



# Job Application Guide

Eurobodalla  
Shire Council



# Applying for jobs at Eurobodalla Shire Council

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All vacant positions at Eurobodalla Council are advertised on our [website](#). Applying for local government jobs may be a little different to other jobs you have applied for, as the process includes several additional steps.

## Merit based recruitment

Eurobodalla Council employs people based on merit. This means an assessment panel will mark your responses to selection criteria from one to five. A score of one means you have not met the criteria and a score of five means you have provided an exceptional response. To achieve a high mark against the selection criteria, you need to demonstrate and give examples that reflect your skills, experience and abilities.

Those who score the highest will be invited to interview. Interviews are structured in a similar way, where responses to questions are marked. The person with the highest mark is offered the job.

## Steps to submit your application

Your responses to selection criteria are one of the first pieces of information the assessment panel will read about you. This is your chance to show why you are the right person for the job and to make a positive impression. To apply for a council job, you will need to:

1. select a job and download the information pack from Council's 'vacant positions' webpage
2. respond to the selection criteria
3. update your resume and ensure referees are current
4. upload your resume and necessary additional documents.

**Hint:** don't wait till the last minute! Avoid the stress and complete your application early.

## Writing your application

### Cover letter

Cover letters are not mandatory, however a resume and your response to selection criteria are. If you choose to include a cover letter, make sure it:

- is no longer than one page
- is specific to the job you are applying for
- gives a specific overview of your skills and key achievements and how they can be used in the job you are applying for
- explains your motivation for applying for the job
- confirms you meet all the essential criteria.

### Resume

A resume is required when applying for a job at Eurobodalla Council. When writing or updating your resume, make sure:

- the resume is simple and easy to read
- all personal details are up to date
- it includes education, qualifications, or training
- you include paid or volunteer work, with the most recent listed first
- all previous jobs include a time range of employment, the business name and your job title
- you include additional skills, volunteering experiences, knowledge of computers and software, achievements, or membership in organisations
- all referees are aware they are listed on your resume and their contact details are up to date.

Resume templates can be accessed through Microsoft Word, online or by contacting Council's Employment Revolution team at the Job Shop. Further information about the Job Shop and Employment Revolution project can be accessed on Council's [website](#) or by calling 4474 7380.

**Hint:** your response to selection criteria is very important. While your resume will be looked at by the panel, it is not scored. Make sure a large portion of your effort is focused on your selection criteria, because a good score will get you an interview.



## Selection criteria

Selection criteria are standards or questions that outline skills, knowledge or behaviours required within a role. Some criteria could be phrased as a question and others will ask you to demonstrate an expected skill or quality. Answering selection criteria is the main important part of your application for a job at Eurobodalla Council. Examples of selection criteria can include:

1. Experience in operating a forklift, hand tools and machinery.
2. Demonstrated ability to work in a team environment.
3. Tell us how your personal attributes demonstrate the behaviours in the focus capability 'Manage Self'.

To make a good response, you will need to cover the relevant information in the information package.

Selection criteria always reflect the necessary qualities and duties of the job role and will be different for every application. The information pack gives you hints about what the panel will be looking for, such as the Key Responsibility Areas. KRA's are what the employee is supposed to achieve by performing a task, duty or responsibility.

Applying for a job as an apprentice or trainee might look slightly different to a traditional application. Selection criteria for an apprenticeship or traineeship vacancy will ask about 'focus capabilities', which is another term for skills, knowledge and abilities expressed as behaviours. The information pack gives you hints about what the assessment panel will be looking for in your response to the focus capability.

Responding to selection criteria can often be overwhelming, but if you follow a structured method, it can often be easier. Make sure you read each selection criteria thoroughly. If you are confused by what it means, you can call the Employment Revolution team, Council's People and Culture team or the contact person on the information pack.

**Hint:** write your responses to the selection criteria in a separate Word document, as Council's online application process cannot be saved mid-way and it does not have spell check.

