

## Job Applications

A single job advert can attract many applications.

Just a few of them will get an interview, and usually only one will get the job!

How can you make sure you stand out from the crowd?

It all comes down to the impression you make when you apply.

When you hear about a job or see one advertised, you usually have to phone, email or write to apply. Some organisations use online or printed application form, whereas others will want to find out more about you from a letter, email and/or CV (Curriculum Vitae). This is a Latin word meaning the 'Course of Life' and it is a document that outlines your name, address, contact details, skills, experience and interests.



**Whichever way you apply, it is important to think carefully about how you present yourself**

## Applying Online

Most employers will expect you to apply for vacancies electronically. This can mean filling in an application form on their website or sending them an email containing a cover letter and your CV. Take as much time and trouble over what you write online, and make a copy of it for your own records.

## Application letters and emails

- Apply for a job as soon as you find out about it
- Unless the advert specifically asks you for a handwritten application, word process your application
- If submitting a hand written application, do a rough copy first. For your final version, use black or blue ink, as this is much more professional and will allow the employer to photocopy if necessary.
- If you start your letter with 'Dear Sir/Madam' you should end your letter with 'Yours faithfully'. Use 'Yours sincerely' if you are addressing your application to somebody by name.
- Always mention which job you are applying for, give the job reference if applicable, and mention where and when you saw their advertisement.
- When providing 'referees' make sure you ask their permission first.
- Make sure your spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct. Get someone else to check it as you may not spot your own mistakes – if you are using a computer; remember to use the spell check and grammar functions.
- If you are applying for lots of positions, keep a record, e.g. on an excel spreadsheet, and keep a copy of your specific application.

## Write the 'right' letter or email

Stand out from the rest.

If the job advert asks you to write or email for further details, or make contact for an application form, **do just that!** Don't tell the story of your life.

**Make your email or letter clear and concise. Keep it short.**



However if the job advert asks you to apply in writing, you should give your full details and the reasons why you are applying for the position.

- Say where you saw the advert
- List your qualifications
- Give details of your work experience and skills – align these to the vacancy as much as possible
- Say why you want the job and why you are suitable
- Make sure your name and contact details can be read easily
- If sending your letter in the post, make sure you use a white or brown envelope. Address it clearly and include the person's name, job title and department (if you know this information). Make sure you include the postcode and use a first-class stamp.

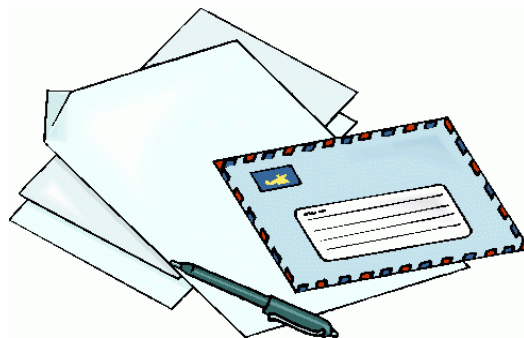
## Sending a CV

Employers nearly always want you to send a CV. This is a document which outlines your name, address, contact details, skills, experience and interests. If you are applying for a particular vacancy try to tailor your CV towards the skills, personal qualities and experience they are seeking.

## Writing a speculative letter or email

If you have not seen a suitable job advert, you may want to approach a particular employer – on the off chance they may have plans to recruit in the near future. If you impress them, they may keep your details on file and consider you if a suitable job arises.

- Research potential employers by using their websites; you may also find information on employers in your local library.
- Find out the name of the relevant person to contact (normally the person actually recruiting i.e. Manager or the Human Resources Person, who is the person who manages all the recruitment and retention of staff in the Company). Address your application to them personally. You could telephone the organisation to find the information you need, or look on their website.
- Include your CV to inform the employer so your skills, experience and qualifications.
- Accompany the CV with a short letter or email informing the employer of the type of work you are looking for, and why your relevant skills and experience would 'fit' with the company. Ask them to contact you if a suitable vacancy arises.
- Keep a record of all your applications, so that you can follow up in a few weeks with another letter or email to check that your 'on-spec' application has been received by the right person and this will also give you a chance to find out about any opportunities with the organisation.



## Writing a CV

### What is a CV?



CV means Curriculum Vitae – meaning ‘a Course of Life’ and that’s exactly what it is – a record of your experience and achievements so that employers can see what you can do for them!

A CV is a record of your education, qualifications, employment and experience in a written format.

It is used to ‘market’ yourself to a prospective employer

### It can be a full time job, looking for a job!

You need to be organised and prepared – be methodical in your approach

Prepare an excel spreadsheet – to keep track of the places you apply to. Have it easily to hand, just in case an employer contacts you unexpectedly. Telephone interviews are quite common these days – especially in forward/customer facing roles. Ensure you are ready to receive calls in a polite and well spoken manner.

The Excel spreadsheet needs to have the basic details on, who you are applying to, their email address, the company name, telephone number and a short paragraph about the company – *don’t get caught out!*

### Make sure you are prepared

- You need to MAKE A JOB OUT OF LOOKING FOR A JOB
- Be organised, prepared and methodical
- Create an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of your applications



### Make sure you include

- Your contact details
- Your personal Profile
- Your Education and Training
- Your work experience, including any voluntary work
- Your hobbies and interests
- References – normally two – work reference or character references are normal

**Your contact details** – no nicknames, you full postal address, one phone number and one SENSIBLE email address

**Your Personal Profile** – A short paragraph which describes you and what you are like. Try to keep your profile to 3 or 4 sentences – remember HR/Employers may just ‘scan’ your CV, don’t let your important information get lost! Try and align your profile to the JOB you are applying for, perhaps use some similar words to the job specification. Make sure you can ‘qualify the statements’ for example ‘**Good at working alone using my own initiative but a good team player too**’ try and give an

example of this later in your CV (Hobbies/Work Experience etc.). State what you are good at, and what you do best. Remember to add the relevant skills and strengths you can bring to the company

**Your Education and Training** – When listing your qualifications list them with English, Maths and Science first – then add the rest, with your best grades first - add in the dates you achieved these.

