



Understanding our job descriptions, employee specifications, how to complete application forms and writing supporting information can help increase your chances of being shortlisted and getting the job you want. These tips will help you through the process.

Understanding the Job Description

The main details. The job description gives you the details of the job (job title, grade, location and who you report to) and describes what you have to do on a day to day basis. By reading the job description you'll have a greater understanding of what the job entails instead of choosing a job by the job title alone.

Special conditions. These will be listed near the top of the first page and list any special conditions attached to the role such as overtime, working at different locations, an obligation to work out of hours or a requirement for the Fluency Duty.

Fluency Duty. The Fluency Duty means that you must be able to speak fluent English if the role is customer facing or involves liaising with professional organisations.

Understanding the Employee Specification

The main details. The employee specification lists what skills, abilities, qualifications and experience you need to perform the job.

Corporate behaviours. All our employee specifications list our five corporate behaviours – Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency and Ethical. Remember to include examples of these in your supporting information.

Methods of assessment codes. These are listed on the employee specification on the right side of the page and explain how that criteria will be assessed following your application.

A is for Application. An assessment code listed as 'A' means that the criteria will be assessed from your application form. This could apply to qualifications or a driving licence. You'll need to include examples of these in your application form.

A/I is for Application and Interview. This means you need to demonstrate how you meet the criteria on your application form and you'll be asked about it at the interview so work through these and include examples which show your expertise and knowledge.

T is for Test. If the criteria shows a 'T', it means that a test or assessment will be included as part of the process.

I is for Interview. An 'I' means you will be asked questions on these criteria during the interview. Examples could be demonstrating good communication skills or how you prioritise your workload.

Understanding the weight codes on the employee specification

Weight codes are the numbers listed in the right side column of the employee specification and give an indication of the importance of that criteria to the job. They also play a part in the scoring process the interview panel will use. A **3** indicates that this is an essential criteria and critical to the job. You should have the ability to do this from the first day. A **1** means that the underpinning knowledge is required but can be developed and **2** is the middle ground.

Completing your online application form

The advert. Read the advert carefully and then read the job description and employee specification to find out what skills, abilities, qualifications and experience you need.

Supporting information. You should aim to not exceed 1500 words, roughly equivalent to four sides of A4 paper. Be sure to cover all the criteria in the employee specification. Show the recruiting manager how you are a perfect fit for this job by giving examples of your skills and abilities.

Getting shortlisted. By covering all the criteria in the employee specification, you increase your chances of being shortlisted. Include all your skills in the workplace, anywhere that you volunteer or any skills you have in a professional capacity.

Checking the small stuff

Spelling and grammar. All our jobs require an online application but you still need to remember to check your grammar and spelling for any mistakes. Read through the form because not all spelling errors are picked up in a spell check on your computer.

Early closing dates. Check the closing date because sometimes the advert can close earlier than the advertised dates due to large numbers of applicants so complete your application as soon as possible so you don't miss out.

Interview know how

Interview techniques. A useful technique for structuring your answers at interview is using the 'CAR' method. This is short for CONTEXT (describe the situation), ACTION (what you did and how you did it) and RESULT (the outcome).

Work history. If you're struggling to remember all your work history and examples when preparing for an interview, refer back to your diary, calendar, emails and courses you've attended – it all counts towards your preparation.

Being prepared. When you've got your interview (congratulations by the way!), plan ahead of time so you're calm on the day. Get your clothes ready the night before, make sure all your certificates and paperwork are to hand and be on time. You want to be as calm as possible so that you appear confident.

Virtual interviews. If you are attending a virtual interview online instead of face to face, remember to test the software beforehand and check the lighting in your room.

Mobile phone. Remember to switch off your mobile phone or change the setting to silent before you go into the interview.

Eye contact. Making the right amount of eye contact during the interview can show that you are listening and that you are interested in what the interviewers are saying.

Ending the interview. At the end of the interview, thank the panel for giving you the opportunity and smile as you leave. If they haven't mentioned it, ask when you are likely to hear the outcome of the interview.

Understanding interview questions

The key to a successful interview is preparation, preparation, preparation so it's good to understand what types of questions you may be asked.

Verification questions. To verify the information on your application form, for example how long you worked at a particular place or when you achieved a qualification.

Responsibility questions. To check what your responsibilities were in a particular job or to explore how you gained a particular skill.

Scenario questions. You could be asked to describe how you would respond in a specific scenario or what steps you took to get a required result or outcome.

Brainteaser questions. This is purely to assess your problem solving abilities and check if you can solve a problem without getting confused or flustered.

Problem solving questions. An employer may want to evaluate your problem solving abilities and how you would work through potential situations.

Behavioural questions. These are to gauge how you conduct yourself in a professional environment or how you act in specific situations.

We hope this has been helpful to you. You can follow us on Twitter (@walsalljobshop) or Facebook (walsallcounciljobshop) where we'll bring the latest vacancies to you so you can be one of the first to know about our job vacancies. You can also check out our Employment and Skills support at:

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