



Careers Support Information Booklet

Blue Coat Church of England Academy

Hints, tips and support for...

Application processes, completing application forms, preparing for interviews, CV writing, Cover letters



CAREERS EDUCATION BLUE COAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

Raising aspirations to achieve future dreams



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Sources of Support

Careerpilot

<https://www.careerpilotorg.uk/information/apprenticeships/tips-applying-for-an-apprenticeship>

Barclays Life Skills

You will need to register with Barclays Life Skills using your email and create a password in order to access the full content. Lots of useful support around CV's, Interviews including a virtual interview that you can try and Employability Skills

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-help-applying-for-jobs/school/>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-help-applying-for-jobs/school/cv-builder/>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-help-applying-for-jobs/school/assessment-test/>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-to-prepare-for-an-interview/school/>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-to-prepare-for-an-interview/school/virtual-interview/>

Start Profile

<https://app.startprofile.com/>

This website has lots of different sections you can look at. The employability section has interview on CV's and Interviews. You will have to create a log in using your email address for some sections, others you can use as a guest

Unifrog

School have signed up to Unifrog so you can have access to lots of information on all aspects of careers. Your login details were sent to your school email address and you can reset yourself if required using 'forgotten password'

<https://www.unifrog.org/>

You can contact the Careers team at school Mrs Facey, Mrs Devlin or Mrs Drewett for support email: careers@bluecoatacademy.org



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Apprenticeships

Applying for an Apprenticeship Video

<https://youtu.be/7lqFUxSLufw>

Where to find Apprenticeship Vacancies

You will need to create an account in order to apply for the vacancies

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk

www.futuretalent.com

www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk

Remember that the colleges also offer apprenticeships and so you can apply via the college websites. If you have not already applied for a 6th form or college place, I would strongly recommend that you do so in addition to applying for apprenticeships. Should you not be successful in gaining an apprenticeship, you will hopefully at least have a place at college or 6th form.

<https://www.bmet.ac.uk>

<https://www.dudleycol.ac.uk>

<https://www.sandwell.ac.uk>

<https://www.sccb.ac.uk>

<https://www.walsallcollege.ac.uk>

<https://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk>



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Covering Letters

Cover letters are your ticket to job interviews, especially when you don't have much work experience. So how can you write a cover letter that will make an employer eager to meet you? This guide will help you write cover letters with confidence.

For many people, this is the trickiest part of applying for any job or apprenticeship - so if you're stressed, you're not alone! But once you learn some basic tricks, the whole process becomes way simpler. Let's take it step by step.

Step 1 - Read the job/apprenticeship description

Yes, we know this one seems a bit obvious, but when we say 'read' we really mean dissect. Figure out exactly what the employer wants from their ideal applicant. If you are lucky, they will have provided a handy bullet point list. If not, just highlight key words and create your own. Here is an example adapted from a real job listing:

The Assistant Events Administrator will have a varied set of duties in a busy cultural organisation with a regional reputation. Duties will include:

- Recording appointments in the online calendar
- Assisting the booking of travel and accommodation for visiting artists and speakers
- Planning and scheduling pre-approved social media posts to market company activity
- Researching purchases required for upcoming performances or demonstrations
- Helping with online book-keeping entries to record company finance
- Attending company meetings as required
- Helping organise summer education programming
- Coordinating/preparing event spaces classes and hires where possible
- General project support for the team as required

Hopefully, your list will look a little like this one:

- Strong organisational skills
- Decent with maths (also called numeracy)
- Able to balance a lot of different tasks
- Good at working and communicating with lots of different people



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Step 2: Answer these three easy questions

1. Why do you want to work (or complete an apprenticeship) with this company?

Do your research. Explore the company's website, blog, and social media channels to find out what they've been up to recently, what they care about, and what makes them stand out from the rest. If you're going for an apprenticeship, you might want to mention something specific about the training programme they offer.

This section doesn't need to be long, but it does need to be relevant and personal to you. Avoid things like 'it's always been my dream to work here,' especially if it's a famous company - they've heard it before, and it doesn't make you stand out.

