Application Forms

Employers often request applicants to complete an application form rather than send in a CV and Covering Letter. Application forms are useful from an organisation's perspective because they ensure that all applicants provide answers to the questions an employer wishes to pose. This helps the organisation to objectively short-list the applicants with the relevant skills and experience for the role.

Filling out an Application Form

Before you start

- Follow the instructions on the form. If you fail to follow the instructions it is more than likely that the employer will not entertain your application. If it states to write in **black ink** or in BLOCK CAPITALS then it is imperative to do so.

- Read the questions carefully to make sure you understand exactly what the employer is looking for. Use the job description and person specification to inform your answers.

- Photocopy the original form a couple of times so you can complete some rough drafts. The version you will send to the potential employer will need to be perfect so working on rough drafts will help you to achieve this.

- You will not need to attach a Covering Letter if the application form allows you provide additional information such as why you want to work for the organisation.

- Be careful with simply 'cutting and pasting' from a previous application form. Make the necessary alterations to suit the employer and job in question. Failure to alter your answers may confuse the employer or even worse lead them to concluding that you simply 'cut and paste' from a prior application.

During

- If the application must be handwritten then it is imperative to write neatly. Use black ink and If your handwriting is difficult to read you should write using block capitals. Never cross out an answer or use tip-ex.

- If the application form allows a choice between handwriting or typing your answers it is best to complete the form in type. Type will look more professional and it will reduce the possibility of spelling and grammatical mistakes appearing on your application.

- Look out for multiple questions within one question and make sure you answer all aspects of any such question.

- Use active language (verbs rather than nouns). Don't waffle or use too much jargon.

- Make sure your education and work history dates are correct.

- Use a range of examples from your work and personal history (this will show that you are a well rounded person with varied experience).

- Keep the application form clean and tidy. An employer will not appreciate a coffee stained application.

Before you send

- Make sure you have filled in every part of the application form. If a section/question does not apply to you write N/A (not applicable). This will demonstrate that you have considered the question and not failed to notice it.

- Spelling and grammatical errors are some of the most common reasons for rejection of application forms. Ask someone to check over your work before submission.

- Take a photocopy of the completed form before submission. If you are invited to interview you will want to remind yourself of your answers.

- Don't forget to sign the application form.