trainees, cadets and graduates. See **info sheet 5** for more information.

in the know

There are more than 100 different APS agencies. Some agencies provide a broad range of services across the country. Others work on specialised issues in one sector of society. Find out which agency best suits your skills and interests. For a list of APS agencies, as well as non-APS Australian Government bodies, go to www.directory.gov.au/departments-and-agencies.

For graduate roles, we look for people with a wide range of qualifications including law, ICT, economics, finance, psychology, international studies, policy and public administration to name a few.

Find out more

What is a school leaver program?

These programs are for people who have recently completed Year 12 or equivalent. They may include work placements within various areas of an agency, and provide good learning and development opportunities to begin your career. In some cases, the agency may also support you through tertiary study if it relates to your work.

If you haven't decided on the type of job you want, these websites may help:

[Australian Job Search](#): Australia's largest free online jobs website.

[jobactive](#): Australian Government employment services system that supports job seekers and employers.

There is a range of other useful websites, including:

Bullseye posters: School subjects you like and jobs they can lead to.

Job Outlook: A careers and labour market research information site to help you decide on your future career.

myfuture.edu.au: National career information and exploration service.

My Skills: Online information about vocational education and training options.

What are traineeships?

Traineeships are suitable for school leavers, TAFE graduates, or people already working. They usually involve work experience with an agency, and the opportunity to gain a formal qualification.

What is the difference between cadetships, internships and graduate programs?

Cadetships are for university students to start working while they finish their degree. They generally involve full-time study, with work placements during study breaks, allowing you to begin developing your professional skills. In most cases agencies provide some form of financial assistance towards your study.

Internships are similar, with part-time work placements or placements during study breaks, usually in your final year of study. There is usually no financial assistance towards your study.

If you have graduated or are about to graduate, you may wish to consider a graduate program. Generally over the course of a year, the agency will give you on-the-job training and professional development opportunities. Your employment will be ongoing if you satisfactorily complete the period of training and development and you will, in effect, be promoted on completion.

Cadetships, internships and graduate programs provide excellent opportunities to start putting your skills into practice, learn new skills, undertake professional development and begin building your future career.

myth vs reality

You can only apply for traineeships, cadetships, internships and graduate programs if you are young

Age is not a factor when applying for an APS job. It is about your skills, experience, and capacity to perform the requirements of the job.

You need a good ATAR to get into the APS

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) applies to entry to university, and is not required when applying for APS jobs. For some jobs, it may be beneficial to provide a copy of your university transcript when applying, such as for cadetships, internships, graduate programs or jobs which relate directly to areas you have studied. For other jobs, this will not be the case. Also, there are a number of entry pathways into the APS, and having a degree is not always necessary.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



Get the facts

Workplace diversity makes a major contribution to the capability of the APS and we are looking for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work at all levels.

If you are interested in starting a career in the APS but have limited experience in public administration or related fields, there are a number of employment pathways to help kick-start your career. These include Indigenous entry level jobs, cadetships and graduate positions.

For example, Indigenous cadetships are a great way to complete your degree while gaining professional experience—and you may be eligible for financial assistance.

What are Affirmative measure: Indigenous employment provisions?

Affirmative measure provisions are aimed at improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They are permitted by the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and are used to reserve certain jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. You may hear these jobs referred to as affirmative measure positions, or special measures as they were formerly known.

What are identified positions?

Some agencies advertise identified positions. These are jobs where knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures, as well as the ability to communicate sensitively with Indigenous Australians, are required. Generally they will involve the development or delivery of Indigenous specific policies, programs or services.

Your experiences as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person may assist you to meet the identified criteria used in these positions. You do not have to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to apply for an identified position.

How do I find the right job for me?

The Indigenous careers page at www.indigenouscarers.gov.au links to a range of affirmative measure and identified position opportunities—click [here](#) to access current vacancies.

However, Indigenous people are encouraged to apply for jobs in all areas of the APS, regardless of whether they are advertised under one of these provisions.

Info sheet 4 provides general information on entry points into the APS, including traineeships, cadetships and graduate programs.

in the know

We are working towards improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS. You can find out more on our Indigenous employment page.

Many APS agencies will have Indigenous employment strategies on their websites. These tell you more about the steps agencies are taking to improve employment outcomes for employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

People with disability



Get the facts

The APS encourages and values diversity by supporting workplace cultures based on fair and equitable treatment of employees. Supporting the employment of people with disability is a key focus of the APS commitment to workplace diversity.

A job in the APS can provide you with opportunities to apply your skills, work in various areas and access professional development.

