

# Searching and Applying for Jobs

## Searching for jobs

### The best career for you

Before you can begin searching for a job you need to have some idea of what sort of area you would like to work in and what types of jobs are suitable for you.

#### Speak to your tutor

They have course-specific job knowledge.

#### Speak to a Careers / Guidance Advisor

You may not know what career you want to pursue. A careers advisor can help you find out the types of jobs you may enjoy and discuss your career options with you.

You can make a guidance appointment at the Advice Centre on your campus, by emailing [guidance@dundeeandangus.ac.uk](mailto:guidance@dundeeandangus.ac.uk) or asking at Reception.

#### Do some research

Carrying out research into what sort of jobs are available can help you decide the type of career you want to pursue. To search for career ideas on My World of Work visit [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk) and select Careers A-Z.

### How to find a job

Whether you are looking for a new job or an apprenticeship you need to know about the different methods that employers use to advertise their positions. There are various ways of trying to find job advertisements including:

#### My World of Work

To search for jobs on My World of Work visit [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk) and select Job Search.

#### Word of mouth/ recommendation

Let people know you are looking for a job/apprenticeship. Talk to friends, family, past employers and teachers.

#### Jobcentre Plus' Universal Jobmatch

Visit the main government site [www.gov.uk/jobsearch](http://www.gov.uk/jobsearch) to search for the latest vacancies in your area, the UK and abroad.

#### The National Apprenticeship Services

Go to the main apprenticeships website on [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) to register your interest and to search for vacancies.

## **Company websites**

Some companies or organisations, for example hotel chains, the BBC or Dundee and Angus College advertise jobs on their own websites. Current vacancies will be placed on their websites which allow you to search for jobs within their organisations.

You can bookmark websites in your internet browser so you can refer to them again. Some organisations allow you to sign up for alerts, so when a new job is posted on their website you are automatically sent an email alerting you to the new vacancy.

## **Recruitment agencies**

Recruitment agencies are used by employers to help find suitable candidates for job vacancies. Some agencies specialise in certain areas of work. You can register with an agency and they can keep your CV on file should any suitable job vacancies arise. They may ask you to attend an interview before they pass on your details to potential employers. You shouldn't rely on agencies as your only means of finding a job and be aware some agencies will charge you for their services.

## **Local newspapers**

Check out the 'Positions Available' section in Friday's Courier and the Evening Telegraph. You can also look at the national papers' recruitment sections for a variety of jobs across the country.

## **Speculative applications**

Email, telephone, send a letter or visit a number of employers on the off-chance they might have a vacancy. Many vacancies never get advertised. Check the local press for firms that are expanding in your local area. Even if they have no current vacancies, they may retain your details for future opportunities.

## **Social networking sites - LinkedIn, Twitter, Gumtree & Facebook**

Regularly follow company pages and look out for recruitment advertisements. Remember, if you are contacting people through networking sites keep any communication formal. See page 16 for information about writing formal emails. Follow both the website's and College's safety guidelines when using social networking sites.

## Reading job adverts

When searching for a job you will need to look over adverts and pick out the ones which are of interest. Look for:

- The job title
- The job description
- Whether the job is shift work, full time or part time
- Whether the job is temporary (fixed term) or permanent
- The location
- The salary/ hourly rate of pay
- How to apply

## Writing a CV

### What is a CV?

CV stands for Curriculum Vitae which is Latin for 'course of life'. A CV provides an overview of your work experience, achievements, skills and qualifications and can be sent to potential employers in application for jobs, sometimes in addition to an application form.

CVs can also be sent on a speculative basis to enquire about the possibility of a job or work experience even though there are no posts advertised.

For further information on the purpose of a CV please visit:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/what-is-a-cv](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/what-is-a-cv)

Did you know you can borrow books on CV writing from the college libraries or make an appointment to speak to someone in Student Services about your CV?

