



Training & Employability

Application forms

Many employers prefer application forms to CVs. Forms are easier to compare because, unlike CVs, all applicants will present the information the employer wants in the same way.

As long as you answer everything and use the opportunity to show how you meet the person specification, you will be in with a good chance of getting an interview. Do not send a CV instead or as well, unless it has been requested.

They can be very time consuming but the more you do the quicker you will become, especially if you save your answers in a Word document or to your email.

Online application forms

If the form is online, draft your application offline first in a word processing package like Word or Google docs and save it regularly. This way you'll be able to use spell check and have a back-up copy.

Often you can store your application online and come back to it. If you do this, keep a record of any usernames and passwords.

Paper application forms

If you're filling in a form by hand, write as neatly as you can in black ink. Use block capital letters if the form asks you to.

A good way to avoid mistakes and crossings-out on the final form is to photocopy or print 2 copies of the original and practice.

Tips for the form

Reasons for leaving

Be positive about your reasons for leaving a job and keep it short e.g. end of contract, or career progression.

Equal opportunity monitoring

Organisations often ask you to fill in a form about details such as your ethnicity, gender and sexuality. This is not used for selection, just to check they are receiving applications from all sections of the community.

Personal or Supporting Statement

Use this section to show how the skills and experience match the person specification for the job you are applying for, why you want it, and how you would be good at it.

- A really good idea is to use the person specification as headings in the same order they are listed, and write an answer for each heading. This makes it easy for the employer to see you tick all of their boxes
- It's really important that you give real examples to show when you gained the skill or how you apply it in real situations
- If you don't have specific experiences of that skill in a work situation, think about similar skills or examples from volunteering or your life experience. Remember your transferable skills!
- Use positive language and describe what you could bring to the company
- Be honest - they will find out if you aren't.
- It will also impress employers if you show some knowledge of the company, such as what they do, what their strengths are and any latest development that might have been in the news
- If there is not word limit, space or character limit, try and aim for 2 sides of A4. Be concise - they are probably reading a lot of applications

Very important - check and recheck!

Read it over a few times to check for spelling and grammatical errors - these are one of the most common reasons applications are rejected. It's useful to:

- Ask someone else to proofread it and check it for you – a fresh pair of eyes often sees things that we've missed ourselves!
- Check that the formatting of the form hasn't been knocked out of place
- Check you've filled in all the boxes that are relevant to you. If a box isn't relevant, put 'N/A' (not applicable) in the space provided
- Save, photocopy or print out the finished form, so that you have a record of what you've written. You'll need to be able to refer back to it if you get an interview
- Make sure you get it in before the closing date. Check what time it needs to be in by on that date. Companies reserve the right to bring forward the closing date so try and apply as soon as you see the job advert!