

**WRITING A SUCCESSFUL JOB APPLICATION**

Before you start

When you find a job you'd like to apply for, don't start filling in the application form straight away. Take some time to prepare, as this will make the task much easier.

Gather together all the information that you'll need, including details of your academic achievements, employment history and contact information for your referees.

You'll make a great first impression if you do your research - find out the aims of the company you're applying for, the sector they operate in and who their main competitors are. Browsing their social media channels is a good place to start.

Study the job description so that you can refer back to the specific skills and qualities that the employer is looking for as you complete the form.

Finally, read the instructions carefully to ensure that you complete the correct sections of the form and know when the deadline is.

What to include on an application form

The application form should make the employer want to meet you to find out more and demonstrate your skills. Typical sections of an application form include:

* **Personal information** - give basic details, such as name and email address.
* **Educational background** - provide information on your academic achievements, including the institutions you've attended, courses taken and qualifications gained.
* **Work experience** - list your employment history and describe your main duties and responsibilities in each role, emphasizing those most closely related to the job you're applying for.
* **Competency-based questions** - give specific examples of times when you've demonstrated the skills required for the role. Avoid being vague, and don't waste space writing about skills you have that aren't relevant - see [example questions and answers](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/example-questions-and-answers) for help.
* **Personal statement** - write a well-structured, well-argued case that you are the right person for the job, again referring to the person specification set out in the advert.

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Don't be afraid to sell yourself. Demonstrate your passion for the company or job and any past achievements you can relate to the role. When writing your answers, always consider [what skills employers want](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/what-skills-do-employers-want) and how you can show that you have them.

Most application forms will also require you to provide details of at least two people who can provide references. You may sometimes be asked to attach a [CV and cover letter](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters) as well.

Never lie on your job application form. Not only is this dishonest, but there can be more serious consequences - for example, altering your classification from a 2:2 to a 2:1 is considered degree fraud and could result in a prison sentence.