### Writing your CV or application form

Your CV or application form should be written using **formal English**. The information in your CV or application form should always be:

- Well written and easy to read
- Truthful
- Accurate
- Relevant
- Positive

## Keeping it relevant

The information you include in your CV or application form must be **relevant** to the job you are applying for. Employers need to know that you will be capable of doing or learning to do all aspects of a specific job. When writing a CV and application form you should:

- **Read the job description** carefully and continually **refer to it** whilst writing your application
- If it helps, make a **check list of all the requirements** of the job role to ensure you cover as many as possible, as long as your experience and skills are relevant
- Use the **exact terms stated in the job description** to describe your own skills and experience
- Carry out some **background research** about the employer

Even if you haven't had many jobs, skills you develop whilst at College, undertaking work experience or in your personal life can be relevant to the jobs you are applying for. They are called transferable skills.

If you take the time to read about the employer and the job role when making an application, you will already have done some of your preparation should you be asked to attend an interview.

## How to lay out a CV

Your CV should be neatly laid out and easy to follow. There are different ways of organising the information on your CV. You can use different layouts to highlight your most relevant strengths and achievements. The two main types of CV are skills based and employment based.

### Skills based CV

This type of CV emphasises your soft skills, personal qualities, work experience and life experiences rather than your employment. It is usually suitable for school leavers, students and graduates.

#### Soft skills

Employers are always looking for soft skills or workplace skills. Of all the skills and qualities you have, these are the ones employers want to hear about most.

The table below shows a list of skills you must consider either in your application or before attending an interview. Remember that all of these skills are transferable and can be used in other aspects of life:

Timekeeping	Prepared	Willing to learn new skills
Positive attitude	Enthusiastic	Committed
Work well in a team	Sincere	Reliable
Following instructions	Attendance	Time management
Ability to use initiative	Motivated	Sensible
Willing to work hard	Listening to instructions	Respect for others
Willing to do training	Complete tasks on time	Honest

### Personal qualities

Personal qualities are the characteristics that best describe you as a person. You may be asked to demonstrate an understanding of the qualities you have in an interview or on an application form and how you have used them in a real situation. For example:

One of my qualities is being punctual, I can demonstrate this by my excellent record of always being on time for my classes and appointments.

Here are some examples of positive personal qualities:

Responsible	Strong	Helpful	Thoughtful
Tactful	Ambitious	Polite	Kind
Considerate	Patient	Persistent	Positive
Enthusiastic	Hard working	Organised	Sympathetic
Thoughtful	Independent	Self-reliant	Good humoured
Respectful	Punctual	Friendly	Modest
Honest	Loyal	Dependable	Caring

Determined	Adaptable	Adventurous	Hard working
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### **Life experiences**

Outside work and education everyone develops skills through life experiences. This could be through a particular hobby or interest, through voluntary work or through being a member of a club or society.

Your experiences can also provide you with examples of times where you have demonstrated particular personal qualities. Don't be shy about giving examples! Employers will be looking for you to not only describe your qualities but demonstrate them, so examples are essential.

### **Work experience**

Work experience or work shadowing is when you are invited by an employer to spend a period of time doing unpaid work. Depending on the arrangements, you may get to spend time shadowing an employee, giving you a great insight into what the job entails. In some situations you may be asked to undertake some work. Either way, work experience can help you decide if you would enjoy and would be good at a particular job.

Work experience is very important if you know the career you would like to pursue, but have no employment experience in this area. If you apply for a teaching course for example, it will be expected that you have volunteered your time to shadow a teacher or had some work experience in a school.

## **Employment based CVs**

This CV will highlight your job specific skills and experience.

### **Job specific skills**

These are the skills that you will have developed through any work you may have done: full time, part time, work experience placement, etc. It can be anything from painting to answering the phone.

You may also hold a formal qualification that demonstrates to employers that your skill in a specific area is at an industry recognised level.