2. Why do you want this particular job/apprenticeship?

Again, start with some research. If it isn't clear on the job or apprenticeship description, find out exactly what this role will involve and be honest about why you want to pursue it. Unifrog has some great guides to specific roles in the Careers Library, and the National Careers Service is another good source.

Of course, we all want a job to make some money, or because it is the entry-level role for a career we are interested in pursuing. But try to get more specific than that. For example, 'I'm interested in joining your team as an administrative assistant because I'm hoping to gain more experience in a fast-paced corporate environment.'

3. What makes you a good candidate for this job/apprenticeship?

This is the most important section, so spend some time on it. This part is challenging, especially if you are used to advice that tells you that this is where you need to prove you are 'The best.' That can feel like bragging, and can be uncomfortable - plus, how can you know if you really are? All you can do is demonstrate that you are a good fit for the things they are looking for, which is a much easier task.

Go back to the list you made back in step one and think of an example from your work experience - or school, clubs, or hobbies if you haven't worked much - that demonstrates that you possess that skill.

You don't want to say, 'I am very organised' - instead you want to say, 'When I became secretary of my school's science club, I completely reorganised our membership records so that we could keep in better contact with our alumni. I transferred everything to a new online database and set up a new sign-up system so that everyone's information would be automatically saved when they joined.'

That example shows them your passion for organisation, rather than just having to take your word for it.

Step 3: Add a beginning and an end

Keep it simple. The beginning just needs to shout out why you're writing, including the name of the position and where you saw it listed.

You don't have to worry about getting too creative at the end, either. 'Thank you for your consideration, I hope we will have the opportunity to discuss this role further' does just fine.



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Step 4: Get the formatting right

The hard bit is over! Now it's all about looks.

- Make sure the cover letter is no more than one page in length
- Use the formal business letter layout for your letter, use 'Dear Sir/Madam' and 'yours faithfully' if you don't know who you're sending it to, or 'Dear Mr / Ms [name]' and 'yours sincerely' if you do.
- Give your letter a title or subject line, e.g. 'Re. application for position as engineering apprentice'
- Proofread your letter and make sure you check for any spelling, punctuation or grammar errors. Don't just rely on computer spell checks - they can miss things out. Ask a friend, teacher, or family member to double check your letter before you send it.
- Use a plain type face - Arial size 11 is very common for formal letters. Whichever you choose, make sure it matches your CV.

Now all that is left to do is send it off, along with a copy of your CV. As frustrating as it is to wait, try to avoid the temptation to follow up if you don't hear back right away. If they want to speak to you, they aren't just going to forget to let you know.



CV writing guide

What is a CV?

A CV, which stands for curriculum vitae, is a document used when applying for apprenticeships or jobs. It allows you to summarise your education, skills and experience enabling you to successfully sell your abilities to potential employers. Alongside your CV employers also usually ask for a cover letter (please see separate information on this)

How long should a CV be?

A standard CV in the UK should be no longer than two sides of A4.

That said one size doesn't fit all. For example, a school leaver or recent graduate with minimal experience may only need to use one side of A4.

To save space only include the main points of your education and experience. Stick to relevant information and don't repeat what you've said in your cover letter. If you're struggling to edit your CV ask yourself if certain information sells you. If it doesn't, cut it out. If it's not relevant to the job you're applying for delete it.



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What to include in a CV

Contact details - Include your full name, home address, mobile number and email address.

Profile - A CV profile is a concise statement that highlights your key attributes and helps you stand out from the crowd. Usually placed at the beginning of a CV it picks out a few relevant achievements and skills, while expressing your career aims. A good CV profile focuses on the sector you're applying to, as your cover letter will be job-specific. Keep CV personal statements short and snappy - 100 words is the perfect length.

Education - List and date all previous education, Place the most recent first. Include qualification type/grades, and the dates.

