



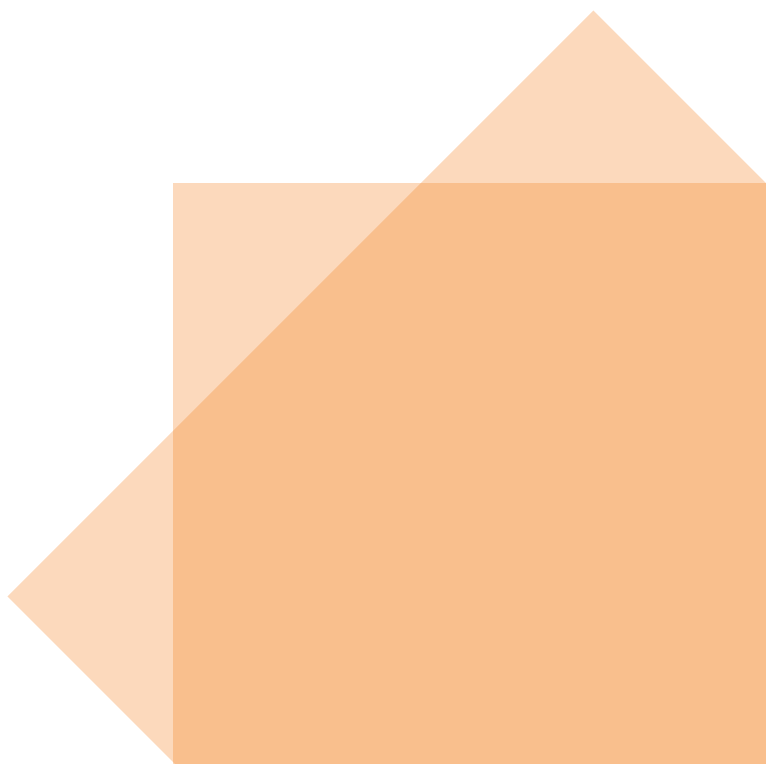
College of  
Policing

# Application Success!

## How to deliver an amazing application

You've seen your dream role and you know a great application is needed. How do you give yourself the very best chance of success? Let us help you through it...

**Better**Professionals<sup>TM</sup>  
for **Better**Policing



## What are you trying to achieve?

Application forms are nothing more than a structured way to gather information about people against requirements for a role.

The aim is to provide the most convincing evidence of how you meet those requirements.

No one likes filling in applications... OK, there it is. But you know you'd be great at this role, so let's do ourselves proud.

## Mindset

This is do-able! Other people, probably very similar to you, have done it before and been successful. You know you can do this. Make sure you keep telling yourself this. Those receiving this don't know you, so let's show them who you are, what you can do and why you would be fantastic.

## First things first

Before anything else, let's make sure we give this the time it's going to need. Being able to work through the application, leaving enough time for you or someone else to check it, is going to be crucial. Get the diary and pop in some time to prepare, draft, check and submit – all in time for the deadline.

## Role requirements

If we are going to provide evidence of how we meet the requirements, let's make sure we are clear about what they are.

Requirements come in various formats: values, behavioural competencies, skills and qualifications.

Some criteria will be essential. These are the easiest to check. Do you meet the list of essential criteria? If you are unsure, there is often a contact email or person you can talk with to check. Get in touch. You are becoming known to someone in the organisation – that's a good thing.

All other criteria are either desirable or, like values and behaviours, more qualitative. If you are not sure if you meet all of these, don't give up – let's keep going! Read on – help is on its way...

## Preparing

You will often be asked for your work history and qualifications. Write these as a timeline, making sure you account for any gaps.

Often, the largest sections are on skills, behaviours and values. Let's get these right!

Skills are activities that you can perform. Take each skill that is asked for and make a list of the ways in which you fulfil these responsibilities in your current and previous roles.

Values are about the underpinning drivers for our behaviour. These are 'why' we do things. Take the values and list as many instances of when you have done things that would show others that you operate consistently with these.

Behavioural competencies are looking at the approaches you use when you work. They are less about 'what' and more about 'how'. Take each area and make a list of specific times and instances you have shown the positive behaviours required.

If you find it difficult to think of examples, or think there is something you can't demonstrate, ask a friend or colleague who knows you well. Often they will quickly bring things you had forgotten or don't see in yourself.

OK, now you have a lot of the thinking work done. Next, sort out what is going to be the most convincing.

## Convincing brilliance

The more examples you have prepared, the easier this will be.

There are a small number of things anyone considering your application will be looking for – the more of them you have, the more you will blow them away!

It is all about choosing examples that are most similar to, or above, the level of responsibility in the role you want. Providing evidence at the wrong level is one of the most common errors – but not one you're going to make!

This can be challenging though, especially if the role and context is not one you have worked in before. OK, so here's what to do...

Identify examples that are as closely aligned to the level and role requirements as possible. If you have to, use non-work examples, but make sure the level and behaviours required are similar to those required by the role. Keep it as close as you can and explain the level clearly.

## Draft responses

Now you've got lots of examples that show the values and competencies, which ones should you use?

Each area will have a question. This will take one of two formats.

It may be a general request for relevant example(s). This lets you choose your very best evidence. Look out for whether it asks for one or more examples. There's a common error here where people talk about what they do generally rather than specific examples – but that's not a mistake you're falling for!

It may be that you are asked a more specific question. For example, you could be asked for 'a difficult decision where not everyone agreed'. This is clearly something that people in this role do often and it's important to do well – and that's why it's being asked. Select the example that not only shows the level but also **answers the question!**

If you have used the same instance in more than one area, consider another example if you can. You want to show them your breadth of experience. You're not a one-trick pony!

Now draft your responses into the application, making sure that you clearly show how this demonstrates the criteria within each value or competency area.

Don't provide anything you don't need to. It's about brevity, brevity, brevity – or should that just be **brevity?**

Say briefly what the situation was and why it was your responsibility to manage it. Explain what you did, making sure it is clear how this links to the values or competency criteria. Finally, what was the outcome and, if possible, did you review what you did?

This is shaping-up to be a first-class application!

## Sense check

Now that we have a great draft, we need to check and refine it. Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes is useful – get a trusted colleague or friend to check it. Make sure, however, they are someone who will tell it like it is. Tell them you need them to think about whether it is compelling and at the right level. Do you answer the question? Is it clear what you did and does all this relate to the values and competencies you are trying to show?

Get feedback and update things, making sure you meet any word-count limits.

## Checklist

Finally, check that you have given yourself the very best chance of success.

Make sure you have:

- ✓ covered eligibility
- ✓ shown all essential criteria
- ✓ shown all desirable criteria (as close as you can)
- ✓ shown evidence at a relevant level
- ✓ explained situations
- ✓ explained your role/responsibility
- ✓ explained what you did
- ✓ explained outcomes and any review
- ✓ shown clearly the behaviours/criteria within the values or competency of interest
- ✓ met the word-count
- ✓ checked all spelling, grammar, formatting and typos
- ✓ submitted ahead of deadline
- ✓ completed all sections (leave any biographical monitoring until you've got everything else finished)
- ✓ And... relax!

## About the College

We're the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

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