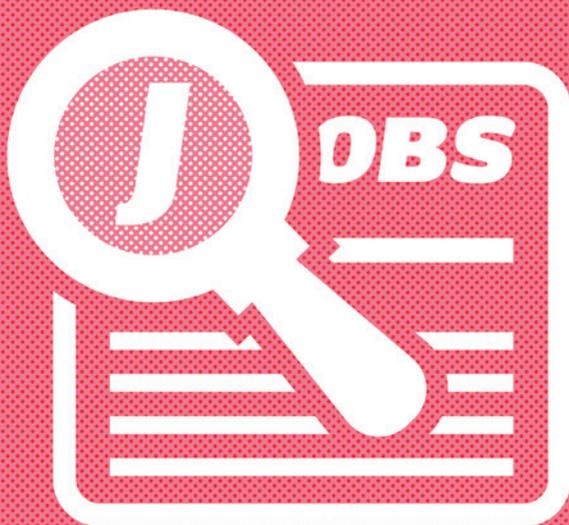


Into Work

Careers advice



Searching for a job

We've put together this guide to help you search and apply for jobs and find the one that you want.

It takes time to apply for jobs, so be patient and stay positive.

Searching for a job

Searching for a job on the internet

The internet is a great place to look for jobs. There are lots of websites available to help you in your job hunt.

General websites which post many different vacancies include:

www.indeed.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

www.reed.co.uk

www.cv-library.co.uk

There are also specialist websites such as:

www.jobserve.com – For jobs in IT

www.jobs.nhs.co.uk – For jobs in the NHS

www.fejobs.com – For jobs in the Further Education sector

There are so many free websites advertising real jobs so you should never need to pay to upload your CV or apply for jobs.

It's always your choice to upload your CV or sign up for alerts.

Speculative applications

Speculative applications are used to let an employer know you're looking for work.

Think about local businesses that you'd like to work for. If you can, try to find out the name of the person who does the recruitment in the company and write a speculative letter and send with your CV.

You could also call in to the business in person and ask to speak to the manager to see if you can leave your CV with them.

Always make a note of who you've seen or sent a letter to and when, so you can follow up afterwards.

If you're confident using the phone you could call prospective employers too.

Social media

Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are another great way of looking for work. By liking local Facebook job groups and following tweets from employment agencies, you'll have quick and frequent access to upcoming job opportunities.

www.twitter.com

www.facebook.com

Think about your personal digital history and what a potential employer could find out about you if they searched for your name on the internet. Check your privacy settings and make sure that the content you display is appropriate.

Newspapers

Newspapers can be a useful place to search for jobs. Local newspapers:

- Have dedicated pages advertising job vacancies
- May have specialist features on certain types of work

- Often advertise specialist job fairs
- Give regular and updated information on the local jobs market, for example current businesses expanding or new ones moving into the area
- Information on local learning or training opportunities
- Will have their own website if you prefer not to buy the paper copy
- Can usually be accessed at your local library.

Universal Job Match

You can search and apply for full and part time jobs using Universal Job Match. This service is available to all job seekers and can be found at: www.gov.uk/jobsearch

There are instructions on how to set up and use an account on the website. You don't need to be receiving benefits to create an account.

Other options:

- Look in shop windows for job adverts
- Join a jobs club
- Consider volunteering to widen you skills – this can sometimes lead to employment.

Writing a CV

A CV or curriculum vitae is a summary of your skills, abilities, experience and achievements Your CV should be:

- One-two pages in length
- Typed up and available electronically
- Adapted to the role you're applying for
- Up to date.

Personal details like your date of birth, NI number, and marital status aren't relevant, so you don't need to include them.

Skills

It's really important to include your skills in your CV. These are things that you can do well, either in the workplace or in your personal life.

Some examples of key skills are:

- Good communication
- IT skills
- Flexibility
- Using your initiative
- Problem solving
- A good level of literacy and numeracy
- Team work
- Achieving targets
- Planning
- Operating machinery
- Following instructions
- Organisation
- Prioritising.

Remember if you include a certain skill on your CV, you'll need to be prepared to give an example of how you've used that skill.

Writing covering and speculative letters

Covering letters

A covering letter is sent with a CV or an application form as a response to an advertised job vacancy.

It should contain

- Your contact details
- The vacancy title
- Where you saw it advertised
- More detail about your skills and experience
- Why you want the job.

Remember to finish with the correct ending. If you addressed the letter to a particular person, end with 'Yours sincerely'. If you're using Sir, Madam or The Manager, end with 'Yours faithfully'.

Speculative letters

A speculative letter is used to let an employer know you're looking for work. These can be kept on file in case a job opening comes up.

These can also be used to support an application for apprenticeship or volunteering.

It should contain

- Your contact details
- The kind of vacancy you're looking for
- More detail about your skills and experience
- Why you'd like to work for that company.

Applying for a job

Application forms

An application form gives an employer information about applicants in a standard format. The employer can then use this to choose the candidates they'd like to interview.

From an application form, an employer can tell whether you:

- Take care in the presentation of your work
- Can follow instructions
- Have the skills to match the job
- Have relevant qualifications and work experience.

Tips

- Read through the form before you start
- Make a copy of the application form to practice filling it in first
- Allow yourself plenty of time to complete and submit your application

- Use your CV to help with dates and qualification details
- Your handwriting should be clear and easy to read (if the application form is not typed up)
- Check spelling and grammar
- Keep the application form in a good condition (if you're sending in a hard copy)
- Answer all questions. Put 'n/a' for those questions that don't apply to you
- Take a copy of your completed form.

Online application forms might look different from a paper form but the type of information they ask for is going to be similar.