## **CV tips**

### **Do**

- Use a clear font style and size
- Use clear subheadings
- Format and align sections
- Keep the length to two single-sided A4 pages
- Use a sensible email address

- List your academic grades if they are above a 3 at standard grade or C at Higher
- Proof your CV to check for errors
  
- **Don't**
- Use photographs
- Print on coloured or poor quality paper
- List your academic grades if below a 3 at standard grade or C at Higher

### Example CV

The example on the next page illustrates your skills followed by your education. This is particularly useful if you haven't had many jobs yet.

**Remember to tailor your CV to suit the job you're applying for.**

There is a CV builder tool available on the My World of Work website. Visit [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk), select My CV and then Login/register.

If you would like help formatting or proofing your CV ask a member of the Learning Resources team. You can also arrange an appointment with a member of Student Services staff.

Your CV should only be one or two pages long

Use a clear font at no smaller than 10pt

You don't have to include a photo (unless requested), or disclose your date of birth or marital status on a UK CV

## Your first name and surname

Your phone number

Your email address

mention if driving licence/passport

Use a professional sounding email address

## Personal Statement

Your personal statement should give an overview of the relevant skills you've gained whilst at College and through work experience. This section should be positive, focussing on key areas employers look for.

## Education and Qualifications

Month YYYY – Month YYYY

Name of college

Highest qualification – Level of pass

- Use bullet points to include details of any relevant course modules, projects or awards you received

Month YYYY – Month YYYY

Name of school/college

Highers Subject (Grade), Subject (Grade), Subject (Grade)

Standard Grades Subject (Grade), Subject (Grade)

Add any other commendations from school if applicable.

## Work Experience

Month YYYY – Month YYYY

Job Title

Name of employer

- Use bullet points to explain your job role and responsibilities

Month YYYY – Month YYYY

Job Title

Name of employer

- Use bullet points to explain your job role and responsibilities

List your work experience in reverse chronological order. This means the list will start with your most recent job and work backwards from there.

Even if your work experience is not the same as the job you are applying for, it should be included to highlight transferable skills. These are skills which can be used within different jobs such as communication skills. Remember to include skills which are relevant to the job.

## ICT Skills

Use this area to explain your IT skills

Employers like you to mention whether you have any qualifications like ECDL

Name the programs and systems you use like Internet Explorer, Microsoft Office

Explain your abilities using job-specific software, like specialised databases or systems

## Additional Information

Is there anything you've not mentioned already that would be good to explain?

Perhaps First Aid training, additional training or responsibilities

Have you been a Class Rep, achieved an award outside school/college etc.?

## Other Interests

Use this area to mention any other interests you have outside work and study, try to mention relevant things and phrase everything positively like 'I enjoy travelling and the experiences it brings as it widens my horizons to new cultures'.

## Referee

Name of Referee

Job Title

Work address

Work address

Work address

Postcode

Work telephone: 01234 100 100

Work email: person@email.com

Name of Referee

Job Title

Work address

Work address

Work address

Postcode

Work telephone: 01234 200 200

Work email: person@email.com

A referee is the person who provides the reference to potential employers. Always ask permission before naming someone as a referee on your CV or a plication form.

If possible, try to use references from different workplaces so they provide different information.

## Covering Letter

### What is a covering letter?

A covering letter is sent alongside other documents to provide the recipient with additional information such as an explanation as to why you are sending the enclosed documents and further details about yourself.

When applying for a job or sending your CV to a potential employer, the covering letter is your opportunity to make a good first impression.

For further information on covering letters please visit:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/clever-cover-letters](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/clever-cover-letters)

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/5-things-you-should-never-include-in-a-cover-letter](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/5-things-you-should-never-include-in-a-cover-letter)

### Using formal English

If you are writing to a friend or relative it is fine to use informal, chattier sounding English. If you are writing a covering letter to send with your CV or a job application, it should be written using **formal English**. This applies to both printed letters and emails. It is important your letter is clear, so don't over complicate your sentences. Ask your tutor or a Learning Resources Assistant to read your letter to check it is easy to understand.