## Responding to selection criteria

When writing your answers make sure to begin with a positive statement such as:

- In 2020, I successfully completed my HSC exams with a 70 ATAR and achieved an award for excellence in English and poetry.
- I have been employed as a labourer with Recruitflex for six years and have gained a high level of experience using tools and machinery specific to road maintenance.

When responding to criteria, providing examples demonstrates your skills and experiences. To do this effectively, you can use the STAR method:

- S: situation (introduction to your example, the where, when and who)
- T: tasks (what was your role and what did you have to do)
- A: actions (how did you do it, what was your approach)
- R: results (how did it end, what was the benefit or improvement)

Brainstorm examples before you start formally writing your response. Grab some paper and write down situations in current or previous paid or unpaid roles or at school that fit each criterion. Try and use a variety of situations throughout your application and avoid using the same example twice.

## Example of selection criteria using the STAR method

Below is an example of a response to selection criteria using the STAR method:

### 1. Tell us how your experiences and knowledge demonstrate your ability to deliver results.

**Situation:** In my current position with McDonalds Batemans Bay, I have been employed as a customer service officer and barista since 2018. Additionally, for the past six months I have been required to train new staff in:

#### Tasks:

- How to use the cash registers
- How to make coffee
- How to amend an order
- How to fix errors on the point-of-sale system
- How to check rosters
- Company policies and procedures

As a McDonalds team member, I am responsible for completing daily tasks and sometimes supervising other staff in a fast-paced environment while ensuring high quality food and services is delivered to customers. An example of when I went above and beyond when achieving results is when I was given the task by my boss to train my first junior staff member.

**Action:** I made sure to have a one-on-one meeting with my supervisor and wrote a check list of all the things I needed to teach the new junior. I also spoke to the other staff on shift that day to let them know that the new starter had no previous work experience, and to encourage them to be supportive. The junior had several “buddy” shifts with me, and I taught and supervised them when they were using the cash register.

**Result:** Though the junior was initially nervous, I made sure they had the knowledge they needed. They are currently still employed at McDonalds and training new staff.

**Hint:** researching Council, including the department you are applying to and using their workplace values in your application can show your enthusiasm and passion for the job. Council values can be found in the job information pack.

**Hint:** in your responses to the selection criteria do not say ‘refer to resume’. Your responses should be as easy to read and as complete as possible.

**Hint:** If writing in paragraphs is overwhelming, you can use dot points! Don’t forget to still use the STAR method.



## Interviews

If you are successful at obtaining an interview with Eurobodalla Council – well done! Your interview responses will be marked in a similar way as the selection criteria, with the highest mark offered the job. Here are some tips about preparing for interview:

### Before the interview

- Learn as much as you can about Eurobodalla Council and the job you're applying for.
- Drive to the interview site before the day. This will limit your chances of getting lost and being late. On the day, make sure to arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- Be prepared when you go to the interview. Bring extra copies of your resume, licences required, a notepad and a pen.
- Wearing professional attire that reflects the job you are applying for is essential.
- Prepare some additional work-based or volunteering examples that demonstrate your skills. You can write this on a notepad to bring into the interview with you.
- Contact Eurobodalla Council's [Employment Revolution](#) team for some interview advice and practice.

### The start of the interview (beginning)

- Your interview will most likely be located at Council's main administration building at 89 Vulcan Street, Moruya. For operational roles, interviews may be held at another location, such as the Moruya Depot. These details will be provided to you when you are first told about the interview.
- On arrival, please tell reception you are there for an interview. Make sure to mention the role you're applying for and the time of the interview.
- When you meet the interviewer, look straight into their eyes, shake hands, introduce yourself, smile, be confident and sit in the chair indicated.
- Be positive in your communication. If you're nervous – that's OK! Explain you are happy to have the opportunity to interview, and you are so interested in the job that you're nervous.
- It is suggested you avoid smoking, chewing gum and cursing during the interview.

