

How to Complete (Job) Application Forms

Job applicants may be asked to complete a form, rather than submit a CV and covering letter. Many of the sections are standard for most forms, but your son or daughter should always tailor their form to the job, especially when completing the Personal Statement. A form may be available online or on paper, depending on the company but if completing a paper application form, applicants should use a black pen and CAPITAL LETTERS, unless the form specifies otherwise.

Applicants may wish to prepare some sections in advance, particularly the Personal Statement, which can be produced as a Word document then copied or pasted into the online form.

Typical sections on a form:

Personal Details

A contact phone number and/or email address should be provided. This is especially important if the company wants to invite the applicant for interview.

Education

Applicants should always provide the information asked for, but sometimes it is appropriate to summarise, e.g. 5 GCSEs including English Language and Maths, if the student has higher level qualifications.

Employers will be particularly interested in basic qualifications such as English and Maths and subjects/qualifications which are relevant to the post.

Employment/Work Experience

When your son/daughter is starting out, there may not be much to put here but weekend and vacation work, voluntary work and work experience can be included.

Emphasise experience that relates to the job applied for, e.g. *Using MS Office including Word and Excel on a regular basis*, for a clerical position.

Be sure to explain any gaps in employment history, focusing on the gains, e.g. *Taking a year off to travel around Asia, meeting a variety of people and building self-reliance and confidence*.

Similarly, regarding leaving a job – give a brief but positive explanation, e.g. *Progressing to next post; Making a career change*.

Personal Statement

This section may also be called *Supporting Statement, Supporting Information or Additional*

Information. This is in many ways, the most important part of the application and gives your son or daughter the opportunity to sell themselves to the employer. The key points they should cover are:

- Why they want the job/want to work for this particular company
- What they have to offer

The second point should take up most of this section and be answered in relation to the Person Specification, i.e. how they meet the criteria for the role, ensuring each point on the Specification is addressed.

Your son or daughter should highlight their relevant experience and skills acquired, e.g. *I worked for nine months as a Saturday retail assistant at DreamBuyWorld gaining valuable customer service experience and skills in stock management and control.*

Communication and IT skills are required for many positions.

Training/Skills

Some forms will ask for information on training and/or additional skills gained, e.g. experience of a particular software package, typing, joinery skills, etc.

Formal qualification would normally go under the Education section but any additional courses or certificates (usually for short or part-time courses, evening classes, or work-related training) can be included here.

Only those courses which are relevant to the post or demonstrate a particular skill, e.g. leadership should be included.

CV

There is sometimes the option to include a [CV \(Curriculum Vitae\)](#) with the application form. If one is included:

1. It should be up-to-date
2. The information on it should be consistent with that on the form
3. Don't leave information off the form because it is on the CV. All relevant information should be on the form, which is the main source of information for the employer

References

Most forms ask for a reference from a current or most recent employer and at least one other. Applicants should ask permission from the referee before including their details.

When time has passed, details should be checked as the referee may have changed jobs or job title.

Applicants should choose referees who can comment positively and relevantly on the applicant's experience or skills/attributes.

If your son or daughter is applying for a job and doesn't want his/her current employer to know, they should tick the box saying: 'Do not contact before a job offer is made' (or similar). If this option isn't available, they can always request that the person is not contacted, on the form.

In general

- Always be honest. Recruiters are adept at spotting inconsistencies/exaggeration
- Treat online forms as equivalent to their printed versions. Applicants shouldn't use abbreviations, text-speak or language they might use in an email to a friend
- If a part of the form isn't relevant, put N/A or not applicable
- Don't complete the form at the last minute. This is more likely to lead to mistakes and incomplete information, and with online forms, system downtime or failure may prevent the form being submitted in time
- The form should always be checked before submission and a copy printed out and kept. This can be referred to before an interview or can be a source of reference for future applications. Remember to keep the information up to date

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