

Application Forms

Employers use application forms to objectively compare candidates with what has been specified on the job description and/or person specification. You will need plenty of time to complete an application form to a good standard so consider this before you begin.

It is important to plan what you are going to write about yourself. You will need to go into detail about experience you've had and what skills you've gained to paint a full picture of how you match what is being asked for. Try brainstorming how you match what is being asked for before launching into completing the application form.

Job Description

The job description outlines the background on the job including salary and day-to-day duties and responsibilities of the job. This will help you decide if the job is right for you.

Person Specification

The person specification outlines the skills and qualities required to do a good job. These may be split into "essential skills" and "desirable skills".

Personal Statement or Additional Information

This is the part of your application form is where you can write in detail about how you match the job description and person specification.

Write persuasively, using examples to show that you have the skills required to do the job and have experience of performing tasks similar to those in the job description. You should focus most attention and detail on points mentioned nearer the top of the job description and the "essential skills" of the person specification. Be sure to mention any "desirable skills" you have too.

This is also your chance to show your enthusiasm for the job and what attracted you to this vacancy. Try to use upbeat language when describing what you could bring to the company. It may also impress employers if you have some knowledge of the department or the company.

Online Application Forms

You will have to register to use many online application forms so make a note of any usernames or passwords you need to access your form. Familiarise yourself with the application system and be aware of deadline day.

Use a word processor to; keep an eye on your word/character limit, keep an offline backed-up copy of your work and make use of a spellchecker. Always have someone else through your final copy before you submit your application form.

Paper Application Forms

Make a couple of photocopies so you can practise handwriting and determine the space you'll need to fit everything on. Use the correct coloured ink and use a white envelope if possible.

Keep a copy of the final completed application form, job description and person specification as you will want to look at these again before interview.

If you would like further support please contact the Employment & Skills Team at Solihull Council;

Call 0121 704 8098 / 8076

Email employmentteam@solihull.gov.uk

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a great way to start your career. They are real jobs which have training attached to them and they take between one and four years to complete. There are over 1500 job roles across a wide range of industries with pay ranging from £2.68 an hour to £17,000 a year.

Depending on skills and qualifications you can apply for the following types of apprenticeship;

- Intermediate Apprenticeship (level 2) ~ GCSE level
- Advanced Apprenticeship (level 3) ~ A-Level
- Higher Apprenticeship (level 4 or above) ~ alternative to university

All three levels of apprenticeship allow you to gain a nationally recognised vocational qualification and a technical certificate (such as a BTEC or City & Guilds) relevant to your specific Apprenticeship. Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships also allow you to complete functional skills in Literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Visit the National Apprenticeship Service website www.apprenticeships.org.uk to view hundreds of local vacancies and to apply.

For help with a specific apprenticeship application please contact the Employment & Skills Team at Solihull Council;

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Interviews

Prepare with care. You'll be more calm and confident and the interviewer will see this.

- Research the company to learn more about them and what they want from staff
- Look at your application again, picking out points interviewers are likely to want to talk about. Take a copy along with you to interview if possible.
- Confirm you'll be attending by email or telephone and use this as an opportunity to check practical matters like parking or directions. Plan your route.
- If you can't attend or are running late then let the interviewer know ASAP!

First Impressions are vital. Make sure you are clean, smart and crease-free.

- Smile, make eye contact and firmly shake hands with the interviewer
- Use a clear and confident voice, responding as your interviewer explains things

Interviewer's Questions can sometimes be anticipated. Typical questions;

- *"Tell me about yourself?"*
Talk about what you've got to offer and why you're interested in this job.
- *"Why do you want this job?"*
Say how your skills are a strong match to the job. Use examples as evidence.
- *"What are your strengths/weaknesses?"*
Pick 2 or 3 strengths that match the job and one "positive" weakness such as "I'd like to have some training in area X".
- *"How would your colleagues describe you?"*
Talk about your working style and how you contribute to teams.
- *"What do you know about our company?"*
Talk about the bit of the business you'll be working in and show you know what the job involves and that you are interested in working for them.

Be honest. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.

Be positive. Even if your last job was the pits, don't let a negative word pass your lips.

Your questions will help you decide if the job is right for you. Have at least one question prepared. Some good questions you could ask;

- What kind of opportunities are there for growth within this company?
- What's happened to people who did this job before?
- What training do you offer?

Questions to avoid asking;

- How much holiday do I get? When will that increase?
- When will I get a pay rise?

The interviewer will normally explain what the next steps are and when they'll be in touch. If you've any other questions or need to tell them anything else, now is the time.

Group interviews

- Be prepared for anything – group interviews could begin with you introducing yourself to the group, a fun task with other candidates, a test or something random.
- Usually group interviews are designed to see how you interact with other people so be courteous to your fellow interviewers and get involved.
- Be sure to say goodbye to your interviewers before you leave.

For help preparing for a specific interview please contact the Employment & Skills Team at Solihull Council;

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