



6 October 2021

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Tēnā koe Ethan

Thank you for your email of 18 August 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting information about job advertisements asking for whakapapa.

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Responses to your individual questions are below.

**Question One: Does the request for candidates to disclose their whakapapa relate to the selection criteria for the role?**

The invitation for candidates to disclose their whakapapa is voluntary and does not relate to selection criteria. In the layout of the advert, there are subheadings and included under the heading *'Mōhou ake | About you'* are the requisite skills and experience needed for the role, and relate to the selection criteria for a role.

Under the heading *'Kua rite koe mō tēnei mahi? | Are you ready to make a difference?'* is where the application process is noted. The option to talk about whakapapa is included in a list outlining the sort of information an applicant may choose to put in a cover letter.

Cover letters in general allow applicants to tell us about themselves, both specifically relating to the job requirements but also more generally who they are as a person. This allows candidates who want to, to tell us more about their connection to a place or where they place themselves in the world which aligns well with a Te Ao Māori view, and we believe it may encourage more applications from people of diverse backgrounds.

If the information provided in a cover letter is relevant to the specific selection criteria, it will be used alongside that which is provided in a CV to inform the decision whether to shortlist and interview the candidate. It also helps build a full picture of the candidate, as contribution to the ultimate decision on whether the person is the best person for the role.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The Ministry will review future job adverts to ensure it is made clearer to applicants what information is required for the application process and what information is optional.

**Question Two: If the answer to (1) is yes:**

Not applicable

**Question Three: If the answer to (1) is no:**

**a. In relation to section 22 of the Privacy Act 2020, what is the lawful purpose for which this personal information is being collected?**

The information is lawfully collected as part of the Ministry's application process. Providing a cover letter as part of the application process is optional, though strongly encouraged.

Our application system will allow an applicant to submit an application without a cover letter if this is how someone prefers to apply. Alternatively, an applicant may choose to include a cover letter with their application but outline information that differs from what is listed on Ministry adverts. Our list is a guide for applicants to develop an application that they feel will present them well.

**b. In relation to section 22 of the Privacy Act 2020, what steps has the Department taken to ensure that the individuals providing the information are aware of the purpose for which it is being collected?**

The fact that the request is noted in the paragraphs outlining How to Apply, is an indicator of the purpose for which the information is being collected. The Ministry will review this material for clarity of purpose.

**Question Four to Six:**

**Has the Department's privacy officer been consulted to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act 2020 in the collection of this personal information from candidates?**

**Has the Department's Head of Human Resources and/or other members of the HR team been consulted on the decision to include the request for whakapapa and any related selection criteria?**

**I also request copies of all correspondence and documents related to this consultation, or any decision not to consult.**

**Has the Department's internal or external legal counsel been consulted on the decision to include the request for whakapapa and any related selection criteria? I also request copies of all correspondence and documents related to this consultation, or any decision not to consult**

No, neither the Privacy Officer nor the Legal Team were consulted on this decision.

The Chief People Officer / Head of Human Resources holds responsibility for executing the employment brand and publishing of vacancy related advertising. They would seek advice from internal departments (eg legal and privacy) if required.

No correspondence or documents exists other than what was drafted into the job application. As such, this part of your request for all correspondence and documents has been refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the requested documentation does not exist.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Zoe Griffiths  
**Hautū Te Puna Rangatōpū | Corporate**