How to write a winning Apprenticeship application





National Apprenticeship Service

### Introduction

This guide is packed full of hints and tips about how to work your way through registering, searching and applying for your dream Apprenticeship job.

When you see this sign take a few minutes to read our suggestions – it won't take long and we promise it will make a big difference to your application.

By reading through the different sections of this guide, you will be able to pick up valuable advice about the application process that will really help your application to stand out and hopefully get you through to the interview stage of the process.

We hope you find this guide useful and wish you every success in securing an Apprenticeship job opportunity.



This publication was produced by Hertfordshire County Council in conjunction with the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Provider Network





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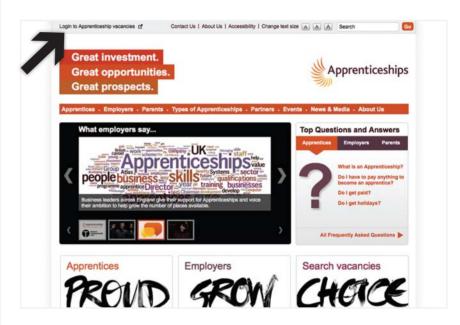
### Step 1: Register

# **Notes**

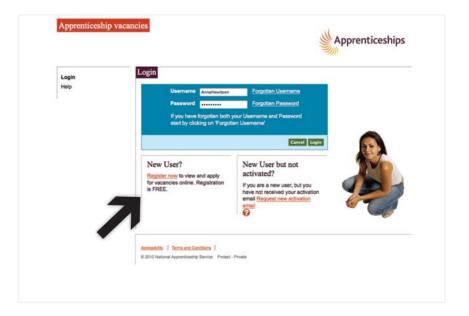
Registering on the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) vacancy website is completely free of charge.

To start your search you need to visit the website apprenticeships.org.uk

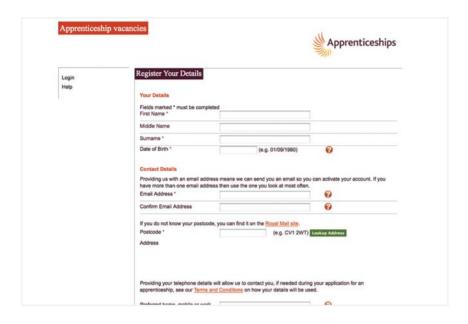
From the home page you can find out lots of useful information about apprenticeships. Click on **Login to Apprenticeship vacancies** as shown below (top left hand corner of the home page).



A new window will open and you need to click on the link that says **Register Now**.



You will work through a form to complete your details and create a new account that looks like this:



When writing your date of birth you need to put the full year that you were born e.g. 01/03/1994 (not 01/03/94).

Select a User Name that you are going to be able to remember
Setting up the password is quite complicated because you have to

- Make it 8 20 characters
- Include a capital letter
- Include a number and
- Include a special character (something like a ? or !)

# ! Tips

- Make sure you use an email account that you can access straight away. Once you have completed your application you will receive an email so that you can 'activate your account.'
- Always try to include a telephone number if you have got one, is is important that training providers can contact you to discuss your application if they need to
- Write down your username and password straight away before you forget.

Notes

### **Step 1: Register**

Notes

# ! Tips

 Try to use a sensible email address. Many candidates have email addresses that are very inappropriate and may put employers off.

Remember you need to activate your account. You will need to go into your email account (that you used in your registration form) and you will have an email waiting for you. You need to open the email and click on **Activate** your account.

You may need to check your junk mail folder as sometimes the activation email may be filtered to this folder instead of your inbox.

You are now ready to log in to your account and start searching!

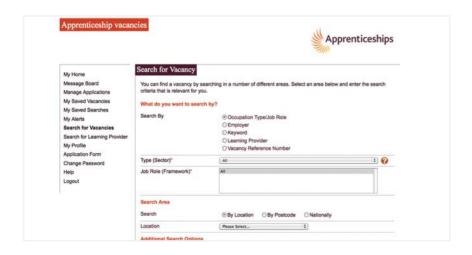
Search the latest App vacancies	renticeship	Apprenticeships
	apprentice	ships.org.uk
Login details	;	
Username:		
Password reminder:		

Once your account is activated and you have logged on, you will see the **My Home** page with 5 boxes on the screen. There will be a welcome email waiting for you in the Message Board.

