

Using the Internet for...

Preparing a Job Application



Using the Internet for... **Preparing a Job Application**

by Libraries Development, LGMA, 2014.

LifeSteps offers you a range of online guides. Written by staff from Irish public libraries, each guide contains easy to follow, step by step explanations of how to use the Internet to achieve a specific goal or 'life step.'

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You can contact the LifeSteps team at lifesteps@lgma.ie.

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Introduction

This guide will help you to prepare a job application, from creating a CV and application letter to understanding key interview techniques. It will also offer advice on finding associated information such as looking for jobs, researching the employer, and employment issues. While some companies require job applicants to complete their own online application form, many also request a copy of your CV.

The Internet offers limitless sources of information for the world of careers, application procedures and job-hunting. However, incorrect or outdated information can make the task long and frustrating, so be careful when browsing websites and make sure that the information you are using is up to date.

Need to Know

You will need to have a basic knowledge of how to use a PC, the Internet and email.

Need to Have

An email address to receive notification of potential jobs and to submit job applications.

Related Guides

The LifeSteps Guide *Internet Basics* covers the need to know requirements for this guide.

Quick Guide

1. Create a CV
2. Write a cover letter
3. Interview skills
4. Searching for jobs online
5. Links

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 1: Create a CV

Although creating a CV can be a daunting prospect, the impact of a strong CV cannot be overstated. The purpose of a CV is to convince the potential employer to invite you to an interview. It is usually the first contact you have with him/ her and as many potential employers only give CVs a minute's attention or less, it is worth spending time on it so you make a good impression.

Unless otherwise stated in the job advertisement, your CV should include contact details for two referees. Contact the people you would like to use as referees, ask for their permission and confirm their contact details before submitting any job application.



Courtesy of Carol Sweeney Photography

There are many different templates available online for creating CVs and most are presented in one of two basic structures: Chronological CV and Skills-based CV.

Chronological CV

This CV is most suitable when applying for a job in the same industry that you're currently working as it shows your professional development. The basic structure is as follows:

Structure:

1. Personal Information
2. Personal Statement (optional)
3. Employment History - listed chronologically
4. Education & Training
5. Skill Set
6. Interests
7. References

Skills-based CV

This CV is most suitable when applying for a job in a different industry as it focuses more on the skills needed for the position rather than the fact that you lack experience in that particular industry. The basic structure is as follows:

1. Personal Information
2. Personal Statement (optional)
3. Employment History - listed by skills
4. Education & Training
5. Skill Set
6. Interests
7. References



Regardless of which CV structure you prefer, remember that presentation, accuracy and clear writing are key. A concise CV that is pertinent to the position is much more appealing to an employer than an unnecessarily long CV. Ideally it should be no more than two pages as it is usually only necessary to include relevant work experience. Irrelevant details take up space and will lose attention of a potential employer (who is probably already short on time).

Lastly, revise and edit! Typos, inconsistent formatting and other errors will reflect badly on you and are likely to result in your CV being put to the bottom of the pile, or rejected immediately.

Further tips on CV preparation and various CV templates are available on the following websites:

JobSeekerAdvice.com:

<http://jobseekersadvice.com/>

Effective CV Writing:

<https://sites.google.com/site/effectivecwriting/>

Monster.ie:

<http://career-advice.monster.ie/cvs-applications/careers.aspx>

CVTips.com:

www.cvtips.com/

Step 2: Write a Cover Letter

Now that you have created your CV, you need to write a cover letter. Each job application should be accompanied by a cover letter. It provides the opportunity to formally introduce yourself to the potential employer and should outline briefly why you are a suitable candidate for the position. It also demonstrates your written communication skills, so make sure to re-read and edit any cover letter before submitting your job application.

As well as supplying a CV and cover letter, many companies require candidates to complete an online application form. These can take considerable time to fill out and revise for accuracy. If you are applying for a position with this requirement, it is worthwhile starting your application procedure well in advance of the closing date. Recruiters and potential employers get a lot of applications, so take the time to make yours stand out.

While each job application requires a specifically tailored cover letter, depending on the requirements of the position, the guidelines below are universally applicable.

- Address the letter to a specific person. If necessary, phone the company to find out the name of the person.
- Keep it short, usually one page of three to four well written paragraphs.
- Read the job description carefully to ensure you address all requirements.
- Use language from the job description and advertisement.
- Avoid using slang and always use correct grammar and spelling.
- Use positive language.
- Do your research. Link the company's aims and the position responsibilities to your own professional skills and experience.
- Outline your career goals.
- Highlight what makes you different from other candidates with similar experience.
- If there is anything the employer may be concerned about in your application, address this directly in the cover letter.

- Proof read the letter.
- Ask a trusted friend or colleague to proof read and edit the letter.
- Use an appropriate email address for sending your application.

