



INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Introduction

This document has been prepared to help you apply for advertised general vacancies in Customs. For information about applying for Customs Trainee or Graduate Trainee programs please refer to the information at the links to Customs Trainee Recruitment and Graduate Trainee Program on this web site.

The following information should be read in conjunction with the job description, selection criteria and general application form. Any further information required should be sought from the contact officer before the application is submitted.

In this document you will find information about eligibility, the selection process, and how to prepare a statement of claims. The rating scale (Attachment A) and information for referees/supervisors (Attachment B) is also attached.

Eligibility

External Applicants

To be eligible to apply for these vacancies you must:

- be an Australian citizen. If you are not an Australian citizen, but a permanent resident, please provide evidence of when you expect to obtain citizenship.
- be prepared to undergo a security assessment and meet the required standard.
- be prepared to undergo a medical examination and meet the required standard.

Applicants will not be engaged if they have received a redundancy benefit from an Australian Public Service (APS) agency or a non-APS Commonwealth employer within 12 months of the proposed date of their engagement with Customs.

Applicants who have received a redundancy benefit are eligible to apply for the positions, but cannot be engaged as an ongoing employee until 12 months has expired since receipt of the redundancy benefit.

Customs applicants only

Successful applicants will only be required to undergo a security clearance if their current clearance level is below the level required of the position.

Mandatory Qualifications

Some advertised vacancies will have mandatory qualification requirements and these will be advised in the selection documentation. If evidence of qualifications needs to be submitted with the application, it will also be advised in the selection documentation.

Merit

All Customs selections are based on merit. Section 10 (2) of the Public Service Act 1999 defines a decision relating to engagement or promotion being merit based if:

- an assessment is made of the relative suitability of the applicants for the duties, using a competitive selection process; and
- the assessment is based on the relationship between the applicants work-related qualities genuinely required for the duties; and
- the assessment focuses on the relative capacity of the applicants to achieve outcomes related to the duties; and
- the assessment is the primary consideration in making the decision.

Privacy

Customs understands and respects the right to privacy and has introduced privacy safeguards. The information provided in job applications will only be used for the selection exercise and related procedures.

Advertised Vacancies

An application form should be completed for each advertised vacancy. If there are several positions nominated in the advertisement you will need to indicate the position/s for which you wish to be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the selection criteria, job description and application form. These documents, along with advice provided by the contact officer, provide important information about the skills and knowledge required for particular positions.

How to Apply

Applications consist of two parts and should be submitted in the format detailed below. Only the original document is required (i.e.: no copies).

Part A - Application Form

The relevant General Application Form can be downloaded from the Customs Internet site or will be sent to you by the nominated documentation contact officer if requested. The General Application Form must be completed in full.

Your completed General Application Form will contain information about your employment history, education and training, and any other information that is relevant for consideration for the vacancy. Educational qualifications and training courses should be listed in chronological order and limited to those that are relevant to the advertised positions. Proof of qualifications may be required to support your claims. Employment history should include any relevant work

experience detailing the name of the company, the dates of employment, and the type of duties performed.

Part B - Statement of Claims

The statement of claims provides scope to demonstrate your competency to the selection panel. The statement of claims should attempt to convince the selection panel that you have all the necessary skills and qualities required for the advertised vacancy. The statement is in the format of selection criteria.

Your statement of claims should be concluded with a summary, which reiterates your strongest claims against the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria identify the specific characteristics required for the position. Selection Criteria for Customs Levels 1-5 may have the same general categories, however they vary in the degree or complexity.

Criteria may be weighted depending on the particular position. If weighting is applied it will be advised in the selection documentation.

Addressing the Selection Criteria

Your statement of claims should be prepared keeping in mind the particular expectations outlined in the selection criteria and the job description. You should cite examples of situations you have faced and describe in detail your actual involvement. Your examples of past behaviour should reflect your knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications.

The key in preparing your statement of claims is to:

- demonstrate capability by providing evidence of how you meet the selection criteria;
- provide specific details; and
- where possible, include an indicator of success or a result.

An easy way to do this is to use the **CAR** approach wherever possible – that is:

C (Circumstance)	What was the situation? Who was involved? What was your role?
A (Action)	What did you do? What happened next?
R (Result)	What was the end result?

Remember we are interested in you! So please:

- Focus on your specific involvement in the various situations (use “I” instead of “we”).
- Give examples within the last two/three years if possible.

Your statement of claims should not exceed one page in length for each selection criteria.

Selection panel

Selection panels usually consist of two people. Although diversity on panels is encouraged, both genders may not be represented. The selection panel will only prepare written individual assessments for interviewed applicants. The panel will use standard assessment definitions in order to describe your performance against individual selection criteria. Refer Attachment A.

Supervisor/ Referee comments

It is not necessary to provide a written supervisor/referee report with your application unless specifically requested in the selection documentation. However, current contact details for your supervisor and referee should be provided.

The selection panel will only seek supervisor/referee comments on the most competitive applicants for the advertised position/s. It is important that the supervisor and referee nominated are in a position to comment on and rate your recent work performance. The selection panel can request a written report or seek verbal comments at any stage of the selection process. Panels are aware that notes on these discussions, and any written reports received, will be made available to applicants.

Please provide attachments A, B and C at the end of this document to your nominated supervisor or referee. This, together with the job description and selection criteria, will assist the nominated referee/supervisor to provide an assessment of your abilities using the same rating scales used by the selection panel.

Interviews

As an applicant, you will be regarded as being available for interview from the date applications close. If you are going to be unavailable for any length of time, the period must be stated on your application. However, you should be aware that the selection process may not be delayed to accommodate your availability.

