

**Attraction**

**Essential**

**criteria - Handout**

# Essential criteria in position descriptions

## What are essential criteria?

Essential criteria are the 'must have' qualifications, skills, and experience a future employee needs to be successful in the job.

## What are desirable criteria?

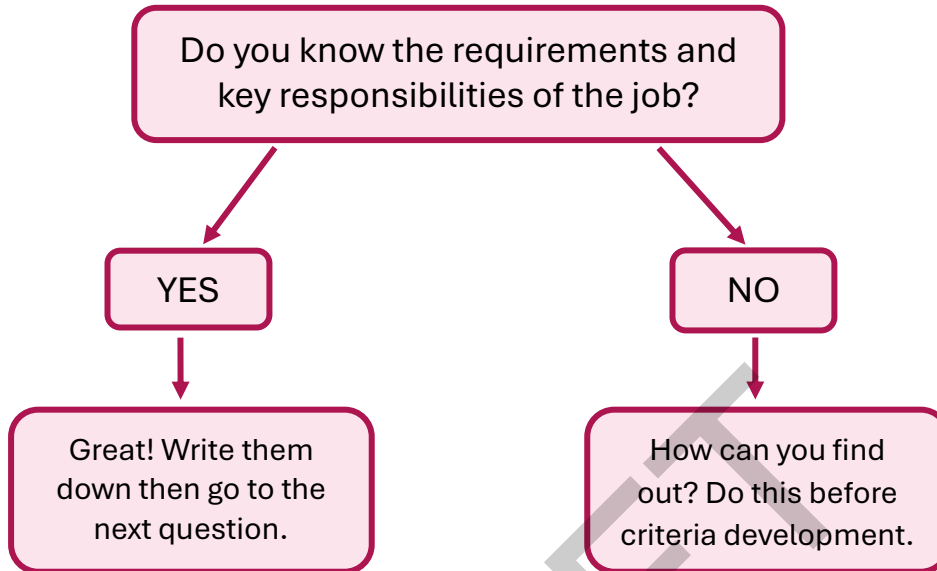
Desirable criteria are 'nice to have' qualifications, skills, and experience. These criteria will help a future employee to be successful in the job but are not always essential to the role.

## Why consider access requirements when reviewing essential criteria?

Position descriptions often contain 'essential' criteria that, on review, are not actually necessary to succeed in the role. It is worthwhile reviewing these regularly to ensure that those criteria listed as essential are in fact necessary to perform well in the role.

## How do I know what is essential and what is desirable?

This will change depending on the job. Here are our tips.



## Let's take a closer look at some examples

Do any of these criteria apply to your position description? Is there any flexibility in the criteria?

Criterion	Consider	Possible Change?
Years of experience or industry-specific experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience alone does not necessarily mean competence or effectiveness.</li> <li>• Does your job advertisement ask for a specific number of years of experience, and if so, does this accurately reflect the skills and knowledge needed to perform the job?</li> <li>• Could a person with transferable skills from related fields do well in this job?</li> </ul>	Relevant experience and / or skills

<p>Advanced degrees, certifications, or qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the person need a specific qualification or would experience in a similar industry, or a related qualification be sufficient?</li> <li>• Is there the possibility for a certification or on-the-job upskilling after the person is hired if they have the right qualities and experience?</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant experience, qualifications, and/or skills</p>
<p>Specific software and / or program knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the person need to be able to use a specific software or program, or is this something they can learn on-the-job through training?</li> </ul>	<p>Experience using [specific software] or willingness to learn</p>
<p>Advanced language proficiency</p> <p>High-level written/verbal communication skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is an important element of most jobs, but it is important to remember that communication does not look the same for everyone.</li> <li>• A person with communication access requirements can be a very effective communicator when given the right supports and adjustments.</li> <li>• Avoid listing a specific method of communication – specifying ‘excellent spoken communication skills’ may deter applicants who communicate using text or a communication device.</li> <li>• Avoid descriptors like ‘high-level’, ‘excellent’ and ‘proficient’ that are subjective measures - be specific about what is required.</li> </ul>	<p>Effective communication skills</p> <p>The ability to communicate effectively with others</p>

<p>Advanced literacy skills for reading and digital literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are these skills that the person could be supported to develop on the job?</li> <li>• Are there tools that could assist the person, such as text-to-speech technology which may compensate for any difficulty in these areas?</li> </ul>	<p>Ability to manage written and/or digital information</p>
<p>Management experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the role involve management and staff supervision?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities to upskill the person on the job?</li> </ul>	<p>Experience managing others or willingness to develop these skills</p>
<p>Detailed technical knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is detailed technical knowledge a large component of the job?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities to upskill the person on the job?</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant technical knowledge or willingness to learn</p>
<p>Physical requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some physical requirements such as lifting heavy objects are not essential to the job or could be accommodated with assistive devices.</li> <li>• Consider elements like workspace set-up.</li> <li>• Is it really necessary for someone to stand for their whole shift, or use a standard chair or desk space?</li> <li>• What accommodations and adjustments could be made?</li> </ul>	<p>Willingness to perform physical tasks and / or use relevant assistive technology where relevant</p>
<p>Availability for overtime and / or travel</p> <p>Driver's license</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the person's ability and readiness to perform overtime or travel.</li> <li>• If this is required, be specific about how regularly this will be required.</li> </ul>	<p>Working arrangements and locations can be discussed as part of the recruitment process.</p>

<p>Availability for overtime and / or travel</p> <p>Driver's license</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include details about preferred work locations and outline the reason for specifying this location.</li> <li>• Is it essential for the person to travel to the office each day for work?</li> <li>• What flexible work arrangements are available?</li> <li>• Do they need to have a driver's license, or are there other options available for transport and travel?</li> </ul>	
<p>Public speaking and presentation skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this an integral part of the job and how regularly would you be expected to present to audiences?</li> <li>• Is there flexibility around this requirement – for example, could the person pre-record a presentation to be played to a group?</li> <li>• Could presentations be delivered online or remotely?</li> </ul>	<p>Ability to share information effectively with different people</p>

**Consider adding a line to the end of the job ad that tells people they are welcome to discuss the role before applying.**

**Could an employee be successful with the right adjustments?**

## Here are a few final tips for reviewing your position description

- Use plain language.
- Avoid acronyms.
- Consider any bias in the choice of criteria and language used.
- Mention reasonable adjustments. Provide examples of what you can offer.
- Include your workplace's diversity and inclusion plan/s.
- Consider providing the job description in an Easy Read format.

DRAFT

Scope's Building Employer Confidence is made possible by an Information and Linkages Capacity Building Project funded by the Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This training has been co-designed with the valuable input of people with communication access requirements, pilot organisations and our valued partner, Thriving Communities Australia. Contributions from co-designers have directly influenced its design, ensuring it is informed, inclusive and reflective of the diverse experiences of communication disability. We recognise and appreciate the personal stories shared in shaping this impactful learning experience.

This information provides guidance on how to support communication in the workplace with people who have communication access requirements. It should not be relied upon in relation to employment law matters - independent advice should be sought.