

Applying for a role in DES

Recruitment, and who gets selected for a role within DES, is governed by the *Public Sector Act 2022* (The Act).

This new Act came into effect from 1 March 2023 and changed the requirements for decision making around recruitment and selection. What does the new Act mean for individuals applying for roles? Let's take a look.

What is different about the new Act?

The primary objective of a process under the new Act remains the same – getting the best person into the job. The previous Act relied on a narrower version of 'best' when considering who should get a role.

This was known as the merit principle. The new Act replaces this principle with three recruitment and selection principles. Hiring Managers must meet new obligations under the Act to consider, promote, support and progress equity and diversity throughout the recruitment and selection process.

This is something we have been doing for a while at DES, so we are well placed for these changes.

How do panels decide who gets a role?

The panel will now be looking to find the eligible person best suited to the role. To do that they will be considering:

- **Are you eligible to do the work?** I.e., do you have the right to work in Australia and do you have the required licences, qualifications etc?
- **Can you perform the role?** Do you have the skills, abilities, personal qualities, qualifications, knowledge, experience, and aptitude, relevant to doing the role. Importantly, they will look to understand how you are able to contribute to diversity and inclusion at DES.

They may also consider:

- how you carried out previous employment.
- the potential you have to make future contributions.
- how the decision could contribute to equity objective strategies and targets.

To make these decisions they will look at the context of the role and the make-up of the team, unit, and department, and make a decision around considering the 'whole person contribution' that the applicant is able to make.

In line with the Act, the sector is focussed on increasing the representation of four minority groups:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
2. People with a disability
3. Women
4. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CALD)

Diversity is of course much broader than just these four groups, and includes a wide range of thinking, being and doing characteristics. Our objective is to enhance capability across the sector by enriching diversity.

During a recruitment process, the panel may look to increase representation of any of these four groups, or, where the team may already have an adequate representation of these groups, the panel may look to increase diversity in other aspects of thinking, being or doing, to create diversity within the team.

Panels must now consider an applicant's overall value, to select the eligible person best suited (in the context of the vacancy in that team, at that point in time). Not just their skills and experience, and not just diversity contribution, but all of it together as the whole person contribution.



What does this mean for applicants?

We want applicants to have the best chance at showing us why they are the best person for the role. So here are some tips to help.

Read the job advert. Carefully.

Sounds fundamental, right? Staff who have applied for lots of public sector roles over the years may have assumptions around what a panel is looking for – such as addressing selection criteria, what a good cover letter looks like, how to present a resume and what to expect in an interview.

It is important to read the advert and the position description (PD) carefully and then respond to what has been asked. In particular, the 'look fors' and 'how to apply' sections. This means keeping to the page limit they have requested or including information that they have asked for.

The advert will also include hints to the team's culture and style. If the advert is very formal, then that might be the way the team communicates. If they seem more contemporary, then that could imply that they are expecting (or hoping) their applicants respond in a way that is contemporary too.

Make it easy for the panel to see you in the role.

Your Resume/CV and cover letter are your opportunity to pitch for the role and show why you are the best suited person. Try to show how your experience directly relates to the role that you are applying for. Don't put every task that you did for each role but keep it to a summary of the most important or relevant responsibilities and the value that you would bring. This doesn't mean you have to spend hours and hours personalising your resume. It just needs to bring to light some of the experience to get you through to the next phase. There are lots of existing support / resources to help applicants succeed in applying for roles.

Show the panel what you would bring.

Equity, diversity, respect, and inclusion are important to DES. You will see that we speak to this, and our commitment to First Nations people's employment and all diversity in our PDs and adverts. This is because we want to be as diverse as the community we serve.

We want to know about how you will contribute to workplace equity and diversity. Being the successful applicant for a DES role requires more than simply demonstrating that you have the most skills, qualifications, and experience (against the 'look fors' stated in the PD).

Your application and the recruitment process are your opportunity to share what you could bring to the role to support diversity and build a culture of innovation, respect, and inclusion, in the context of the role. You should continue to share what you could bring through your resume, cover letter and any selection processes such as interviews.

For Priority consideration or Identified (Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) or Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) vacancies, applicants will be asked for a written assertion or evidence to confirm they are eligible to apply. What you need to include will be specified in the PD.

For general vacancies, you may choose to share specific information about how you contribute to diversity and inclusion within DES. For example: you are an Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander person, you are neurodiverse, etc, or you may share how you are able to contribute without possessing an attribute, through diversity of experiences and knowledge. For example: experience of inclusivity practices.

For general vacancies, the panel doesn't need to know the details and doesn't require any evidence of an attribute. They are interested in the diverse perspectives and lived experiences you can contribute, not the attribute itself.

All applicants should highlight their personal commitment to, or experience in contributing to a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace, or share any experience they have in working with or supporting diversity target groups or other minority groups.

All processes are different.

Long and complicated selection criteria are becoming less common (thankfully!); however, each panel decides the type of process that they will run to find the eligible person best suited to the role they are trying to fill.

Some are more comfortable running a more traditional process, others are trying more contemporary ways to find and assess applicants. Whatever the method, the panel should make it clear on what they are expecting when

you apply, and the format of any assessment or selection as you progress through.

How modern or traditional an approach is will help to guide you on the types of responses the panel might be looking for, the style and process of the selection, and even potentially how the team operates more generally. For example: If a job advert contains media, a self-selection tool, an engaging style, straightforward and plain English language, talks about the purpose/values of the team/work is/are, then it is likely a more contemporary process. This means you should think about the style you are using in your responses. You should still be professional, however use language that is concise and easy to understand and talks to the value you could bring to the role. If the advert is more generic and formal, it could imply a more traditional recruitment process and you could therefore expect the selection activities to be more formal in their approach.

The below existing resources are a great source of information for applicants to help land the perfect job at DES.

[Finding and applying for jobs | Employment and jobs | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/employment-and-jobs)

[Tips for job interviews | Employment and jobs | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/employment-and-jobs)

[Indeed Career Guide | Indeed.com Australia](https://www.indeed.com.au)

[Job hunting – SEEK](https://www.seek.com.au)

[Job interview tips - SEEK Career Advice](https://www.seek.com.au/career-advice)

<https://www.qld.gov.au/jobs/career>