



## COMPLETING AN APPRENTICESHIP APPLICATION FORM - TOP TIPS!

### GENERAL

- **Make sure you feel ready to commit to an apprenticeship and meet the expectations of an employer before you apply.**
- **Make sure you have enough time to think about the job and complete your application without rushing.**
- **Check you meet the requirements detailed in the person specification.**
- **Ensure you understand the company or organisation's aims and the job description/s clearly before you apply.**
- **Correct punctuation, grammar and spelling are vital to give the right impression.**

### WHY DO YOU WANT THIS APPRENTICESHIP?

You are likely to be asked to explain your reasons for applying for a particular job. This is the most important part of your application!

**Include the following:**

- **Why do you think you would be good at your chosen apprenticeship? Try to link any qualities mentioned to the person specification. Provide EXAMPLES from previous experiences to demonstrate your skills.**
- **Why have you chosen an apprenticeship rather than any other job vacancy? (i.e. why do you want to earn and learn?)**
- **Why do you want to work for xyz company/organisation specifically? (Visit their website to get some ideas!)**

## WORK AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

You will probably have to list your work and education history.

- Remember to include **ALL** qualifications, not just GCSEs, e.g. City and Guilds, short accredited courses, etc.
- Make sure you include details of where (and when if possible) you achieved your qualifications.
- Ensure that you include details of all your job titles or roles and where you worked, as well as the responsibilities you had and any skills/learning experiences you gained. It really helps if these skills are related to the requirements on the person specification.
- If you have not worked before, remember times when you did voluntary work, even on a short term basis, e.g. over the half term. You can explain your contribution in the same format as you would for paid or unpaid work.

## PROVIDING EXAMPLES

You may be asked to give an example of a particular skill, such as teamwork or problem solving.

- Think of an example that enables you to give a detailed description based on a particular activity that you did.
- If you don't have school/work experience, give an example of the relevant skill which you have achieved in your personal life, e.g. babysitting, house work, planning a family event, etc.
- Use the STAR model on the application form to demonstrate your contribution and achievements as clearly as possible. (Situation, Task, Action and Result)

## BEFORE YOU SEND OFF YOUR APPLICATION FORM...

- Check you have completed **ALL** sections of the form.
- Make sure you check for any spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Get someone to proof read your form if possible.
- Make sure you send your application form to the correct address before the closing date.



## USING THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS SERVICE WEBSITE

1. In order to search for other apprenticeships, register with the National Apprenticeship Service: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk). Go to the search for vacancies section and register as a new user. Make sure you choose a username and password that you'll easily remember.
2. Once you have registered, you will be sent an email. Click on the link in the email to activate your account. If you can't see the email, check your junk mail because it sometimes goes there.
3. After you have activated your account, you can log in and search for vacancies. You will need to create a profile with details of your work experience, etc. but you only need to do this once, and the site stores your information so you don't need to keep putting in the same things every time you apply for a job.
4. When you find a job you want to apply to, make sure you complete the part which says, 'What are your strengths?' really thoroughly, relating your skills specifically to those which you would need for the job you are applying for.
5. There are normally 2 additional questions for each vacancy. One may say, 'What do you know about (company name)?'. Look on the company's website to get ideas but make sure you don't copy and paste because it'll be really obvious. Put something in your own words.
6. If you forget your password or username, you can get a temporary one emailed to you which you can then change. Just go to the log in section and click forgotten password or forgotten username.

### **Searching for vacancies**

1. Log in using the link above and click on *Search for Vacancies – Go*
2. Choose to search by *keyword or topic*
3. Select the job type you would like to explore
4. Make sure you have selected the appropriate location
5. Click 'Search'



## INTERVIEW TIPS

### 1. Preparation is the key!

- a. Know what you are applying for:  
Make sure you know as much as possible about the job and the company before the interview. At the very least you should read through the advert and any attached job description or person specification. It is always best to do a bit of extra research about the company on the internet.
- b. Know yourself:  
Make sure you know what you have written on your CV and application form. Think of examples of things you have done in the past which show your strengths and skills. Think about how best to tell people about these examples. Using the STAR model can help with this (see next section).

### 2. On the day

- a. Make sure you look as smart as you can. Employers really do look for people with a professional appearance, even if the role does not require you to look smart all the time.
- b. Get an early start. Wake up early enough to make sure you have plenty of time to eat breakfast, get ready and make yourself look your best. This will help to impress the employer and help you to feel confident.