For help describing your work, skills and strengths when writing a covering letter please visit:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/clever-word-play](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/clever-word-play)

### The first sentence

Depending on the situation, there are a number of ways of starting your covering letter, these include:

- I would like to apply for the post of...
- Further to our telephone conversation...
- In reply to your advertisement in...
- Please find enclosed a copy of my CV in connection with...
- Please find enclosed my application for the position of...

## Final steps

The following suggestions can help you avoid errors in your letters:

- Read through your letter a couple of times and make any amendments where required. Have you missed anything out? Are your points in the correct order?
- Ask your tutor, a Learning Resources Assistant or a colleague to read over your letter to check it is easy to understand
- Proof read for grammar, spelling and punctuation errors
- Keep copies of your letters so you can refer to what you've sent

## How to lay out a covering letter

The following page shows you an example of how to lay out a covering letter.

For further guidance about the type of information to include in each section of your covering letter, along with a Word document template, please visit:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/cover-letter-guide](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/cover-letter-guide)

	Your address Your phone number Your email address
Employer's name Employer's address	
Today's date	
Dear Name or Dear Sir/ Madam	
<b><u>The job title and/or reference number</u></b>	
The first paragraph should state clearly which job you are applying for and where you saw it advertised. Mention that your CV is enclosed.	
The second and third paragraph should tell the employer about you and why you are suitable for the job. This is an opportunity to sell yourself to the employer and show what you have to offer. Be enthusiastic but try to keep it brief and to the point.	
In the concluding paragraph of your letter you should indicate your interest in attending an interview, thank the reader for their time and consideration. End on a positive note such as 'I look forward to hearing from you.'	
Yours sincerely (if writing to a named person e.g. 'Dear Mr Smith') <b>OR</b> Yours faithfully (if you began your letter with 'Dear Sir/ Madam')	
Sign your name here	
Print your name here	

## Writing a formal email

The same principles for writing a formal letter apply to writing an email. However, there are a few additional considerations:

**Don't write 'Hello':** When writing a formal email use 'Dear...' A formal email is no different to a formal letter and should be written using the same language.

**The layout of your email:** When sending a formal email postal addresses are not required. If you want to lay it out like a formal letter, write it in Word and save it as a PDF. This PDF can then be attached to your email. Direct your recipient to the attachments by writing 'Please find attached.....' in your email.

**Subject box:** Put the email subject in this box, for example 'Application for position of Receptionist'.

**Email address:** Double check the recipient's email address is correct. You could ask the recipient to send you an email to confirm they have received your email.

**Your email address:** Create a sensible email address for yourself, especially if you will be using this email account to send more formal correspondence.

**Cc box:** Cc stands for carbon copy. If you want to send copies of your email to others, put their email addresses in this box. Please note all recipients will be able to see who else was copied into the email.

**Bcc box:** Bcc stands for blind carbon copy. If you want to send copies of your email, but do not want the recipients to see who else received it, enter their email addresses in the Bcc box. Top tip – enter your own email address into the Bcc box to check that it sends OK.

**Attachments:** If you're sending a document or an image as an attachment with your email, make sure the file size is not too large for emailing. Try not to send any files that are larger than 5MB. Unless a particular file type is required, use PDFs as they can be viewed on most computers and tend to have smaller file sizes. Microsoft Office has a "save as PDF" option.

**Keep a copy for future reference:** Most email accounts allow you to create folders for filing emails. You can also print a hard copy or save a copy to your computer.

# Interviews

## Job interviews

Having received job applications, an employer will usually invite a short list of the top applicants to attend an interview. This is the most common method used by employers to help decide whether or not an applicant is suitable for a job and can be hired.

If you are fortunate enough to be selected for an interview, the employer will contact you to let you know when and where it will be. They may also let you know what format the interview will take.

## Types of interviews

### Formal interviews

You may be asked to attend a formal interview, during which you could be interviewed by a single person, two people or a panel of people. Unless told otherwise, presume that all interviews are formal, and dress and act appropriately.