During the application process you may be asked to identify if you have a disability. It is entirely your decision to do so, and you are not required to disclose this information. However, if you do choose to disclose that you have a disability it will enable the contact officer to get in touch with you to see if any reasonable adjustments need to be made to the process to assist you in presenting your case fairly. Information about the nature of your disability is not needed.

Reasonable adjustment, sometimes referred to as workplace adjustment, reflects the understanding that people with disability can often perform the tasks of a job where adjustments are made to allow them to work to the best of their ability. There is no exhaustive list of what kinds of changes can be made. There are many different types of disability, and they affect people in individual ways.

In most cases, APS vacancies will have a **contact officer** when advertised. This person is there to provide information about the job and assist you with any questions or adjustments you may need during the application and selection process.

Any information you provide is confidential. Health information about a job applicant or employee, including information about a disability, is 'sensitive information' for the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988*. Sensitive information has a high level of protection and your consent is required for the information to be collected or shared with anybody in the agency.

RecruitAbility

Many APS vacancies are advertised under the RecruitAbility scheme—the job advertisement will tell you if RecruitAbility applies.

RecruitAbility encourages the employment of people with disability by offering you an opportunity to progress to the next stage in the assessment process if you opt into the scheme, declare you have a disability, and meet the minimum requirements of the job. More information about RecruitAbility is available www.apsc.gov.au/recruitability.

Affirmative measure: Disability employment provisions

The disability affirmative measure allows a particular job in the APS to be open only to people with disability, or with a particular type of disability. The measure is designed to address the under-representation of people with disability in APS agencies, and is consistent with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

The measure can be applied to ongoing (permanent), non-ongoing (temporary) and casual APS jobs, and includes senior level vacancies. It is not restricted to jobs with a disability-related function. You can search for jobs that have been advertised under this affirmative measure on the [APSjobs website](#).

The measure can also be applied to recruit candidates who are participants with a disability employment service, and who have been assessed as being likely to be unable to compete successfully on merit due to their disability.

More information is available in the [Affirmative measure: Disability employment applicant guide](#).

What is available for people with an intellectual disability?

The disability affirmative measure allows a job to be made available to only people with intellectual disability, aiming to improve their opportunities for employment in the APS. A job may be advertised on **APSjobs**, or an agency may recruit a candidate with intellectual disability through a disability employment service where they have been assessed as unlikely to be able to compete on merit.

in the know

If you need a reasonable adjustment to be made during the application or selection process, get in touch with the vacancy contact officer. The contact officer will be able to assist you with organising any adjustments you need.

Contact the human resource section of the agencies that you are interested in working for and discuss the employment pathways they offer.

Find out more

jobaccess

The Australian Government provides a number of services and assistance for people with disability looking for employment. Information about these services is available at www.jobaccess.gov.au.

myth versus reality

If I identify that I have a disability I won't be considered for the job

The APS encourages and values diversity by supporting workplace cultures based on the fair treatment of all employees. Including people with disability in our workplaces also helps us to better meet the needs of the wider community. Identifying that you are a person with disability will enable the selection panel to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are made so you can perform at your best.

People with disability only get employed in lower level jobs

We employ people based on their skills and abilities to perform the job requirements. Reading the job description and speaking with the contact officer will help you decide whether it is the right job for you to apply for.

The interview and other assessment



Get the facts

Once applications have closed, your application will be assessed against the requirements of the job and compared with other applicants to make a **short-list** of those applicants who are suitable, or most suitable, to be considered further. This comparison is generally done by examining your CV, application, statement or pitch. Short-listing may sometimes involve a phone or Skype interview, or use online assessment methods such as video interviews, multiple choice questions or psychometric testing.

If you are short-listed for further consideration, you may be invited to attend a **face-to-face** interview. Using the job description as a guide, you may be asked a range of questions to demonstrate your skills and abilities. These could include **behavioural-based** questions and/or **hypothetical scenario questions**.

As part of, or in place of an interview, you may be asked to do exercises such as a work sample test, a presentation, or psychometric testing.

If an agency is recruiting for a number of jobs, you may go through an assessment centre which could include group work exercises.

In a typical recruitment process the selection panel will rate your suitability for the job based on your application, your performance at interview, other activities such as a work sample test, and referee comments if sought. The most suitable person, based on merit, will be offered the job. In some processes, a merit list may also be established that the agency may use to fill other similar jobs for a period of 12 months following the advertisement in the Public Service Gazette.

