



Filling out Application Forms

An application form is a standardized document which solicits information that the employer requires, either as a basis for an interview or to obtain information to register you on the payroll.

General tips

- Use only black ballpoint pen. Do not use pencil; texture or fountain pen.
- Fill out the application form as completely as possible. Do not write “please see resume”.
- If there is insufficient space on the form, write on a sheet of paper and attach it.
- When recording date of birth, people frequently make the mistake of showing the current year instead of their year of birth.
- If the question does not apply to you, write “not applicable” or “N/A” rather than leaving it blank.
- Start with current position and working backwards.
- Next of kin means a close relative.
- A mistake that is sometimes made on the form, is to give a supervisor’s name where it asks for the name of the employer (the employer is the company).
- Make sure you are honest and accurate. If you write something on the form that is wrong, even though it may have been a mistake, the employer will consider you to be either dishonest or stupid. If they detect a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, your application will be rejected for these reasons as well.
- If there is a question that you may have to answer negatively, for example ‘do you have a police conviction, traffic?’ (traffic infringements are not considered police convictions unless it is Driving Under the Influence or Negligent Driving or something very serious) or ‘do you have a health problem’ or ‘have you been fired from a job?’ – it is better to leave the answer blank or write ‘I would prefer to discuss this at an interview’ This will give you a chance to present the full story.

Filling out a form before an interview

Make sure you are early for an interview (perhaps 15 minutes) just in case you are given an application form to complete before the interview. If you are early, you will have time to complete the form more fully and accurately than the other applicants who show up just on time.

Always have your resume with you. If you do have to complete an application form, it is easier when you have your resume on hand. Take a pen with you so that you do not have to ask for one. The employer will observe how you completed the application form, noting such things as –

- The way and the type of questions you ask about the application form.
- How long it takes you to complete the form, which reflects your speed and ability to complete clerical workloads.
- The fact that you cannot remember something – this could mean that you get stressed or it could indicate a poor memory.
- Whether or not you miss questions; or whether you misinterpret questions.
- Whether you put your employment in reverse order if asked to.
- The neatness of your handwriting, especially if your writing is going to be read by others.
- Your spelling ability.

Filling out a form at home

If a company has given you an application form to take home and fill out, it is a good idea photocopy it and fill out the copy as a practice-run before completing the original.