During a formal interview you will be asked a number of questions, designed to help the interviewers decide if you are the right person for the job.

### Informal interviews

Depending on the job and the employer, you may get asked to an informal interview. This means there might only be one or two people interviewing rather than a panel. The interview will probably have a more relaxed atmosphere. If you are attending an informal interview you should still act professionally, dress smartly and be well prepared.

### Group interviews

During a group interview you will usually be given a task alongside other candidates, whilst the employers observe and assess your performance.

### Phone or Skype interviews

Large companies sometimes interview candidates over the phone or online to help them narrow down the number to be interviewed face-to-face. You may be interviewed over the phone or through Skype if the employers are based too far away for you to travel to an interview.

## Selection testing

Depending on the employer and the job, some companies may ask you to take a test as part of their selection process. Testing can take a variety of forms depending on the job, ranging from practical to personality tests.

If you were applying for a job as a chef you may be asked to do a practical cooking test. If you were applying to work in a call centre, you might need to answer a mock call. Sometimes bar and restaurant interviewees will be asked to serve food or pull a pint.

## Handling interview nerves

Even if you're really prepared, interviews can still make you nervous.

Visit this website to read 10 top tips for handling interview nerves:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/10-top-tips-for-handling-interview-nerves](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/10-top-tips-for-handling-interview-nerves)

## Non-verbal communication

During an interview you will give signals with your body language.

Look at the pictures below of people in interview situations. They show examples of both positive and negative body language.



**Negative**

**Negative**

**Positive**

Relaxed but authoritative body language, such as open hand gestures, sitting upright and smiling demonstrates a positive and confidence outlook.

## Be prepared!

Here are some key points to remember when preparing for a job interview:

- Contact the employers to confirm you will be attending the interview
- Remember to ask what format the interview will take, and if you need to bring any evidence of qualifications, examples of your work, etc.

- Make sure you know exactly where the interview will take place. If you plan to drive, find out if there are parking facilities. Establish how to get there and how long it will take. Give yourself at least 15 minutes extra time so you do not need to rush and you are not late. Being early gives you time to compose yourself and handle your nerves
- Research the company. Check their website and get some information about what they do and if they have any awards for excellence or training. For example, it makes a good impression, if they ask you why you want to work for them and you can answer “I understand you have won a national award for employee satisfaction”
- Decide what to wear. Unless told otherwise, dress smartly. Remember that first impressions count
- Read the job advert, job specification and your application. Think of specific examples you can give to demonstrate how your skills match those required
- Think about the sort of questions you might be asked and practice your answers. Are there any questions you would like to ask them?

### The 10 biggest interview mistakes!

Watch this video and read the information to find out what not to do in an interview:

[www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/the-10-biggest-interview-mistakes](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/content/the-10-biggest-interview-mistakes)

### Interview questions

Listed below are common interview questions. Read through the list before you go to an interview and write down how you would answer each question, giving examples of how you can demonstrate what you have been asked with a real life situation, if applicable.

- Why do you want this job?
- Describe a situation in which you have demonstrated leadership
- Describe a situation where you worked in a team
- What do you expect to be doing 5 years from now?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Who else have you applied to/secured interviews with?
- Why did you choose your course and what factors influenced your choice?
- What are your strengths?
- What has been your greatest achievement?

- Why do you want to join our organisation?
- What would you do if ..... happened? (hypothetical questions)
- Describe a situation in which you dealt with confrontation (for example, a difficult customer)
- Describe a situation in which you have influenced or motivated people
- Describe yourself in one word / in a sentence
- Are you prepared to be flexible? (for example different locations / different shift patterns)
- Describe a situation in which you used your initiative
- Describe a situation in which you solved a problem
- Describe a situation in which you took responsibility
- What are your hobbies?
- What was your biggest setback? (How do you deal with adversity?)
- Describe a situation where you had to plan or organise something
- What IT skills do you have?
- Describe a situation where you had a difficult decision to make
- Have you got any questions?