

HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB IN THE ARTS

Applying for a job can be a daunting experience at any career stage. Here are some tips that we've gathered up from all of our experiences of applying for jobs – successfully or unsuccessfully – as well as our experiences of being at the other end of the recruitment process. We encourage you to review them before you next apply for a position at Regional Arts Victoria.

Position Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read this very carefully to understand the full scope of the role. Why does it appeal to you? Does it require skills that you have, or ones that you want to develop?
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at what the organisation does and consider whether it is a good fit for you. What do you like most about the organisation and why? What do they actually do? What's the organisational culture like?
Call the contact person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's always a good idea to call the key contact listed on the job advertisement to express your interest in the role, and ask some questions that can help your application to stand out. Calls like this are always welcome – keep in mind that the organisation is as keen to hire someone great, as you are to find a great job! There are some example questions below to help you out. • Call at least a week before the application due date (not on the day before!).
Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the heart of the application. Take each selection criterion as a sub-heading and write a brief response – bullet-points are fine – that give specific examples of how you meet that criterion or how you've demonstrated the required skills in the past. • Consider how your skills and past experience might transfer into the new role. You may not have done exactly what's being asked in one selection criterion, but what work have you done that's similar? What specific examples can you give?
Application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must follow the application process. This is a demonstration of your professionalism and attention-to-detail, as well as a key way of ensuring that you're providing what the selection panel needs to make their decision. Read it carefully. • For applications to Regional Arts Victoria, you must include a one-page covering letter, your statement against selection criteria, a brief CV, and the names and contact details of three professional referees – emailed as one single PDF with your name and the position title as the document's name. • Please keep in mind that if you don't address the selection criteria or follow the application process, your application may be discarded as there's no way to assess it in relation to the other candidates. Regional Arts Victoria job advertisements give a timeline for our recruitment process, so that you know exactly how long it will take – including when interviews will be held. If you know you're not available on the interview day, mention this in your covering letter. • Application layout is important – do not include old or irrelevant information, and a photo of yourself isn't necessary. Don't include a portfolio unless it's specifically requested. Keep it simple and brief! • Make sure your covering letter addresses the person who is named as the key contact. Never address a job application "To whom it may concern." • Be sure to proof carefully – is that really your mobile number and email? • Be sure to submit your application via the required method, which might be by email, post or through an online portal. If it's an online portal, make sure you've already registered well before the deadline, as this process takes time.

Meeting the application deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have someone proof your application before you submit it, not just for spelling and grammar, but to review the clarity of your responses. Usually, the person assessing your application won't know anything about you except what you put in your application, so don't assume any knowledge of them, • Check the due date and time carefully. Submit your application at least a couple of hours before it is actually due. Give yourself room to iron out any technical difficulties well ahead of the deadline.
After submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should get a confirmation of receipt. If you don't get one within 24 hours, it's ok to send an email requesting an acknowledgement. • Apart from requesting an acknowledgement, it's best not to get in touch again. You will be contacted if you are shortlisted.
If you get an interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you know who is on the interview panel. If it's not in your confirmation email, ring and ask. • Do your research. The interviewers are almost always going to ask why you want to work at this organisation, and your answer to this question needs to be specific. At the very least, you should review the organisation website before your interview • If you know that interviews make you nervous, try role-playing interview questions with a friend. This can help you unpack more of your experience and remind you of your great skills. • Do not arrive late! Scope out the office location beforehand and plan your route. It's also important not to be too early as you may disrupt the interview day. • Most of all – be calm. The interviewers want to get to know you, and they want you to do well – no-one is hoping that you fail! Take your time, don't be afraid to pause and think about the questions or ask the interviewer to repeat them. • Don't refer to notes in the interview, and don't bring anything to show the panel unless they have specifically requested it.
If you're unsuccessful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't take it to heart. Seize the opportunity to understand why by calling the contact person. There's nothing like a job application process to provide you with honest and valuable feedback – make the most of it. • Do take the time to listen to the feedback with a generous and a critical ear. This is a rare opportunity to gain real insight into how you came across in your application. It's bound to help with your next one.

GOOD QUESTIONS

Unsure what to ask when you contact an organisation or come in for an interview? Here are some key questions that are good to consider as a starting point:

Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about the organisation, its current priorities and challenges, and its next steps. You will be better equipped to ask such questions if you do some research beforehand, such as reviewing the organisations website. • How does this role contribute to the overall vision? • What kinds of professional development opportunities does the company offer?
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a new role? Has it been changed or updated for this recruitment process? Why? • If it's not a new role, why is the previous person leaving it? • Is there scope to contribute to how the role evolves in the future?
Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the hours flexible? If it's part-time, can you choose your days?