

Cheshire West & Chester Council

## Module Two:

# Maximise your Job Application



Cheshire West  
and Chester

# Maximise your Application:

A quality job application could make the difference between whether or not you even get to the interview stage. Be sure your completed job application presents you in the best light possible.

**Don't let a poorly filled out application ruin your chances for the job.**



# Maximise your Application:

1. Cover Letters
2. Application Forms – tick that box
3. Follow Up
4. Social Media

# Cover Letters

Writing a **cover letter** is an essential part of almost every job application. Not only do you have to make sure it sells your skills and abilities to recruiters, you also need to do it a clear, concise and professional manner. You need to use the cover letter as part of your toolkit – that ultimately persuades the reader to want to meet you.

# How to write a cover letter

Keep your cover letter brief, while making sure it emphasises your suitability for the job. It can be broken down into 4 sections...



# Cover Letters

- **First paragraph** - The opening statement should set out why you're writing the letter. Begin by stating the position you're applying for, where you saw it advertised and when you are available to start.
- **Second paragraph** - Cover why you're suitable for the job, what attracted you to this type of work, why you're interested in working for the company and what you can offer the organisation.

# Cover Letters

- **Third paragraph** - Highlight relevant experience and demonstrate how your skills match the specific requirements of the job description. Summarise any additional strengths and explain how these could benefit the company.

# Cover Letters

- **Last paragraph** - Use the closing paragraph to round up your letter. Reiterate your interest in the role and indicate your desire for a personal interview.
- Finish by thanking the employer and say how you are looking forward to receiving a response.



# Application forms

The majority of application forms begin with basic questions regarding personal details, information about education, and employment history.

These sections are generally straight forward and self explanatory so there is no excuse for errors!

# Application forms

Some application forms use competency based questions, which require the candidate to use examples as evidence demonstrating the skills and qualities that they are looking for. Such questions might begin; Describe a situation..., Describe a time..., Give an example of...

# The STAR model

using examples to demonstrate competence

<b>Situation</b>	Put the situation in context: briefly describe the situation so the example is clearly understood
<b>Task</b>	Add more detail to the situation: where, when, how many / often, who
<b>Action</b>	Say what action you actually took: outline your contribution
<b>Result</b>	Describe the outcome: positive points, learning points, reflection upon the situation, make sure the reflection demonstrates how this has improved you as a potential

# Personal Statements

The personal statement is an opportunity to:

- Summarise key strengths aligned to the job description
- Ensure all elements of the person specification are covered
- Show why you want the job

# I've got a Disability - should I put that in a job application?

- **Yes** - You will be guaranteed an interview if you meet the minimum requirements for the job.
- **Yes** - Employers will want to provide appropriate support and be happy to adapt accordingly. You can then demonstrate how well you can do the job.
- **Yes** - you should tick the box saying you have a disability as non-disclosure could cause problems at a later point.

# Application Forms – Do's

## Do.....

- Read guidelines carefully before you begin
- Follow instructions and complete every section fully
- Answer the question
- Use a variety of examples
- Proof read - do not rely on a spell checker
- Reviewers can tell how much time and thought has gone into completing application forms whether online or paper based.

# Application Forms- Don'ts

## Don't.....

- Use informal language
- Write about negative experiences
- Leave time gaps
- Make any information up
- Cut and paste generic information from other applications
- Exceed given word limits

# Follow up your application

- Following up shows a level of interest. If someone takes time out of their day to follow up on the progress of their application, they clearly want the job.
- Following up also shows you have good communication skills, confirms that you are responsible as well as persistent.



# Follow up your application

- How long should I wait for a response?
- Should I follow up by phone or email?
- What should I say?

# How long should you wait?

- Usually there's a reason why it can take a little while to hear back from a company.
- There's a lot of moving pieces in the hiring process.
- Recruiters usually won't follow up immediately
- Anything between 5 to 7 days after the closing date is a good time period to reach out to the employer if you haven't heard anything.

# To Note!

Before you follow up, have another look at the job post. Sometimes employers explicitly state that they do not want you to reach out to them to ask about your application status at this stage. In other cases, the exact response date is provided in the job advertisement.

Play by the rules.

# Writing up follow-up email

- Use a clear subject line, for example: Following up on a job application for [position title]
- Be polite and professional in the body of your message recognising how busy employers are
- Say you're still interested and reiterate why you're the perfect fit
- Keep the follow-up email short

# Keep job seeking

- Even if you think you've found the perfect job for you, don't give up on applying to other companies while waiting for the response.
- Don't obsess over one job posting. No matter how great a candidate you are, you might not make it for reasons beyond your control.
- Use rejection to learn something for the next application.

# Manage your Social Media Footprint

- We all leave a digital footprint. We join social networking sites, post pictures and send messages - often with little thought for the future.
- Sometimes it can be embarrassing when a picture of you that belongs in the personal domain gets shared a bit too widely.
- Generally, it doesn't matter too much, however, once you start to look for a job, your social media footprint becomes a bit more important.

# Manage your social media

- Many employers and recruitment agencies today are using social media to source the right candidates, which means it should be a big part of your job search strategy.
- On-line social network sites have become an essential forum to advertise your skills

# Manage your social media

By using social media sites in your job search you can increase the visibility of your professional profile and be seen by the wider world.

But be warned...





# Manage your profile

It's no secret that nothing is really private where the internet is concerned.

Be careful what you post to any site, because once it's out there, you can't take it back.



# Manage your social media

**Your first step is to find out what information is out there.** The best way to do that is to do a Google search for your name, because that is what potential employers will be doing.



# Manage your social media

Look for anything that might be off-putting to potential employers in the search results. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Any reports of police involvement in your life.
- Any reports/images of alcohol fuelled events, even past student ones. Ensure your Social Media conveys the image of yourself that you would want.
- Other people's photos of you doing something stupid or inappropriate for the same reason.
- Prospective employers may make judgements on what they see online about you. Make sure they are the right ones!

# Manage your social media

Once you know what's out there, then you can start to effectively manage it. Your strategy is therefore two-fold:

- To remove or hide anything unprofessional or off-putting that does relate to you.
- To make clear what doesn't relate to you.

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**Module Two:**

**Thank You  
& Good Luck**



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