



**Christ the King**  
Catholic Voluntary Academy

# **How to apply for a job.**

**A Guide for CTK Students.**

## **STEP 1—READ ALL OF THE INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE JOB**

Most Organisations detail full details of the requirements of the job in a document called a Job Description and detail the skills/experience and attitude of the person needed to do the role in a Person Specification.

### Example of Job Description and Person Specification

These documents are produced by the staff members in the department which is hiring, in conjunction with their HR department. The documents outlines the knowledge and skills that the organisation are looking for in their ideal candidate. These criteria are divided into two categories; those that are 'essential' and others that are 'desirable'. In some cases, the criteria will be personal attributes, and in others they reflect particular skills or knowledge that you will be required to demonstrated if you get the job.

### **What if I don't meet the criteria?**

Unless you can demonstrate experience of every item in the 'essential' list, then it is probably not worth applying for the job. Some jobs adverts provide the name of an informal contact and if you believe that you are perfect for the job in every way apart from missing one criteria, contact this person and ask whether they would consider your application.

## **STEP 2—FIND OUT ABOUT THE ORGANISATION!**

What does the organisation do?

What is the organisations mission goals?

What projects are they currently working on?

What are their plans for the future?

All this information can generally be found on the organisations website or search the name of the organisation on Google to find information from other parties i.e. press information and reviews.

Why?

- Is this an organisation you would like to work for?
- Help you understand what part the vacant role plays in the wider organisation.
- Will enable you to think about what you could bring to the organisation.

## **STEP 3—APPLY!**

Read the information given on how to apply for the role carefully and follow instructions given.

### **Application Form**

- ⇒ Complete the application form and include all information required!
- ⇒ Take your time so that you complete the application to the best of your ability. Check your spellings! Check and check again!

### **Competency-- Based Application Form**

In this kind of application form, in addition to the basic personal information, education and employment history, you are required to demonstrate certain skills and experiences that are desired or expected in the job specification. This kind of commercial application form poses a few specific competency-based questions for you to answer, such as: “ Please give an example of how you work in a team/how you have dealt with a difficult problem”. Alternatively you may be given a scenario for which you have to present a solution. An example of this is: “If your co-worker has missed a deadline, what would you do?”.

## **Personal Statements**

- Many job application forms include a large space for candidates to write something about themselves that will convince the employers to take them on.
- Although it is often called a 'personal statement' this section of an application form does not require you to give 'personal' information about things such as your hobbies. Employers only want to know why you are the best person for the job so only include hobbies etc. if they illustrate why you are the best person for the job. Unless the form specifically requests you to do so, don't reveal details of your life outside the world of work.
- It is important not to make a personal statement into a dense, unreadable block of text. You need to write good prose in full sentences and break it up into small paragraphs. Use headings to help guide the reader's eye to the most important information.
- It is very important that you tailor each personal statement for the specific job you are applying for. Do not simply copy and paste an old personal statement into your new application.
- Show off the skills that you have (which of course meet the skills detailed in the Job Description and Person Specification!)
- You cannot simply state that you fulfil the criteria. If the criteria asks for a strong team player you cannot simply put I work well in a team. You have to give examples to illustrate why you are a strong team player. This may be at school, voluntary work or during completion of hobbies.
- State your achievements and why they will help you succeed in the role.

Include such things as:

- ⇒ Events from your education/career to date that make you especially suited to the job (including volunteer work/work experience): it is important to be able to write about these events enthusiastically
- ⇒ What it is about the job that especially attracts you to it
- ⇒ The skills/knowledge base you have that is relevant to the job
- ⇒ What is the unique contribution you can make to the organisation? Refer to your research about the organisation when describing this.

## **CV Applications**

Write a short cover letter to include when sending your CV. The covering letter is a courteous introduction. It needs to lead into your CV and it must be concise and relevant. It is also a professional document, even if it is sent via email, so format it as you would a business letter (date, address etc.)

Include;

- 1. Your name and contact details**
- 2. Personal statement**
- 3. Work Experience.** Start with your current or most recent experience. Bullet-point your key duties and achievements under clear sub-heading. Detail key responsibilities and key achievements.
- 4. Qualifications, education and training.** Include all your GCSE subjects and grades, and any vocational qualifications or A Levels. Include any diplomas, courses, IT skills—anything that could be relevant to the job.
- 5. Voluntary work (if applicable)**
- 6. Interests.** Unless your hobbies/interests are relevant to the job, keep it to a sentence about what you like to do in your spare time.
- 7. References.** If you have details of referees, put them in. Common practice is to write 'References are available on request' and wait until they are asked for.

## **How is your application judged?**

Job applications are often judged on a tick-box system. Because there is little time for the hiring committee to read through hundreds of applications in detail, many panels start by going through the applications and removing any applications who do not meet all of the 'essential' criteria.

You need to think of ways to be creative when presenting your information that proves you do match the stated criteria for the job. Using bullet points, underlying or bold letters is a way of attracting the reader's eye to the relevant parts of your application.

## **STEP 5—INTERVIEW PROCESS**

### **Interview Purpose**

The purpose of an interview is;

1. For the employer to find the best person for the job. The interview is designed to review the candidate's experience and abilities.
  - *Can you do the job? (skills, abilities, qualifications)*
  - *Will you do the job? (interest, attitude & motivation)*
  - *How will you fit into the organisation? (personality)*
  
2. For you to decide if this is the job for you.
  - *What does this position offer me?*
  - *How does it fit with my career plans?*

## **Interview Advice**

- Double check the date, time and location of the interview and be familiar with the name and title of the interviewer. Take your interview confirmation letter with you.
- Prepare your interview outfit in advance. Ensure your appearance is both smart and comfortable.
- Familiarize yourself with the journey to the location, to ensure you arrive in plenty of time. If driving, do a 'dummy run'. Anticipate delays, especially on unknown routes. Contact your interviewer swiftly if you are unavoidably delayed on the day.
- Take any requested certificates, a copy of your CV/application form and a notepad and pen. Ensure your mobile phone is turned OFF before arriving at reception.
- Be punctual for your meeting.
- Remember that you start making an impression on your prospective employer the moment you arrive at reception. Be courteous to the receptionist and any other staff you meet prior to your interview. Their opinion of you is often sought and may even have some influence on the final selection.

## **Interview Preparation**

- Find out as much information as possible about your prospective employer in advance.
- Prepare in advance—think of ways in which your experience will benefit your potential employer (refer to Job Description and Person Specification)
- Prepare yourself in advance for likely questions. Prepare answers to competency based questions which ask you to provide examples of your experience/skills.
- Prepare some questions that could ask the employer in the interview. This can demonstrate you have thought about the role and done some research on the organisation.

## **The Interview**

- Greet your interviewer standing, with a strong, firm handshake and a smile. Good body language is vital. Sit up straight with both feet on the floor. Speak clearly and confidently. Try and maintain a comfortable level of eye contact throughout.
- A standard interview will generally start with a introductory chat, moving on to questions specific to your application and experience. General information about the company and role may follow, finishing with an opportunity for you to ask your own questions.
- Be familiar with your application form/CV so that you can answer any questions related to it.
- Listen to what is being asked of you. Do not be afraid to spend some time thinking before you answer more difficult questions.
- Show your enthusiasm for the role.

### **What creates a bad impression?**

- Poor personal appearance
- Negative attitude—evasive, using excuses
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- Lack of preparation
- Poor knowledge of role
- Failure to give concrete examples of skills
- Over emphasis on money/rewards
- Lack of career plan