



Apprenticeship application guidelines

What to expect in an apprenticeship application form:

The majority of apprenticeship positions advertised on National Government Apprenticeship page (www.apprenticeships.org.uk) have application forms that are divided into the following sections:

- ❖ **Personal details**
- ❖ **Education details & Qualifications**
- ❖ **Work experience details**
- ❖ **'About you' questions**

TIP: You might find it useful to have the a copy of your CV in front of you when completing your application

Feel your CV needs improvement too?
Please see Miss McGuinness in the LRC for a copy of the CV guidelines booklet

REMEMBER: If you are completing the application form online, make sure that you click 'save' throughout so that your answers are not lost!

If you are completing a hard copy: you might want to make notes of your answers first and check spelling/ punctuation before filling in the hard copy of the application form

Personal details:

- ❖ **Spelling:** Make sure that you have spelt your name, home address and email correctly
- ❖ **Contact number:** Make sure this is the number you use regularly (e.g. mobile) to ensure that if you are successful the employer is able to reach you! Make sure that your voicemail is sensible too (i.e. no silly messages!)
- ❖ **Email address:** It is important that this is a sensible email address, such as your name (e.g. john.smith@gmail.com). If you do not yet have a sensible email address make sure you set one up before applying.

TIP: once you have submitted an application make sure you check your email account regularly as employers are likely to contact you through email first of all



Education details:

- ❖ **School details:** you will need to include the name(s) of the secondary school(s) you have attended and the dates you studied there.
- ❖ **Predicted Grades:** remember to include all of your predicted grades and any other qualifications that you hold e.g. sport, music, dance, drama, Duke of Edinburgh, St Johns ambulance etc.

Work experience:

- ❖ **Employer:** include the name of the company you worked/volunteered for. If the work you completed was provided by your parents or a neighbour (e.g. babysitting), include their first and last name in the 'employer' box

TIP: This can be **any** work related experiences you have had. So it can include **both** paid and unpaid experiences. Examples could include; work experience, volunteering, babysitting (looking after siblings), paper rounds, and positions of responsibility at clubs (e.g. football team Captain, Head Girl at Brownies etc.)

- ❖ **Job title & dates worked:**

Include a title that best describes the role you completed as part of the work related experience (e.g. 'Babysitter', 'Gardener', 'Care Volunteer', 'Retail Assistant', 'Labourer Volunteer' etc.). It is also important to include the dates you worked in this role; if you can't remember the exact dates then include approximate dates (e.g. month you starts/ finished). If you are still working in this role then write 'Present' or 'Current' in the 'Finished box'.

- ❖ **Main duties:** It is important not to just list your main responsibilities but briefly explain how you carried out your responsibilities/duties in an effective way and the skills you applied to accomplish this

- For example: *'I used my organisation skills and eye for detail to arrange the shelves at the shop according to the shelving policy that was communicated to me by my manager'*
- For example: *'as the Team Captain for my football club, I help our Football coach organise the weekly matches, and use my communication skills to motivate the other players'*

REMEMBER: you might have a word limit for some applications! So make sure you keep your responses to the point and focus on the tasks you undertook that might be the most relevant to the job/ apprenticeship you are applying for

The **job description** might provide you with ideas on what duties might be most relevant

TIP: Need help? Use the 'Skills Grid' at the end of this help sheet to think about the skills you might have developed through your work/ volunteer/ extracurricular experiences



‘About you’ questions:

This section is the **most important** part of the application form to help you get through to interview. Therefore, you need to make sure that you use this section to describe yourself in the best possible light!

“What are your Strengths?”

- ❖ **Think** about strengths that the employer might be looking for. For example, many employers look for candidates to have ‘**Good communication skills**’. You could use this section to tell them that you have good communication skills by briefly explaining an occasion where you used these skills
 - For example: *‘I believe that I have extremely good communication skills. I have given presentations in front of whole year assemblies and in front of groups in the classroom. At our school fundraising event, I used my communication skills when greeting and serving customers in a friendly and polite manner. I also have excellent written communication skills from completing Essays and Assignments in English and I am confident speaking on the telephone.*
 - For example: *‘I feel that I have very good communication skills. As a keen team member of a local football team, it is important that we communicate with one another constantly when on the pitch to make sure that everyone can work together to win the game. I have been praised by my football captain for the way that I communicate with my team mates on pitch, saying that I am calm, motivational and fair’.*

