



How the language in cyber security job ads impacts diversity

BETA worked with the Department of Science, Industry and Resources, and Jobs and Skills Australia, to analyse 12 million Australian job ads published online over the last decade.

We aimed to understand how the language currently used in cyber security job ads may discourage women from applying, and how these job ads could be improved.



Flexibility

Evidence: Only **0.1% of job ads in cyber security** offered part time positions in 2022, yet in reality, many people actually do work part-time in cyber security.

Solution: Offering part-time and other flexible working conditions is an evidence based way to increase the number of female applicants.



Gendered language

Evidence: Cyber security uses the most stereotypically masculine language of any occupation. However, despite using an above average amount of stereotypically feminine language, cyber still has one of the lowest proportion of women in its workforce.

Solution: Reducing the amount of masculine language, *not increasing the amount of feminine language*, may increase the number of female applicants.



Lists of skills

Evidence: Both cyber security and ICT job ads specify many more skills than other job ads, including job ads for other highly technical roles (e.g. engineering).

Solution: An overly long list of skills may be overwhelming and deter applicants in other fields who may have relevant skills and experience.



Job ads written in a way that encourages women to apply may lead to a more diverse cyber security workforce.