APS agencies can source suitable applicants from merit lists established by other agencies in some circumstances. Unless you decide to opt out of this arrangement, your details may be released or shared with other agencies. If this happens, you may be contacted by another agency with a similar vacancy if they think you would be a suitable candidate for their job.

before the interview

You can prepare for the interview by:

- looking at the agency website to understand what they do—their most recent annual report may be helpful, along with the agency corporate plan
- reviewing your application and picking a few additional examples to use in the interview
- doing a mock interview using the job description to think up possible questions.

at the interview

During the interview it is okay to:

- take time to think about your answer
- ask the selection panel to rephrase the question if you don't understand
- take a copy of your application or other notes with you for quick reference.

Find out more

What happens now?

Following the interview or other forms of assessment, the selection panel will make a recommendation to the decision-maker about who is most suitable for the job. They may first contact your referees for confirmation of your skills, abilities and experience. Once the panel's recommendation is approved, the successful applicant may be offered the job.

You can ask about the expected timeframe for filling the job. If you haven't heard anything in the weeks after the interview, call the contact officer and enquire about the timeframe for announcing the decision.

If you're unsuccessful, you can seek feedback from the contact officer. You may wish to ask for feedback about:

- your application
- your performance at the interview or on other assessment activities
- your strengths and those areas where you may need to improve your skills and abilities or gain more experience.

This feedback can help you to improve your application and performance next time.

in the know

Think of your top three skills/qualities and why you have applied for the role. You may be asked to talk about this at the interview. Use examples that best relate to the duties of the job, and be honest.

Choose referees who can provide evidence to support your claims by commenting on your skills, abilities and past work performance. It is generally expected that one of your referees will be a current or recent supervisor.

If your application is not successful, you may not be notified by the agency. The information kit should inform you of the process for unsuccessful applicants.

assessment terminology

Assessment centres: involve a number of applicants doing activities such as job simulations, role-playing and group discussions. Skills and behaviours are assessed according to the job requirements, e.g. teamwork and interpersonal communication.

Behavioural questions: usually begin with a statement like 'Tell us about a time when...' or 'Describe a situation where...'. They are based on the principle that past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour, and demonstrate what you did, thought, said, and how you acted in a work-related situation.

Hypothetical scenario questions: set up fictitious work-related problems which require a solution. Applicants are asked to describe how they would respond to, or deal with, the situation.

Merit list: also called an 'order of merit' or 'merit pool'. From the recruitment process, a range of people may be found suitable for the job, based on the evidence collected. The merit list can either consist of a pool of applicants all rated as suitable or higher, or as a list ranking applicants in order of suitability. The merit list is valid for 12 months from the date the job was advertised in the Public Service Gazette, which means the agency can use the list to fill other similar jobs during

that time. Merit lists can also be shared with other APS agencies to fill similar jobs in some circumstances.

Psychometric tests: these are sometimes used to assess your abilities, behaviours and interests and may include aptitude and/or personality tests. They may assess things like numerical reasoning, abstract thinking, problem solving, interpersonal style or time management.

Scribe: this person takes notes for the selection panel during the interview, helps write the selection report, and may contact referees and document their comments. They are not involved in the decision-making process.

Selection panel or team: may consist of two or more people, usually APS employees, who assess applicants based on their skills and abilities and how well they fit the requirements of the job. The selection panel often includes the job supervisor.

Work sample test: involves doing exercises or activities similar to those required in the job, e.g. a writing exercise.



Top tips and frequently asked questions



Top tips

Make a decision

- Find a job that interests you
- Spend time researching the job—don't dismiss it on face value if you are interested in that field of work
- Read the job description and information pack to make sure it's the right job for you
- Look at the agency website and annual report
- Speak with the contact officer for more information if you are undecided.

Go for it

- Complete your application in the way the agency requires
- Use the STAR model if you are having trouble answering selection criteria, writing your pitch or stating your claims for the job
- Prepare your application by drawing on your skills, abilities and experiences—select examples that best relate to the duties and level of the job.

Back yourself at interview

- Be prepared—have an understanding of what the agency does, read over your application and think about practical examples to demonstrate your skills and abilities and how you have done, or could do, this type of work
- Remember the interview is a discussion, not a test, and we want to talk to you because we are interested to find out more about you.

Frequently asked questions

How do I apply for an APS job?

Options include:

- applying directly for jobs advertised in the Public Service Gazette at www.APSjobs.gov.au, on agency websites or websites such as www.jobsearch.gov.au, or even in newspapers.
- applying for school leaver programs, traineeships, apprenticeships, cadetships, internships or graduate programs
- registering on a temporary employment register for the opportunity to be selected for short-term jobs. These registers are available online on many APS agency websites, on **APSjobs** and occasionally through recruitment companies.

Take the time to check all the required information when applying for a job. With each job vacancy there may be particular requirements, such as submitting your CV, providing a written application, or completing an application form.

