

SOCA EXTERNAL APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE NOTES

Read these notes carefully ***BEFORE*** completing the Application Form.

If you have a disability or need assistance to complete the application form please contact the Recruitment Team on the number shown at the end of the notes.

1. Introduction

The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) is a dynamic organisation with many exciting career opportunities in an environment that is geared to developing lawful innovative strategies and tactics aimed at fighting serious and organised crime.

To achieve our goals and meet the challenge of turning back the tide of crime we require high standards, drive, determination and a strong commitment to the prevention and detection of serious and organised crime through the highest professional and ethical standards.

This selection process is designed to give you an equal opportunity to demonstrate that you have the abilities and potential to perform at the highest level in the role for which you are applying.

2. Application Information

To apply for a vacancy you will need:

- A copy of the advertisement and advertised instructions
- The Role Profile for the post
- The Personal Qualities Framework
- A SOCA Application Form (HR23-04E)
- The Guidance Notes
- An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

3. Role Profile

The Role Profile outlines the entry requirements for the post. It will specify the personal qualities / behaviours for the post, the entry criteria and the training and professional qualifications required upon entry into the role. It will also set out developmental requirements of the role and you should be clear that you will be required to undertake the additional training and / or development.

4. The Application Form

The application form is laid out as follows:

- Page 1 Personal Details
- Page 2 Screening Questions

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- Page 3 Training and Qualifications
- Page 4 Employment History – current position
- Page 4 Employment History – previous posts
- Page 5 Evidence of Suitability for the Post – Personal Qualities / Behaviours
- Page 7 Evidence of Suitability for the Post – Entry Criteria
- Page 8 References
- Page 10 Signed Declaration
- Page 11 Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Please note:

- **Every section of the application must be completed.**
- Applications may be typed in Arial font, minimum size 11 or hand written if access to a computer is not possible.
- Do not extend the evidence boxes provided beyond the specified word count. Any evidence provided beyond the specified word count will not be considered.
- Do not attach a CV or any other documents to your application, they will be disregarded.
- All sections must be completed in line with these guidance notes.
- If you are unable to meet required dates your application may be declined on the basis that you are not available to participate.

4.1 Personal Details

Please complete every box. This section is for information purposes; you are not assessed on the details you include here. Please clearly specify the job title and reference number of the post for which you are applying.

4.2 Vetting and Pre-employment Checking Procedure

Candidates who are selected for permanent appointment to SOCA will be subject to checks, including National Security Vetting, in order to fulfil our aim of developing an ethical, professional and robust organisation and our objective of ensuring the highest levels of security, ethical and professional standards. SOCA currently allows entry when SC+ is obtained but DV is required within 12 months. Failure to attain DV status may result in employment being terminated during probation. If you are successful with your application you will periodically be required to update your clearance and bring to attention any matter which may affect your clearance. Failure to maintain security clearance may also lead to termination of employment.

Applications may be considered from individuals who have spent at least five of the last ten years in the UK. Foreign or dual nationality is not normally a bar to recruitment. In both cases it may be necessary for additional enquiries to be made. Applicants should seek advice from the recruitment team on the telephone number shown at the end of these Guidance Notes.

If you are successful we will require you to disclose further information about yourself, your partner, your finances, your parents, your children and anyone else who lives at the

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same address as you. This process will cover most aspects of your professional and private life. This is to get a rounded picture of you and to determine whether you will be able to cope with the demands and sensibilities of SOCA life without becoming a security risk. Such risks can arise without any specific wrongdoing on your part. It is important for your own protection as well as for the agency that all risks are identified.

Information provided at each stage of the recruitment process may not necessarily prevent your application progressing; however, failure to disclose relevant circumstances or information may be regarded as evidence of unreliability and will be taken into account in assessing your suitability for appointment with SOCA.

The vetting procedures are compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998) and in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998) and HMG's Security Policy Framework. Information obtained during the vetting process will be treated in the strictest confidence and only be used for the purpose for which it is obtained. Security clearance restrictions may affect your ability to make future internal moves.

Please note that the post for which you have applied is NOT protected by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). You must disclose any criminal convictions, including those that are 'spent'.

4.3 Training and Qualifications

Please provide details of any training courses and qualifications, both vocational and non-vocational, that you believe are relevant to the post for which you are applying. Where a certificate or diploma was awarded, please state this on the form. Present your most recent first and include any membership of professional bodies and registration numbers, if appropriate. You will be required to provide original documents for verification if your application proceeds.

4.4 Employment History – Current Position

Your work experience is important in providing background information about the work activities you have participated in and the career opportunities you have had. The Serious Organised Crime Agency welcomes applicants with a diverse mix of experience and potential.

