ual: london college of fashion

Illustration by Priscilla Fung

How to apply for job vacancies

Job applications can vary depending on the type of role. This guide will help you prepare for these different sorts of job applications.

What is a job application?

Job applications can vary depending on the type of role. Usually, what is required to complete the application is included in the job description. Most companies have a vacancy page on their website to process online application forms directly. The processes have become easier to navigate for the applicant, quicker for recruiters to pre-screen your skills and ability to do the job. Depending on the vacancy, an application may include competency questions or an 'ability test'. For example psychometric or numerical testing.

Some online applications allow you to extract information from your LinkedIn profile or CV, to speed up the process. You should always make sure your LinkedIn profile or CV are as accurate as possible.

What is in a job application

- A copy of your tailored CV
- A copy of your tailored Cover letter
- A link or attachment to your portfolio or website
- Completing competency-based questions (if applicable)
- Completing a Diversity, Inclusion & Equality form (if applicable)

Questions you may be asked in a job application

Sometimes an application may ask you to answer a specific question. This is so that the company can understand how you think, how you approach problems and whether you have the skills mentioned in the job description. It can take time and effort to write out answers for these questions, but it is always worth it. This also gives you the chance to go into more depth on your experiences and achievements. Sometimes you may not have space to detail everything on your CV, so take advantage of this opportunity.

Example questions used in job applications

- Why are you applying for this role?
- How does your experience relate to this role?
- Please explain a situation where you had to use time management skills.
- Can you give an example of a scenario where you worked as a team?
- Please explain a time where you creatively solved a problem.

Student working on laptop, Chelsea College of Art & Design, © Ana Blumenkron

Application methods

There are different methods to apply for roles. From sending traditional CVs and cover letters, to signing up with recruitment agencies. However, these days the standard approach is directly applying to companies through an online application form. Application methods include:

• Directly emailing the hiring manager or recruiter
• Applying through the company's careers portal
• Applying through third-party portals (such as BoF, Fashion Workie, Creative Opportunities)
• Applying through networking sites (LinkedIn, Otta, The Dots)
• Staff referral

What employers assess

Employers have a large volume of job application forms to sift through. To show you are eligible for the role and to receive an interview, you will need to demonstrate the following:

• Industry or company knowledge
• Personality
• Etiquette in professional communication
• Resilience in situations
• Confidence in problem-solving and innovative to developing ideas.

Preparation is vital. It is always good practice to create a word document to collect all your research and answers before starting your online application.

Widening Participation Team working with CAPS, © Michele Buchanan

Engaging Video Applications

Certain industries like advertising, creative arts, marketing, media, PR or music may require a short video submission statement as part of your application process. With employers inundated with applications, it offers employers an easy way to assess an applicant's presentation skills, personality and potential.

- **Film preparation:** You can use any video equipment, for example a mobile phone, tablet or digital camera. Make sure your audio is captured and the camera is angled accurately.
- **Your script:** Write down what you would like to say. Do not attempt to film the video without a script, you may forget important points. Do not recite your CV, this is for you to tell a brief story about you and why you are suitable for the job. Create your script in 3 parts - beginning, middle and end. This will help you structure your dialogue.
- **Location:** Plan the location of your video to ensure that you have a quiet, clear background with plenty of light.
- **Appearance:** Plan your outfit, dress as if you were attending an interview. Think about the company and dress accordingly.
- **Enjoy yourself:** Relax and have fun. Maybe practice in front of a friend or mirror before attempting to film. Think about what how you want the video to represent you. Do not hesitate to start recording, you will get better with practice.
- **Personality:** The most important thing is to show your passion, capability and personality.
- **Editing and submission:** You may need to edit your video with your mobile phone, free editing apps or editing software. Be prepared to spend a lot of time refining your recording. When uploading your video, remember to follow the requirements in the application for length and file size.

Employer requirements

It is important that your application shows how you have gained core attributes that make you a worthwhile applicant.

What employers want

- **Resilience:** Your ability to deal with problem-solving and issues in the workplace. How well do you cope with stressful situations?
- **Good communication:** How you express your ideas. Can you follow direction from others? Employers want to see how you build rapport, persuade, and negotiate with people.
- **Effective leadership:** Even if you are not applying for a management job, you will still need to demonstrate how you motivate and lead others to achieve common objectives. The ability to solve problems is always valuable to an employer.
- **Self-motivation:** How do you prioritise your objectives and duties? How do you manage your time effectively under pressure? Demonstrate these skills to show that you are flexible and can be trusted to work independently.
- **Planning and research:** Highlight times that you have researched and planned to a brief. For example, during your degree, how did you start planning for a project?
- **Teamwork and interpersonal skills:** Employers will be looking at your contribution within a team. Talk about your university collaborations, explain how you interacted with the team.

How to tailor your applications

It is worth making edits to your CV and cover letter with every application you send. This is so that your skills and experience match the job description and shows the brand you have made an effort to target the application to their vacancy.

CV
- Do your hard and soft skills mirror what is required in the job description?
- Does your experience match up to the job description? Can you add personal projects or course modules that relate to the role?
- Are there any extra-curricular activities or awards you have earned that relate to the company's values?

Cover Letter
- Make sure you include the role title and company name in your opening paragraph.
- Explain why you are applying for the role. How do your skills and experience match up to the job description?
- Write about how your values align with the brand's mission and why you are the ideal candidate for the role.

Tracking your applications

It is helpful to keep on track of your applications using a spreadsheet, for example on Excel. You can use this spreadsheet as a database to store every application you've submitted. Include details such as:

- Role
- Company
- Date of submission
- Documents sent
- Application deadline
- Outcome of application.

By keeping track of every application, you may start to see patterns of which CVs are getting you good results and taking you through to the interview stage. You can also monitor when to follow up if you do not hear back from an application.

Following up

If you do not hear back from an application submission for over 2 weeks past the application deadline, you can follow up with an email. Politely ask for the status of your application and any feedback if possible.

If you do not hear back within 4 weeks of the application deadline and your follow up message went unanswered, you can assume that you were not successful on this occasion.

Useful Links

- UAL Careers: <u>Student resources</u>
- Prospects: <u>How to write a successful job application</u>

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