

Top tips for getting started on your application

1. When completing your application, don't assume the sift panel have any knowledge about you. Try and be as detailed as possible – explain what skills and experiences you have that you can bring to the role.
2. It's important that you remember to use 'I' not 'we' in your application – you need to sell what you have done.
3. Remember to stick with the specified word count.
4. Our application form asks competency based questions. At this point, it might be useful to familiarise yourself with the WAO competency framework. Note down the competencies required for the role.
5. You will need to illustrate your answer with specific examples. Consider using active verbs which will give your application greater impact and make a strong impression. Using the past tense also gives the sense that you have completed or achieved your goals. You should also aim to use fewer words. For example:
 - **Don't use:** I was responsible for organising a programme of speakers.
 - **Do use:** I organised a programme of speakers.
6. Allow plenty of time for writing down your examples – avoid leaving them until the last minute.
7. Write down all the things you have done well in your job, volunteering roles or education.
8. It is useful to refer to previous performance appraisal reports or tutor feedback for this.
9. For each of these things, note down how you achieved what you did, what skills and behaviours did you display?
10. Now gather your evidence together and analyse it before you start writing examples for the competency questions – you will probably have more evidence than you think.
11. Share your evidence and examples with someone who will provide constructive feedback.
12. Choose your most powerful examples – demanding/challenging situations.
13. Take time to start writing your competency examples ideally using the STAR technique. Writing good examples will take days to develop – not hours. For further information, see the **tackling competency questions** guidance.
14. Make sure you include how you overcome problems and obstacles. What did you learn from the experience?
15. Describe your thoughts, actions and feelings rather than just describing what happened.