Job Club
Histon and Impington

Application Forms

21 OCTOBER 2016

Why employers use application forms

Easier to compare different candidates
- Puts everyone on the same basis

Less open to accusations of discrimination
- Less subjectivity than you get judging CVs and cover letters

Can ask questions which are appropriate to them
- Make sure they have what they need to shortlist

Makes it easier for recruiters
- But much more work for applicants…

Read all the instructions carefully

Read all the instructions carefully and follow them exactly
◦ Make sure you know when and how to submit the form

Some questions may have several parts to them
◦ Read them carefully and make sure that you answer all parts

Complete ALL sections of the form
◦ Don't leave something blank just because you don't know how to approach answering it
◦ Your form may be rejected
◦ If a question really isn't applicable to you, write 'N/A' (not applicable)

When completed check the instructions again
◦ In case you have missed anything

Overview of the form

Come in different formats
- Normally online
- A few still use paper

Factual sections
- Personal details, qualifications, work experience etc.
- These should be similar between forms
- Can cut and paste from CV or previous applications

Sections for other selection criteria
- Need to write about your skills, knowledge and experience
- Show how you match their criteria
- Will vary from form to form

Understand the role

Read the job description and person specification carefully

Be clear about the role and competencies required
- Write your application in relation to these
- Use their keywords from the job description

Identify the main criteria
- Note down examples from your experience which show how you meet them
- Use these as a basis for writing the long answers

Applying to Cambridge University

For a job on www.jobs.cam.ac.uk

At the bottom of the general job description is a link to **Further Information**

◦ It is really important to click in this and get the detailed requirements for this job.

Often a long and detailed list out the specific essential or desired skills and experience

Make sure that you check off all the skills listed

◦ Some set a threshold number eg 75%

◦ % of the skills and experience you have to have before they will consider an interview.

◦ So if you don't reference all of the ones you have in the application you probably won't get an interview.

Please quote reference AK05589 on your application and in any correspondence about this vacancy.

The University values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity.

The University has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK.

Further information

• Further Information Accounts Administrator

Apply online >

Include real examples

Use 'STAR' (Situation, Task, Action and Result) to help you provide a concise and effective answer to competency based questions.

Situation - provide some brief details about the situation you were in when you used your competencies so that the reader can understand the context of the example.

Task - outline what your objective or purpose was during that situation, again, to put your answer into context.

Action - describe what you (personally) did in that situation and how you approached it. It is worth including what you were responsible for

Result - state the outcome, for example: Were the objectives met? What did you learn/gain from being in that situation?

Filling it in

'Sell' yourself to the employer
◦ It isn't time for false modesty but make sure that you don't go too far and tip over into arrogance
◦ Avoid exaggeration
◦ Keep in mind positive thinking and positive writing

Ensure that you use good English language throughout
◦ Check all spelling, grammar and punctuation
◦ This is vitally important as many applications are rejected on this basis alone
◦ Avoid repetition of words "I really want.."

Use the word count
◦ Not too long – make sure you meet any limits
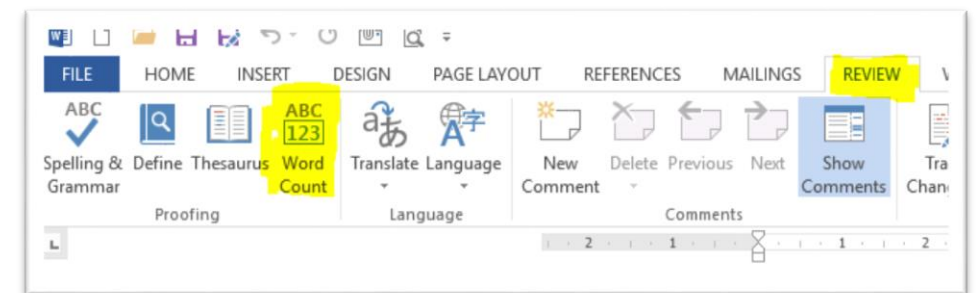
Don't cut corners

Avoid simple 'cut and paste' of long answers from previous applications

- ◦ Employers can usually tell when this is done as your answer won't exactly match the question that they asked
- ◦ Even worse, applicants sometimes leave the previous organisation's name or a different course title in the application!
- ◦ You can use a previous application as a prompt but write a new answer for each question

Take plenty of time over the application

- ◦ A good application takes a long while to complete and rushing an application will simply be a waste of your time
- ◦ It might take you a whole day to complete your first application form properly but hopefully your efforts will be rewarded with an interview or an offer on a course!

Tips

It is worth creating documents listing your achievements in education, work and in your personal life, to ensure you have a database of your work recorded to draw from when completing an application form

Read the job description and person specification carefully. Note down 6-8 main criteria from it and write underneath each one examples of work experience and education that give examples of how you fulfil each criterion. Use this outline as a basis for writing the supporting statement

Get a friend to read it through for you - we often are taught not to boast and so we sell ourselves short when completing applications. An honest friend - ie. one who will tell you what you've done wrong as well - will be able to point out what you do that you haven't included on the application

Keep a copy as it makes it easier next time and is essential when preparing for the interview

Summary

Customise your application to the organisation you are applying to

Show enthusiasm as to why you really want the job

Show you meet the criteria

Give complete answers and provide convincing examples

Check your spelling and grammar

Keep a copy