Work experience - List your work experience in reverse date order, making sure that anything you mention is relevant to the job you're applying for. Include your job title, the name of the company, how long you were with the organisation and key responsibilities

Skills and achievements - This is where you talk about things like any other languages you speak and the IT packages you can competently use. The key skills that you list should be relevant to the job. Don't exaggerate your abilities, as you'll need to back up your claims at interview.

Interests - 'Socialising', 'going to the cinema' and 'reading' aren't going to catch a recruiter's attention. However, relevant interests can provide a more complete picture of who you are, as well as giving you something to talk about at interview. Examples include writing your own blog or community newsletters if you want to be a journalist, being part of a drama group if you're looking to get into sales and your involvement in climate change activism if you'd like an environmental job. If you don't have any relevant hobbies or interests leave this section out.

References - You don't need to provide the names of referees at this stage. You can say 'references available upon request' but most employers would assume this to be the case so if you're stuck for space you can leave this out.



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CV format

Avoid titling the document 'curriculum vitae' or 'CV'. It's a waste of space. Instead let your name serve as the title.

Section headings are a good way to break up your CV. Ensure they stand out by making them larger (font size 14 or 16) and bold.

Avoid fonts such as Comic Sans. Choose something professional, clear and easy to read such Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman. Use a font size between 10 and 12 to make sure that potential employers can read your CV. Ensure all fonts and font sizes are consistent throughout.

List everything in reverse chronological order. Then the recruiter sees your work history and most recent achievements first.

Keep it concise by using clear spacing and bullet points. This type of CV layout allows potential employers to skim your CV and quickly pick out important information first.

Name the document when saving - Don't just save as 'Document 1'. Make sure the title of the document is professional and identifies you, such as 'Joe-Smith-CV'.

Unless the job advert states differently (for example, it may ask you to provide your CV and cover letter as a Word document) save with a .PDF file extension to make sure it can be opened and read on any machine. If you're posting your CV, print it on white A4 paper - Only print on one side and don't fold your CV - you don't want it to arrive creased.

How to write a good CV

Use active verbs when possible. For example, include words like 'created', 'analysed' and 'devised' to present yourself as a person who shows initiative.

A good CV doesn't have any spelling or grammar mistakes. Use a spell checker and ask someone else to also check over the document.

Avoid generic, over-used phrases such as 'team player', 'hardworking' and 'multitasker'. Instead, provide real-life examples that demonstrate all of these skills.

Tailor your CV. Look at the company's website and social media accounts, look to see if they've recently been mentioned in the local press and use the job advert to make sure your CV is targeted to the role and employer.

Make sure your email address sounds professional. If your personal address is inappropriate create a new account for professional use.

Don't lie or exaggerate on your CV or job application. Not only will you demonstrate your dishonesty to a potential employer, if you are found to have lied about your qualifications you could be sacked or even charged with fraud.

If posting your CV online don't include your home address, as you could be targeted by fraudsters.

Always include a cover letter unless the employer states otherwise. It will enable you to personalise your application. You can draw attention to a particular part of your CV.



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How to fill the gap left by the COVID-19 pandemic

The first thing to know is that COVID-19 has disrupted the career plans of thousands of students and you're not alone. As a result of the pandemic career-boosting activities such as work experience, internships and volunteering have been postponed or cancelled.

Employers understand the challenges caused by lockdowns only too well and they won't expect you to have completed a period of work experience in this time. That said you could still demonstrate to potential employers how you used this time wisely - showing yourself to be a proactive, dedicated and resilient candidate.

You could mention:

- details of online courses you've undertaken or webinars or online events you've attended
- the acquisition of new skills, such as learning a language or learning to code
- volunteering work such as checking in on and shopping for vulnerable neighbours or caring for young siblings or elderly relatives
- charity work - perhaps you got involved with fundraising or raising awareness of a particular organisation.
- new hobbies such as starting to vlog, picking up a sport, learning to cook
- any virtual work experience you have undertaken Remember - you'll need to relate these to the job you're applying for so focus on the skills these activities taught you and how/why they'd be useful. here to put this information depends on the activities. Volunteering or charity work can be included under the 'Work experience' heading. The online courses and additional qualifications you've gained can go in the 'Education' section while any new skills you've learned need to be housed under 'Skills and achievements'. If any new hobbies are relevant to the role you're applying for place these in the 'Hobbies and interests' section.



