

This leaflet covers where to find vacancies, preparation of an application form, example CVs, a covering letter and interview tips

How to apply for employment and training

To apply for a job, you may be asked to complete an application form, send a CV or write a letter of application. Employers use these to decide whether to offer you an interview, so it's very important to get them right. The more individual you can make your cv to make it stand out from the crowd, the more it will help your application.

The application form

Some employers provide a paper copy of an application form for you to complete. Increasingly, employers are asking for forms to be completed on their websites.

Some useful tips:

Before you complete the form:

- take a photocopy (paper forms) or print a copy (electronic) to practice on
- read the form and make sure you follow the instructions (e.g. use black ink, or use block capitals)
- remember to highlight your skills and qualities and how they will help you in the job you are applying for – refer back to the 'person specification' form if the company sent you one
- check your information is correct – particularly the dates
- check spelling, grammar and presentation
- make sure you include all your interests and abilities (especially those that are relevant to the application)
- be honest – you may have to answer questions on your application form at the interview
- keep a copy of the completed form (photocopy or save and print off) so that you can remind yourself about what you said before an interview
- ensure that you have completed all sections of the form and attach any information requested.

How to find that job

Advertisements for vacancies can be found in local and national newspapers, online on company web sites, in your Connexions Centre or One Stop Shop, in shop windows or if you are over 18 at the local Job Centre Plus. Many jobs are not advertised publicly, so by sending a speculative letter or by hearing of a vacancy by word of mouth you may be lucky and gain an interview.

Example of a job advertisement in a Newspaper

TITLE: Customer Services Officer
BUSINESS: Mytown Solutions
LOCATION: Mytown on Sea
REQUIRED: Punctual, excellent communication skills, ability to use Word and Excel. Good team work required
GCSE: Grade C in English preferred
DESCRIPTION: You will undertake a variety of office duties, including filing, dealing with telephone calls and e-mails from customers
HOURS: 37 hours per week (Mon-Fri)
PAY: £13,000 per year reviewed after 3 months
TRAINING: Apprenticeship in customer services, including day release to college
FURTHER INFO: Please send a CV and covering letter to Jo Smithers

General information on CVs and application forms

Be honest about your qualifications and experience; you might be asked for evidence if you are invited to an interview.

Get permission from people before you put down their names/contact details for reference purposes.

Make sure you don't make spelling/grammar mistakes or note down the wrong dates.

Application forms – what to do immediately

Check you have been sent everything you're supposed to have been sent. Along with an application form, you may receive a job description, a person specification (which explains which qualifications and qualities are important) and company literature.

Make sure you know the deadline to return the form.

Decide when you will complete the form – some can be lengthy and time consuming to fill out. But don't miss the deadline!

Application forms – preparation

Take a photocopy of the form to practise on.

Collect everything you need to complete the form, such as a dictionary, black pen, examination certificates, etc. If you are making lots of applications, it's useful to keep everything in one place to save time.

Read through the form and make sure you understand the questions. You may want to contact Connexions for support if anything is unclear.

Application forms – completing

Try to give brief, clear answers, but make sure you give examples where possible. Look at the person specification (if you were sent one) to see what the employer wants.

Write neatly and clearly and follow the instructions – the employer might have many forms to get through.

Sometimes you are asked to write some of your answers on a separate sheet of paper ‘if necessary’. Unless you have plenty of experience you probably won’t need to do this.

After you have finished your application form or CV

Read everything through one last time to make sure you haven’t made any errors or left any gaps.

Take a copy of the completed form or CV, as it can be useful if you get invited to an interview

Make sure you put the right stamp on the envelope and send off the form or CV in good time, taking into account that things sometimes get delayed in the post.

Online applications

Treat online applications as seriously as paper ones.

Don’t rely on spell checkers to notice any mistakes.

Employers who accept online application forms and CVs might use emails to contact you about interviews so make sure you check your inbox regularly.

It can be helpful to have a separate email address for job applications.