**Your work experience, including any voluntary work** – List in date order, go in reverse date order – newest first - work experience, part time jobs and skills that you used/gained, training etc. Think about Sports/Music/drama art etc./Members of clubs/Cadets/Responsibilities. Don’t forget your main responsibilities and any training certificates or training received (even if not accredited). Don’t worry if you don’t have any work experience, highlight your responsibilities in other ways e.g. any extra curriculum activities such as DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD, MEMBER OF SCHOOL COUNCIL ETC



**Your hobbies and interests** – written in a paragraph, this is a chance to sell your self in a positive way showing commitment and team work, it can highlight your varied interests and can align to your personal profile

**References** – Normally 2 referees. Sometimes a Head of Year/school can be used for a character reference and then add a work reference if possible. Make sure they know you are putting them down as reference – get their permission and warn them!

**Employability Skills or Transferable Skills** can be found in the job adverts and employers are looking for these to know you are able to fit into the working environment and carry out the role. It is important when adding these into your CV that you can give examples of when you have used them. This can be highlighted in your experiences or in your hobbies and interests.



## Important points:

- Ensure you use a clear typeface
- Use bullet and Headings to break up information
- Ensure you are consistent throughout
- Use the same typeface throughout the document
- No longer than two sides, one page
- Keep CV relevant to position you are applying for
- Present your relevant skills and qualities clearly and concisely
- Convert to a PDF document
- Don't lie or make things up
- Check spelling/get someone else to review it



Use a plain easy to read typeface (e.g. Calibri or Arial) and make sure it is no smaller than 10 point, use black type on white A4 good quality paper.

Use Headings and Bullets to enhance the layout.

Keep the information concise, ensure you don't use more than 2 sides.

Keep a copy and add to this/amend as necessary to align to particular job/skills required.

Use the job description to help you with the skills required.

Use the Company website to find out the sort of company they are, look at their mission statement or values.

Think about what you can offer this employer and how you are going to be different from the other applicants.

Avoid fancy borders.

No pictures/portraits – unless requested or you are applying for 'Britain's Next Top Model'!

Don't lie or make things up – you will be found out!

Spell check or get someone else to read it as sometimes you can not see errors.

If you haven't had a part time job, you can look for other ways in which to add to your CV.

There may be some opportunities **in School** where you have worked in a team, or lead a team, joined a club or group or organised an event. Did you keep records, hold meeting, take minutes?

**Outside School**, are there any clubs or extra curriculum activities such as Duke Of Edinburgh Award or similar? Voluntary Work? Do you belong to any clubs such as Scouts, Cadets, Guides, Local Charity events, Fundraising, etc

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SHINE

- School** – have you been part of a club or group at school or college where you had responsibilities?
- Have you helped to organize a college or school event? Did you have to keep records? Hold meetings? Take minutes?
- Outside School** – any extra curriculum activities such as Duke of Edinburgh Award or similar, examples of where you have worked in a team?
- Voluntary** – Scouts/Guides? Local charity? Local elderly home?



## Application Forms

Sometimes employers ask you to complete their own application form. This serves a number of purposes, and can vary depending on the organisation and the nature of the job. An employer may prefer applications in this format as each candidate answers the same questions and it can make it easier for the employer to make direct comparisons. The form itself may be a test as to the applicants' literacy and accuracy skills so it is very important to take care and time when completing these. If you are using a paper based copy, it is better to write your answers using a word processor and then once you are happy you have completed all the sections, neatly copy onto the form.

### Some important general points:-

Make sure you read through the whole form and/or all the instructions before you start.

If possible, print a copy to practice on, this will help you to see how much copy you need for each section/question.

If completing on line, make sure you complete in 'Word' or similar first and then you can copy and paste your responses into the online form, make sure you save it regularly.

By preparing your answers in 'Word' first, you can also ensure you have a copy and the spelling is correct. Some on-line application forms will not automatically have a spell check function.

Follow instructions, such as **'use capital letters'**, **'use black ink'**.

Make sure you answer all the questions.

Make sure you get your punctuation and grammar correct too – ask someone else to read through your answers, as it isn't always possible to spot your own mistakes.

Once you have a copy you are happy with, keep this, and use this as your starting point when applying for all jobs, remember to amend where necessary to ensure it matches the job and person specification.

Keep an excel spreadsheet of all your applications, including name, dates, phone numbers, company information and details about the job you are applying for, this will help you to be prepared for any replies from employers.

Some employers seek information regarding your gender, age, nationality, whether or not you have a disability etc, this is to help employers monitor their equal opportunities policies.

## Competency-based Applications

Some organisations use competency-based applications. These will ask you a series of questions based on your skills and aptitudes. Sometimes there is not an obvious 'right' or 'wrong' answer; however the employer may use your responses to assess your skills within the workplace.

## Phoning about Jobs

When you ring about a job vacancy, always have the advert and/or your excel spreadsheet beside you so that you know: -

The number to ring

The person you want to speak to or the department such as HR (Human Resources)

The telephone extension number

When you applied for the post and a little information about the company (especially if you are confirming or enquiring about your application)

If you are using a mobile, make sure you have a good signal, plenty of credit on your phone (if applicable) and it is fully charged. Have a piece of paper or your diary to hand so you can write down any essential information and/or check your availability if you are offered an interview.