To start searching for vacancies, click on **Go** in the Search For Vacancies box on the top right.



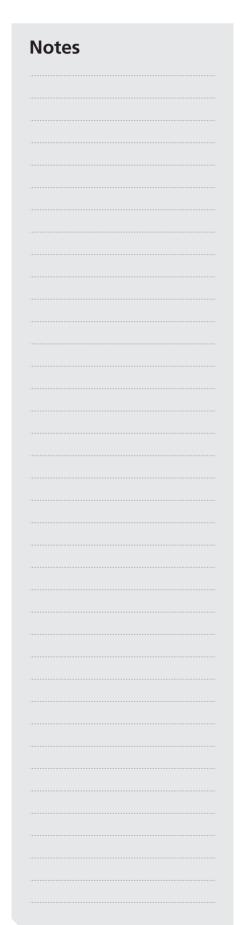
There are 5 ways in which to search for a vacancy.

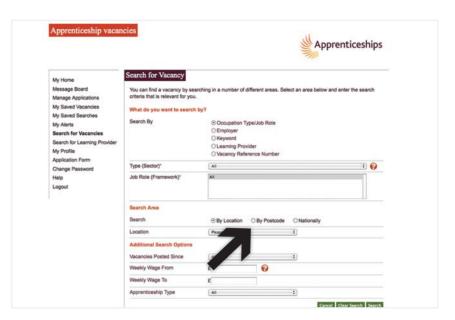


When searching by Occupation Type/Job Role, use the drop-down menus to enter the broad area of work in which you are interested and then, if you can, narrow it down to the Job Role. For example, in Business Administration and Law, job roles include Accounting, Sales and Telesales, and Marketing. If you don't want to do this, leave it on All.

Notes

### Step 2: Search





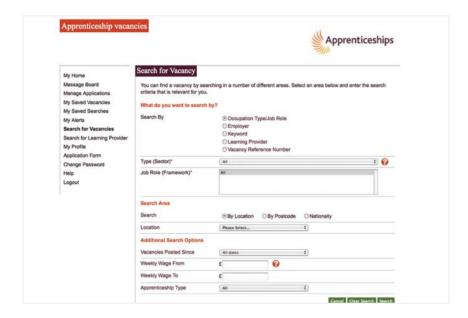
### Search Area lets you search in 3 ways:

- If you search by Location, use the drop-down menu to choose your area but note that this will be a whole county, city or region in England.
- If you search by Postcode, the postcode that you used in your address will appear automatically or you can enter another one.
   Type in the distance from the postcode that you are prepared to travel to work. Widen your local search area for more vacancies.

Take account of easily available bus, train and underground routes as a longer distance might not necessarily mean a more difficult journey.

# ! Tips

 If you are looking for inspiration try a postcode or location search to see what is in the area.  Searching Nationally will give you all the vacancies for your selected occupation in England. Beware that this will give you a very large number of opportunities which might make selection difficult.



### **Additional Search Options** enables you to narrow your search more:

The Vacancies Posted Since drop-down menu will probably be of most use once you have been using the website for some time to look at vacancies. It will save you having to sort through vacancies that you have already seen.

## ! Tips

 Look every day at the Vacancies Posted Since Yesterday to give you the best chance of being one of the first applicants and not missing out on a great opportunity before the closing date.

When you come to the Weekly Wage boxes, if you are uncertain about wages it is probably better to leave this field blank. Please be aware that Apprenticeship wages vary depending on the Employer/Occupation Type and where you live.

Select the level of Apprenticeship you are looking for from the Apprenticeship Types drop down menu.

Notes

### Step 2: Search

Notes

Remember that as Apprenticeships involve taking job-specific and work-based industry-standard qualifications which reflect the skills and knowledge needed for a particular job, you might need to start at the same level that you have already achieved in your qualifications at Key Stage 4 or after the age of 16.

### **My Alerts**

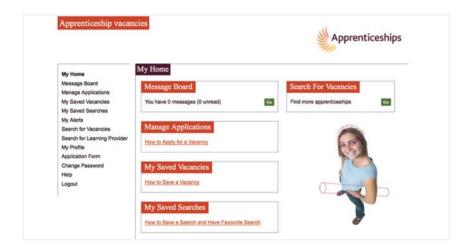
Once registered click on **My Alerts** to set up email and text alerts to ensure that you are one of the first to find out about new vacancies posted that match your search criteria. You will still need to look at your account regularly as other vacancies may appear that don't quite match your search criteria but that may still be of interest to you.

