

Application forms

You will need to complete an **application form** for most jobs, apprenticeships and college courses.

Like a Curriculum Vitae (CV) an application form gives an employer/ admissions tutor a general overview of your skills and experiences and the reasons why you think you are the right person for the job/course.

You should give all applications forms careful consideration and time.

You might want to use a covering letter to go with an application form – see *Covering and Speculative letters* for details and examples.

1: Find out what the employer or college is looking for

- * Have you picked the job/course advert apart?
- * Have you listed all the skills, experience and qualities essential for the job/course?
- * Have you done additional research about the employer/ college to ensure you are using the right language?
- * Have you spoken direct to the employer/college about the opportunity?

2: Preparation

- * Have you given yourself plenty of time to complete the form?
- * Have you taken a copy of the form to practice on? This is essential as it will help you judge how to make best use of the space available.
- * Have you read any instructions that came with the form?
- * Have you read through the form thoroughly?
- * Do you have a good quality, **black pen** to complete the form?
(Forms are often photocopied).

Think about:

Brochures/prospectuses, websites and publicity materials can give you some useful key words to use.

If the form is electronic you may be restricted to a particular font style and size.

Speaking to the employer/ college shows you are really interested; it can give you some useful additional information and means your application form doesn't arrive cold.

3: Presentation

- * Is your writing neat and tidy? If your writing is very untidy complete the form in block capitals.
- * When you write are there usually lots of crossings out or correction fluid? Take things slowly as this won't look good.

4: Content

- * Are your answers informative and with just enough detail? You need to give the essential detail but leave the employer/college wanting to meet you to find out more.
- * Are you constantly thinking about what the employer/college is looking for?
- * Are your statements positive and active?
- * Have you completed all the spaces provided? If something doesn't apply to you write 'not applicable' or 'N/A'.
- * Have you made the most of your work experience, holiday work and Saturday job?
- * Have you given details of the extent of your interests – cinema, sport, reading – and any clubs, societies and achievements.
- * Have you made best use of the 'Other Information' section? Make sure they know why you are so suited to the job/course. Demonstrate through past experiences how you are keen and willing to learn, motivated and reliable.
- * Have you checked with your referees that they are happy to be contacted?

Don't cross out or use correction fluid on an application form. Take copies and practice. Don't rush.

State you have a clean driving licence if relevant.

Use sentences like: "I organised a successful work experience placement with a juice bar chain." and "My voluntary work at the hospice inspired me to start a fund raising appeal at school – last term we raised £300."

Don't leave holiday work or Saturday jobs out – these show your motivation to try things.

Flesh out the skills, experience and qualities you have in the 'Other Information' section.

5: Get other people's opinion of your application form

- * Have you shown your application form to someone who knows you well?
- * Have you asked for feedback on your application form from friends, colleagues or your Connexions Personal Adviser?
- * Have you considered the feedback and made the necessary improvements?

6: Before you submit it

- * Have you signed and dated the form?
- * Have you spell-checked the form?
- * Have you taken a photocopy or saved a copy of the completed form?

Criminal Convictions

Generally, the rule is – if an application form asks if you have one, and you do, you must say yes. But, if a length of time called the 'rehabilitation period' has passed since your conviction you no longer have to declare you have a criminal record. The following website has some useful guidance – www.youthinformation.com go to Justice and Equality > Crime > Criminal Records. See *Getting ready for an interview* for how to tell an employer about a conviction.

7: Deal positively with rejection

- * Have you contacted the company/college to find out why you weren't successful?
 - * Will you revise your application form in the light of this feedback?
 - * Do you accept that rejection can happen for a number of reasons?
 - * Are you being realistic and persistent enough?
- Get advice from your Connexions Personal Adviser or a teacher. They will be able to advise if you are going for the right opportunities in the right way.

Think about:

Your Connexions Personal Adviser, your teachers, parents, carers and friends can help to make sure you are not 'under selling' yourself.

Don't take rejection personally – internal candidates usually have an advantage and completing application forms is a skill that benefits from practice.