



Guide for Applicants

Making a difference

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Contents


The Purpose	1
Why is the DEEDI experience different?	1
What is a capability framework and why do we need it?	1
What role does our capability framework play in the recruitment and selection process?	2
What does the DEEDI recruitment process involve?	2
Understanding the DEEDI role description	2
Preparing your application - 🌐	2
Updating your resume - 🌐	3
Citizenship requirements	4
Lodging your application	4
Applying online	4
Applying via email or post	4
What does the DEEDI selection process involve?	4
Know the competencies of the role	5
The interview process	5
Open-ended questions	5
Preparing your response to an open-ended question - 🌐	6
Other selection tools	7
Referee checking	7
What happens after the selection process?	7
Notifying applicants	7
Confidentiality	8
Feedback	8
Recurring vacancies	8
Important Tips - 🌐	9

The Purpose

Applying for a new role can be a daunting process and generally avoided by most people thanks to the time it usually takes to read a long and sometimes generic role description, understand what the employer actually wants and finally, address the dreaded selection criteria.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) is changing and aiming to make the process work better for both the applicant and department. DEEDI are looking for people who want to **make a difference** and requires a process that enables, not prevents applicants from clearly showing that they have the relevant capabilities to do so.

It is our aim that after you have read this tool kit, you understand our recruitment and selection process a little more and you are one step closer at getting the right job for you.

Please note that through the tool kit you will see this -  - whenever you see this symbol, refer to the Important Tips section for further information about how you can learn more about the relevant topic.

Why is the DEEDI experience different?

DEEDI recruits under a capability framework which assists the department to find the right person for the right job. The underlying principle of the framework is that if an individual has the relevant transferable capabilities (or abilities) that apply to a specific job, they may be suitable for the role, regardless of whether they have had previous experience in that role or a similar role.

What is a capability framework and why do we need it?

A capability framework is a tool by which the critical capabilities an organisation needs in order to achieve its goals are identified, described and understood by employees and organisational leaders

Implementing a capability framework allows us to understand what skills, attributes, qualities and behaviours we require now and in the future. It provides us with an opportunity to integrate human resource activities across the department and to ensure DEEDI is a constructive and capable organisation. These include:

- Consistent role descriptions which include critical core capabilities;
- Improved ability to compare applicants from other public sectors jurisdictions and the private sector
- Use of critical core competencies to market positions and attract quality applicants who possess the capabilities critical to achieving the organisational objectives;
- Development of consistent proven selection processes to assess core competencies based on best practice
- Improved ability to predict the performance of applicants in the workplace
- The adoption of a capability framework provides DEEDI with a common language;
- Provide employees with a clear definition of what 'success' means in their role and for DEEDI.

Two frameworks have been developed for DEEDI, a framework for the Administration and a second framework for the Technical/Professional and Operational Stream. Each of the frameworks describes the 20-25 capabilities for success at various levels across DEEDI. The framework can be described as a stepping stone or building block approach. The capabilities on which the framework is based are derived from the Lominger framework.

What role does our capability framework play in the recruitment and selection process?

After critical capabilities and subsequent skills, qualities and behaviours of a role have been identified, it is then possible to develop a relevant role description that provides an applicant with a clear definition of what 'success' actually looks like. It also provides the selection panel the capability to design the suitable recruitment and selection strategies for a particular type of role.

What does the DEEDI recruitment process involve?

Understanding the DEEDI role description

It is important that you read the role description prior to drafting and submitting your application. The role description contains the important information about the role such as the **key duties and accountabilities** and the requirements for submitting an application. When applying for a job in DEEDI, it is important that you read the "How to Apply" section of the role description carefully and respond accordingly.

The **key capabilities** listed within the role description are based on the DEEDI Capability Framework which is derived from the Lominger Capability tool. The relevant information for you to understand the role and its key capabilities and competencies are in the role description.

The contact officer detailed on the role description will be your contact point if you require further information on the role. The role description also contains any special conditions or mandatory requirements relating to the role. For your application to be considered by the selection panel you must meet any mandatory requirements detailed in the role description, if applicable.

Preparing your application -

The approach to preparing a job application under a capability framework is different to the approach taken to prepare a job application under traditional public sector selection criteria models.

Selection criteria frameworks ask you to provide a response to separate selection criteria. Under a capability framework, you are asked to **provide two examples** of work you have undertaken which show that you possess the relevant key skills and attributes required to undertake the **key duties and accountabilities** the role you are applying for.

This means you have to think about a specific activity or project that you have undertaken which would allow you to show that you possess all of the **key capabilities** outlined in the role description.

