

Candidate Guidance



Our Application & Assessment Process

Our recruitment process is fair, transparent, and based on merit, in line with the [Civil Service Recruitment Principles](#). We'll assess your skills, experience, knowledge, and attributes, and give you the best opportunity to showcase these.

The guidance below includes information on:

1. [Finding the right job](#)
2. [Inclusive Recruitment at Ofwat](#)
3. [Making your application via Civil Service Jobs](#)
4. [Our shortlisting \(sifting\) process](#)
5. [Interviews at Ofwat](#)
6. [Artificial Intelligence](#)

1. Finding the right job

Have a look at the opportunities we currently have on our [Careers website](#). Once you find a role that interests you, you can apply via [Civil Service Jobs](#). Utilising this platform enables a fair assessment, helps eliminate bias, and keeps your data secure. It also allows you to access the application portal at any time and review your application status.

2. Inclusive recruitment at Ofwat

2.1 Name-blind recruitment

We operate anonymous sifting to eliminate bias from the application review process. During the sifting stage, the hiring panel shortlist applicants for interview solely on merit. They will not see any personal identifying information. To maintain this anonymity, please don't include any identifying information in your application (e.g. do not sign or include your name in your personal statement).

2.2 Diversity & Inclusion

Your application will include a short Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) questionnaire. Your answers are anonymous. The data captured is only viewed by our HR team and is used for monitoring purposes only. We aim to be representative of the communities we serve, and we want to see diversity and inclusion embedded into all that we do. This data is important for informing our D&I strategy. You will have the option to decline to answer questions if you would prefer.

2.3 Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) and Great Place to Work for Veterans (GPTW)

We are proud to be a DCS and GPTW employer. We guarantee to interview all candidates applying under either scheme who meet the minimum essential criteria for the role.

2.4 Reasonable adjustments

You will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments as part of your application. At any stage of the process, you can contact us via recruitment@ofwat.gov.uk to discuss any further help you may require.

3. Making your application via Civil Service Jobs

When you click 'apply' you will be prompted to sign-in/create an account prior to starting your application form. The application form consists of questions detailing your employment history, previous skills and experience, and relevant qualifications. You may be asked to provide a personal statement, depending on the requirements for the role.

Please ensure you have submitted your application in full ahead of the deadline listed in the advert. Unfortunately, we won't be able to consider late applications. If you are unable to make an online application, then please contact recruitment@ofwat.gov.uk and we will be happy to support.

3.1 Your Application (CV Section)

This section of the form consists of three subsections. Complete each text box manually.

- **Employment History**

Give us an overview of your career. Include job titles, names of employers and dates of employment. List your most recent role first. Consider the relevance of your experience to the role you are applying for. Don't worry about going back further than 10 years unless you think it's relevant to the role. For example:

- Principal Economist – 'Company A' – June 21 – Current
- Economist – 'Company B' – January 18 – June 21
- Junior Economist – 'Company C' – Sept 15 – Dec 17

- **Previous Skills & Experience**

This section offers you the opportunity to highlight relevant responsibilities, skills, and achievements. Please link these with your previous roles or qualifications. Focus on the essential criteria listed in the candidate pack.

- **Qualifications**

Provide the name/type of qualification, subject, and grade. Don't include any reference to the institution you studied at. For example:

- BSc – Environmental Studies – 2:2

3.2 Personal statement

For the majority of our roles we ask for a personal statement. You can refer to the 'Selection process' section within the candidate pack for specific guidance.

Although there's a word limit, don't feel you have to fill the space. It's about the quality of your words, not the quantity. Highlight specific experience, skills and knowledge you consider relevant but remember that we only score how well you demonstrate evidence of the criteria being assessed.

4. Our sifting (shortlisting) process

We will assess your application against the essential skills, experience and knowledge listed in the 'Professional requirements' section in the candidate pack. Please note that not all the essential criteria will be assessed at sift stage. See the 'Selection process' section of the candidate pack for details on which of the essential criteria has been selected for the sift stage. Criteria not assessed at the sift stage will be assessed at a later assessment stage (e.g. interview).

When we receive a high volume of applications, we may pre-sift applications on just the **Lead Criteria** identified in the 'Selection process' section of the candidate pack. Be specific and ensure you address the lead criteria as advertised.

4.1 Application Outcome

The closing date and sifting date(s) will be identified in the candidate pack. We'll let you know of the outcome and what to expect at the next stage via email within 5 to 10 working days of the advert closing date. Keep an eye on your spam folder as this response is automated from civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk. Unfortunately, we are unable provide detailed feedback at this stage.

You can access the application portal to monitor the progress of your application by logging into your [Civil Service account](#). Your outcome and assessment score will be visible under the 'Applications' tab.

5. Interviews at Ofwat

Our interviews are structured around the attributes, experience, skills, and knowledge specified in the candidate pack. It's important to review these essential criteria to prepare for your interview.

There is usually just one interview, but some roles may have additional assessments, including a written exercise, presentation, or a second interview. The advert and the candidate pack will specify exactly what's required for your interview in the 'Assessment process' section. You can find the advert again in your 'Application Centre', on the Civil Service Jobs platform.

5.1 Questions

The interviewing panel will ask you a number of interview questions and you may also be asked follow-up questions, to delve deeper into your answers. The panel want you to do well, so feel free to ask them to repeat or clarify questions if you need to, or ask the interviewers to post the questions in the Microsoft Teams chat if your interview is held online.

Your interview may start with a warm-up question/icebreaker which won't be assessed, to help you feel more comfortable. The assessed interview questions will be a mixture of attribute-based and other competency-based questions which will be more technical in nature.

5.2 Attribute-based questions

Our [Framework for Success](#) outlines the attributes that you'll need to succeed at Ofwat and are specific to your grade. The framework also helps our colleagues identify their strengths and development areas, enabling them and their People Leader to align their development with their career aspirations.

We recognise that we all react differently to interview situations. To increase transparency, you will receive a selection of our attribute-based questions ahead of interview with your interview confirmation email. We call this transparent interviewing. This gives you the opportunity to think through your response ahead of time, so you have relevant examples to share. You can use notes throughout the interview to jog your memory, but you will want to strike a balance to avoid over-preparation or scripting your answer. We want you to be able to give your absolute best and this forms part of our approach to enable this.

5.3 The Panel

The interviewing panel will usually consist of two people, and we try to ensure diverse representation as much as possible. Names and positions of the panel members will be shared in the interview confirmation email. The interviewing panel will receive a copy of your application prior to your interview.

5.4 Location

Information about the interview location will always be included in the candidate pack and in the advert, in the 'Selection process' section. Interviews will be held either virtually via Microsoft Teams or in-person in one of our offices in London or Birmingham. Further information on how to access your interview will be emailed to you as part of your interview confirmation.

5.5 Duration

Interviews typically last around 60 minutes, but they may last longer if you have been asked to give a presentation or complete an additional task. The duration will be set out in your invite. There will be an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions. We consider interviews a two-way conversation and as much as we want to find out

more about you and your experiences, it's also a chance for you to find out more about us and the role you have applied for.

5.6 Interview Feedback

You will be provided with scores and constructive feedback once all interviews have been completed and the panel have had the opportunity to finalise outcomes. We aim to do this as quickly as possible, and the panel will usually indicate when you can expect to hear from us

6. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application and interview preparation, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action.

For further information on appropriate and inappropriate use of AI, see the [Civil Service guidance](#). Please note this guidance refers to 'Civil Service Success Profiles' as part of the Civil Service assessment framework. At Ofwat, we do not use this in our assessments – instead, please refer to our [Framework for Success](#) as listed above.