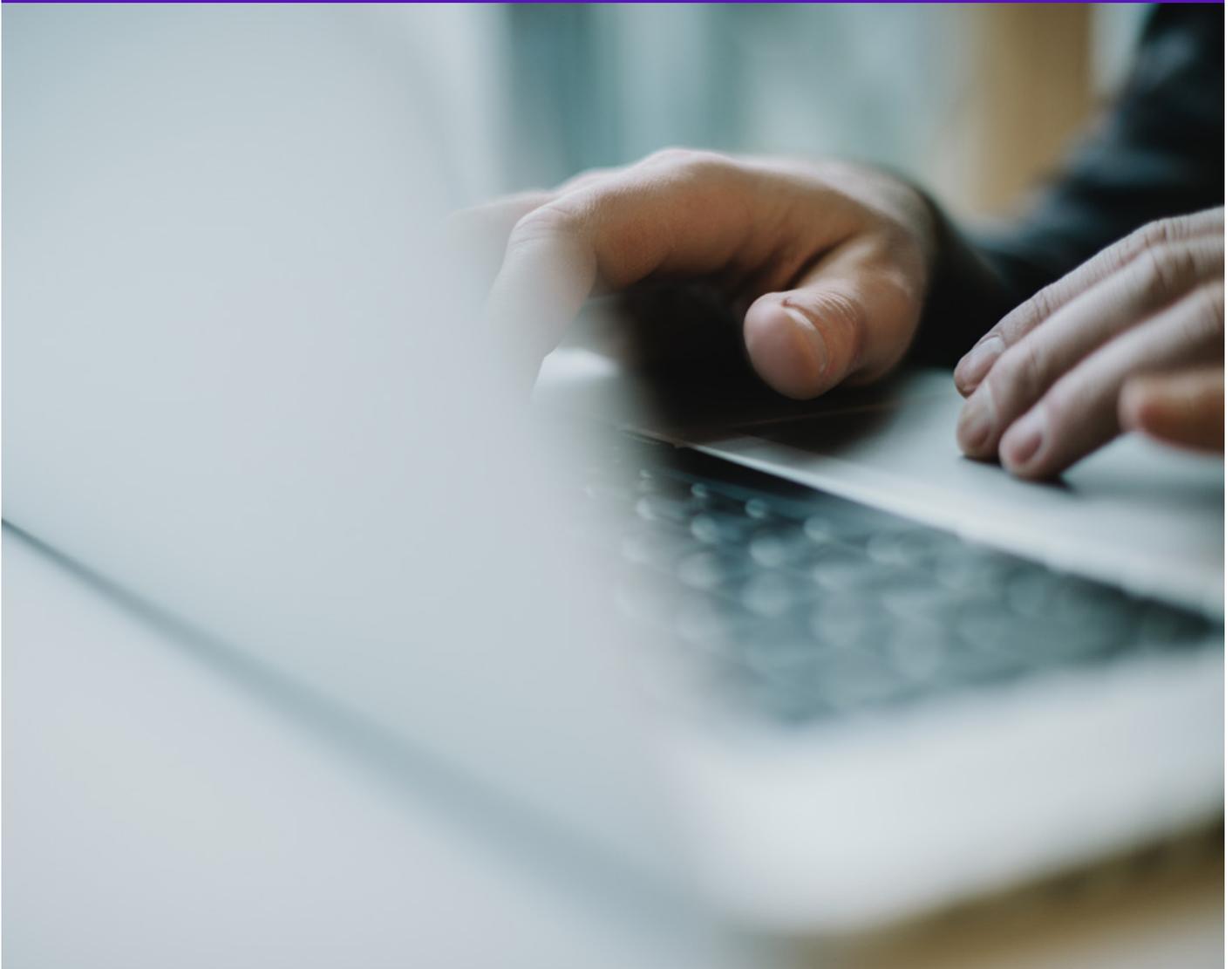




Resource Pack

Give your job applications a boost



Decoding job adverts

Before you look at a job advert, it's important to have a good understanding of your skills, knowledge and experience, so that you can match yourself to roles that you can potentially apply for. Aside from the details of the role like the salary, location and hours, a job advert gives you the key words that you can use on your CV to give you a better chance of being invited to an interview. If you can scan through a job advert and tick around 80% of the boxes of what the employer is asking for, then you could find yourself with a higher success rate of getting through to the next stage of the process. But sometimes even if you feel you don't match all the skills and qualities the job ad is asking for, it might still be worth applying for as you never know who else is applying and who you're up against.

Essential vs desirable

Essential skills

Essential skills are the qualifications, experience, or knowledge you must have to be considered for the job

Desirable skills

Desirable skills can be used to help decide between candidates who meet ALL the essential Criteria or even someone who doesn't mean all the essential skills but matches a lot of the desirable skills as well.

It's important to note that not all employers will have 'essential and desirable' but where they do, you should always try to meet both.

Some people take the approach of sending off as many applications as possible. But there are strategies and techniques you can use to maximise your chances to push your application to the next stage.



Application forms

Preparation

Writing an application form can take time. So, make sure you don't rush it, an employer can tell and will feel like you aren't serious about the position. Application forms usually have a save for later function, so you don't have to complete and submit it on the same day. It's better to complete as much as you can and then come back to it later if you need to finish it. Make sure you spend time reading through it thoroughly and iron out any spelling or grammatical errors.

TOP TIP: Copy all the application questions to a separate word document. Answer everything there so you don't have the risk of your Wi-Fi suddenly dropping out and you can save your word document for later and any future job applications which will save you time.

