

## **Guidance Notes for Candidates**

The following advice is designed to help you, particularly if you do not have experience of completing competency-based application forms.

The application form plays a crucial part in the selection process, both in deciding whether you will be shortlisted or not, and at the interview itself. It is essential therefore that you complete this form as fully and accurately as possible. All information you provide is confidential. Please read the advertisement, job description, person specification, the TSSA website and any other information supplied carefully.

### **Completing the Application Form**

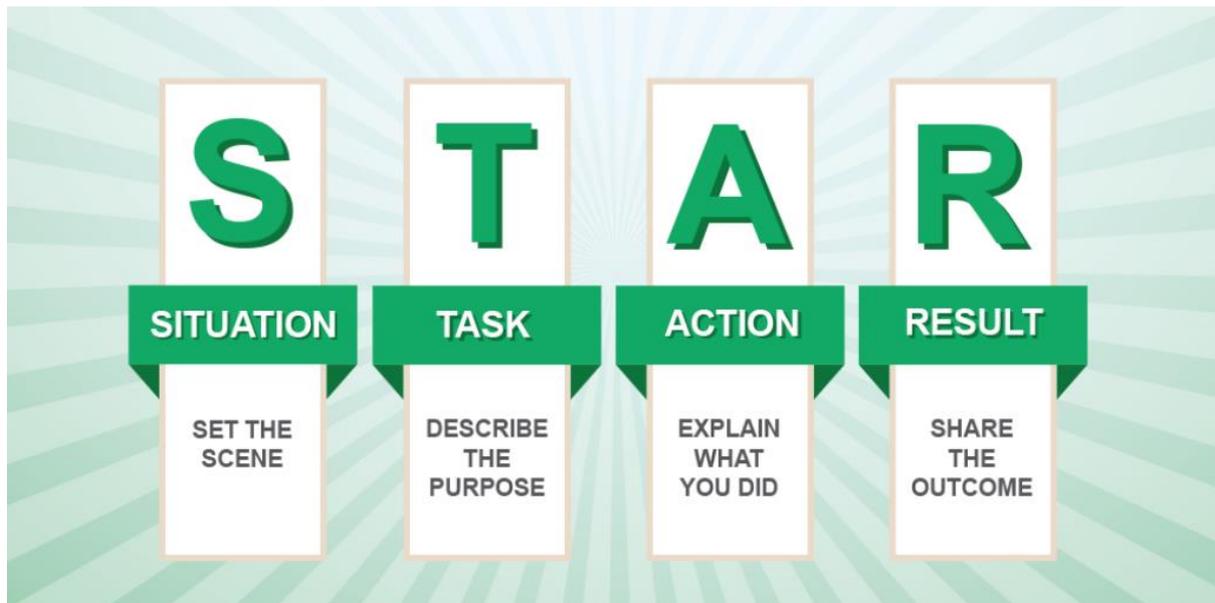
The application form should be typed and sent as a word document. Complete all sections of the form in full. When completed read the application through carefully to check for any mistakes. Return the application form as a word document by email to [vacancies@tssa.org.uk](mailto:vacancies@tssa.org.uk). **Do not enclose a CV or any other additional documents as these are not considered in the shortlisting process.**

### **Supporting Statement**

This is the most important section of the application form and should be used to demonstrate how you meet the **essential criteria** for the job you are applying for. Read the Job Description and the Person Specification first. We will have provided pre-set headings - use these headings we have provided in the order we have listed them. If you don't use the headings, it is unlikely that you will be shortlisted as we use these in our shortlisting scoring process.

Underneath each and every heading give two or three specific examples (if possible) of how you meet each set of criteria. It is not sufficient just to state that you have a certain skill, or knowledge; you need to provide us with evidence of how you have used this skill or knowledge. It is fine to use the same example if it is relevant to more than one area of competency, but don't just repeat exactly the same information.

Using the **STAR model** will help you write a supporting statement that will demonstrate to the panel your abilities.



<b>Situation or Task</b>	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalised description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the shortlisting panel to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, as a volunteer or any relevant event.
<b>Action you took</b>	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project, describe what you did - not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
<b>Results you achieved</b>	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

**Example:**

Question - What ability do you have to meet specific personal targets and objectives?

<b>Situation or Task</b>	In my previous job at the Volunteer Youth Association I was tasked with the job of getting ten local employers to subscribe to our employer volunteer programme within a two-month timeframe. Each employer had to agree that they would seek out 5 of their employees to volunteer to attend a 1-day training programme followed by 1 hour of their time (in work time) each week for six months to mentor a young person in preparation for undertaking paid employment.
<b>Action you took</b>	I began the task by researching all local employers and drawing up a list of all those that appear to share our organisations wider common values. I then contacted them all by phone to find out who the best person to contact was within the organisation. I then followed this up with a direct email or mailing to that person that included a pack that I compiled containing all the key information about the programme. Within a week I contacted the organisation again by phone to try and get a commitment to a short 121 meeting to discuss the programme in person. I would try a maximum of three times to gain access to a 121 meeting. For the meetings I devised a short but powerful PowerPoint presentation on the aims of the programme highlighting the benefits to them as an employer, particularly focusing on how engagement with the programme upsills their own staff. I also devised a bronze, silver and gold standard for employer volunteering with different levels within it, this created a real incentive for employers to want to go for gold and be seen as progressive in their local area. This also allows the employer to apply our gold standard volunteering badge on their literature/website etc. I tracked my progress in achieving the set target set using a spreadsheet and my online calendar that contained set milestones for each week.

<b>Results you achieved</b>	<p>By systematically contacting a wide range of employers and by following them up persistently (but not where it was obvious they would not engage) I secured 20 appointments with potential employers. The bronze, silver, and gold scheme that I devised really engaged employers in wanting to enrol on the programme and be seen to be a good employer amongst their staff and in the local community. I secured 10 employers to join the programme and a total of 50 volunteers from these employers. My organisation has now turned the award scheme for employers into a nationwide scheme which I am really proud of. I am also now responsible for training others employed by us in the delivery of the employer presentation. I learnt that persistence and focusing on what the employer will want from their engagement were key to my success.</p>

### Other top tips;

- Be honest if your experience is minimal in one or two areas, we are keen to develop people.
- Do talk about yourself and what you have done, use I and not we. Don't talk about what your previous organisations did, talk about what your role and contribution was/is.
- Ensure the examples you select are specific, recent and relevant. Ensure that your examples show a positive application of your skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour so we can understand how you would apply them in our workplace.
- Don't assume that we know about the jobs that you have done from the initial parts of the application form, the shortlisting panel only have access to the supporting statement.
- The examples you give do not necessarily have to relate to your current or previous employment. Skills, knowledge and experience can be gained pursuing voluntary work, leisure activities or in other areas of your life.
- Don't assume that a long trade union or similar service history proves to us your ability. Rather than tell us that you have good skills because you have worked a long time in the movement – explain to us using the STAR model as outlined above.

### Data Protection

The TSSA will process all information provided during the recruitment process in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

### Equal Opportunities

The TSSA seeks to be an equal opportunities employer. Applicants are requested to fill in the equal opportunities monitoring form. However, this section is detached and will not be used as part of the selection process unless it is required for the purposes of providing reasonable adjustments during the short listing, assessment and interview stages. Following completion of the process, the data only will be used for the purposes of monitoring and analysing our aim of increasing the diversity of our workplace.