

Discover your options

Careers, Internships & Employment

Careers in the State Sector



The state sector is the term used to refer to all organisations that report to the crown. Organisations within the state sector include the state services (public service departments, other departments and crown entities), tertiary education institutions and offices of Parliament.

There are a broad range of positions available within the state sector. Reading career profiles of employees on the New Zealand Government jobs online website maybe helpful for you to develop a broader understanding of the types of positions available and what it is like to work in the state sector: <https://jobs.govt.nz/portal/profile.html>

Positions for Graduates within the State Sector

Graduates with degrees in nearly every discipline are employed within the state sector. Some of these include accounting, business, economics, engineering, environmental science, geology, law, public administration, social work, the arts and veterinary sciences. Examples of graduate positions include policy analyst, policy advisor, policy researcher,

administration and support, and evaluation and monitoring.

So where can you look for these types of jobs and others?

- www.careerhub.canterbury.ac.nz is where you can read about vacancies and state sector employer visits on campus.
- www.jobs.govt.nz is where you can find vacancies advertised across the entire state sector. The 'Browse

Jobs' section on the Homepage also highlights graduate vacancies. Or in the 'Search for Jobs' section under 'Any category' you can click on 'Graduate' to identify any current vacancies suitable for graduates. You might like to look at the non-graduate sections as well, particularly if you have previous related work experience.

- Vacancies will also be listed under individual government departments and agencies websites. A full New Zealand Government Directory List can be found at <https://www.govt.nz/organisations/>
- Vacancies are also advertised in national newspapers.



Internships

Some government agencies may offer internship programmes. To find out which agencies might host interns, please check with government agencies you are interested in working for directly: www.newzealand.govt.nz

Apply for positions

Each state sector organisation advertises for and appoints its own staff below the position of chief executive. All vacancies must be advertised and appointments made on the basis of the impartial selection of suitably qualified people.

Key points include:

- The application process is explained when jobs are advertised. Follow the application procedures and request a copy of the application package (including the position description and/or job profile) if not already given on the website.
- Appointment processes can vary considerably between organisations so you need to ensure you provide all the information required and present it in the form and way requested.
- Short-listed candidates will be interviewed and may need to complete some form of testing.

CV's and Job Application Forms

Some state sector organisations have suggested guidelines for doing CV's, others don't. If in doubt, check with the organisation if they have any particular preferences. Also, refer to the Guide to Job Hunting for examples and tips on layout and overall content of a CV.

In general, as part of your CV and/or filling in the application/self assessment form, you are likely to be required to identify the key competencies sought after by the employer and to provide specific examples from your work experience, activities, interests, volunteer work, projects and/or family life that illustrate your ability and experience in fulfilling these competencies.

Visualise yourself in the role and if possible use examples for each competency that are closely related to similar tasks you might be doing in the position.

Use the S.T.A.R principle in writing a competency. That is, think of a Situation and/or Task you have done. Make a note of the Action steps/activities you did in that situation and/or task, followed by the Result/outcome. In applying this principle see the example below. Please note you can use bullet points or write full sentences in writing examples to competencies.

S.T.A.R. Principle

Competency Example: Communication

Researched, prepared and delivered a presentation on the book 'Pride and Prejudice' to over 50 students as part of stage three English course. Involved reading, identifying and critiquing key themes in the novel, as well as analysing reviews/commentaries on the book. Summarised key points in a PowerPoint presentation and successfully responded to student questions at the end of the presentation. Received positive feedback from the lecturer, including an A grade.

Job Interview preparation

Selection processes and interview formats can vary within state sector organisations; however behavioural based interviewing is most common. This type of interviewing focuses on experiences, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job-related. It is based on the belief that past behaviour and performance is a likely predictor of future behaviour and performance.

What employers are looking for are examples which show how you respond to situations, tackle problems, used your initiative and what you have learned from the experience – just like you have highlighted in your CV and/or application form.

Interview tips include:

- Read the Job Interviews and Assessment Centres and Psychometric Tests sections in Careers, Internships & Employment's annual Guide to Job Hunting.
- Find out more about that state sector employer on their website. Become familiar with their structure, divisions and the type of work they do.
- Read recent speeches made by relevant Cabinet ministers to increasing your understanding of the current issues and direction facing particular state sector organisations.
- Look at government department and crown agency annual reports and other relevant literature online
- Become familiar with the Standards of Integrity & Conduct issued by the State Services Commission to understand what the expectations of professional conduct are for working in the state sector.

References: www.jobs.govt.nz and www.ssc.govt.nz
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