Tailor your language to the company

This goes back down to doing your research. Researching the company and tailoring your language to connect with the employer. Look at the job ad in detail and make sure you reference how you meet the specific requirements of their ideal candidate in your application.

Catch the attention of the employer

You want to make sure you keep it snappy and to the point, so the employer wants to keep on reading. Put emphasis on the skills and experience that are relevant to the job using the job advert. If you have skills and experience that aren't relevant to the job, leave it out until the end. This is all part of grabbing the attention of the employer and keeping what's important at the top. Make sure you read through your application thoroughly and cut down paragraphs so its snappy and to the point.

Finally...

Check closing dates. Most people wait until just before the closing date to submit their application, so the employer has a huge rush of applications at the same time. If you submit yours earlier, they may have more time to sit down and read yours, giving you a better chance of being invited for interview.

Common questions - Job applications

A job application can sometimes contain some specific questions an employer might want you to answer which can relate to the role you're applying for.

Here are some of the most common questions and what the employer is looking for.

Why do you want to work here?

The employer is trying to figure out the reason you want to work there, do you have a genuine passion. You need to show that you've done your research and understand exactly what the job entails. Explain how it fits into your long-term career plans.

Why do you think you are suitable for the role?

You need to describe how your skills, knowledge and experience match the job description, while also explaining your motivation and goals.

Give an example of when you've worked under pressure

You need to prove that you've handled deadlines successfully in the past. Describe how you overcame obstacles that you had no control over. This is a STAR technique-based question. There's lots you can find online on the STAR technique if you're not familiar with it.

Please provide further information to support your application

This will usually be placed at the end of the form and is like a personal statement, making it one of the most important sections to get right. It is an opportunity for you to show the employer why you are the best candidate for the job. You'll need to relate your skills directly to those outlined in the job description.



Cover letter

In a nutshell, a cover letter is like your virtual handshake. An introduction to you and your CV. It should aim to capture the attention of the hiring manager and not just repeat what's on your CV. You can use it to emphasise some of the key skills in the job ad requirements to show how you meet them or even speak about your long term ambition for wanting to work within their organisation.

Below is some guidance on how to layout your cover letter.

We also have a template cover letter that you can download to help you get started:

<https://www.shorturl.at/iyGTV>

Paragraph 1:

Consider introducing yourself with a snappy first sentence that highlights your excitement about the company you're applying to. It should be short and sweet made up of three things: why you're writing the letter, the position you're applying for, how you found out about the position.

Paragraph 2:

The second paragraph should be about you, expanding on your CV and giving a brief summary of any relevant skills or education you have. Remember, your cover letter shouldn't be a copy of your CV; it should take your most notable achievements, explain a bit more about them, and then show how these skills could benefit the employer. Make sure you refer back to the skills mentioned and the phrasing that's used in the job description to detail how you match those skills if they apply to you.

Paragraph 3:

The third paragraph is your chance to show your knowledge of the company and the sector and go into detail about why you want to work for their company specifically. You should state how you can help the company and add to their success, as well as why you'll fit in with the company culture and core values.

Paragraph 4:

Close by expressing your passion for wanting to work there, it's your last chance to, so you could say something like "I'm passionate about wanting to work in [company] and would love the opportunity to contribute to its success". Thank them for taking the time to read your letter and sign off with:
Yours sincerely,
[Your Name]

TOP TIPS

Make sure you save your cover letter as a PDF file so it's easily accessible to everyone.

If you're sending the hiring manager an email, make the email the cover letter including a CV as an attachment. Don't attach the cover letter as you want to be able to grab their attention right away.

Tailor your cover letter, don't use a generic one for every job you apply for, you want to show you've made an effort to look through the job post and responded to it in your cover letter.

Join our upcoming free Work Ready webinars

Make your CV work for you

Give your job application a boost

Get a head start with assessment centres

Be a hit at interviews

<https://www.bt.com/workready>



Useful links

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>

LinkedIn have made some relevant parts of their learning catalogue free to all. LinkedIn is not just another social media profile, you can use it to create new connections, get connected with a company that you want to work for so when they have a new role or opportunity they will most likely advertise on LinkedIn first. You can also use this link to learn something new with LinkedIn, once you finish that course, it automatically gets added to your LinkedIn profile so employers can see when they visit your profile.

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/young-professional-training/>

Young professional content for Youth Employment UK. Youth employment connects young people to youth friendly employers, some free advice tips and regularly updated graduate roles and apprenticeships on here.

<https://www.barclayslifeskills.com>

Free online tools to help jobseekers. Includes a CV generator, help with cover letter, your skills and much more.

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/telephone-interview-tips-dos-and-donts/>

This is one of many sites that have guidance on phone and video interviews.

<https://www.bt.com/careers>

You can find all our live vacancies here including apprenticeships and grad roles.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well>

NHS Live Well - Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing. If you are suffering in any way mentally/physically there is help and support available.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-courses-for-jobs>

If you are aged 19 or over you could access a course for free, as part of the support available from the government to help you gain the skills you need to get the job you want

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Getting work ready

Whether you're getting ready for the world of work or supporting someone who's preparing for employment, there's lots of ways that we can help.

Want to see what it's like to work at BT, learn practical skills to make yourself more employable or apply for a work placement? You'll find everything you need right here.

Getting Work Ready from home

We've paused our face to face Work Ready programme, but at BT we didn't want the support to end there, so we've designed a series of short, interactive webinars on four different topics so you can use your time to make sure that when the chance comes along you'll be ready to succeed.

Work Ready
from BT