In two (2) pages, discuss two activities or projects that you have been involved with that can demonstrate to us that you possess the Key Capabilities mentioned. **Your response must be no longer than two (2) pages.**

The following model may assist you in preparing a structured response which will show how you have used or acquired key skills and attributes through your selected task, activity or project.

- **Context** – explain the purpose of your task/activity/project in a broad context. Why **you** were involved in a task/activity/project?

“I just returned from annual leave and was asked to meet with the Director-General in one hour to provide her with an update concerning an emergency issue”.

- **Task** – provide a very brief outline of the task/activity/project. What were **you** required to do?

“I gathered the latest information and data on the issue by meeting with the emergency support staff and documented the actions taken so far”.

- **Action** – outline how you carried out the task/activity/project and why you used this approach. What action did **you** take?

“As I knew the Director-General was more of a visual person and only had a short time timeframe to absorb the information, I developed a one page brief with an accompanying Gant chart and analysis to illustrate timeframes, the steps taken so far and the planned actions”.

- **Result** – describe the outcomes – what did you achieve? What were the results?

“After I had briefed the Director-General on the emergency issue and potential impact on the community, she was able to declare an official emergency response and release resources to prevent a large outbreak”.

- **Key learnings** – what did you learn from the experience?

“After the emergency was declared over, I developed a key list of key contacts within the agency so I could minimise the time taken to identify who I needed to talk to gather information”.

Updating your resume - ★

You are required as part of your application to provide the selection panel with a resume. Your resume is to provide the selection panel with a summary of your education, work history, and any other training and skills you have gained through school, study, work experience and hobbies. Your resume should include where you have worked to date, jobs held during your period of employment and major duties performed. Your resume may also contain the details of two referees who can provide an objective assessment of your work performance. Your resume may be considered as a part of an application or may be considered on its own, so it may be vital to include as much information as possible to allow the panel to assess your suitability for the role. A resume should **generally be no more than four pages**.

Citizenship requirements

Like any individual applying for a job in Australia, to be eligible for appointment, you will need to have one of the following:

- Australian citizenship; or
- Permanent residency; or
- New Zealand citizenship with a special category visa
- Permission to legally work in Australia through a valid temporary visa for the duration of employment

Lodging your application

Applications must be received by the closing date displayed on the role description. Online applications can be submitted up until midnight of the closing date, if further time is required, permission is to be sought from the contact person on the role description.

Applying online

To apply online, select the relevant Job Ad Reference (JAR) number appearing on the Smart Jobs and Careers website, then select the 'apply online' button displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Complete username and password if you are a registered applicant, or click on 'Register' to complete your details. Complete the online application form, attach up to (3) files either in Microsoft Word or PDF format by using the 'attached files' button. Select attachments using browse facility.

Click the Submit button. The system will automatically generate a receipt via email advising you that your application has been lodged and will be forwarded to Shared Service Agency for inclusion in the selection process.

If you have applied online, please do not duplicate the process by emailing or providing a hard copy of your application. The Smart Jobs and Careers website allows you to track the progress of their online application and maintain your personal details and withdraw your application.

An "Advertised Position Application" form is not required if applying online.

Applying via email or post

Refer to role description for details on how to apply via email or post. You must complete and attach an "Advertised Position Application" form when applying via email or post.

What does the DEEDI selection process involve?

The selection process may involve a variety of tools and techniques for assessing your skills and abilities. Traditionally, the selection panel will assess your written application during the short listing phase and if you are successful, you may be contacted to progress through the next stage of the selection process. Depending on the role and the selection panel, the next stage of the process may include and is not limited to:

- Work samples
- Presentations
- Case studies

- Structured/behavioural interviews
- Written questions
- In-tray exercises

The selection panel will assess your skills and abilities throughout the selection process against the requirements of the role and their suitability for the role.

Know the competencies of the role

As mentioned earlier, it is important you understand the key competencies of the role. These competencies can be found in the 'Key Capabilities' section of the role description.

The skills and abilities we refer to are carefully worded and contain a number of key words. This should give you an insight into what is vital for the role. Try to cross check your experiences with the skills and abilities shown in the role description to show the selection panel that you understand the job. An interview may not always be the next step in the selection process. Depending on the role, the selection panel may choose to assess applicants on their competencies by performing a presentation, or an in tray exercise to simulate the work that really happens in the job. Here are some tips on the interview process if a selection panel is to choose an interview as a selection tool.

The interview process

Under the capability framework, DEEDI interviews may use open-ended questions that aim to get you to describe real circumstances and your response to them. This approach to interviewing is called behavioural interviewing. The premise behind behavioural interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations.