# ! Tips

- If you change any of your personal details such as email address or mobile number, don't forget to change them in My Profile.
- If you see No vacancies currently found that match your search criteria in your selected location then expand the search to see the vacancies available nationally.
- Save a favourite search to receive alerts by text or email when a vacancy that matches your search becomes available. You will also receive a message on the Message Board.

The good news is that you can set up your application form before you are ready to start applying for jobs so that once you do see a job that you want to apply for, you've already done most of the hard work and you will just need to make a few tweaks to your application so that it is relevant to the job you are applying for.

From your home page, you can access your **Application Form** which you can start to complete at any time.



# ! Tip

Before you start, print off a copy of anything that might help you such as your:

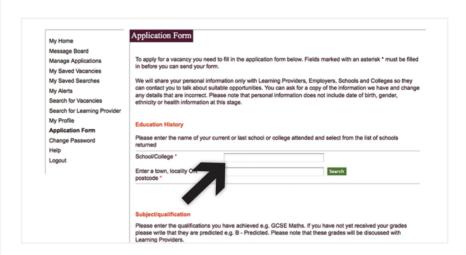
- UCAS Personal Statement
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Any practice application forms that you have completed
- Personal Statement
- Achievement Portfolio
- Copies of Certificates
- Remember to click on save at every section of the form
   You can always return to it later to complete different
   sections as you are ready.

N	otes

# **Notes**

### **Education History**

The first section of the application form asks you to input the last school or college that you attended. Don't worry if you haven't been at school or college for a number of years as it won't affect your application.



### Subject/qualification

The Subject/qualification section enables you to enter all of the qualifications that you hold or are currently undertaking.

felp	School/College *			
ogout	ou non conlege			
	Enter a town, locality OR postcode *		Search	
			CSE Maths. If you have not yet received ease note that these grades will be disc	
	Subject		0	
	Qualification	Please select	2.46	: 0
	Grade		0	
	Grade Year Attained		0	
	-	Cancel Add Subject		

# ! Tips

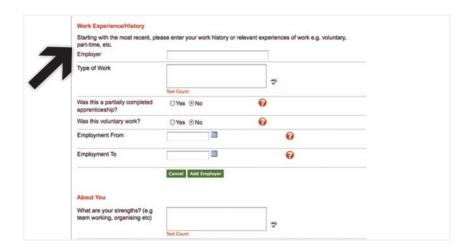
Remember to include all of your predicted grades and any other
qualifications or grades that you hold. e.g. sport, music, dance,
drama. Duke of Edinburgh, Asdan. St Johns Ambulance etc.

### Work Experience/History

This section enables you to enter all of your work experience, whether this is paid or unpaid work.

When you start typing in the box that says 'Type of Work' you will notice that a character count will appear underneath the box. You have 200 characters to describe the type of work that you completed.

If you can't remember the exact dates then you can select the approximate dates.



# ! Tips

- Practice writing your statement in a word document first, ther
  you can cut and paste it into the box when you're happy with
  how it reads
  - Remember to check the spelling and punctuation.
  - Make sure you focus on tasks that you undertook that might be relevant to the types of jobs that you are applying for in the future.

Notes

Notes

# ! Tips

- If you do not have any relevant experience then consider taking
  the initiative to set some up. This could be one day at the week
  end or in the holidays. You don't have to rely on the work
  experience that your school might have set up for you.
- Think about the skills that your work experience placement helped you to develop.

About You – What are your strengths?

This section is one of the most important parts of the Application Form that will help you to get through to interview. You need to be prepared to put in a great deal of work to get this section looking really good.

When you start typing in the boxes, you will notice that similar to the Work Experience/history section you are given a character count – but this time you have 4000 characters per box (which is the equivalent to one UCAS personal statement or approximately one and a half A4 pages of typed text).

What are your strengths? (e.g.	1	
eam working, organising etc)		
carring, organising city		ABC .
	Text Count:	
bersonal skills would you like		
rove? (e.g. time managing,		49
que doning skills)		4
	Text Count:	77.00
s there anything we can do to		7
support your interview? (e.g. do		140
you need a signer, information in		**
Braille, another person to come		
with you).	Text Count:	
What are your hobbies, interests	<u> </u>	
and/or achievements?		
		A50
	Text Count:	

Mate

## ! Tips

Remember to give examples of your strengths if you can. For
example, if the employer asks for 'Good communication skills'
then you need to tell them that you have 'Good communication
skills' but also think about how you could back this up with
evidence of these skills.