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Example CV

How to write a cracking CV

JOHN THORPE
17a Christmas Way, Abingdon, Oxon OX99 2PQ
Email: johnthorpe@inter.net
Tel: 01449 123456 Mobile: 07759 234567

Education and qualifications
2008–present *Abingdon Secondary School*
A levels (predicted): Maths (B), Physics (C), Chemistry (C)
BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Engineering (Merit)
GCSEs: Maths (A), Physics (A), Chemistry (B), Biology (C), English Literature (C), English Language (B), Geography (C), IT (B)

Employment and work experience
2014 (2-week placement, August) *Civil Engineers & Building Design, High Street, Abingdon*
Shadowed design team and attended design meetings. Used technical computer programs, including AutoCAD 2014. Helped to compile reports for clients. Performed necessary administrative tasks and gained an understanding of all departments.
2014 (July) *South Oxfordshire Holiday Park, Wallingford*
Helped caretaker with repairs and maintenance, including cleaning and gardening.
2011–present *Customer service assistant, Tesco, Abingdon (part time)*
Working on the checkout and at the customer service desk. Has helped develop my commercial awareness and communication skills.

IT skills
Good working knowledge of AutoCAD 2014, Excel and Word.

Interests
I am a keen footballer and have played in the school team for the last five years. In the year I was captain (2012) we came second in the county league. I have volunteered as a football coach at local primary schools' after-school clubs and have tried and enjoyed many other outdoor activities, including kayaking and climbing.

References available upon request

Callouts:
- You don't need to say 'Curriculum Vitae' at the start of your CV. Begin with your name.
- Include contact details: phone numbers, an address and an email address [make sure this is sensible and sounds professional]. You don't need to include your date of birth or age.
- If you aren't writing a covering letter, you can include a personal statement at the beginning of your CV that describes your strengths and why you are interested in the career. If you do this, keep it brief – ideally two to three lines and not more than 60 words. We've started this CV with education and qualifications instead. Employers will expect to see education and qualifications covered near the top of your CV.
- If you've attended more than one secondary school, list the most recent first. You don't need to include your primary school.
- If the apprenticeship or job you are applying for specifies that you need specific exam grades, show that you have them.
- Employers won't expect you to have lots of relevant work experience, but they will be interested in any that you do have. Give some details about what you learned and contributed.
- You can provide a brief description of any full-time or part-time jobs you have had, explaining your responsibilities and achievements.
- Employers will be keen to find out about your skills, for example, IT, team working, customer service and communication skills. If it's relevant to the role, mention that you have a full clean driving licence.
- You don't have to include a section on your interests, but this can be a good way to tell employers about your strengths and give them a sense of what you might be like to work with.
- Putting any voluntary work you have done on your CV helps to create the impression that you are committed and motivated. Include any fundraising, involvement in teams, positions of responsibility and awards.
- You don't have to include this. Employers will assume you have references and will follow them up if you get through to the next stage. You definitely don't need to include contact details for them.



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Application Forms

There is no taking a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to applying for school leaver programmes, as the process isn't centralised in the way that applications to university are. The first stage is usually an online application form, but the format and questions will vary depending on the employer and the type of opportunity you are applying for. Some employers may also invite you to upload a CV along with your completed form.

Here are some top tips on how to succeed in your online application form and get through to the next stage.

Have you done your research?

Employers usually provide plenty of information on their websites to guide you on what to include on your application form, so take the time to look round and find it. You might also find information about school leavers who are already working there, which will help you to understand what will be expected of you. You'll be in a much better position to tackle the application form if you've got a really clear idea of what the recruiter is looking for and have identified the key skills and competencies – and can show that you would be a good match.

