Application Forms
The main purpose of an application form is to get you to the next stage of the recruitment process! Employers use them to check that you are able to do the job, you want the job, and that you fit with the organisation’s culture and values.

Some applications will be submitted via email and others will be submitted via an online portal. In this instance, you will be asked to create a log in to complete and submit your application.

**Top Tip:** Some of the details that you complete on an application form, might be useful on other applications forms. So keep a copy of key content on a word document for future use.

### Before Applying

**Important things to consider:**

1. **Do you meet the basic requirements for the job?** It’s important to consider if you have the correct qualifications / experience for the role. For example, a role may ask for a student with a specific degree or level of qualification, or experience via a placement year in industry.

2. **Do you have the overall skills, knowledge and attitudes the employer wants?** (Otherwise known as the Person Specification. The Person Specification will often be advertised alongside the duties/job description of the role). List these and write examples of how you meet them. For larger companies and graduate recruitment schemes, it is imperative that you can demonstrate and evidence how you meet the essential skills they require.

3. **Have you read the form thoroughly?** Carefully read the instructions for each application you make. They are all different! A fantastic application can be immediately rejected if you have not attached a CV alongside it if requested, or if you simply have not answered an essential question. It is also important to draft and re-draft your answers until you are certain you have answered the question to the best of your ability. Employers will be able to see through an answer that has been cut and pasted from other applications, so it is best practice to start afresh each time. Or at least tailor for each application!
Here are some of the sections that you may find on an application form. Have a read through so that you know what to expect.

**Personal details**

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<th>Personal Details</th>
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<td>Surname:</td>
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<td>Post Code:</td>
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<td>Contact Details:</td>
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**Academic Qualifications and Work History**

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<th>Employment History</th>
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<td>Please give details of all positions held (including part time and unpaid positions), starting with the more recent positions.</td>
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<td>Dates</td>
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<table>
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<th>Educational, Technical and Professional Qualifications</th>
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<td>Dates</td>
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**Demonstrating your suitability for the role**

This is key! An employer should read your application and be able to quickly identify that you meet the requirements of the role and are an ideal candidate.

Ensure that you showcase your most relevant experiences to the employer as well as giving specific answers to demonstrate this.
Competency based questions – These are designed to get you to demonstrate and evidence how you meet a specific skill or attribute that the employer is looking for. They usually ask you to describe or give an example of a specific time that you carried out a task or used a skill.

Example: Describe a situation when you delivered excellent customer service following a complaint

How to answer competency based questions

The most common and effective way of structuring your answers is through the STAR format. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result and can be framed as follows:

Situation

Provide some context and a bit of an introduction. This should be a short description, such as: ‘Whilst working on a group project’ or ‘During my internship last summer’.

Task

Briefly explain what it is that you did, and what the success criteria was. If you were working as a group explain what the overall task of the group was, however be very clear about your own role.

Action

This should be the lengthiest and most detailed part of your example. You should include: What you did; Why you did it; How you did it; What skills you used.

Result

What happened because of the actions you took? Would you make any changes next time? What skills/confidence did you gain in that specific area.

Example answer using STAR:

During my summer internship in 2018, I was responsible for managing the company’s customer relations, which included handling customer queries and complaints.

On one occasion, a customer contacted our service centre as an email they had sent had not yet been responded to by the company. As I was dealing with this customer by phone, quick thinking and a personable telephone manner were essential.

I discussed the situation with the customer and explained that we had a company policy of answering all email communications within a 48 hour period. I was able to resolve her initial query, so that at the end of the call she felt satisfied that all of her concerns had been answered.

As a result, the client not only continued to order from us, but also added positive customer service feedback to our website.
‘Blank Page’ Person Specification Format.

A person specification is a breakdown of qualities and skills that an employer deems necessary to carry out the job effectively. Most person specifications are advertised alongside the job description.