For example, you could say something like this:

'I believe that I have extremely good communication skills. I have given presentations in front of large audiences in whole year assemblies and I have also talked in front of groups in the classroom. As a 6th form Ambassador, I have been involved in open evenings where I have spoken to groups of parents and prospective students about my experience of the 6th form. I also have excellent written communication skills and I am confident speaking on the telephone'

Or you could say something like this:

'I feel that I have very good communication skills. As a keen team member of a local football team, it is crucial that we communicate constantly when on the pitch to ensure that everyone can work together to win the game. I have been praised by the team captain for the way that I communicate effectively on the pitch, saying that I am calm, motivational and fair'

## ! Tips

If you are not sure about what to write about yourself, ask a
friend or teacher to list your three best qualities (see the
worksheet on page 26 of this guide which will prompt you to
think about some words and phrases that you could include)

Notes

Notes

Finding and using 'buzz words'

The job advert needs to be the starting point for your 'strengths' section. By reading it carefully, you can start to identify the skills and attributes that the employer is looking for.

The first place to look for the 'buzz words' is in the Vacancy Description within the job advert. This section will contain information about the kinds of tasks that you would be expected to complete.

# ! Tips

 Have a look through the job advert and either print it off and circle all of the buzz words, or write them all down so that you have a checklist of the kinds of words that you could try to include in the 'About You' section of the application form.

Learning Provider	
Vacancy Descrip	ttion an online retailer specialising in electronics equipment based in St Albans are looking for
an enthusiastic ar	and self motivated individual to carry out a full range of administrative support duties.
Main duties includ	de:
Telephone/Email	Support
	a to customer queries.√la phone and email ustomer <u>s</u> with product and service information
Customer Order F	Processing
	onto online order processing system nvoice Management
	<u>r products</u> for advertising ate <u>clearly</u> with the rest of the team regarding the status of each order including items out of
<ul> <li>Payments I</li> </ul>	Management asks as directed by the line manager
71,701.0.0	and an entitle of the line manager

We have circled some of the 'buzz words' and phrases that we think could be used in the application form

The second place to look for the 'buzz words' is the sections at the bottom of the job advert that are titled Skills Required, Qualifications Required and Personal Qualities.

Remember to try and include examples of your skills and personal qualities in your application.

Able to work alongside a wide variety of people	
An interest in Geography would be an advantage	
Excellent IT skills are essential	
Good written and verbal communication skills	
Qualifications Required	_
GCSE grade A-C in English and Maths or equivalent.	
Personal Qualities	
Enthusiastic	
Punctual	
Able to show commitment	
<ul> <li>Keen to work in a busy office dealing with a variety of different types of work</li> <li>Willing to learn new skills</li> </ul>	
• valing to learn new skills	
mportant Other Information	
From the 1st October 2011 the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for apprentices will be increased for young peop	
aged 16-18 and those aged over 19 in the first year of their Apprenticeship. The new rate is £2.60 per hour. The	
covered by the age category above will be entitled to the NMW appropriate to their age.	
Future Prospects	
Good prospects to work in a Planning Office here or elsewhere.	
sood prospecte to train in a richning whole into a stadffillial.	_

# ! Tips

- If the employer is asking for GCSE grades A\*-C and you did not achieve these grades, it could still be worth applying for the job. You would need to say that you were willing to work towards achieving Functional Skills within the duration of the Apprenticeship framework.
- Remember to print off or save a copy of the job advert as you
  will need to use the advert to help you to prepare for interview
  (if you are invited to attend one) and you will also need to take a
  copy of the advert with you to the interview.


Notes	

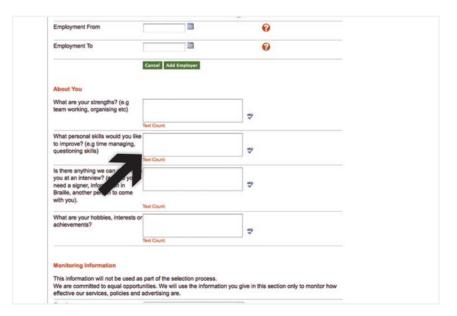
About you – What personal skills would you like to improve?