Give yourself time

Some school leaver application forms are designed to take more time to complete than others depending on the details on the application form. Most employers recommend that candidates take their time to complete the application form. You should allow yourself at least half a day for each application, and make sure that you have uninterrupted access to a computer for that length of time. If the application requires you to upload your CV and a cover letter, you should make sure you spend time tailoring your cover letter and CV to the company you are applying to.

Sections on personal details, accessibility and monitoring information questions should be relatively straightforward to fill in, but the free text question, which asks about the skills and experience you can bring to the role, is likely to take longer. Avoid copying and pasting answers from other application forms and make sure your responses are tailored to the employer and role you are applying for.

Can you justify your choices?

Employers want to be sure that you are committed. They don't want to invest in training you only for you to drop out. When they assess your application, they will be looking for answers to the following questions:

Why have you chosen a career in this particular area? Think about your work experience, volunteering and activities, both in school and outside, to help you explain your career choice. What do you enjoy doing?

What are you good at, and how does this match up with your choice of school leaver programme?



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Why this employer?

Explain why the work, training and career opportunities on offer appeal to you. To answer this convincingly, you need to get to grips with what the organisation does and how you could be part of that. Why this particular programme? Some employers offer many different options for school leavers. For example, if an employer offers numerous apprenticeships and has previously asked you to give clear reasons for your choice, refer back to the job description to help you.

Are you a good match?

The employer wants to get a sense of what you'd be like to work with and how you'd fit in, and this is about more than your school work and academic results. They want you to match your skills and strengths to the position you're applying for: show them you've got the qualities they want.

Back up your claims with examples

Yes, you're motivated and a fast learner – but you would say that, wouldn't you? Back up your claims with examples, such as your role in organising a big event, doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or charity work, or achievements in your part-time job or work experience.

The same goes for showing employers that you're a strong team player. Can you think of times when you've been involved in the work of a group? You could draw examples from school, your family, sports teams, work, voluntary organisations such as the Guides, Scouts or Cadets, or religious or community activities.

It's good to include examples of your involvement in teams, but if you can explain how you made a difference to the team and contributed to its success, you'll impress employers even more. Did you help solve disagreements, take responsibility for helping to organise anything to do with a group activity, or have a specific role such as team captain? Use 'I' rather than 'we' to explain your contribution.

Some employers assess your ability to take on responsibility by having a section to separately upload your work experience as well as a section to upload your CV. Employers will look for well-rounded individuals and you can show you fit the bill by listing any additional language skills you have, extracurricular activities, achievements, interests, scholarships, awards and prizes.

Watch the word count

There is usually a set word limit for each answer on an online application form, and you should take care not to exceed it. At the same time, make the most of the allocated word count to show the employer what is unique about you, and steer clear of very short responses that don't give the employer enough to go on. If possible, avoid repeating yourself. If you have to upload a CV as well as filling in an application form, try to use different examples, or use your application form to give more detail about something you've only referred to briefly on your CV.



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Check for Mistakes

Even if you're applying online, it's still worth printing off a hard copy of your application in order to check it through. Sometimes you can spot errors on a printed page that are easy to miss on screen. If the application system isn't set up so that it's straightforward to save and print your completed form, make sure you copy your answers into a separate document and print that out instead. Take extra care over your spelling and grammar.

Keep copies of all your applications

Copy your answers to a separate document as you go along and save this as a back-up, just in case. Keeping your password to the application system to hand, so you can log back in quickly if necessary. You should also keep copies of your applications after you have submitted them, for reference. If you're invited to an interview, the employer is likely to pick up on the information you've provided in your application form and ask you about it. If you've completely forgotten what you've told them, you'll struggle to answer. If you're applying to a number of schemes with different employers, each application should be slightly different and you'll need to keep copies of all of them so you can refer back to the relevant application when the time comes.

It is worth giving some thought to how you're going to organise this. For example, you could print off hard copies and keep them in a folder or keep them in a virtual folder either online or on your digital device. Remember to look through your application before you attend an assessment centre or interview.



