Applications Hints and Tips

Applications show an employer or recruitment company that you are right for the job and will often help you progress to the next stage.

Researching the Employer

Before you begin writing your application, research the company and its aims, the industry it operates in, their competitors and the role you are applying for specifically.

Useful places to find information are often on the company's website, industry press, 'instructions to candidates' and the role advertisement.

Typical Application Form Sections

- **Personal Information** – Make sure it is up to date, so that the employer can contact you.
- **Personal Statement** – Emphasise your suitability to the role with direct referrals to the skills specified in the advertisement.
- **Educational Qualifications and Achievements** – If your final grades are unknown, write down what you are predicted to achieve. Some applications want to know a breakdown of your individual modules and the results.
- **Work Experience** – Include your main roles and responsibilities, especially those related to the position requirements.
- **Competency-based Questions** – Some application forms ask you to highlight specific examples of when you have demonstrated key skills.
- **Written Tasks** – Some larger companies include a section for you to write a newsletter, report, etc. for a specific task they have assigned to ensure you have researched the company.

Personal Statement

- A personal statement should be made up of around three paragraphs and include evidence and examples of your skills and expertise.
- It should also make you stand out and demonstrate your passion to impress the employer, e.g. if you have travelled to parts of the world or have completed voluntary work somewhere.

First Paragraph - Who you are, the grades you have attained, why you chose to study a particular subject and your interests.

Second Paragraph - Key modules you have studied and any work, voluntary or practical experiences you have.

Third Paragraph - Explain how your work experience fits the opportunity and company requirements. State what you can bring to the business, what you will gain from the position and why you are interested in this particular role.

Contact us directly if you need any help or guidance with your application forms. If you're not sure how to address a period of absence in employment or are struggling to put your experiences into words, phone 01159775030, email info@step.org.uk or drop us a message on our website!

Competency-Based Questions

- Although some applications ask you to tailor your personal statements to highlight competency skills, other application forms ask you individual questions to demonstrate your capabilities.
- Use the STAR technique to describe different situations and your role in delivering an outcome:
  - **Situation**: What was the situation and when?
  - **Task**: What was the task and what was your responsibility?
  - **Action**: How did you complete the task or meet the challenge?
  - **Result**: What was the end result? Emphasise your accomplishments or what you have learnt.

Written Tasks

- Some applications set you a task to complete as part of the form before it can be submitted.
- For example, some companies may ask you to research their company, including their business model, products, history, future goals and competitors, and ask you how they can improve their strategy or how you would respond to an activity you would usually carry out in the role.
- These types of tasks are unusual in an application form and are mainly included in psychometric tests and assessment days.