Although you have 4000 characters for this question you only need to write a good paragraph or a few sentences that answer the question, but in a clever way and linked directly to the job that you are applying for. For example, if you were going for a job in the IT industry you could say something like this:

'I would like to improve my knowledge and awareness of the latest programming techniques being used in the workplace to increase efficiency and decrease costs to the employer'

Or if you were going for a job in hairdressing you could say something like this:

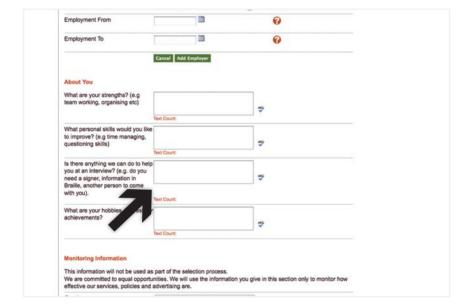
'I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest cutting and colouring techniques being used within the fashion industry and how these could be adapted to suit high street fashion trends'



About you – Is there anything we can do to help you at an interview?

Even if you do not require any support at interview, you should never leave this box blank

It is acceptable to write 'No thank you' or 'Not applicable' but never leave this (or any other box) blank on the application form. This is because the employer will not know if you have chosen not to answer or if you have accidentally missed it. This rule applies to every different type of job application that you may find yourself completing – not just Apprenticeships.



Notes

Notes

About you – What are your hobbies, interests or achievements?

Be careful about what you write in this section. You need to remember that the employer will use this section (and all of the application form) to start to create an impression of the kind of person that you are.

It is quite likely that if you are invited for interview, that the employer will use this section to help to 'break-the-ice' and make you feel more comfortable in your interview. They might start by asking you something like 'So (your name), I notice from your application form that you are a interested in films. What was the last film that you saw and what did you like about it?'

Employment From		0	
Employment To		0	
About You	Cancel Add Employer		
What are your strengths? (e.g team working, organising etc)	Text Count:	∌	
What personal skills would you like to improve? (e.g time managing, questioning skills)	Text Count:	⊅	
Is there anything we can do to help you at an interview? (e.g. do you need a signer, information in Braille, another person to come with you).	Text Count:	*	
What are your hobbies, interests or achievements?	et Count:	<b>⇒</b>	
Monitoring Information This information will not be used as We are committed to equal opportue effective our services, policies and	nities. We will use the informati	on you give in this section only to monitor how	

# ! Tips

If you have an interesting or unique hobby or interest then include it in this section, but be careful about over-embellishing or 'making up' a hobby or interest as you don't want to get caught out and be asked about it at interview, then not be able to talk about it honestly.

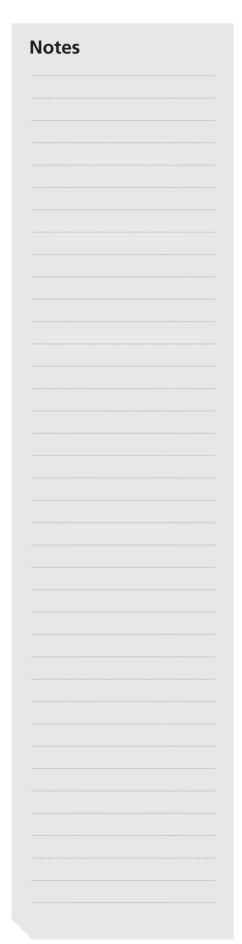
# Remember to think about what you write and what it says about you. For example:

Your hobby or interest	What it might make an employer think about you
I like talking to friends on BBM	'I wonder if I would need to keep an eye on this person in case they use work time to talk to friends'
I like to spend time on Facebook	'Oh good, they've got a facebook account – I can have a look and see what they're like'
I like playing football and keeping fit and healthy	'They obviously like to keep fit and healthy, I hope that means they will take less time off sick through ill-health and be a more reliable employee'
I like going out and socialising	'This person likes to party. They'll probably phone in sick every Monday'

# ! Tips

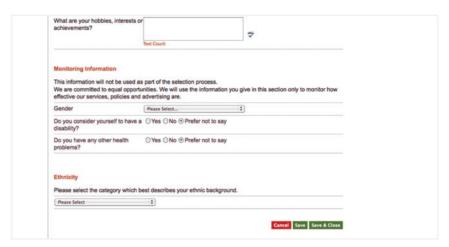
 Try to include hobbies or interests that are current, telling the employer that you were in the Brownies when you were 8 years old is not very current.

