Application form hints and tips

Many employers will ask you to complete an application form when you apply for a job. Some will send you a traditional paper form. Others will ask you to download and print out a form from their website.

Although they are time consuming to complete, they can give you more scope to demonstrate your suitability for the role, by answering questions and giving specific examples.

Hints

- Read the job advert or job description, and have a copy to hand. Match your skills and qualities to that specific job.
- Read the entire form carefully before you start, and make sure you follow any instructions. For example, use BLOCK CAPITALS when asked, or use black ink.
- Practise on a photocopy of the form before you complete the original. If you are downloading the form from the employer's website save a copy, or print one out, to use as a practise version.
- It can take anything from 30 minutes to an hour to complete an application form. So, give yourself enough time to do it well.
- Keep your writing neat and clear. If you are using a word processor keep things simple. Use the same type of font throughout and make sure it's easy to read.
- Complete all of the sections. If a question doesn't apply to you just write in 'Not Applicable' or N/A.
- Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. If possible, get someone else to check your draft copy before you complete the final version.
- Make sure the information you give is truthful and accurate.
- Make sure you get the form in by the closing date.

Tips

- Complete the form in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed; you'll make more mistakes if you can't concentrate.
- Try to make the best use of space in the form. If necessary, use an additional sheet of paper and attach it to the form.
- Don't eat or drink near paper application forms as stains are hard to remove from paper – especially if you only have one original copy.
- Likewise, keep a paper application form in a safe place, where children and pets can't find it!
- Keep a copy of the completed form to use again when filling in other forms. You can also use it to prepare for the interview.
- Don't write any examples down that you can't explain in more detail at an interview.
- Contact your referees, the people who are providing you with a reference, to let them know that the employer might be in touch.
- Many application forms have a large section called 'Other Information', 'Relevant Skills and Experience', or similar. Here the employer is giving you a chance to sell yourself and let your personality shine through. Give them more examples of skills and experience and how you are ideal for the job. Make the most of this section!

- You may also want to read our articles about **Applying online**.