

Recruitment to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is governed by the *Public Service Act 1999*. The Act enshrines the merit principle, which requires employment decisions to be based on merit and made without patronage, favouritism or discrimination.

Please carefully read all sections of this document. It contains important information on preparing your application, the selection and assessment process, eligibility requirements, terms and conditions of employment and remuneration and salary packaging.

Preparing your application

In preparing your application, you should work on the assumption that the selection committee has no prior knowledge of you.

The electronic application process consists of three simple stages: registration, drafting your application and review. The system will guide you through each of these stages.

REGISTRATION

If you have not previously applied online for a vacancy with DFAT, you will need to select 'Start new Application'.

You will be asked to fill in a range of basic information which will be automatically inserted into your future applications. You can update this information at any time. You will be issued with a user ID number and you will be asked to choose a password.

Your email address is our primary method of contact with you. **Ensure that your email address is correct, current and regularly visited.** You can only nominate one valid email address during the Registration Process. When undertaking the Registration Process, you will be asked to type your email address twice to ensure the integrity of the data. You can change your email address during or after the process if you need to.

Following the Registration Process, your User ID and password will be emailed to you. You will also automatically start the application process.

If you have previously applied online for a vacancy with DFAT, use the 'Access existing Application' option. You will then be able to log in using your User ID and password. If you have forgotten your log in details, click on the relevant link and follow the steps.

Your personal information will be automatically entered into the new application. You need only enter/revise your claims against the selection criteria and any other relevant fields.

DRAFTING YOUR APPLICATION

Read all the text and instructions

Text and instructions are used sparingly throughout the online application process and exist to assist you in completing the application successfully. This document contains important information to guide you through - so please read it carefully.

If you want to view the information you need before you get started, you can click on the “Preview Application Form” button. Remember that the preview form isn’t the real application - you still need to fill in the electronic application.

Complete each section

As you are completing each section, you will be warned if a compulsory data item has not been completed. You can, however, progress to any part of the application by using the tabs at the top of the screen. To ensure that the data has been updated, select the ‘save’ or ‘save and next’ options at the bottom of each section. Once all mandatory data has been entered and you have accessed each section, your application will be automatically submitted. However, your application will not be finalised until the closing time, allowing you to update any section until that time.

Statement of claims against selection criteria

Your statement of claims against the selection criteria is the centre piece of your application and should be presented in a concise and focussed manner. In addressing the selection criteria, you should use specific examples of work you have done, describing how you have contributed to a process or an outcome. Unless otherwise indicated, the criteria are weighted evenly. For guidance on applying for positions in the Australian Public Service (APS), including how to address selection criteria, please see ['Cracking the Code: How to apply for jobs in the APS'](#).

Note: if this is a subsequent application, the system automatically fills in the claims against selection criteria from your previous application – you need to check each of the criteria carefully.

Treat your application like a formal document

Although the application is online, you should avoid writing your application like an email to a friend. Ensure that grammar and spelling are correct, and that you have used the correct punctuation where appropriate. **For extended answers, in particular your claims against the selection criteria, we strongly recommend you write them in an application such as Microsoft word and then cut and paste the answers into your online application when completed.** This should prevent the loss of your work and spelling errors. Please note that there are word limits on all text boxes.

Referees

You are required to provide the contact details of two referees. The selection panel may seek comments from others who know your work (but will not seek comments from more than two referees). Referees should be willing to discuss your demonstrated skills against the selection criteria. In conducting oral discussions with referees, the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) will establish the relative suitability of each candidate. The SAC will seek evidence-based evaluations of your performance against each criterion. We recommend that you discuss your claims with your referees to ensure that you are aware of the comments they may make in discussions with the selection panel. If an adverse comment is made that will have a significant bearing on an application, the SAC will give the applicant concerned the opportunity to respond to the criticism(s).

REVIEWING THE APPLICATION

You can log in and change your application as many times as you like, up until the closing time. Your application will only be printed and assessed once the closing time has passed.

If your application is incomplete, you will receive an automatically generated email two days before closing to remind you of the job closing.

The closing time will be somewhere between 5:00pm and midnight Australian Eastern Standard Time on the closing date. The website displays how many days there is until the vacancy closes. In the final week, it displays hours as well as days. On the final day, it also displays minutes. **Once the closing time has passed, the vacancy vanishes from the website. Editing is not possible after that point. Applicants are strongly advised not to submit their application at the last minute.**

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED

Notification

You will receive an email notifying you of the successful submission of your application.

In due course, you will also be contacted with advice on whether you have been successful in the shortlisting process. You can monitor progress of the selection process on the [DFAT website](#).

If selected for an interview you will receive at least 48 hours notice. Overseas and interstate applicants will most likely be interviewed by telephone.

Updating your details

You can update your contact details at any time. (Note: the job link will vanish from the website after the closing date. Follow the instructions in your registration email to log in.)

Withdrawing an application

Changed your mind? You can withdraw your application at any time. Withdrawals should be made through the electronic application system or in writing to Candle ICT. Changed your mind again? You can request reinstatement of your application, up until the closing time.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Please ensure that your ISP will provide you with uninterrupted online access for the entire application process. Many ISPs will automatically disconnect you if there has been no communication from your computer for a set period of time, which can be as little as 10 minutes for some ISPs. Note: Simply typing information on a web page is not registered as communication with an ISP - you must save your work to continue communicating with your ISP. Select the 'save' or 'save and next' options at the bottom of each section regularly.

The application system may not be compatible with some older browsers. This should rarely be a problem, but if you have trouble, you may want to update your browser. More current versions can be downloaded free of charge over the Internet.

Problems with the system?

If you are unable to lodge your application electronically, please consult with Candle ICT on telephone (02) 6260 7533 for advice on alternative methods of lodgement.