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Preparing for Interview

Worried about how hard your interview will be? Feeling nervous is almost inevitable but if you understand the types of questions you're likely to be asked and have done your preparation you can still perform well. Nerves can even be an advantage – they show that the interview matters to you and give you focus and alertness.

Interviews can take many different forms.

- You might have a video or telephone interview before you meet anyone face to face.
- You may be invited to a first interview followed by a final interview, or be given interviews that focus on different areas such as your skills or technical knowledge.
- You could be interviewed by one or two people or a whole panel, and your interviewer(s) could be a senior partner, a member of the HR team or your prospective manager.

The tips below will help you prepare. They will work best if you combine them with research into the employer and the job/ role/ apprenticeship in question, and carefully read all the details the employer provides about the interview format.

Some recruiters will give you a job/ role/ apprenticeship interview that combines competency (skills), motivational, strengths-based and technical questions. Others hold more than one interview and give each session a different focus. Generally speaking, larger employers are more likely to invite you to more than one interview for apprenticeship posts.



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Competency interview questions and tips

Competency interview questions are widely used and you are highly likely to be asked them at some point. This style of interview question focuses your skills and competencies and aims to find out if you are a good match for the role. They often start 'Give me an example of a time when you...' or 'Tell me about a time when you...'. For instance, you might be asked 'Give me an example of a time when you worked successfully as part of a team' or 'Tell me about a time when you used your problem-solving skills to overcome an obstacle'.

You may have already mentioned examples of your skills in your online application form or CV and the interview is an opportunity to talk about these in depth, or to mention further examples.

- Make sure you know if there are any skills and competencies the employer is particularly keen on and check what's required for the role you are applying for.
- Come prepared to discuss times when you've shown the competencies they are looking for. For example, if you are asked about teamwork you could bring up your involvement in sports teams or voluntary organisations such as the Guides or Scouts.

Motivational interview questions and tips

Motivational interview questions aim to find out whether you are genuinely motivated to take on the opportunity on offer. Your motivation will make all the difference to your performance at work, so it's hugely important to your prospective employer.

- Typical motivational questions include asking why you are applying for an apprenticeship, why you are applying to this particular employer for this particular apprenticeship, and what you expect to be doing during your first year, so make sure you can answer these.
- Knowing some detail about the role and employer will really help you here – it shows you've taken the time to research the opportunity and are still keen on it now you've got the full facts.
- For example, naming some key tasks you'd be doing as an apprentice/ in the role and saying how they tie in with your favourite school subject or hobby is a lot more impressive than saying you want the job because of how great the company is without having any facts to back this up.

Strengths-based interview questions and tips

Strengths-based interview questions are intended to find out what you enjoy doing and are good at. Recruiters pay attention not only to what you say but to how you say it – they're interested in what fires you up. In a strengths-based interview you might be asked which subjects you most enjoyed studying at school or about a time when you achieved something you were really proud of. Other typical strengths-based questions include asking about what you find easy to learn, who most inspires you, and the kind of tasks you enjoy least.

- Be yourself and give genuine answers that you feel enthusiastic about, rather than ones you think will sound impressive.



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Technical interview questions and tips

Technical interview questions are typically used for roles in science, engineering or IT. The aim is to assess your ability to learn and understand information about the technical side of the business you are applying to. You may also be asked about your understanding of what the company does and the different areas in which it operates.

- Make sure you understand roughly what the employer's work involves, what your job would involve and what subjects you would study as part of the apprenticeship/ role. This will help you identify the types of technical skills you'll need to develop if you get hired.
- If you've done anything that relates to these already – for example studying a relevant module or going on a work experience placement – brush up on what they involved so the details are fresh in your mind. This is particularly important if you've mentioned them in your CV or online application, as your interviewer may decide that these are good topics to question you on.

Interview formats: video, phone and panel interviews

Phone interviews are typically used to screen candidates after the application form stage. You might be interviewed by someone from the HR department or from the team you are applying to work with. The questions are likely to be competency-based.