Applicants should be aware that short listing is rigorous and that interviews are not automatically granted. Only the most competitive applicants, ie. those who have demonstrated strong claims to the position, will be fully assessed. Only applicants included on the shortlist will be contacted regarding the next phase of the selection process. Short listed applicants may be required to participate in psychometric testing, an assessment centre (where appropriate), a practical assessment or demonstration and/or a panel interview.

The selection panel may decide that interviews are not necessary and make the decision to fill the vacancy based on written applications and referee reports only.

If granted an interview, the selection panel will assess an applicant's capabilities against selection criteria, noting in particular any aspect of the criteria rated more

highly. Interviews will incorporate questions that are behaviourally based. Behaviour based interview questions assume that past behaviour will help to predict future behaviour. Therefore, applicants should be prepared at interview to discuss examples of past and present behaviour detailing specific achievements and challenges faced.

You may be presented with questions such as “Provide an example of when you have been under pressure” instead of “What would you do if...?” It is important to ensure your responses display your ability to meet the criteria for the advertised position.

When answering behaviourally based questions at interview remember to:

- a) Describe the situation.
- b) Describe how you reacted to the situation.
- c) Describe the end result of your action.

Lodging your application

Your full application containing your completed General Application Form and your Statement of Claims (ie answers to the behavioural questions) must be submitted by the specified closing date to the address specified on the selection documentation. The committee may not accept late applications.

Receipt of your application will not be acknowledged.

Selection Results

Shortlisted applicants will be advised of the outcome of the process by letter or email. Applicants may also check Public Service Gazette notices for further details of the outcome of completed selection processes.

Individual assessments are available on request from Human Resource Management once the process is finalised. Please Note: - only interviewed applicants will have a written individual assessment. Where interviews are not conducted, written individual assessments will be provided to the most competitive applicants. The selection panel will also provide post interview counselling upon request.

Customs Standard Assessment Definitions

This is a standard assessment format that is understood by all parties using assessment definitions to describe the applicant's work performance against selection criteria. The short alphabetic descriptions for the definitions are entered into a grid by the selection panel to reduce the need for complex written reports.

Referees, please comment on the applicant in terms of the relevant selection criteria, and **assess the applicant against each criterion using the assessment definitions provided below**. Your comments and assessment should be based on the applicant's likely capability for the position in question. Comments must be objective, and also **include specific examples to emphasise and illustrate the applicant's abilities, knowledge, experience and personal qualities in relation to the criteria**

ER Exceeds Requirements of this criterion for this position	Based on the available evidence, in comparison to your expectations for this classification level this applicant is considered to be outstanding. Their skills and abilities are exceptionally well developed, and their performance can be expected to be consistently outstanding. This is a rarely applied rating.
MRH Meets Requirements of this criterion for this position to a High level.	Based on the available evidence, in comparison to your expectations for this classification level this applicant is considered to have highly developed skills and abilities relevant to the criterion. Their performance can be expected to be above your expectations for the position and/or classification.
MR Meets Requirements of this criterion for this position.	Based on the available evidence, in comparison to your expectations for this classification level this applicant is considered to possess the required skills and abilities relevant to the criterion. They can be expected to be fully competent.
MMR Meets Most Requirements of this criterion for this position.	Based on the available evidence, in comparison to your expectations for this classification level this applicant is considered to possess most of the required skills and abilities relevant to the criterion. They can be expected to be fully competent after a reasonable period in the advertised position.
MSR Meets Some of the Requirements of this criterion for this position.	Based on the available evidence, in comparison to your expectations for this classification level this applicant is considered to possess some of the required skills and abilities relevant to the criterion. They could not be expected to be fully competent within a reasonable timeframe.
U Unsatisfactory, does not meet the requirements of this criterion.	On the evidence available this applicant does not meet the requirements of this criterion.

Referee/Supervisor Report

Name of applicant:

Details of position:

Name of referee and position:

Relationship to applicant (if direct supervisor, include length of time you have supervised applicant):

Please read the full selection documentation before providing comments against the selection criteria.

Criterion 1 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)
Criterion 2 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)
Criterion 3 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)
Criterion 4 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)

Criterion 5 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)

Criterion 6 assessment ER MRH MR MMR MSR U (delete those that do not apply)

Additional comments: (If not covered previously, please include comments on the applicant's strengths, areas for development, work ethic, motivation level.)

Referee's signature:

I have discussed my comments with the applicant.
Signature: **Date:**

Applicant's signature:

I agree/disagree with the comments (if you disagree please provide reasons)
Signature: **Date:**

If comments have been given verbally the panel must complete the following:

The comments recorded above have been cleared with the referee (see attached email or signature above) and a copy has been provided to the applicant.
Committee member: **Date:**

Information for Referees/Supervisors

As a referee/supervisor for an applicant for a Customs position, you may be asked to provide a written report. Or alternatively, the committee may seek a verbal report. The selection committee may seek referee reports at any stage of the selection process.

Previously, referees have been asked to only describe the applicant's performance against individual selection criterion using a rating scale provided. This gives limited information about the applicants past behaviour, which is the best predictor of future behaviour. Changes have been made to now include questions that will ask about an applicant's past performance, in terms of the circumstance, actions and the result of their actions. You will therefore need to consider specific aspects of their work performance when making comments about the applicant. These questions will act to verify and support information already gathered.

You will also be required to use the rating scale (attachment A) to identify an appropriate assessment using Customs standard assessment definitions and the report template (Attachment B).

Where comments are given verbally, the selection panel will take notes of the conversation and confirm the accuracy of the record with you. Any verbal or written Supervisor/Referee report given directly to the panel will be made available to the applicant by the selection panel.