Asking yourself specific questions about the position can help you to prepare an effective, personal and job-specific cover letter that will make your application stand out from the rest.

- Who will read this letter?
- What do I know about the company/ organisation?
- What type of job am I applying for?
- What skills and experience do I have that relate to this job?
- What are my main achievements in my current/ previous job and how do they relate to the advertised job?
- How can I help this company/ organisation to reach its aims and objectives?
- Where do I hope to work in the future and will this job help me realise my goal?
- Why do I want to work for this company/ organisation in particular?

Further tips on preparing a cover letter, including sample letter templates, and completing online applications are available on the following websites:

[Gradireland.com](http://gradireland.com):

<http://gradireland.com/careers-advice/cvs-and-applications/how-to-write-a-successful-job-application>

Government of Western Australia, Department of Training and Workforce Development:

www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au/findingajob/applyingforwork/Pages/HowToWriteAnApplicationLetter.aspx

[Monster.ie](http://career-advice.monster.ie):

<http://career-advice.monster.ie/cvs-applications/free-cover-letter-samples/jobs.aspx>

Trinity College Dublin Career Advisory Service:

www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/jobsearch/apply/write_a_cover_letter.php

Step 3: Interview Skills

Writing your CV and application letter is not the end of the hard work! The interview is the final step to securing a job offer.

Thinking about the type of questions you are likely to be asked in an interview can make a big impact on how you perform during the interview. Prior preparation is key to ensuring that you present yourself at your best.

During an interview, you will be asked questions about yourself, your skills, experience and suitability for the position. Your CV is the basis for these questions so make sure you know exactly what you've stated on your CV and be able to back up any statements with examples. Below are some tips to preparing for and answering interview questions.



- Plan ahead by preparing answers to the questions you will most likely to be asked.
- Be prepared to elaborate on your answers if necessary.
- Be honest with the interview panel. If you don't know the answer, don't try to talk around the topic.
- If you don't understand the question, ask the interview panel for clarification.
- Plan ahead by preparing answers to any unexplained gaps in your CV.
- If you were made redundant/ fired from a previous position, plan appropriate answers to interview questions on the circumstances.
- Ask questions to show you have done research on the company and the position. Ask about the business, job, training and career progression etc.
- Show enthusiasm in the interview to demonstrate the passion and energy you could bring to the job and company.
- Sell yourself. In the competition for jobs, modesty and understatement will not lead to numerous job offers. Be assertive, confident and don't be afraid to highlight your competencies.
- Make eye contact with the interview panel.
- Avoid distractions. If you have a habit of fidgeting with jewellery etc., leave it at home.
- Practice. Ask a trusted friend or colleague to host a mock interview to give you an opportunity to answer questions aloud.
- Dress well.
- Arrive for the interview a little early to give yourself time to collect your thoughts. Running late will only cause you stress, which will not help in the interview.

Further tips on preparing for interview, including sample interview questions, are available on the following websites:

Effective Interview Skills:

www.careersportal.ie/pdfs/effective_interview_skills.pdf

GradIreland.com:

<http://gradireland.com/careers-advice/interviews-and-tests/interview-questions>

RecruitIreland.com:

www.recruitireland.com

IrishJobs.ie:

www.irishjobs.ie/careeradvice/interview-advice/

Step 4: Searching for Jobs Online

There are many benefits of using the Internet to find a job.

- You can register for job alerts, which means you will be sent all the latest jobs by email as they appear on a particular site, or you can specify the type of job that you would like to be notified about.
- Many websites offer you the option of storing your CV and when you wish to apply for jobs, you simply enter your username and password and your CV is automatically sent to the employer.
- Sometimes advertisers or employers request a database search of CVs that are registered with recruitment websites. If your CV matches their requirements, you will be sent an email with a link to that job.
- Most websites offer a facility for keeping a list of all the jobs you applied for and the dates you applied to them.
- You can receive monthly/weekly newsletters from some websites and these keep you informed of the job market, the latest career news, recommended reading and much more.



Links

Employment Issues:

www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment

Careers Websites:

www.mindtools.com

www.careersportal.ie

www.careerdirections.ie

Recruitment Websites:

www.recruitireland.com

www.monster.ie

www.jobs.ie

www.irishjobs.ie

www.irelandjobs.ie

www.careerwise.ie

<http://advancerecruitment.ie>

www.edenrecruitment.ie

www.jobsnation.net

www.publicjobs.ie

<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage?lang=en>

Final Notes

As already noted, the Internet provides limitless resources for the jobseeker. Start with the suggested websites provided in this guide. Most of these websites have a links section and it would be worthwhile checking which other websites are recommended. This can often lead to the most relevant website to you.

Finally, when writing up a CV and cover letter, remember to edit, edit, edit! You cannot proof read your application too many times!