In response to an open ended question, you will describe in detail, a particular event, project or experience and how you dealt with the situation and the outcome. Although it is more difficult to prepare concrete answers in advance to these interviews (as opposed to traditional ones), you can and should take some time to review your understanding of yourself, your past successes and examples of your accomplishments. The selection panel will probe for more depth, detail or understanding with questions like: "What were you thinking at that point?" or "Tell me more about what you discussed with that person."

Be open and honest in your response. When you start to tell a behavioural story, the selection panel may try to sort out the details by understanding your behaviours. Be honest about your mistakes since the experienced interviewer will be looking for "progress" and "growth", not perfection. But, do give an example of how you learned from your mistake and how that experience has benefited you in the long run.

Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are designed to allow a respondent to answer a question in their own words. There are no options and predefined categories to select from. The respondent supplies their own answer without being constrained by a fixed set of possible responses. Examples of types of open ended questions include:

- Tell me about a time that you demonstrated initiative?
- Describe a situation when you have motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do
- Think about a difficult boss, professor or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
- Think about a complex project or assignment that you have been assigned. What approach did you take to complete it?

- Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made. What were your considerations in making that particular decision?
- Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done? What were the challenges and difficulties and how did you face these?
- Describe a situation when you or a group that you were a part of were in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done? Would you work with that person again if given the choice?
- Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
- Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?

Preparing your response to an open-ended question - ★

Be reassured that the selection panel is not trying to 'trick' or 'test' you. They are trying to find out as much as possible about your skills, abilities and levels of experience. There are no standard responses. In responding to an open ended interview questions, you will need to be able to provide the following information:

Background

Provide the selection panel with a brief description of the challenge, problem or situation. To sketch out the background, ask yourself the following questions:

When & where did this happen/occur?

- What were you hoping to do/expected to do?
- Who else was involved? and
- What did you do?

What did you learn?

Remember: learning is one of the most important recruitment indicators under the capability framework. It shows that you may have the ability to transfer skills from one job to another. Learnings are important for a selection panel to differentiate the skills and abilities of individual applicants.

What exactly did you do & how did you use your strengths?

Ask yourself the following "How, why, what" – How did you organise that? Why did you choose to do this? & what did you do in particular, which helped to progress things?

What were the results of your actions?

How did things turn out? How did you know it went well? How did you measure this? Why do you think it was a good achievement?

Why does this make you suitable for this job?

How does this experience prepare you for the job you are applying for? Are the qualities you used here relevant to the job in question? What have you learned from this experience that would help you in this job?

Other selection tools

The selection panel will advise the applicants what selection tools may be used during the selection process once the shortlisting phase has been completed. The selection tools will be selected by the selection panel to assess the key skills and abilities necessary for the role. For example:

If the role is a client service role, the selection panel may wish to perform a role play to assess how the applicant will perform in a similar environment with a difficult client.

To prepare for the role play, it will be a good idea to practice how you would react with a friend or family member. This will increase your confidence and provide you with feedback on how to improve your response.

Another example would be that the selection panel would like the shortlisted applicants to provide a presentation on key projects and their outcomes. It may be a requirement of the project management role to conduct presentations on the status of projects and therefore, the panel will be assessing how applicants can present and their project management experience. The selection panel may or may not provide applicants with sufficient time to prepare for the presentation depending on the work environment of the role. When preparing for a presentation, it is a suggestion to practice in front of the mirror and discuss with family members and friends on how to improve your presentation.

These examples are not limited and may depend on the role and its requirements. To prepare for a selection tool, it is suggested that you understand as much about the role as possible and know as much about how you meet the requirements of the role.

Referee checking

The selection panel may conduct a referee check at any stage of the selection process to verify your suitability for the role. A referee report is not a selection tool and is only used to verify suitability or work performance. Referees should be current or recent referees who can provide the selection panel with enough information on your work experience and performance. Referees within the Queensland Public Service are obliged to disclose all information known to them that is relevant to the responsibilities and duties of the advertised role.

What happens after the selection process?

Once the selection process has been completed, you will be notified and given the opportunity to seek feedback on your application by contacting the contact person on the role description.

Notifying applicants

You will not be advised of the result of the selection process until the panel's recommendation has been approved. Once the appointment has been approved, the chair of the selection panel will contact you as either the successful or unsuccessful applicant and, if you did not progress one of the shortlisted applicants to advise you of the outcome. The [Shared Service Agency](#) prepares successful and unsuccessful notification for all applicants. The appointment will be notified in the Queensland Government Gazette where an appointment to a permanent role is a promotion or a senior executive or senior officer appointment.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of a selection process is maintained by all panel members in accordance with the departments Code of Conduct. Selection documents are maintained in strict confidence and security for the periods specified under the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule for Administrative Records in the case of roles at senior officer level and below. Documentation for Senior Executive Service (SES) vacancies is to be retained indefinitely.

