Wellington Careers and Employment

Career Essentials—Online applications

Most employers ask applicants to apply online. There are advantages for the employer and for you. Whether completing an application form, CV template, or profile, all applicants get the same opportunity. The process is smoother for the employer as they can easily manage and search applicant data.

Online application methods

- Complete your entire application on the employer's website.
- Download an application form from the website, complete and send via email, or print off and post.
- Email your application documents (e.g., an application letter within the body of the email and CV and/or application form as an attachment).

Preparation

- Develop enough self-awareness of your skills, knowledge, and interests to be able to match these to the job competencies. You may be asked to indicate preferences from a list of job titles.
- Prepare a 'master' cover letter and CV that you can go back to and adapt to each application. A skills-based format of CV is the most adaptable.
- Also have a plain text version to copy into other documents, including the body of an email, should you need to get details to someone urgently.

When applying

- Read all instructions carefully. Gather everything required for the application such as academic transcript, CV, or other application requirements.
- Be professional. This does not have the level of informality of social media.
- Complete the form, even if it repeats information from your CV. Most online applications can't be submitted if fields are left incomplete. Missing information may be a reason for rejecting your application.
- Address the skills, credentials, knowledge, and experience being asked for. Your applications may go directly into a database that allows the use of applicant tracking software to do a keyword search.
- Draft answers to any questions and remember to keep a copy of these as a record of what you submit.
- Download any relevant information and/or application form. Some sites might ask you to register before allowing access to the application form or graduate recruitment details. These may be unavailable after the closing date of the role.
- Contact the organisation if you experience any technical difficulties.
- Keep a record of which organisations you applied to and when, and the name and contact details of key people.

Online job applications

- As you have already drafted your answers, check the website again to ensure nothing has been changed which would alter the responses you would want to make. In this situation it is best to type in rather than cut and paste from another document as all applications will come out at the recruiter's end in plain text.
- Before submitting, print off the completed application and re-read a few times. After making changes, print a final copy as a reference and proof of application. Even online applications sometimes get lost.
- Most application systems will automatically acknowledge by email if a submission has been successful. If not, or you are uncertain or have experienced problems, follow up by email or phone.

Emailing an application

- Ensure your documents are in PDF format to avoid unhelpful changes in formatting.
- Attachments should only be what has been requested. These may be any or all of: application form, CV, cover letter, sample of written work, scanned copies of references, or academic transcripts.
- The cover letter can be sent as an attachment or in the body of an email. Either way it should still be in formal letter format. See Career Essentials—Cover letters.
- For email communication, ensure you get any important information in first, as most email screens only show about 20 lines of text. Your aim is to grab the attention of the reader.
- Request a receipt of application acknowledgement either in your cover letter, or by setting up an automatic delivery receipt.
- Choose a subject line for your email that indicates an application. Use reference numbers if these have been provided, or the position title, or "Application for (position title)."
- Ensure each attachment file has your name on it, to avoid any confusion.
- A professional email address is considered essential for candidates who want to be taken seriously.
- Sending your referees a blind carbon copy (BCC) of your application can be a good idea. Alternatively, contact them to let them know about your applications.

Sharing your CV online

- A LinkedIn profile is one approach to showcasing your relevant professional information online, with content similar to a CV. Refer to Career Essentials—Introduction to LinkedIn and LinkedIn.
- Some organisations and recruitment companies allow you to upload your CV in their websites or talent banks. This enables you to 'spread the net' as widely as possible in terms of accessing potential employers. Track or record where your CV has been shared and keep it up to date.
- Having a CV online is more effective for those with skills that are in demand, or those with directly relevant work experience. If your work experience is limited, this approach is less effective.
- Ensure you post your CV on sites that are likely to be visited by employers and recruitment companies
- If possible, check the security and confidentiality of the sites you post your CV to—most sites take this seriously and you can decide what information you will provide and who will have access to it.
- Social media platforms such as YouTube are increasingly common for applications, especially in jobs where creativity and digital skills are needed. Look up video résumé tips on YouTube itself for some useful ideas.

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