N	otes

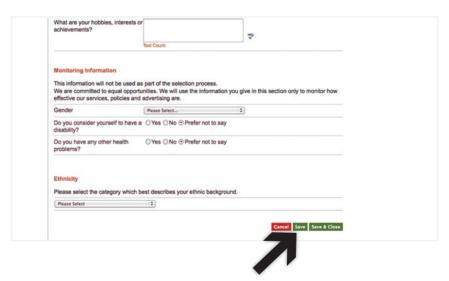


### **Monitoring information**

This section does need to be completed and should be pretty quick for you to complete



At the bottom of the page you can click on **Save** 

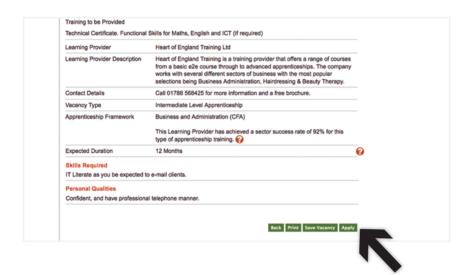


### How to apply

When you find an Apprenticeship job advert that you want to apply for, you need to go to the bottom of the job advert and click on the **Apply** button in the right hand corner.

At this point some adverts may direct you to the employers website to apply using their own system. This is likely to be very different to the application form that this guide has explained, although all of the advice that we have given you should also help you when completing other applications.

If the employer is using the National Apprenticeship Service 'Apprenticeship Vacancies' form then your application form (that you have been working on to complete) will automatically be transferred through.



# ! Tips

- Remember to update and change your application form so that it is relevant to the job that you are applying for.
- Make sure you double check that your answers are relevant to the job that you are applying for.

Notes

# **Notes**

### **Additional Employer Questions**

With every job application that uses the Apprenticeship Vacancies form, the employer is only allowed to change one thing, the rest of the form has to stay the same.

The only thing that they may change is to ask you two questions that are relevant to their job application. They will be displayed at the bottom of the application form and will look something like this:



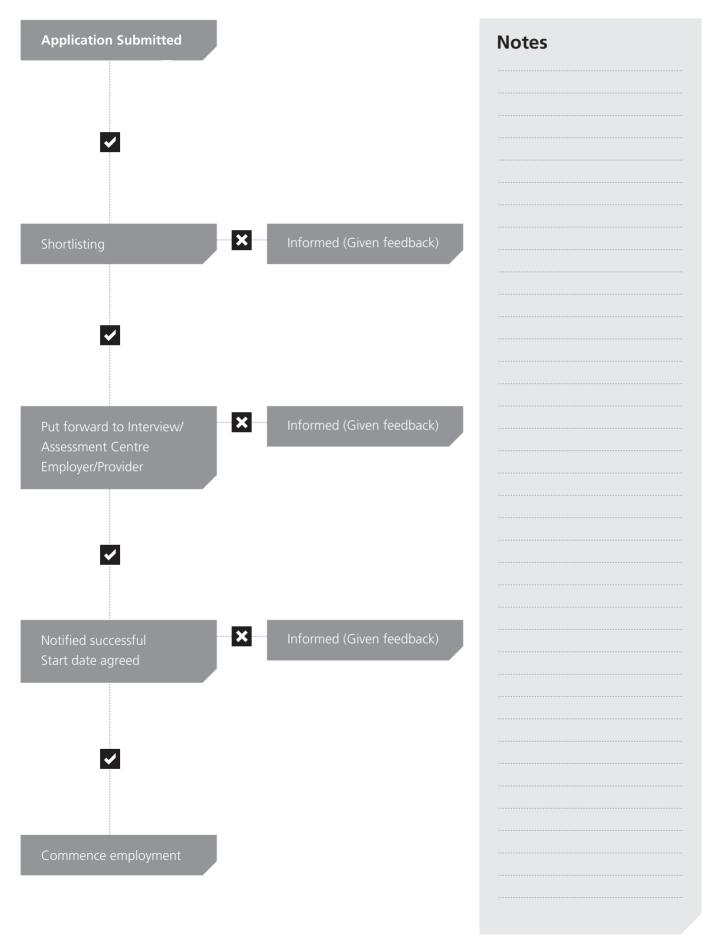
You do need to answer these questions and you need to think about the job advert, the employer and what you can tell them that might make you stand out from other applicants.

