



careers advice pack

10. Guide to application forms



Application forms

Application forms are used by many, often larger, employers in both the public and private sectors. They enable employers to compare information from candidates on a 'like-for-like' basis and to seek specific information from those applying. Employers often ask you to complete an application form online.

If the job you wish to apply for requires an application form, then there is usually no way around it! Don't send in a CV instead as this will result in an immediate 'no', unless you have agreed this with the organisation in advance.

Here are some guidelines for success with application forms...

Before completing the form

- Read through the whole application form before you start to complete it.
- Read and note any guidelines you have been given about how to complete the form.
- Review the job description and any other available details about the role.
- Gather your content and details for each section.
- Prepare a draft for each section.
- If using a paper form, take a copy so that you can do a rough version first.

Completing the form

- Answer **all** the questions on the form carefully.



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- Be specific in your answers and give evidence (specific examples) for your skills and experience.
- Use the CAR approach for your examples. This means thinking through:
 - Circumstances – what was the task?
 - Action – what did you do?
 - Result – what was the result?
- Use bullet points and headings to make what you write as clear to the reader as possible (they will have tired eyes after reading lots of forms!) This is especially useful in longer sections such as a 'personal statement' or 'reasons for applying'. The job description will give you clues as to which headings to include.
- Keep to the guidelines on the number of words for each section. Avoid the temptation to write more. If you have to, and the guidelines allow, attach additional pages (clearly headed). Keep the number of additional pages as low as possible.
- Group together some content if space is short – e.g. several jobs from your earlier work history.
- Focus on the skills and experience you have that are most **relevant** for the job you are applying for.

Once completed

- Ask someone to proof read the form for you before you send it.
- Keep a copy. Essential for the interview and useful for future forms you may do.
- Submit your application by the deadline along with any additional documents requested. Do not send in a CV, attach a photo or covering letter etc unless specifically asked to do so.