### The interview (middle)

- You will be interviewed by a panel of three people, two experts from the job you have applied for and one independent.
- Make sure you use relevant, but simple responses in the interview, as the independent may not be a subject matter expert.
- You can use the STAR method previously mentioned to structure your responses.
- Members of the panel will take turns in asking you questions and will take notes through the conversation. Don't be worried if you see them writing as you speak.
- Always face the interviewer with good posture and body language.
- Stay positive with your attitude and your answers. Let the interviewer know about the skills, knowledge and experience that make you a qualified candidate.
- Know your resume and be prepared to answer questions.
- If you don't have experience in what you're being asked, express your willingness to learn.

- Be thorough with your answers. Never answer with just a “yes” or “no.” Always provide explanations and examples.
- If you don’t understand the question, you can ask the interviewer to explain.
- Organise your thoughts before speaking. Feel free to think for a moment about tough questions. If there’s water on the table, you can take a sip before providing your response to give you a moment to think.
- Don’t focus on your weaknesses and don’t draw attention to negative attributes such as poor attendance, grades or leaving your previous job.

### The end of the interview

The interviewer will usually ask you several questions at the end of the interview:

1. Is there anything else you would like to add?  
If you have a good example you forgot to mention, or there’s a point you would like to reiterate, do it now. It may not be marked as part of a response, but it will give a positive image to the interview panel.
2. Is it OK to call your referees?  
Make sure your referee details are up to date, and that they are aware they may get a call. This is your chance to update any details necessary.
3. Do you have any questions for us?  
You can ask the interviewer any questions about the work team, the job, your duties, or how long it will take to find out if you’ve been successful. Remember, read the information pack thoroughly before the interview so you don’t ask a question that has already been answered.

Once the interview is complete, the panel will meet to confirm scores and job offers. Depending on schedules, this can take several weeks. You will be notified of the outcome of the interview over the phone.

### Why you may not be successful:

- poor personal appearance and hygiene
- poor communication and not providing examples
- not expressing a willingness to learn new things
- lack of planning and enthusiasm
- late to the interview
- lack of knowledge about the business or the position

## Frequently asked questions

### **1. What if I've never worked before?**

If you have never worked before, you can still apply for a job at Eurobodalla Council. You will need to think about your transferable skills; that is skills you have gained from sports, volunteering and/or school projects and how they transfer over to the role you are applying for. Volunteering or being a part of a group will greatly increase your chances of being successful when applying for work for the first time.

Council knows that many young people haven't written selection criteria before or may not have much work experience. The panel will take this into consideration when reading applications.

### **2. What if I'm not great at school?**

If you have graduated high school in the last five years, you may have to upload your last school report with your application. If you're worried about your results – don't be! School's not for everyone, so the assessment panel will consider all your past experiences, your responses to the selection criteria and your interview results when considering if you're suitable for the job.

### **3. What if I don't meet all the criteria and licence requirements?**

Sometimes job seekers don't meet all the selection criteria and may fall short in terms of experience or required licences, such as a driver's licence or white card. If this is the case call the contact person listed in the information pack. Sometimes there is flexibility and transferable skills can be used to demonstrate experience – so don't let it stop you from applying! Some licencing is mandatory to have prior to starting your role, and some can be arranged with assistance from Council once you have started your new role.

### **4. What if I'm not confident using computers and unfamiliar with submitting formal applications?**

We understand that online applications can be overwhelming, especially when out of your comfort zone. If you would like assistance with preparing a resume or to understand how to respond to selection criteria, contact our [Employment Revolution](#) team for some help. If you don't own a computer or having difficulty with internet connection, the [Job Shop](#) in Moruya and our [libraries](#) in Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma can provide you with a computer and wifi.

### **5. How long should my responses to the selection criteria be?**

There is no rule to how long responses to selection criteria should be. It should be as long as needed to demonstrate your skills. However, keep in mind that some Council jobs can have up to 80 applications. If each application includes long responses to selection criteria, the assessment panel could find it hard to read.

Keep your responses relevant and to the point, without any waffle. Generally, selection criteria are answered in two to three paragraphs, but this is not a rule. For example, you can have one introductory paragraph, then one or two short paragraphs giving examples using the STAR method.