Selection, Assessment & Outcome

The department often receives several hundred applications for its advertised vacancies.

The department aims to conduct its selection processes in a timely manner. Bulk round selection processes are usually completed in about 3 months, whilst specialist processes may take 6-8 weeks.

Updates about the progress of specific selection processes are available on the department's recruitment page on the [DFAT Website](#) under the "Status of Selection Processes" heading.

The Committee

The department will establish a **Selection Advisory Committee** to consider applications for the advertised vacancy. For non-SES vacancies, the SAC is comprised of a Chair and two other members, all of whom are usually departmental employees. For SES vacancies, the SAC includes an SES employee external to the department who is the Public Service Commissioner's representative.

In bulk round selection processes, the department may choose to use an **Independent Selection Advisory Committee (ISAC)**, convened on behalf of the Merit Protection Commissioner by staff made available to him by the Public Service Commissioner under section 49 of the PS Act 1999. Promotions made on the recommendations of an ISAC are not open to review.

The Assessment

In the Committee's overall assessment of each applicant, referee comments account for at least 50%, with the remaining percentage split between the application and the interview (each no more than 25%).

In accordance with the merit principle, the Committee will assess applicants' claims against the selection criteria by:-

- considering written applications
- considering referee comments
- contacting others familiar with the applicant's work to verify claims against the selection criteria
- short-listing applicants for interview
- conducting interviews

The Committee will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of the department or his delegate to establish an order of merit. The order of merit can be drawn from to fill future vacancies for 12 months from the date of gazettal of the original vacancy.

Outcome

Applicants who are not shortlisted for interview will be informed as soon as this decision is made. At the completion of the selection process, successful applicants will be contacted by telephone. Unsuccessful applicants and those on the reserve merit list will receive advice by email.

Eligibility Requirements

There are basic eligibility requirements which all applicants must meet:

- **Citizenship requirements:** You must be an Australian citizen to be eligible to gain employment with DFAT.
- **Character requirements:** You must be of good character – ie. a “fit and proper person”, and demonstrate exemplary standards of integrity and professionalism.
- **Medical requirements:** You must meet Australian Public Service (APS) required standards of health and physical fitness. Successful applicant/s are required to pass a Commonwealth Medical Clearance.
- **Security requirements:** All positions in the department are ‘*Designated Security Assessment Positions*’ or ‘*Positions of Trust*’. This means that employment in the department is dependent on an employee gaining a valid security clearance. Until a person has been granted a DFAT security clearance we cannot make any formal offer of employment. Loss of a security clearance at any time will lead to termination of employment. If you are identified as a preferred candidate for employment in the department, a letter will be sent to you enclosing a security questionnaire for you to complete. Once you return the completed form, the department assesses whether there would be any risk associated with granting you access to classified information. That assessment may be based, among other things, on advice from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Federal Police. This process can often take several months to complete.
- **Academic/Professional Qualifications:** Any claims you make with regard to academic and/or professional qualifications must be capable of being verified with the relevant institution. False claims could lead to rescission of an offer of employment or disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.
- **Recipients of a redundancy benefit from the APS:** Persons who have accepted a redundancy benefit from the APS or a Commonwealth-related agency are ineligible to be engaged by DFAT within 12 months of their separation, except in some limited circumstances.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Advertised vacancies are for Senior Executive Service (SES) or non-SES positions. Non-SES positions include APS classifications from APS Level 1 (base grade) to Executive Level 2

(Director of a Section), while SES positions include Band 1 (Branch Head), Band 2 (Division Head) and Band 3 (Deputy Secretary).

The department's Collective Agreement 2009-2010

(http://www.dfat.gov.au/dept/ca_2009/DFAT_CA_2009-10.pdf) sets out the terms and conditions of employment for non-SES employees, including salary rates, performance management, bonuses and leave provisions. The following employee broadband structure is set out under the Collective Agreement:

- Broadband 1: APS Levels 1-3
- Broadband 2: APS Levels 4-5
- Broadband 3: APS Level 6 – Executive Level 1, and
- Executive Level 2.

Advancement in salary within a broadband is subject to individual performance assessments under the department's performance management scheme (see Chapter 2 of the Collective Agreement). To move to a higher broadband, employees must apply for an advertised vacancy and will be assessed on a competitive basis against both internal and external applicants.

The terms and conditions of employment for all SES employees are set out in an Australian Workplace Agreement agreed between the department and the employee. SES applicants can refer to the Australian Public Service and Merit Protection Commission's *Working with the Act* (Booklet No 2): *The Senior Executive Service* at www.apsc.gov.au, or the SES information section of the Public Service Gazette at www.apsjobs.gov.au for further information.

Vacancies are in the Canberra headquarters of the department, unless otherwise specified. Successful applicants for generalist vacancies usually remain in a work area for at least two years before being eligible for transfer within the department, including to an overseas position. Staff engaged through a specialist process will spend a minimum of three years in a position. After fulfilling their specialist commitments staff may cross over into generalist positions.

Remuneration and Salary Packaging

The salary ranges for non-SES employees are set out in the department's [Collective Agreement](#). The Collective Agreement allows for salary packaging for a broad range of employment related items including superannuation, on-site childcare, a motor vehicle, personal computers and a mobile phone. Employees are also entitled to membership of a comprehensive superannuation scheme.

All employees have access to the department's performance management scheme after a qualifying period. This scheme allows for progression through the broadband salary structure and/or performance bonus payments of up to 12 % of base salary.

The SES remuneration package (see vacancy information on the website) includes entitlement to membership of a comprehensive superannuation scheme, a vehicle (official and private use, subject to guidelines, and with an option for "cash in lieu") and access to the department's performance management scheme.