TIP: Look at some of the example job descriptions to get an idea of the skills and personal qualities that employers are looking for. Circle ‘Buzz words’ (see example below), so that you have a checklist of skills that you could include in your strengths section

TIP: Need help? Ask a friend or a teacher to list your three best qualities

Use the ‘Skills Grid’ at the end of this help sheet to think about the skills and phrases that you could include in your answer



An example of a Job description, with 'Buzz Words' Circled

Apprenticeship summary

Weekly wage

£150.00

Working week

9:15am to 5:45pm (37.5 hours over 5 days)

Apprenticeship duration

24 months

Possible start date

25 May 2015

Date posted

5 days ago

Buzz words:

Eager (Enthusiastic), Organised, Confident, able to deal with queries from clients & Excellent customer service (communication skills), Researching on the Internet (IT Skills)

At MTR you will work as the office administrator dealing with all customer queries either via telephone or face to face as well as writing reports and attending client meetings. This is a fun office based environment where no two days will ever be the same with your wide varied job role. If you are **eager, organised and confident** then apply now for this role and kick start your career with MTR! Below are some of the roles you will carry out:

- Working on the reception area of the office
- Meeting and greeting visitors who enter the office
- Writing up reports
- Attending client meetings if and when required
- Answering internal and external telephone calls
- **Processing and dealing with all queries from clients**
- **Researching on the internet**
- Using the internal diary and computer system
- Sending and receiving emails and letters to clients
- Scanning, printing and photocopying documents
- Storing and retrieving of information
- Organising, inputting and reporting data on to the company system
- Filing away and maintaining internal documents
- Continuously providing **excellent customer service**

Requirements and prospects

Desired skills

We are looking for applications from individuals who have the following skills:

- You need to be **confident** and have the ability to **work independently** without the need for close supervision.
- Communication skills are vital in this role; successful applicants will be **well spoken** with a clear and professional telephone manner.
- You must have **good time management skills**; you must be a punctual person and be on time for work and any meetings.

Qualifications required

No formal qualifications required.

Future prospects

Full time position for the right apprentice.

Things to consider

Can you travel there? Please check links below

<http://www.traveline.info/> Or www.transportdirect.info

- This role involves liaising with both internal and external customers, you must be confident when dealing with people at all levels.
- This role may involve unsociable hours – you must have a flexible approach to your work.
- Travel costs will be incurred to get to work, and to access the training.
- You must have a customer focused approach whilst handling a large volume of queries.



“What personal skills would you like to improve?”

- ❖ **Think** about this in relation to the skills and knowledge you would be able to gain from an apprenticeship or job in the area you are interested in. For example, if you are interested in working in the IT Industry, you might say something like this
 - For example: *‘I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest programming techniques being used in the workplace and learn how I could use and develop my IT Skills (in Microsoft excel, word and powerpoint), further in a work place setting.’*

Or if you were going for an apprenticeship in Hairdressing you could say something like this

- For example: *‘I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest cutting and colouring techniques being used in the fashion industry and how these could be used to suit high street fashion trends.’*
- ❖ **Always** think about skills you would like to improve in a way that will still present you in a positive light. By thinking about knowledge and skills you already have (e.g. Mathematical or Scientific knowledge gained from the classroom, IT and written communication skills gained from lessons), you can use this section as an opportunity to explain how you can improve upon this knowledge/ skill set further by finding out how it could be applied/ used in a workplace setting.

“What are your hobbies and interests?”

- ❖ **Be careful** about what you write in this section. Remember, the employer will use this section (and all of the application form) to start to create an impression of the kind of person that you are. The table below shows examples of how an employer might use what you say in this section to form a good or bad impression of you!

REMEMBER: Employers might use this section to ‘**break the ice**’ at an **interview** E.g. “so (*your name*), I notice from your application that you like films. What was the last film you saw and what did you like about it?” So if you have an **interesting or unique hobby/ interest** **make sure you include it!**

Your Hobby or Interest	What the employer might think
I like talking to my friends on WhatsApp	I wonder if I would need to keep an eye on this person in case they use work time to talk to their friends
I like to spend time on Facebook	Oh good they’ve got a Facebook account- I can have a look and see what they are like
I like playing football and keeping fit and healthy	They obviously like to keep fit and healthy, I hope that means they will take less time off sick through ill-health and be a more reliable employee
I like going out and socialising	This person likes to party. They’ll probably call in sick every Monday



“Is there anything we can do to help you at interview?”

