APPLICATION PROCESS GUIDE

We use a 3-stage application process:

- stage 1: online application
- stage 2: assessment
- stage 3: offer and pre-employment checks

Further information about each of the stages is included below:

Stage 1: online application

To apply for a job at the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC), you will need to complete an online application, which is accessed through the job advert for the position. Job adverts can be searched and viewed on our website here.

Before applying, you should read the job advert carefully — it includes the Success Profile for the role. The Success Profile outlines the criteria that will be assessed, which may include a mix of behaviours, experience, and technical skills.

Candidates will be asked to supply information based on the assessment framework used for the vacancy. You will be asked to provide the following information at application:

- Personal details and contact information
- An up-to-date CV
- A Supporting Statement
- Some diversity monitoring information
- Your CV and Supporting Statement should provide clear evidence of how you meet the Success Profile criteria listed in the job advert.

Application guidance

We recommend saving your Supporting Statement in an offline document. This ensures you have a copy for your records and protects against data loss if your connection to the system drops during the application process.

Diversity monitoring

You will also be asked to provide some diversity information in the online application. This information is collected for monitoring purposes only and will not be shared with the assessing panel. It has no impact on how your application is assessed or scored.

Stage 2: assessment

You will need to provide evidence for all advertised criteria in the Success Profile during both the application and assessment/interview stages. The assessment process varies depending on the role and may include activities such as role plays, skill tests, report exercises, or presentations.

An interview will also be conducted to explore how you meet the role's requirements. Full details of the assessment process be shared with you in advance.

To learn more about the types of assessments we use and how to prepare, please see our assessment process guidance here.

Assessments will be scored on completion and offers will be made to the highest-ranked candidates.

Stage 3: offer and pre-employment checks

Successful candidates will usually be contacted by the hiring manager and receive an e-mail with a provisional offer of employment, along with details of next steps.

You can find out more about pre-employment checks in our recruitment guide.

On successful completion of pre-employment checks a final offer will be made and a start date will be agreed.

Your CV

Your CV is a document that allows you to summarise your education, work history, technical skills and your experience. Your CV will be assessed against the Success Profile criteria in the job advert so make sure the information you provide is relevant to the job.

Formatting your CV

There is no set template CVs must follow, and you will not be scored on the design your CV, however you should make sure that the content of your CV is presented clearly.

What your CV should include

Your work history can include relevant paid work, volunteering work and/or work experience through school or college. You can also mention experience you have from other environments. For example, if you helped organise a school trip or arranged a charity event you can highlight the skills you used.

Your CV does not need to be a full history of all your work and education — it's fine to leave out or summarise things that are not relevant to the role. For example, it is not important to include school information where your more recent experiences provide more evidence against the criteria.

Tips for writing your CV

- be concise: keep your CV to around 2 pages
- tailor your CV: the criteria for the position will be published in the job advert, use this to decide what information to include in your CV
- include qualifications where relevant: your education or qualifications only need to be included where they are detailed in the criteria, or if they provide relevant evidence for the panel
- include key skills and knowledge: you should provide information on skills or areas of knowledge relating to the role, such as operation of specific tools, software or knowledge of specialist topics
- list your previous roles: provide this in chronological order starting with the most recent, include specific achievements from each role along with key responsibilities
- be specific: avoid using too many generic descriptions for example 'delivered various projects', instead, provide specific examples and quantify your achievements
- give context: provide the panel with some context to understand your work, for example, Project Manager is a commonly used job title that will mean different things in different industries, provide a short explanation of the role as well as your achievements in that role
- link your achievements to roles: it is easier for a panel to understand your achievements when linked to a specific role - an achievements section is difficult to understand for panels without the context of when the achievements were made

Your Supporting Statement

The purpose of a Supporting Statement is to showcase your relevant skills and experience against the Success Profile criteria contained in the job advert.

The statement is your opportunity to give evidence and examples of how you meet the criteria.

When writing a Supporting Statement it is important that you:

- read the job advert so you are clear about the criteria required
- outline the skills and experience that you have that are relevant to the job and use examples to help demonstrate this, wherever possible include specific facts and figures that demonstrate the tangible results of your work
- keep to the word limit, if your statement is too brief it will not provide the required depth of detail and evidence to be assessed fully
- proofread your statement before submitting it to make sure it is clear, easy to read and relevant
- The Supporting Statement is an opportunity for you to include additional evidence beyond what is contained in your CV. For example, if your CV contains a reference to a successful outcome, the supporting statement is a good place to describe how you achieved that outcome.

Tips for writing your Supporting Statement

Here are some points to keep in mind while writing your Supporting Statement:

- be concise: to allow you to provide as much evidence as possible, try to summarise points in short sentences
- be clear: describe scenarios using plain English, avoid using acronyms or jargon
- tailor your application: the job advert will contain all of the criteria you will be assessed against, select the best evidence to support your application and ensure you have included relevant transferable skills
- provide evidence: the hiring panel are looking for evidence to assess your application against the published criteria, instead of writing "I have excellent communication skills", describe how you have developed or used those skills in a relevant context such as "I set up a networking forum across multiple teams to share ideas and solutions for the project"
- use headings: to help the panel understand your evidence, it's a good idea to use headings based on the criteria
- consider using the STARR (situation, task, action, result, reflection) approach: using this approach is not essential but it may help you structure your statement - think about what was needed, what you did and how you did it, what happened and what the outcome was

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in recruitment

Artificial intelligence (AI) software such as ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot and Gemini are powerful tools which can help to enhance your application and prepare for the recruitment process, but it is essential you use them appropriately.