- Make sure that background noise is kept to a minimum.
- Pick up the phone with an appropriate greeting to kick off your interview.
- Aim to sound committed and enthusiastic.
- Have a couple of questions prepared in case you get the chance to ask them. However, this isn't the place to go into detailed discussions about pay, terms and conditions – save that for the final, face-to-face interview, which you will get through to if you succeed at this stage.

Video interviews or online interviews are used by some employers instead of phone interviews. These have become even more common recently due to Covid. These may be live – for example, they may be conducted via Skype, Teams or Zoom – or you could have a video interview format in which you are presented with a series of pre-recorded questions and invited to record your answers.

- Set the scene for your video interview. Think about lighting and check what is going to be visible in the background. If your room's a mess, clear a suitable space.
- Dress as you would for a face-to-face interview
- Take time to familiarise yourself with the set-up and try out the practice session. You might prefer to turn off the video view so you're not distracted by seeing the video of yourself as you make it. Remember to look at the camera – this is the equivalent of making eye contact with your interviewer.



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Panel interviews involve being asked questions by a group of people.

- Try to find out who you will be interviewed by before the day; if you are not told this as a matter of course, ask your contact at the organisation you are applying to. Once you have your interviewers' names it is well worth looking them up online; you may find profiles of them on the employer's website.
- On the day, make sure you know who's who and who does what.
- Direct your response to whoever asked the question, but make sure you make brief eye contact with the others as well.

How to give a presentation as part of your interview

You may be asked to give a presentation when you come in for interview.

- Check what visual aids and equipment will be available. Are they expecting you to turn up with a PowerPoint presentation on a memory stick? Make sure you know what they are looking for.
- Make sure your presentation has a structure – a beginning, a middle and an end. Five minutes is probably just about long enough to set the scene, make a few points and wrap up. When you are planning your presentation, you will probably include too much information to start with and will then need to prune it back. Practise if you get the chance – it will help with your timing.
- Try to keep your body language positive and confident. Smile, make eye contact and don't rush. Give particular thought to what you are going to say at the very beginning to introduce yourself and the subject you are going to be talking about. First impressions count.

Apprenticeship questions to ask the employer



Careers Support Information Booklet

Most interviews include the opportunity for you to **ask questions**. Good ways to make the most of this include:

- Getting further detail about the apprenticeship or the organisation you'd be working for. Just don't ask questions to which you've already been told the answer, or to which the answers would have been easy to find online if you'd looked. For example, if you've hunted round the employer's website, done a Google search and still can't find out whether you'd be based in one team for the duration of your apprenticeship or move from team to team this would be a good question to ask. Similar topics include the types of clients you'd work with, the types of projects you'd be involved in, the qualifications you'd gain and what you'd do in a typical day.
- Asking your interviewers about their jobs and what they enjoy about working there. Tailor your question to their job – for example, if you're being interviewed by the HR manager for an apprentice engineer role, it would be fine to ask what they like about working for their organisation but would seem odd to ask for detail about what their job involves. In contrast, this would be a good question if you were talking to an engineer in the team you hope to join.
- Asking about opportunities after the apprenticeship and what previous apprentices have gone on to do. The employer will probably hope you'd want to stay on there if there were a job available, having taken the trouble to train you up, so be careful what you ask if you don't see yourself staying long-term.
- Checking practical details such as where you'd be based or what the next step in the recruitment process would be.

Whatever you want to ask, try to give your questions a positive spin. For example, 'Do apprentices tend to go out on site visits?' or 'Would I get the opportunity to go out on site visits?' sound a lot better than 'Would I have to go out on site visits?'

Preparing for your apprenticeship interview: the day before

- Brush up on your research into the employer, the industry and the role.
- Make sure you've looked through any advice available on the employer's website.
- Re-read your application and make sure you know what to expect from the interview – contact the recruitment team directly to ask if you're not sure.
- If you are going to have to give a presentation or talk in depth about a specific project, make sure you've prepared.
- Think about the key competencies required for the role and prepare examples of times when you've shown them.