

How to address key selection criteria

How badly do you want that job? If it's the job for you stop and think hard about the key selection criteria.

The key criteria for a job are usually spelled out in a list of qualities, knowledge and skills needed for the job. Follow our 9 golden rules to ace that key selection criteria:

- **Golden rule 1: Understand the process.** Employers use key criteria to compare applicants on the same measures.
- **Golden rule 2: Study the key criteria.** Take your time and think about what the employer is really looking for. Break it down into bullet points to answer, says Chris Grant, director of human resources and legal recruitment at Michael Page International.
- **Golden rule 3: Do your preparation.** The more preparation you do, the better your answers will be, says Grant. Look up the organisation's annual report if it's public. Google the company and read news reports about it. Use your network to find out more about the culture. This will help you stand out from the other candidates.
- **Golden rule 4: Match criteria.** Print out your [CV](#) and compare it with the key criteria, says Grant. Can you see matches? It's perfectly acceptable to give examples from extracurricular activities [such as sports or charity work](#). Consider writing a bespoke CV for the job that highlights the key criteria.
- **Golden rule 5: Keep the layout simple.** Bullet points and short sentences are best, says Grant. Time poor recruiters are looking for the key points in a few words. Less is more when it comes to job applications.
- **Golden rule 6: Give STAR responses.** Applicants with relevant and credible examples of the key criteria are more likely to make it to the top of the pile. Grant recommends the "STAR" method for these examples. Explain the "Situation" where the relevant example came from, such as customer service, follow that with the "Task", which is your role in the example, outline what

“Action” you took, and spell out the “Result”.

- **Golden rule 7: Substantiate your claims.** Rather than say: “I worked in a team”, be specific about what your role was in the team, says Grant.
- **Golden rule 8: Choose your words carefully.** A recruiter is likely to spend 30 seconds or less [scanning your application](#). If the right words jump out, your application will be worthy of further attention. Where possible use the same words and the language that is used in the key criteria.
- **Golden rule 9: Get someone to proofread your responses.** A fresh set of eyes is best to ensure that you have answered the questions and [used correct spelling and grammar](#). Ask if that person would employ you based on your replies to the key criteria.

Study the key criteria. Take your time and think about what the employer is really looking for. Break it down into bullet points to answer, says Chris Grant, director of human resources and legal recruitment at Michael Page International.

By even considering the key criteria you put yourself ahead of most of the competition, says Grant. So take your time preparing your answers to the key criteria. All of that homework will pay off when you go for the interview. You'll be able to kill those interview questions.