Feedback

As a applicant who has taken time to apply for a role in the department, it extremely important that you request feedback in a timely, factual and constructive manner which is sufficient to explain why you were or were not successful. Feedback must be given to all applicants (both successful and unsuccessful) when requested. The purpose of the feedback should be on how you can improve in the future therefore, feedback should outline the applicant's strengths and areas for improvements against the assessment criteria and gaps identified in comparison with the selected applicant.

Some key items to remember when you are receiving feedback:

- Ensure the feedback you receive is specific to your application and interview (if this is the selection tool used)
- Have any questions about the process and your application ready
- Ensure feedback you receive is constructive i.e. practical examples of where you can develop your skills through formal or on-the-job training
- Your application will be compared to key capabilities, not the successful or other unsuccessful applicants
- Feedback is usually provided by the chair of the selection panel, however, it can be provided by another panel member, or a number of panel members. Feedback may be provided either verbally or in writing at the discretion of the panel.

Recurring vacancies

Applications may remain current for 12 months and may be considered for recurring vacancies which may be at an alternative location or alternative employment basis.

Important Tips - ☆

Preparing your application

- Consider the key duties/responsibilities outlined in the role description. This may assist you in identifying a task/activity/project that you have undertaken, which best aligns with the requirement of the role you are applying for.
- Use positive and specific language (i.e. avoid ambiguous expressions such as 'I was involved in...')
- Use active rather than passive writing to engage the reader (e.g. I write = active, I have written = passive).
- Make sure you have proofread your application. Mistakes can create an impression to an employer that you lack attention to detail.
- Ensure that the information in your application is truthful and accurate.
- Avoid using abbreviations, acronyms, slang and jargon.
- Have someone check or read over your application for any errors.
- Make sure you read and understand what the role description is asking you to do – every role is different.

Updating your resume

- Keep your resume simple, but informative.
- Use techniques to make it easier for the reader to scan and get key points quickly – use headings, dot points and bold important words.
- Keep it up to date and customise it to suit each role you are applying for.
- There is no right or wrong way to set out your resume, it needs to be easy to read and contains all of the necessary information the panel need to know about you.

Resume checklist

Essential	Not essential
Personal contact details: name, address, phone numbers (email address, mobile number if available)	The actual words: name, address, phone number etc
Career objective matches position applied for	Personal details like your marital status, health, race or nationality
Work skills: highlight and demonstrate the things you can do	Personal characteristics and traits (things you are)
Education and Training	Subjects and grades unless relevant or requested by the employer
Employment history listed with short summary statement of role	Detailed list of duties, irrelevant information
Accomplishments and career highlights	Generic hobbies and interests (unless they specifically relate to the job or highlight employability skills, for example, leadership roles)
Referees - include their name, position and contact details	Written references
1-2 pages (3 max), plenty of white space	Cover page and attachments, for example a copy of your Year 12 Certificate or university degree

Tables and columns if used are consistent throughout	Borders around tables
Clear font (Arial or Tahoma 14/12)	Over-stylised fonts
Clear headings	Headings with nothing to go with them
Full name and page numbers on each page	Page borders and graphics (unless these suit position applied for)
White or cream paper	Coloured paper

Preparing for open-ended questions

- Listen carefully. If you feel the question is unclear, ask politely for clarification.
- Pause before answering to consider all facts that may substantiate your response.
- Always offer positive information; avoid negativity at all times.
- Get directly to the point. Ask the panel if they would like you to go into great detail before you do.
- Discuss only the facts needed to respond to the question. Focus and refocus attention on your successes. Remember, the goal is not to have the right answers so much as it is to convince the selection panel that you are the right person.
- Be truthful, but try not to offer unsolicited information.
- Try not to open yourself to areas of questioning that could pose difficulties for you.
- If you know the selection panel, don't assume that they know everything about you – this is your chance to sell yourself.

Below are additional questions that are designed to make you think further about your capabilities, your experience and your behavioural responses in the workplace. Some examples are:

- Why do you believe that you are the best applicant for this job?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work in this field?
- What are your short- and long-range goals and how do you expect to achieve them?
- What does success mean to you? How do you measure it?
- What motivates you?
- Do you plan to further your education? If so, to what extent?
- What have you done to improve yourself during the past year?
- Tell me about your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment?
- How do you handle your reaction when you don't get what you want? Give me a couple of examples.