CVs

Employers often ask for a CV when they advertise jobs, but your CV can also be sent to employers with a covering letter, to see if they have any vacancies. (This is called a speculative letter)

Some useful tips:

- remember to include all personal details – full name, address with postcode, telephone number and email address
- one side of A4 is usually enough for school-leavers
- word process the cv and check spelling, grammar and presentation
- employers may have lots of CVs to read so keep it simple and to the point
- use positive language about your abilities and qualities
- include information on work experience and any part-time jobs
- include interests – particularly those relevant to the job and place in a sentence rather than just list
- ask someone else (e.g. a PA) to check your CV for errors or to suggest ways it could be improved.

Example CV

RUSSELL SOMEBODY

123 Low Road
Anytown
XA1 9ZA

Tel: 0208 123 4567
Mobile: 07900 0001234
E-mail: russell@inter.co.uk

Profile

I really enjoy working in a team but can also work well on my own. My part time work as a baby sitter has shown that I am responsible and has taught me patience. My GCSE in ICT has given me skills that include Word and Excel spreadsheets. During my schoolwork experience in an Insurance Agency, I decided that I would like a career that involves working with customers. I am friendly, confident and like the challenge of learning new skills. By taking an apprenticeship, I can continue to gain qualifications.

Education

Sept 2005-June 2010
The High School,
Hornet Drive,
Anytown, XA2 34Z

Qualifications and predicted grades:

May 2010 GCSEs	
English Language (B)	Science (D)
English Literature (C)	ICT (D)
Maths (C)	Drama (D)

Employment History

School work experience: July 2009

ASP Insurance, Anytown

Duties included: Word processing, photocopying, filing, faxing and answering the telephone. Supported staff with maintaining on-line records of staff appointments and sick days.

2007-2010

Three years experience of babysitting.

Interests

Member of Mytown on Sea Youth Theatre for six years, recently starred in the Christmas pantomime.

Regularly take aerobics class and enjoy going to the cinema.

References available.

Covering letters

An employer may ask you to send a covering letter with your CV. The purpose of a covering letter is to show how the experience on your CV relates to their vacancy and to highlight why they should employ you. You must send out a new covering letter for each company you apply to. This is so you can show you have researched that company and say why you are applying to them in particular.

Some useful tips:

- plan carefully what you are going to write and do a rough draft first**
- type the letter (or handwrite, if the employer requests it)**
- if you have a named person to write to, sign the letter ‘yours sincerely’, otherwise sign it ‘yours faithfully’**
- remember to highlight your skills and qualities and how they will help you in the job you are applying for**
 - refer back to the ‘person specification’ if you have one**
- keep the letter short and to the point – on one side of A4 if possible**
- get someone else (e.g. a PA) to check over your letter for errors or to suggest improvements.**

Covering letter

**Mr Smithers,
Customer Services Manager
Telephone Solutions
Harvard House
Main Street
Mytown on Sea, AWX 123**

**123 Low Road
Anytown
XA192A**

1st August 2010

Ref: Customer Services Officer

Dear Mr. Smithers,

I wish to apply for the above position, as advertised in the Anytown Connexions Centre.

Having left school in July I would like to work in a customer service based apprenticeship. As I have stated in my enclosed CV, I really enjoyed working in an office environment for my school work experience and I am keen to start a career, but I would also like to gain more qualifications. Your vacancy offers both practical work and also the chance to gain qualifications too.

My school work experience at ASP Insurance involved a variety of office duties. I am already experienced at using Microsoft Office as we used many of the applications at school. I also was asked to use the fax and taking customer phone calls and I found that I enjoyed this part of the work. As I am a friendly person, I worked well with everyone in the team. I also turned up on time every day and completed any set tasks on time.

The staff at ASP Insurance were pleased with all aspects of my work and said I would be well suited for an office-based career.

As my CV shows, I have been involved in Brent Youth Theatre for many years. This again involves team-working skills, as I have been involved in lots of productions, working with other actors, the director and technical crew. Attending rehearsals and learning lines in my spare time also shows that I have dedication and good time management skills, as I have had to combine this with completing all my school coursework.