**6. How long should I spend on writing my selection criteria?**

You should spend as much time on selection criteria as needed. However, past applicants have spent up to a week on the process, which includes writing your answer, proof reading and making final changes. To stop yourself from being too overwhelmed, think about writing one or two selection criteria responses a day.

**7. Can I use dot points in my selection criteria?**

Yes, but make sure to start your answer with a complete sentence to introduce the points.

**8. Can I apply for more than one position?**

Yes, you can apply for as many different positions as you like. Just make sure to edit your responses specific to each job you apply for.

**9. Do I need a driver's licence?**

Each job has its own requirements, such as a Class C driver's licence. This will be detailed in the information pack. If you do not have a driver's licence and want to apply for a role that requires one, you can tick you're willing and able to obtain one prior to your start date. If you have any concerns or queries don't forget you can call the contact person in the information pack.

**10. How long will it take me to find out if I have an interview?**

Following the job closure date you will receive a response anywhere up to three weeks later, although applicants will normally hear within one or two weeks. The workload of the panel and availability will affect timing.

**11. How many people are on an assessment panel?**

A panel is made up of three people. Two are experts in the field of the job vacancy and one is independent and from another team. This is to make sure all applicants are marked fairly.

**12. When will I start the job?**

This depends on the position and any required pre-employment checks, such as calls to your referees and any required medicals or police checks. The hiring manager will discuss this with you when they call to offer you the role.

**13. Is there a permanent job at the end if I apply for a traineeship or apprenticeship?**

No, these positions are fixed term contracts. However, the skills you get as a trainee or apprentice will give you an advantage if you decide to apply for a permanent position at Eurobodalla Council.

#### **14. Do I need to be vaccinated (COVID-19) and will I need a police check?**

Local Government NSW has not made COVID-19 vaccinations essential. Some key work areas, such as Community care, require full COVID vaccination and booster shots.

A police check is required for some jobs and if so, will be mentioned in the information pack. A police check is used to gain an overall picture of the applicant and their suitability for a role. However, a non-satisfactory result does not always mean you will be unsuccessful – it will depend on the type of criminal history. Should you progress to the next stage of recruitment, any required police checks, medical, NDIS or Working With Children Checks will be conducted following interviews.

Don't stress! This is your chance to impress and show all your awesome skills and achievements. Don't forget if you need help contact the Employment Revolution team for advice.

## Glossary

**Merit based recruitment:** Merit based recruitment means job applicants are assessed and marked based on their ability to perform work tasks. The highest mark is offered the job. This means that ethnicity, sex, religion or age play no part in obtaining a job at Eurobodalla Council.

**Selection criteria:** Is a question or statement that asks a job seeker to demonstrate key qualifications, training, abilities, knowledge, personal attributes, skills or experiences.

**Assessment panel:** a group of two experts and one independent that will mark your responses from the selection criteria and interview. The panel will make the determination on who is offered the job.

**Resume:** a multi-page document that summarises your skills, employment and education history.

**Covert letter:** a multi-page document that links your skills and experiences to the job you are applying for.

**Job information pack:** a document located on the job vacancy page of Eurobodalla Council's website that provides job seekers with key information such as position description, Council values, main duties and key result areas, licence and qualification requirements, conditions of employment and salary range.

**Focus capabilities:** another term for skills, knowledge and abilities expressed as behaviours. Often used in traineeship job vacancies.

**Microsoft Word:** a computer program for typing documents. Can be accessed for free at Council libraries in Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma.

**Interview:** a face to face or online meeting between three Council staff and a job applicant.

**Interviewer:** the person asking questions and assessing a job seeker in an interview.

**Referee:** a professional or personal connection that is willing to tell a future employer about a job seekers strengths. Personal details are often included in a resume including name, job title, phone number and email.

**Reference:** a written document from a professional or personal connection that details a job seekers strengths and key achievements.

**Transferable skills:** a skill that you can take from one job to another. For instance, the ability to clearly communicate ideas to others, solve unexpected problems, or work well in a team environment.