Please provide full details of your current employment including a summary of your current duties and responsibilities and where appropriate, management experience.

If you are not in employment please indicate your employment status e.g. school leaver, returning to work.

4.5 Employment History – Previous Posts

Please provide details of your full employment history including any breaks in employment. Starting with the most recent first, provide a brief description of your main duties and responsibilities.

4.6 Evidence of Suitability for the Post – Personal Qualities / Behaviours and Entry Criteria

This is an extremely important section of the form and provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your suitability for the role. The evidence you provide in this section will be assessed and scored to establish whether you meet the required standards to be invited to interview.

Before you start completing this section, check the advert and Role Profile to clarify the personal qualities / behaviours and entry criteria you are required to provide evidence of. A useful tip is to highlight the key areas specified on the advert and Role Profile and draft your evidence in a structured manner to cover these points. To help you compile your evidence of personal qualities / behavioural requirements and entry criteria effectively it may be useful to consider the STAR method:

S – Situation

T – Task

A – Action

R – Result

STAR is a universally recognised communication technique designed to enable you to provide a meaningful and complete example or answer.

Citing recent examples from your workplace or college / university is a good method of evidencing your suitability. Your evidence may also be drawn from activities outside the workplace if appropriate.

Personal Qualities / Behaviours

The behaviours are taken from the Personal Qualities Framework, a Home Office sponsored framework, now owned by Skills for Justice. Every grade within SOCA has 10 behaviours each with clear definitions of the level required at that grade. You will be required to evidence 5 of these on your application.

When providing your evidence you are advised to look at the relevant definitions and positive indicators and ensure that you cover each of the statements contained within it. A statement of your beliefs or values is not evidence of how you meet the requirements.

You should be aware that assessors are looking for evidence that you demonstrate positive behaviours. Statements such as “I am a good team player as in the past I have picked up work that my colleague was unable to do because she was off sick” do not constitute evidence. The example is too brief and lacking in detail. It doesn’t provide any insight into the applicant’s team working abilities. Did the applicant make the offer without being prompted by a manager? On their colleague’s return to work did they bring them up to speed with what actions had been taken during their absence?

Entry Criteria

The entry criteria requirements are the specific knowledge, skills and experience needed upon entry to the role. For example, an administrator who is required to produce documents will need to have keyboard skills and be computer literate. These skills can be proved by qualification and / or evidence of regular in-depth use of a broad range of applications. Up to a maximum of 3 entry criteria are selected for testing and candidates should be sure to address those identified in the advert.

4.7 References

Your nominated referees must be able to provide information that will confirm your suitability for this post. One of your referees will be your current or most recent employer. Where this is not possible you should provide a reason and may list someone else who is qualified to comment on your performance at work or full-time education. References will only be taken up when you are made a conditional offer of employment. In order to maintain the confidentiality of your application we advise candidates not to notify referees until this point in the application process.

4.8 Signed Declaration

Please ensure that you sign your form before submitting it. Your signature confirms the accuracy of the information provided. By signing the form, you are stating that you know of no reason why you should not be employed by SOCA and provide the authority for initial security checks to commence. If you are applying by e-mail you will be required to sign a declaration confirming the application is yours and is accurate if you are shortlisted to the next stage which may be an interview or assessment centre.

4.9 Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

At the end of the application form there is an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. This form is for monitoring purposes (and to identify candidates with disabilities that want to go straight to interview / assessment centre providing they meet the minimum criteria) and will be detached from the completed Application Form upon receipt by the Recruitment Team. The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be saved separately from the Application Form if submitted electronically. It will not be seen by the shortlisting or interview panels.

5. Health Clearance

All new appointments are subject to medical clearance. If you are successful and are made a conditional offer you will be required to complete a medical questionnaire. This can be completed on line or downloaded and returned to the appropriate address.

This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

6. Feedback

Applicants who reach the interview / assessment stage will be provided with feedback on request at the end of the selection process.

7. Submitting your Application

Please check the cost of postage prior to posting, as insufficient postage may lead to a delay in delivery. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Return your completed application by post to:
The Recruitment Team
P.O. Box 58352
London
NW1W 9JT

Tel. 0117 372 0000

For security reasons - **DO NOT** refer to SOCA on the envelope

Or by e-mail to central.recruitment@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk

Please note: We are unable to accept faxed versions of application forms.



METADATA

Business Area:	Human Resources
Policy Owner:	Deputy Director Human Resources
Author / Responsible Person:	Recruitment Team

Review and Amendment Dates

Date issued:	09/12/10 (v1)
Date of last amendment / review:	23/02/11 (v2)
Date of next review:	23/02/13