To complete an online application form you'll need:

- Access to a computer
- An email address
- The ability to save or print a copy of your completed form.

Remember:

- **Read the instructions carefully**
- **Check if there's a time limit for submitting your application**
- **Check to see if you need to attach a CV. Make sure it's up to date with the correct contact details**
- **Find out if there are any further tests to be completed.**

If you don't feel confident in your ability to complete online forms ask for help or find out about training opportunities.

Applying for jobs by email

Treat this form of application as if you were sending it by post. Include a covering letter in the main body of the email. There's no need to put your address though.

If you're asked to apply for a job by email you'll need to:

- Know how to use an email account and upload attachments like your CV
- Have an email address that is suitable to send to an employer (use a simple non-joke addresses to avoid embarrassment or giving the wrong impression). You could

set up a separate one just for job applications

- Remember to check your emails regularly
- Make sure your spelling and grammar are correct.

Personal statement

You have the opportunity on most application forms to explain why your skills and experience fit the profile of the person they're looking for. This is called a 'personal statement'. Take your time to complete this part, as this is the information that is personal to you and can make you stand out.

Things to think about:

- What relevant skills and experience you have that the job is asking for (give examples)
- Try writing your answer out separately before completing the form. There may be a word limit that you need to keep to
- Ask someone to read it through for you to check spelling, grammar and content
- Keep a copy. You may want to change it and use again for another application.

Preparing for an interview

The questions

The questions you're asked at an interview are usually about you, your experience and the job itself.

How you answer them will give the employer information on your suitability for the job so make sure you come prepared with answers. Research the company and prepare answers to some standard questions. The next section should help you with this.

Preparation should also help to relax you and give the interviewer a good indication of why they should choose you.

Example practice questions

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What interests you about this job?
3. What do you know about our company?
4. Why do you want to work here?
5. What skills can you bring to this role?

6. What are your strengths?
7. What are your weaknesses?
8. Give me an example of when you've worked as part of a team
9. You've been out of work for a while. How have you spent your time?
10. Give me an example of when you've demonstrated excellent customer service.

You could practice your responses with family or a friend.

Using S.T.A.R

When you're thinking about how to structure your answers, the 'S.T.A.R' technique is one of the ways to do it:

Situation – Where were you?

Task – What were you asked to do?

Action – What did you do?

Result -What was the result?

Here's a basic example:

- **Situation** - I was working on the shop floor in a supermarket
- **Task** - I was asked by a customer to clear up a broken jar that had leaked onto the floor
- **Action** - I collected the supermarket safety signs and took them to the location and asked a colleague to help by calling the in-store cleaner
- **Result** - The spillage was cleared up following health and safety procedures and no injury to staff or customers occurred.

Asking questions

Asking questions at interview can be a good way to find out more about the role you've applied for. It also shows that you're interested in the role and the company.

If any of the information about the role has not been explained clearly to you, ask about it in the interview. It may not be the kind of job you thought it was when you applied or it could have changed.

You could also ask questions like:

- Do you offer ongoing training and development?

- What will my first job be?
- How soon will I hear the result of my application?

General advice for interviews

- Create a good first impression
- Listen carefully
- Don't rush, take your time to answer
- If you don't understand the question ask for it to be repeated
- Make your answers clear and to the point
- Give good examples to back up your answer
- Don't waffle
- If you really want the job, sound enthusiastic
- Smile
- Ask relevant questions about the job and career prospects.

Remember, if you're not successful you could always ask for feedback.

Types of interview

There are different types of interviews that employers can use to make a decision about applicants for a job. Each type of interview is designed to look at particular aspects of how you're suited to the role, and employers can use a combination of different types of interview to assess your suitability. It's the combined score from all your interviews and activities that will guide the employer to making a final decision.

Face-to-face interviews

The interviewer meets the candidate in person for a face-to-face interview. This may have a slightly more relaxed feel to it, but it is an interview and good preparation is still important.

There may be more than one interviewer and this is known as a panel interview.

Tips

- Remember first impressions count

- You may be expected to shake everybody's hand
- Treat all members of the panel with equal respect
- Direct your answers to the person asking the question
- Don't be put off by one or all of the interviewers taking notes.

Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews can sometimes be used by employers to help with short-listing before face-to-face interviews take place. It's an effective way for an employer to speak to a large number of candidates. It's designed to test your social and communication skills and is often a method used by companies where the job is mainly customer contact by phone.

Tips

- Prepare as if it was a face to face interview
- If you're using a mobile make sure it's fully charged

- Choose a quiet place where you won't be interrupted
- Have your notes handy
- Try to smile – it will lift the tone in your voice and help your confidence
- Speak clearly and don't be tempted to rush your answers
- Stand up and walk about if you want to – this can help you if you feel nervous.

Group interviews

Group interviews are used by some employers. Candidates taking part in a group interview are given a task to complete and are observed by the interviewer. These types of interviews are used to assess:

- Team working skills
- Communication skills
- Relationship building.

Remember to:

- Show you're actively listening to others in the group
- Try to involve other members of the group
- Show your understanding of the task by reminding other people of what you're trying to achieve if they lose focus.

Keep to time – again reminding the others if it looks like the task won't be finished.

Assessment days

Assessment days are often used to interview a large number of candidates in a range of ways, on one day. You may be taking part in a group activity, a face-to-face interview or a role play. There might be an assessment of your ability to perform part of the job or a combination of all of these.

You'll need to be prepared.

Tips

- Read through any information you've been sent. Is there information on what type of interview to expect?
- Think about what you need to take with you
- Do you need to take lunch or is it provided?
- Don't worry about what the other candidates think of you. They'll be too worried about themselves
- Assessment days can be very tiring so remember to get a good night's sleep and a good breakfast.



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