### 3. Getting to the interview

- a. Read through the invitation thoroughly so you know where you are going, who you need to ask for and what you need to take with you.
- b. Make sure you know where you are going. Look up the location beforehand, print a map and take this with you on the day.
- c. Plan your travel, use journey planner to make sure you arrive early. You should aim to get there at least 15 minutes before the start. This will give you time to deal with small delays and means you will be more relaxed when you start the interview.
- d. Store the employer's telephone number in your phone. If you experience a long delay you can call and let them know in advance.

### 4. When you arrive

- a. Do not go to the interview eating, drinking or chewing gum.
- b. Turn off your mobile phone as soon as you arrive. Even if a phone is on vibrate it can still make a noise or distract you during the interview.
- c. Behave professionally as soon as you enter the building and keep this up until you leave. Assume you are being assessed at all times not just during the interview.

## 5. During the interview

- a. Acknowledge all of the interviewers with a handshake or a greeting.
- b. Maintain eye contact, even if the interviewers have their heads down and are writing notes.
- c. Use professional body language.
- d. Do; sit up straight, keep your head up, keep your hands in your lap, look happy and alert.
- e. Don't; slouch, fidget, wave your arms around, sit with folded arms, scowl or look bored.
- f. Listen carefully to everything the interviewers say and ask.
- g. Tell the employer why you are interested in the job, including why the apprenticeship qualification appeals to you.
- h. Tell the employer why you think this job will help you reach the next stage of your career goals, make sure you show how these match with the job on offer.
- i. If you are talking about any skills you have, provide evidence of these with an example from your past.
- j. Explain examples in detail using the STAR method.
- k. Have some questions to ask about the job or the company but don't ask what salary or holidays you would get. Avoid telling the employer about anything negative that has happened before unless this is absolutely necessary, e.g. There is no need to mention if you didn't like studying in a classroom or you didn't like your previous employer.

## 6. After the interview

- a. Give a farewell to the interviewers and shake their hand if you feel it is appropriate.
- b. Remain as professional as you can until you have left the building.
- c. Don't say anything negative about yourself such as telling the interviewers, 'I should have done better' or 'I think I didn't answer the questions very well.'

## 7. When you find out the result

- a. If you are offered the job, great! Make sure you are clear about what is on offer including the salary and duration of the role.
- b. If you accept the offer then find out what you need to do next as you will probably need to provide references and other information. Don't delay in providing any information the employer asks you for as this could hold up your start date.
- c. If you are not successful then don't feel downhearted. You can use this experience to do even better next time. If interview feedback is not offered to you then do ask for it.
- d. When receiving feedback, make sure you take notes and don't take it personally. Interview feedback is not a reflection of you as a person, but on how you performed at that one interview.
- e. Act on your feedback. Think about what you did or said during the interview and use the feedback to think about how you can improve your performance at your next interview.



## PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

We advise you to use the STAR model whenever possible to answer these questions as it will help you to give a very clear and thorough answer.

**Situation** – where were you? Who were you with?

**Task** – what were you trying to do?

**Actions** – how did you personally contribute?

**Result** – what was the outcome? Was it a success? Why was it successful?

Is there anything you could have done better?

### **1. Please tell us why you would like to apply for this apprenticeship?**

You will need to mention:

- Why you prefer an apprenticeship rather than any other kind of job.
- Why you look forward to gaining a qualification.
- What skills and personal qualities you can bring to the job.
- Why you want to work for this particular company/what do you know about them?

### **2. What are your strengths/achievements?**

You will need to mention:

- Strengths useful for the workplace.
- Any examples of things you have done which demonstrate these strengths and why they make you proud/what this shows about you.

### **3. Please explain how you would deal with a difficult customer.**

You should include:

- How you would behave in terms of manner.
- What you would do in general, i.e. listen to their problem and be sympathetic, but focus on a solution.
- Give an example from previous experience if you have one.
- Who you would ask to help you and if/when this would be necessary.

#### **4. Please explain how you plan and organise your time at work?**

You should mention:

- How to divide a big task up into small manageable tasks.
- How to order tasks.
- How to make sure you don't forget anything.
- Any systems/tools you would use to help you.

#### **5. Can you give an example of a time when you have solved a problem?**

You should include:

- What the problem was.
- What you did to solve it.
- What happened in the end?
- What you learnt.
- Would you do anything differently next time?

#### **6. Why do you think it is important to work as part of a team and how can this be achieved?**

You should include:

- How team work helps to create a better workplace.
- The personal qualities you think make a good team-worker.
- The actions you can take to ensure good team work, e.g. being friendly to everyone, being willing to share tasks, communicating clearly and listening, etc.

#### **7. Can you give an example of a time that you worked as a member of a team?**

You should include:

- What the situation was and what was the objective.
- What your role was within the team
- What you did
- Did anything go wrong?
- What was the result?
- Would you do anything differently next time?