

APPLICATION FORMS

Why do employers use application forms?

- Application forms are used by employers, particularly medium and large sized organisations and by education and research institutes for postgraduate or professional study, as a way of finding out more about potential candidates and ensures the information they require is standardised. Application forms may be accessed via an online portal and completed and saved in stages, while others may be a downloadable form, which is then emailed to the recruiter.
- Most job adverts will include a job description and/ or person specification of the required qualifications, skills and experience and could include essential and desirable criteria. Recruiters will be looking for examples of how you meet their criteria and what you can bring to their organisation.
- Applications may be screened manually or using software which identifies key words.

What does an application form include?

- **Role applied for** – include any job reference codes that are requested.
- **Name and contact information** – use capital letters at the start of names, addresses and postcodes e.g. Charles Lee, 10 Sunny Lane, Reading, Berkshire RG6 9UR.
- Sections may include:
 - Eligibility to work in the UK
 - Disability disclosure – additional support/ resources may be available
 - Extenuating circumstances – given to explain if expected results were not received
 - Criminal conviction disclosure – spent convictions not required
 - Professional membership.
- **Education and qualifications** – start with the most recent first and include your full course title and secondary/ high school qualifications. Expected/ predicted grades can be used.
- **Employment/ work experience** – can include paid and unpaid work, starting with the most recent first.
- **Questions** – usually competency (behaviour) or strength based, which may have a word limit.
- **Personal Statement/ Additional Information** – structured and tailored free text paragraphs showing your interest and suitability for the job/ course.
- **Referee contact details** – usually two named individuals, one academic and one professional. PhD applications, research and academic roles may require three referees.

Hints and tips for writing a successful application

- Check the application closing date – submit your application well before the closing date, applications may not be accepted after the date has passed! Some popular internship, placement and graduate schemes may close before the advertised closing date if large numbers of applications are received.
- Save or screenshot the job advert, job description and person specification as these will not usually be available after the application closing date. Keep a list or log of your applications and when you submitted them, tools such as Trello or Excel may be helpful.
- Do your research before attempting the form. Research the organisation, the job role/course and other relevant information so you know exactly what the employer is looking for.
- Draft answers in Word and get them checked as you complete them.
- Show how you meet the entry requirements and criteria. Use your research to decide what your best examples are to answer the employer's questions. Use a range of examples including experience at university, part-time or voluntary work, extra-curricular activities and achievements.
- Complete **all** sections – if any parts are not relevant, put Not Applicable N/A as it shows that you have read the form properly. If you are not sure about the content of any section check with a Careers Consultant. Still provide information and examples, even if they are included in an attached CV and always give honest answers.
- Follow all instructions carefully. Read the form carefully from start to finish and follow any specific instructions including word counts - which you must never go over. Writing succinctly is a skill. Try deleting any unnecessary words or phrases.
- Employer questions are often linked to the company competencies or values and require evidence and examples of your experience and strengths. Structuring your answers using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action and Result) technique, will ensure they flow.
- Make it clear which experience you are referring to e.g. In my Marketing Intern role at Adagency, I...
- Pay close attention to detail. This is expected by ALL employers, so check the final version for typing errors, misspellings and poor grammar. Use UK English spellings if applying in the UK.
- Sound motivated and enthusiastic. Personalise and tailor your application to show why THIS company and THIS role, use the organisations name and what you can bring to them. Employers want to employ people who want to work for them.
- Ask someone to read over your form and check for grammatical and spelling errors. The Careers Centre can provide guidance on structure and content.
- Attach any required documents, such as a CV, ensuring they are clearly labelled with your name or initials and what the document is. Some may include anonymous Equal Opportunity monitoring forms.
- Keep a copy of your application form. When it comes to the interview stage, it is very useful to remember what you have told the employer and the information provided may form the basis of their questions.