An example of a person specification:

Role: Marketing Officer

Knowledge (inc. qualifications)

Essential
- 2:1 Degree or higher in Marketing, Business or a similar subject

Skills (professional, technical, managerial, practical)

Essential
- Ability to verbally communicate information which requires careful explanation.
- High level of personal organisation, with the ability to prioritise own work or resources to achieve agreed objectives.
- The ability to be an effective and flexible team player who can support staff members in peak periods.

Desirable
- Creative writing skills, particularly for websites, including an ability to write for a wide range of different audience groups
- Excellent proof reading and/or checking skills in the context of updating information

Person specifications often include desirable criteria. It is not essential that you have to meet desirable criteria for a role but if you do feel you have the desirable skills required then you should include this, as employers will often shortlist on desirable criteria if the standard of applications is high.

‘Blank Page’ Person specification

Some employers may ask you to write a short paragraph to show you meet the person specification. This is a ‘blank page’ in effect. This is how we suggest you approach this:

Work your way through the criteria in a structured way, following their order. You may choose to use the same example to cover several criteria – this will avoid the application getting too long. You may also use the STAR format to structure your answers.
Let’s look at how you would tackle this:

One of the essential criteria mentioned in the person specification is: ‘An ability to communicate information which requires careful explanation’.

Example Answer (uses STAR) -

During my placement year, I was set a task of designing and delivering a presentation to clients regarding the impact of technology within modern society. I thought carefully about my audience and the points I wanted to make. As some of my audience were not familiar with the subject I was presenting, I decided to incorporate images, charts and graphs to convey information in a way which was engaging and easy to understand. Following the presentation, I answered a number of questions, checking that my answers were sufficient and that the audience fully understood, as well as supplying a handouts. I received positive feedback from my line manager and my confidence grew in delivering presentations.

Top Tips:

- **Double check spelling and grammar.** Employers can and do reject applications based on this!
- **Save a copy of your submission.** If you are invited to interview, you will probably be asked questions based on your application so you need to remember what you said.

References

The purpose of a reference is so that a number of referees can vouch for what you are like as a person or as an employee. The number of referees requested by the employer can vary with each role and level of responsibility. The standard request is 2 references and students/recent graduates often use a personal tutor or other academic member of staff as one of their referees.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

| Please provide details of two referees – one of whom should preferably be your present/most recent employer. If you have recently left full-time education or have not been employed previously, we will accept academic referees. |
|---|---|
| Name: | Name: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Tel. No: | Tel. No: |
| Email: | Email: |

Occupation: Occupation:

This is intended to ensure that recruitment procedures do not discriminate. These forms go to the human resource/personnel departments and do not play a part in the selection procedure.
Disclosure of Disability

If you decide to complete this question it may be a good idea to include a more detailed explanation of any requirements and/or ‘reasonable adjustments’ in the covering letter. If you would like to discuss disclosing a disability with a specialist careers consultant, please book an appointment with Marina Matosic by calling us on 0161 247 3483 or visiting the Employability Hub in the Business School.

Disclosure of a Criminal Record

This is a standard question on many application forms. If you are unsure how to disclose any cautions, reprimands or unspent convictions, you could try attaching a covering letter to explain the circumstances. For further advice before completing this section, have a look at the information available on the following sites:

Nacro: https://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-practitioners/the-law-on-disclosure/

The Information Hub: http://hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/completing-criminal-record-check-application/

Careers & Employability Support

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of application support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **CV and Cover Letter Guide:** You may be asked to provide a CV alongside your application. Our CV guide provides top-tips and example templates to help you to get started. Ask in the Jobs Hub for more details.

- **Jobs Hub drop-In:** Available Monday-Friday 1pm-4pm, our Careers & Employability Assistants are available to offer one-to-one job seeking, CV and application advice.

- **Ask a Careers Question Online:** Get online advice through My Career Hub. Whether you would like feedback on your CV or have initial questions finding job opportunities, this service allows you to ask your question at any time and receive support via email.

For more information visit www.mmu.ac.uk/careers