

How to complete an application form

Why do Recruiters use Application Forms?

Application forms are an increasingly common way to short list candidates. The process helps to ensure that all candidates (both internal and external) are treated fairly and in accordance with Equal Opportunities policies. The information you provide will determine whether or not you are short listed so your application should provide them with as much information as possible about your knowledge, skills and abilities. It is crucial that you complete all sections to the best of your ability with information that is relevant to the job you are applying for.

These guidance notes are intended to help you to complete your form effectively.

Before Completing the Form

Read through both the Job Description and Person Specification carefully. Ensure you read and follow any guidelines/notes displayed on the form itself as requirements may differ by organisation.

Job Description

This outlines the main responsibilities and duties of the post. You should make sure that you have read through this very carefully – your potential employer will expect you to know this in detail in an interview. You should also make sure that you understand the job to ensure that it is a role you really want to apply for.

Person Specification

This document describes the professional and technical skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and personal competencies required for the vacant post. These are used as selection criteria when making an appointment to the role. As with the job description you should ensure that you have read and understood this in detail.

General Points

- The form should be typed and emailed back to The Kage Partnership once completed (don't worry about signing it - typing your name and date is sufficient). We will then forward it on to the recruiting client, on your behalf, by the closing date.
- Don't rush it and don't leave it until the last minute. Recruiters are aware that these forms take time so they usually allow at least a week before the completion deadline.
- Ensure that the information you give is well organised and relevant.
- If you need to continue onto additional sheets remember to write your name, along with the post you are applying for, at the top of each page.
- Before you send the form back, check that you have answered every question.
- Keep a copy for yourself to refer to if you are invited for interview.

Common Mistakes

In our experience some of the most common mistakes that are made when completing application forms are:

- Not answering the person specification criteria in the Personal/Supporting statement section with directly relevant information. This is the single most common mistake we encounter.
- Spelling and grammatical mistakes.
- Omitting key information from areas of the form or entering incorrect or exaggerated information.

Supporting/Personal Statement

This is the most important part of the application form. This section gives you the opportunity to demonstrate why you are suitable for the post, and should be based on the qualities listed in the person specification, which are regarded as essential or desirable for the successful applicant.

Assess yourself against the selection criteria, substantiating each point with specific examples of your skills, knowledge and experience. Unless the form specifies an alternative approach, it is usually a good idea to use each point of the person specification as a heading and answer each of them in turn. In considering your experience, remember all your previous employment, as well as any other interests and voluntary work, and draw on this to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills. Remember to make clear what you did.

An Example:

Strong written and verbal communication skills

I have excellent communication skills. I am a confident public speaker and regularly make presentations on the work of the charity to large groups of people, including schools & local community groups. I also liaise frequently with donors on an individual basis, both over the phone and in written correspondence and I am the first point of contact for any general enquires to the fundraising team. I have a clear and concise telephone manner and enjoy advising and supporting donors with any queries they might have. I have strong written skills and as well as including clear and concise information about the charity in day to day correspondence to donors, I regularly submit articles for both departmental quarterly mailings and the fundraising newsletter.

Other Key Sections

Listed below are some of the section headers which may be included on application forms. The information required and the format of the form will vary slightly between organisations.

KAG& PARTNERSHIP

Personal Details

Make sure that you present the information in this section clearly. Should an offer be made they will need to be able to contact you directly to send out the offer letter or any other documents.

Employment History

List all your previous positions, both paid and unpaid - make sure you distinguish between the two. Check that the dates are correct and are in order, with your current or most recent employer first.

Quite often you will be asked to provide a brief outline of the roles and responsibilities in your current role. Make sure that this information is relevant to the specific role, clear and concise.

Education

The information you give here may be used to assess whether you meet the required qualifications.

Increasingly employers are checking references and qualifications in detail. You should expect to be asked to provide copies of exam certificates and other qualifications where you have listed them, and under no circumstances should these ever be fabricated or embellished.

Reasons for Applying

This is often included and is different to the supporting/personal statement above. Here you need to explain why you want this job and your reasons for applying to that charity in particular. We strongly recommend that this is tailored carefully to each individual application form.

References

One of your referees should be your manager from your current or most recent employment. Include as many as they request (usually two). They often ask whether or not referees can be contacted prior to an offer being made so make sure to note whether or not this is acceptable.

We are always on hand with advice while you are completing application forms. If you are able to get the form over to us in time we will happily read through it and will get back to you with any suggestions/comments.