The customer services officer vacancy sounds exactly like the role I am looking for.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Somebody

Example of basic CV for a year 11 School leaver

NAME: Christopher Jones
ADDRESS: 42 Garden Court
 Mytown, Hertfordshire A2 5DS

TELEPHONE: 01100 330033
MOBILE: 07700 222 333

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- **Computer skills (email, Internet, basic Word), developed through course work at school**
- **Good communication skills (written and spoken)**
- **Excellent time-keeping- 100% attendance at school**
- **Bilingual (English and German)**

EDUCATION

Beech Manor School, Mytown, September 2004 to June 2009

GCSE German grade A*

GCSE Maths grade C

GCSE Art grade B

GCSE English Language grade C

GCSE PE grade C

GCSE Geography grade D

GCSE Science (double) grade E/E

WORK EXPERIENCE

Value Supermarket

February 2009 to present

Part-time sales assistant

Duties: till work, shelf filling and serving customers

Premium Insurance Ltd

October 2007 (School work experience)

Office assistant

Duties: opened post, filing and computer work

INTERESTS

I enjoy organising and playing football with a local team every weekend. I also enjoy cooking for the family and playing computer games in my spare time.

References available

CV Example: for a “2nd Jobber”

Janet Smith

41 Far Drive
Mytown
MX SZX

Tel: 310 456
Mobile: 073356 254
Email: jansmith@farout

Profile

After 14 months in a Human Resources dept. I am looking for a position that would offer the chance to progress as well as gain more qualifications. My present job has given me experience in dealing with staff grievances and union consultations. I am a team player and able to use my own initiative to achieve company targets.

Key Skills

Successfully deal with confidential and sensitive information
Knowledge of staff grievance procedure
Ability to work to tight deadlines and prioritise own work load
Proficient organisational skills and IT: Excel, Word, Microsoft and Power point

Work Experience

Mytown Business Associates

2008 to present

Personnel Assistant

Main duties:

- Maintenance of confidential files
- Act as first point for queries from staff and the trade unions
- Produce monthly and annual reports on all queries and their resolution

Summer Job

Mytown Business Associates

July – September 2007

Office Junior

Duties: Updating confidential files, filing, photocopying, answering telephone enquiries

Education

Any College, Mytown

2006-2008: BTEC National Diploma

Business Administration (Distinction overall)

Mytown High School

2002-2006

GCSEs:

English	grade C	Art & Design	grade D
Maths	grade C	History	grade D
IT	grade C	PE	grade D
Business	grade C		
Science	grade CC		

Interests

Keeping fit at a local gym, swimming once a week and going to the cinema.

References available.

The Interview

If you are fortunate to be offered an interview, remember that preparation beforehand will help on the day:

Before the day

- find out where the interview is being held and how you will get there – a practice run is useful. **Take a map if you don't know the area and allow time for traffic holdups and late public transport.**
- find out about the organisation – the internet can help
- read the information you have about the job
- read your application; check it against the job details and ensure you are ready to answer questions on the information you provided
- Connexions will have information on how to perform well in interviews – you could even ask your Personal Adviser to do a practice interview with you
- plan what to wear and choose clothes that are smart, clean and tidy – it is better to be too smart than too casual.

On the day

- get ready in plenty of time
- check you have everything you need – the letter inviting you for interview, directions on how to get there and any paperwork they have asked you to take
- give yourself plenty of time to get there
- on arrival, introduce yourself at reception and ask for the person you are going to see, remember that the interview starts from the moment that you give in your name

At the interview

- greet your interviewer in a friendly but professional manner – smile, say good morning/afternoon and shake hands
- be polite at all times
- body language is important – sit up straight and make eye contact
- give full answers to the questions – don't just say 'yes' or 'no'
- tell the truth
- prepare some relevant questions about the job and the training before you go in to the interview (avoid asking about pay as it could look like that is all you are interested in!)
- thank the interviewer at the end of the interview.