- ❖ **If you have any special needs/ requirements** this is where you would let the employer know. For example do you need a signer? Are you dyslexic and require additional help completing any paperwork?
- ❖ **If you do not require extra help** write ‘No than you’ or ‘Not applicable’ in this box. Never leave this (or any other box) blank on the application form, otherwise the employer will not know if you have chosen not to answer or if you have just accidentally missed it. This rule applies to every different job application you find yourself completing.

Additional questions:

“Please tell us what has been your biggest achievement to date?”

This question will be personal to you as an individual, which means there is no right or wrong answer. However, you still want to make sure that the example will demonstrate you in a positive light so when answering this question you might want to:

- ❖ **Think** about an example where you would have developed and used lots of useful skills to accomplish your achievement
 - **For example:** *‘My biggest achievement to date was getting first prize in a show jumping competition at my horse riding stables. This required a great deal of determination on my part as I had to spend a lot of time practising beforehand. This meant that I had to use my organisation and time management skills to make sure I had enough time to practice for the competition, alongside attending school and completing my homework. I felt very proud that I was able to do this well and gain first prize in the competition as a result’*

“To date, what has been your biggest challenge?”

Again this question will be personal to you as an individual, but will still need to be an example that presents you in a good light. So when answering this question you might want to:

- ❖ **Think** about an example where you have had to work hard to overcome something difficult and as a result, you have become a better more rounded person. Whether this challenge is completing a piece of school work, adapting to a new school/ home or learning a new language, each experience would have required you to use certain skills and a positive attitude to be successful



- **For example:** *'The biggest challenge I have faced so far is adapting to life in England, after living in Italy for most of my childhood. To overcome this challenge I had to be brave when leaving my friends behind and think positively about the new friends I would make in England. I had to have an open mind about my new home and work hard to learn the language and develop good written and verbal communication skills. It helped that I am generally a fast learner, but nevertheless it required a lot of determination. I am proud that I successfully overcame this challenge as I enjoy my new life in England and have made lots of good friends here'.*
- **For example:** *'The biggest challenge I have faced so far is gaining a good predicted grade in Maths. I have always found maths difficult compared to other subjects such as English and Science. So to overcome this challenge and do well, I have had to invest a lot of extra time into learning this subject. I have been very determined and used my organisation and time management skills to make sure I have had extra time in the evenings and at weekends to complete my maths homework. I have also attended after school homework club for extra support, and gained help from my parents and teachers to improve in this subject. As a result, my grades in maths have improved and I have received great feedback from my teacher on my hard work and positive attitude to learning'.*

“Why have you chosen the particular field of apprenticeship that you have?”

By asking this question, the employer is hoping to find out more about your interest for the apprenticeship you have selected. So to answer this question effectively you might find it helpful to:

- ❖ **Research** the industry you have selected. What career opportunities are there in the industry? Is there something that you have read, or a personal experience you have had that makes this industry particularly appealing?
 - **For example:** *'I am interested in getting an apprenticeship within the healthcare industry as I have learnt during my Health and Social Care classes and extra reading that the NHS is one of the most respected organisations in the country and offers a wealth of career development opportunities. I would particularly like to work as a Care Assistant for the elderly as I have seen first hand the difference good care and support can make to the lives of elderly people. My nan has lived in a carehome for the last 3 years and when I visit her I see how happy she is, as she is well looked after by the staff and they work hard to come up with fun activities for her to get involved in. This has made me want to do the same for other elderly people.'*
- ❖ **Think** about how an apprenticeship in this industry could help you to achieve future career plans, by gaining vital experience and allowing you to work your way up to your desired job role (e.g. an apprenticeship in Hairdressing, could be the first step to help you achieve your career goal of starting your own salon)



The Skills Grid:

- ❖ Please use the skills grid below to think about your personal qualities and strengths
- ❖ Do you consider any of these **skills a key strength or personal quality of yours?** If so **where might you have used them?** (e.g. at school, during work experience, extracurricular activities etc.)

Action Planning	Adaptability	Computing skills	Creativity	Customer service
Decision making	Delegation	Demonstrating initiative	Fast learner	Good organisation
Language skills	Leadership	Literacy	Managing money	Negotiating
Presenting	Prioritising	Problem solving	Professionalism	Reliability
Striving for excellence	Team working	Time management	Written communication	Verbal communication