This guidance provides information for candidates on acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in the recruitment process. It also suggests some uses of these tools that may be helpful to you.

What we look for in applications

The most important thing to remember is that during the application stage, we want to find out about you. Your application should represent your skills and personal experiences accurately and authentically, so we can understand how you would fit a role with the Police Investigations & Review Commissioner.

Good applications help us understand:

- how your skills and experience align with the role (or scheme) you are applying to
- what motivates you to do your best work
- what you have achieved and how you did it

How and when you can use AI tools

The recruitment process typically involves several stages, beginning with a job application, followed by one or more assessments, and concluding with an interview. At each stage, it is important to understand how and when to use AI tools appropriately.

Preparing your application and personal statement

If you want to use AI tools at the application stage, the goal should be to enhance your application by helping to show us who you are and what you are good at.

Warning

AI tools should never be used as a substitute for your views and professional experience, or used to provide misleading or false information at any stage of the application journey.

Acceptable uses

You can use AI tools in the application process to:

- help you refine and clarify your ideas and thoughts
- research public information about the organisation you are applying to
- find out information about trends in industries or professions that you can relate to your personal or professional experiences
- check the spelling, grammar and clarity of what you have written

Unacceptable Uses

You should never use AI tools to:

- inflate or invent your skills and experiences
- create generic responses and copy these into your application
- provide an AI tool with sensitive information about your organisation such as figures or personal details

Top tips for using AI tools at application stage

There are several ways that AI tools can improve the clarity and quality of your application whilst continuing to provide an honest and accurate reflection of your skills and experience:

- think about your personal leadership experiences and ask AI to help you improve how you present them
- ask AI to summarise public information about important projects or policies in the organisation you are applying to, so you can think about how your skills and experience could contribute to these in your responses

- ask AI to help identify relevant skills and behaviours in the job advert and then think about how you've demonstrated these in previous roles as you prepare your application
- write a list of examples you would like to include in your application with details of how you relate your experience and skills to the role, then ask AI to help you structure your response using the STAR format or other ways to strengthen your submission
- ask AI to check your answers are concise and recommend improvements that maintain their meaning
- Top tip: Make sure your application stands out by making it personal to your skills and experience.

How we assess your application

Applications are assessed based on how well they meet the Success Profile criteria outlined in the job advert.

Here's how your CV and Supporting Statement will be assessed:

- your CV and Supporting Statement will be assessed as a whole
- the panel assessing applications will look for evidence against each criteria stated in the advert across both your CV and Supporting Statement
- once the panel have assessed all applications, they will be ranked in a merit order and candidates will be invited to the next stage depending on whether they meet the criteria

Our assessment process

What to expect in an interview

Interviews are part of our assessment process and are typically held in person or via video. Their purpose is to assess your suitability for the role.

Interviews usually last 45 minutes and involve questions about how you've demonstrated the required skills or behaviours. A panel of 2-3 people, familiar with the role or grade, will conduct the interview.

Before attending, review the job advert and prepare examples that show how you meet the criteria. You may also be asked how you'd approach similar situations in the future or reflect on past experiences.

What to expect in an additional exercise

Interviews are only one part of the assessment. You will also complete at least one additional exercise to demonstrate how your skills and experience meet the criteria in the job advert.

Your invitation will explain which selection methods will be used and what to expect on the day. Where possible, the interview and exercise will take place on the same day.

Examples of exercises include presentations, role plays, written tasks, verbal responses, or portfolio reviews.

How will I be assessed

Your interview and additional exercise(s) will be assessed against the Success Profile criteria set out in the job advert.

- once all interviews and assessments are concluded, assessment panels will meet to discuss their evaluation of the performance of all candidates
- you will then be given an overall score and all candidates will be placed in merit order – job offers are made in merit order to the highest scoring candidates
- you may also be offered a place on a 'Reserve' list if you performed very strongly but were not the top-scoring candidate, and the terms of your Reserve appointment will be outlined to you when you receive your outcome

Recruitment adjustments

We want people who can bring fresh ideas and approaches and we fully support recruitment and workplace adjustments for anyone who needs them.

We welcome and encourage applications from diverse candidates.

We are committed to ensuring that all applicants have the opportunity to perform at their best throughout our application process. We offer recruitment and workplace adjustments to anyone who needs them.

We actively support the Disability Confident Scheme and offer a guaranteed interview for candidates with a disability who meet all the selection criteria for our roles.

We also support the Veterans Scheme and offer a guaranteed interview for candidates who are veterans, who meet all the selection criteria. There is no maximum time limit from when veterans left the armed forces to be eligible for this initiative. This means that veterans can apply regardless of how long ago they served.

Requesting feedback

Once you have received the outcome of your assessment and interview, you can ask for feedback as this can help you with your future applications.

When you receive the outcome of your assessment, you will also receive contact details and instructions on how to request feedback.