Do I have to be an Australian citizen?

It is generally expected that people will be Australian citizens to work in the APS, however agencies may choose to employ non-citizens who have the relevant work permits. Citizenship requirements are often included in the job advertisement or information pack. If you see a job advertised which you are interested in, call the contact officer to discuss your options for applying for the job.

Why does the recruitment process sometimes take longer for APS jobs than other jobs?

APS agencies are working to reduce recruitment timeframes. People are selected for APS jobs on the basis of merit, which means we look carefully for evidence of your skills, abilities and experience and how well you fit the job requirements, compared with other applicants. This ensures the best applicant is selected for the job. This comparison may be based on your CV, a written application, an interview and/or other assessment methods. Because of this, the recruitment process may take longer for APS jobs than other jobs. When applying for an APS job, you can ask the contact officer about the expected timeframe for completing assessments and advising on the outcome of your application.

What sort of terms and conditions will I be employed under?

Employment conditions—such as remuneration and entitlements including personal/sick and annual leave—for APS employees are generally covered by the recruiting agency's Enterprise Agreement. Enterprise Agreements are commonly available on the agency's website.

What does a security clearance involve?

A security clearance involves pre-employment and background checks. Some jobs require a security clearance because of the type of issues or information dealt with in the job. The timeframe for starting a job may be longer, depending on the level of security clearance required. Don't let your current level of clearance, or the fact that you don't have one, deter you from applying. This will not form the basis of the recruitment decision.

What is a suitable entry level for a graduate?

If you have graduated, or are about to graduate, from university, you can apply for APS jobs by:

- applying to graduate programs which are run by individual agencies. Graduates are commonly employed at the graduate APS classification or at levels equivalent to the APS 3-4 classifications.
- applying directly for jobs advertised in the Public Service Gazette at www.APSjobs.gov.au, on agency websites, or on websites such as www.jobsearch.gov.au.

The APS 3-4 classification level may be suitable for people with a degree and no work experience. For people with work experience and a degree, the APS 5-6 classification level may be more appropriate. There is nothing to deter you from applying for any job at any level that you may be interested in and suitable for.

What happens after I am told that I got the job?

If you are successful in being offered an APS job—this may be done in a phone call or email then confirmed in writing—you may be subject to some engagement conditions. This means you may need to meet particular requirements to be employed in the job. These requirements may include some or all of the following:

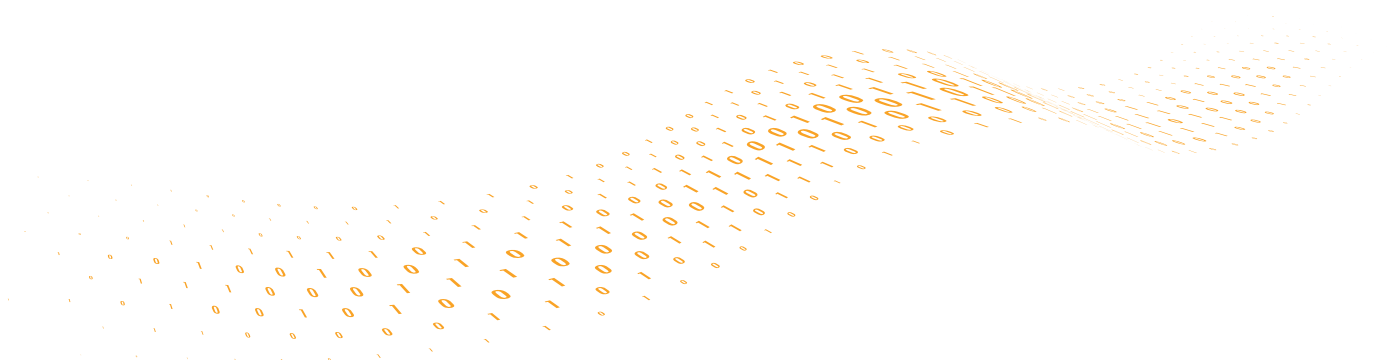
- being an Australian citizen
- a health clearance
- security and character clearances (may include police check)
- a period of probation
- meeting all of the requirements of the employing agency's entry level training program.

Probation will involve a period of time where your performance and suitability for the job are assessed. Once the probationary period has been completed, your performance will continue to be assessed in accordance with your agency policy.

Why can't I get an interview or be considered for further assessment?

If you are having difficulty progressing to the next stage of a recruitment process, ask yourself:

- am I applying for the right jobs for my skills and abilities?
- am I providing all the required information in my application?
- am I preparing a good application which demonstrates my skills, abilities and experience and how they relate to the requirements of the job?





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