You should research their company through the internet so that you can tell them something interesting about your future career plans in that industry.

# Other typical 'Employer' questions that you might see could include:

- Why do you feel you are a suitable candidate for this role?
- Why are you interested in completing an Apprenticeship?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- What experience of dealing with customers do you have?
- What qualities do you think are important in this job role?
- What do you think makes the difference between a good customer experience and an excellent one?

### What happens next?



### **Interview Checklist**

Do you know how to make a positive first impression at a job interview? Use this checklist to help prepare for your next interview.

Prior to submitting an application:		0	Use good posture, sit up straight Be attentive, nod or take notes
0	Ensure your voicemail message on your mobile phone is appropriate	0	Make eye contact but avoid staring Avoid negative behaviour (yawning, crossing your arms, checking your watch, looking at you
$\circ$	Make sure your email address is sensible and		feet etc.)
0	will represent you in a mature way Spell and grammar check your CV, ensure it is up to date	0	Be composed (no fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping your feet)
Prior	to interview:	Respo	onsiveness:
0	Research the organisation and job that you are applying for	0	Bring a copy of your CV, the application form and the job advert with you
0	Prepare at least 2 or 3 questions that show an interest in the job and organisation	0	Bring a pad and pen to take notes if necessary Switch off your phone or set to silent (turn off
0	Work out how to get to the interview and how long the journey will take – allow enough time	0	vibrate as this can still be heard) Be on time (even better – be early) Use interviewer's title and surname (address
$\bigcirc$	to arrive at least 15 minutes early Prepare answers to some typical interview		as Mr/Ms)
	questions e.g. 'why do you want this job?'	$\circ$	Refer to the job advert/job description when
$\bigcirc$	Prepare examples of when you have used skills		answering questions
	relevant to the job	0	Show enthusiasm  Speak clearly, using proper grammar
Appearance:		Ö	Avoid slang, swear words and suggestive language
$\bigcirc$	Take a bath or shower prior to interview	$\circ$	Answer questions clearly and concisely
Ŏ	Wear clean and ironed clothing	0	Focus on your strengths
0	Wear appropriate clothing and footwear –	$\circ$	Avoid interrupting the interviewer
	formal shoes, not trainers e.g. see back page	Attitu	udo:
0	Wear matching socks	Attiti	due.
$\circ$	Polish/clean your shoes	0	Be respectful
0	Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean Wear conservative makeup, accessories and	Ö	Be positive and enthusiastic
0	jewellery (including nail varnish)	$\circ$	Be attentive
$\bigcirc$	Brush your teeth	$\bigcirc$	Be knowledgeable about the company
$\tilde{\bigcirc}$	Wear subtle perfume/aftershave	$\circ$	Use the interviewer's name
$\tilde{\bigcirc}$	Cover tattoos with long sleeves	$\circ$	Be professional and mature
Ö	Remove facial piercings (one set of small		
	earrings is fine)	Closir	ng the interview:
$\bigcirc$	Remove chewing gum prior to interview		
		$\circ$	Ask any questions about the organisation/job
Body Language:			that you prepared prior to the interview
			Stand and shake hands
$\circ$	Shake hands firmly	0	Thank the interviewer for his/her time
$\bigcirc$	Smile	$\bigcirc$	Emphasise your interest in the job
$\bigcirc$	Sit when you are offered a seat	$\bigcirc$	Ask when a decision will be made

### **Interview Checklist**

There are a variety of ways you can describe yourself and your strengths. Try using the following:

1 am	'				
0	Skilled at		○ Excell	lent at	
$\bigcirc$	A skilful		O Able	to	
	Competent in			good at	
0	Extremely good at		-	ted at	
0	Familiar with		() Quali	fied to	
Empl	oyers are looking for various	s qualities and	d characteristics in a	ı potential employee. U	se the following
list o	f words to help you when do	escribing your	self, whether in an	application or at interv	view:
0	Able	0	Drive	0	Keen
Ö	Accurate	O	Dynamic	Ö	Knowledgeable
0	Adaptable	$\circ$	Educated	0	Leadership skill
$\bigcirc$	Alert	$\circ$	Effective	0	Loyal
$\bigcirc$	Ambitious	$\circ$	Efficient	0	Mature
$\circ$	Analytical	$\circ$	Energetic	0	Methodical
$\bigcirc$	Articulate	0	Enjoy a challenge	0	Objective
$\bigcirc$	Assertive	$\circ$	Enthusiastic	0	Organised
$\bigcirc$	Astute	$\circ$	Fast learner	0	Patient
$\bigcirc$	Bright	$\circ$	Fast worker	0	Perceptive
$\bigcirc$	Capable	$\bigcirc$	Flexible	0	Persistent
$\bigcirc$	Calm	$\circ$	Focused	0	Polite
$\bigcirc$	Confident	$\circ$	Friendly	0	Positive
$\bigcirc$	Committed	$\circ$	Good communicate	or O	Practical
$\circ$	Common sense	$\circ$	Gifted	0	Pro active
0	Competent	$\circ$	Hardworking	0	Punctual
0	Computer literate	$\circ$	Helpful	$\circ$	Rational
$\circ$	Consistent	$\circ$	Highly motivated	$\circ$	Reliable
0	Cooperative	$\circ$	Honest	$\circ$	Resourceful
$\circ$	Cope under pressure	$\circ$	Imaginative	0	Responsible
$\circ$	Creative	$\circ$	Impressive	0	Supportive
$\circ$	Decisive	$\circ$	Insightful	$\circ$	Tactful
$\circ$	Dedicated	$\circ$	Inter personal skills	$\circ$	Team player
$\bigcirc$	Dependable	0	Independent	0	Tenacious
0	Desire to succeed	0	Innovative	0	Thorough
$\circ$	Determined	0	Initiative	0	Trustworthy
0	Diplomatic	0	Intelligent	0	Versatile
0	Diverse	$\circ$	Intuitive	0	Willing

# **Applications Diary**

Job Title/ Reference	Contact Details	Application Date

# **Applications Diary**

Contact Name	Interview Date & Time	Company Address

### What the shortlisters say...

"Good applicants have well written application forms where they have taken the time to give examples of their skills and have a good balance between academic achievement and enthusiasm for the job/industry that they are applying for"

"When we shortlist, we do look to see if the applicant has the desired GCSE results that the employer is seeking. However, this isn't the only thing that we look at. If the applicant can demonstrate that they have taken the initiative to set up and undertake work experience to add to their skills then this is sometimes enough to get them through to interview"

"Your application must be submitted on time and be free from errors. Weak applications are written in a hurry and are under-prepared."

"Avoid poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is critical if you want to be taken seriously in your application. Ask someone else with a good eye for detail to proofread your application before you submit it"

"Your application needs to sell you, be engaging, show your interest and enthusiasm and give an insight into your personality. Avoid humour though, this is still a professional document"

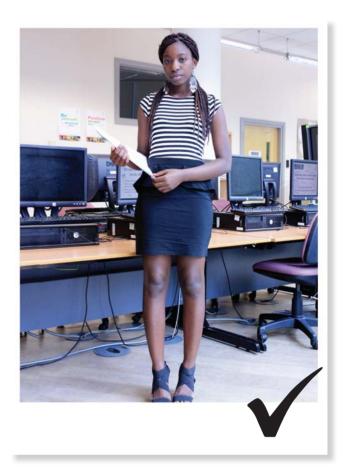
"A busy shortlister is looking for a reason to reject you as much as to offer you a place. Don't give them an excuse to put you on the 'no' pile because of a poor application"

"Your application needs to show that you have thought about why you are applying for the job."

"Remember to tailor your application for the job that you are applying for"

# **Interview Dress Code**









# How to write a winning Apprenticeship application

Final checklist:   Before you submit make sure you			
0	Check the closing date for applications to be submitted.		
0	Ask someone to read your application to check for spelling and grammar mistakes.		
0	Include some examples of your skills, not just a list of strengths.		
0	Check your application is relevant to the job advert and that you have used some of the 'buzzwords.'		
0	Save a copy of your application.		
0	Print off a copy of the job advert and your application.		
0	Check the location of the job that you have applied to.		
0	Check that you have answered all of the questions.		
	apprenticeships.org.uk		