



Coventry Independent
Advice Service

Advice for job applicants

Completing your application form

The application form is your first opportunity to demonstrate how you meet the requirements for the position you are applying for. It is important that you refer to the advert and all related information when completing your application form, to remind you what the role is and what skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours are required. This will increase your chances of being invited to the next stage of the selection process.

We will only use the information provided in the application form to identify candidates to invite to the next stage of the selection process. We will not make any assumptions about a candidate's abilities, skills, experience, knowledge or qualifications, so it is very important that the application form gives us the information we need to demonstrate your suitability for the role.

This guidance will help you fill in your application form effectively.

We ask that all our applications are completed electronically and emailed to us. If this is not possible, we will accept applications by post.

We are committed to increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and will respond positively to meet individual needs throughout the recruitment process. Our application form asks if you have a disability and will interview all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.

We will consider applications from part time or job share applicants on their merits and consider them based on business need.

Deadlines for applications will be advertised for each vacancy. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Employment History

Tell us about your employment history over the last 10 years (or less if applicable), including details of any gaps. The work you tell us about can be paid, unpaid or voluntary work, so please do not forget to include this as it can also demonstrate valuable experience and skills.

It is important that you tell us about the main aspects of the job(s) and what your responsibilities were. This will help us assess your level of experience for the position you have applied for.

Supporting Statement

Your supporting statement is your opportunity to provide detail around the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours you have for the position you have applied for. It is an important part of the criteria used to short-list candidates for interview or the next stage of the recruitment process, so make sure you keep the information relevant and concise.

We ask you to keep within a word limit of 1500 words so please ensure you cover all the relevant knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours in your statement.

Within your supporting statement we are looking for you to clearly demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the role as described in the job advert and role profile.

The role profile will give a broad picture of the accountabilities/behaviours required of someone doing the role, and the job advert will give more detail on the specific requirements. It is important you look at both when thinking about your supporting statement.

Providing examples of your experiences to demonstrate your capability in the different areas will help us to assess your suitability for the job. When shortlisting we will be looking at how well you match the job advert and role profile.

Also, consider the behaviours framework. It is useful to consider the type of behaviours expected and where possible to provide evidence of how you have demonstrated these types of behaviours within your examples.

For example, if excellent customer service is a requirement, ensure you give a specific example of when and how you have provided excellent customer service and what the outcome was. Make sure your answers reflect the level of seniority required by the role you are applying for.

A good supporting statement will give specific examples of how you have used the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required for the role, and evidence of what has changed or improved because of what you have done. If you state that you have the required skills/ experience/ knowledge/behaviours without giving examples, you are unlikely to make it to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Things to remember

- If your answers are badly written, the content will be irrelevant.
- Ensure you demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required for the role you are applying for.
- Ensure your answers reflect the level of seniority required by the role you are applying for.
- Don't be tempted to over inflate your answers. You will be asked to explain your answers further during the interview.

Testing

For some roles, we also ask you to undertake a test or prepare a piece of work for us to further assess skills necessary for the role. If this is a requirement, further details will be provided should you progress to this stage of the application process.

Tips for a good interview

Remember most people get nervous about job interviews, but by approaching them in the right way you can make sure you give the right impression.

One of the most common reasons why interviews don't go well is lack of preparation. It is important that you find out as much as possible about the role and the organisation before your interview. A lot of information will be contained in the job advert and role profile, and you can find out more about us by visiting our website at www.covadvice.org.uk

If the advert provides details of someone you can contact for further information about the role, it is a good idea to do this. Use all the information available to you to help prepare examples for your interview of why you're a suitable candidate.

You will be asked questions relating to the key requirements of the role, so think about how your current skills and experience demonstrate you can do the job. Be prepared to give examples highlighting your personal contribution. It is a good idea, where possible, to have some additional examples to those you have provided in your supporting statement.

The acronym STAR may help you to prepare your answers. It is a good technique which can help you structure your response and provide the information we are looking for.

- Situation – Around 20% of your answer should be used to set the scene. What was happening?
- Task – 10% should explain the task either set by yourself or another.
- Action – This is the most important part: 50% of your answer should describe what you did and the skills you used to do it.
- Result – Use the last 20% to give details of the outcome. Consider what impact your behaviour had on the result - Perhaps you learnt something about yourself or it altered your thinking.

Try not to leave your planning to the last minute. Travelling to your interview can be stressful so, if possible, it can be useful to do a trial run before the day of your interview so you know exactly how long it takes you to get there and can plan accordingly. Remember the job interview is also your way of you deciding if you would like the job, so go in with an open mind and ask any questions you may have to help you understand more about the role and the organisation.

During the interview, the panel will be assessing:

- **Knowledge:** the understanding of and familiarity with a subject, field or specialism.
- **Skills:** the ability or proficiency to do something, which can include technical and interpersonal skills and qualifications.
- **Experience:** practical involvement in activities, fields or specialisms built up over a period.
- **Behaviour:** how a person goes about delivering outputs and the approaches they have used.

Do	Don't
Find out as much about the role as you can before your interview	Attend an interview without proper preparation
Think about what value you can add to the organisation/ role	React to questions by saying the first thing that comes into your head

Listen to the question and respond to what is being asked	Be too modest about your success
Think before you answer	Give a negative impression about your abilities
Tell the interviewers about your achievements and skills	
Be positive about your abilities	
Highlight your strengths	

Feedback

Following your interview, you may wish to request feedback. If so, please contact us on 024 7652 1100 or email info@covadvice.org.uk. We will give feedback to all candidates who attended for interview but we regret that we cannot commit to giving feedback to candidates who were not shortlisted.

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