

Don't  
dream it.  
Do it.

# Introduction

This guide is packed full of hints and tips about how to work your way through registering, searching and applying for your dream Apprenticeship job.

When you see this sign  take a few minutes to read our suggestions – it won't take long and we promise it will make a big difference to your application.

By reading through the different sections of this guide, you will be able to pick up valuable advice about the application process that will really help your application to stand out and hopefully get you through to the interview stage of the process.

We hope you find this guide useful and wish you every success in securing an Apprenticeship job opportunity.



**This publication was produced by Hertfordshire County Council in conjunction with the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Provider Network**



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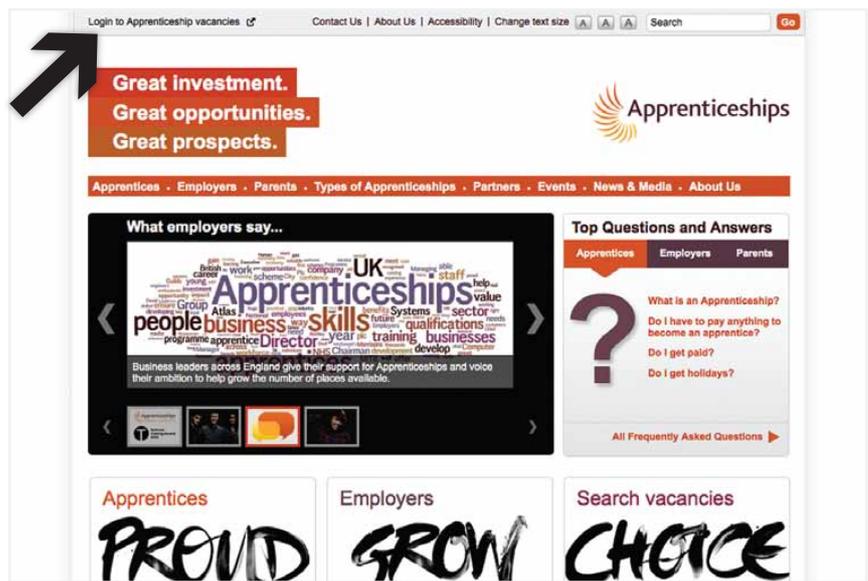
# Step 1: Register

## Notes

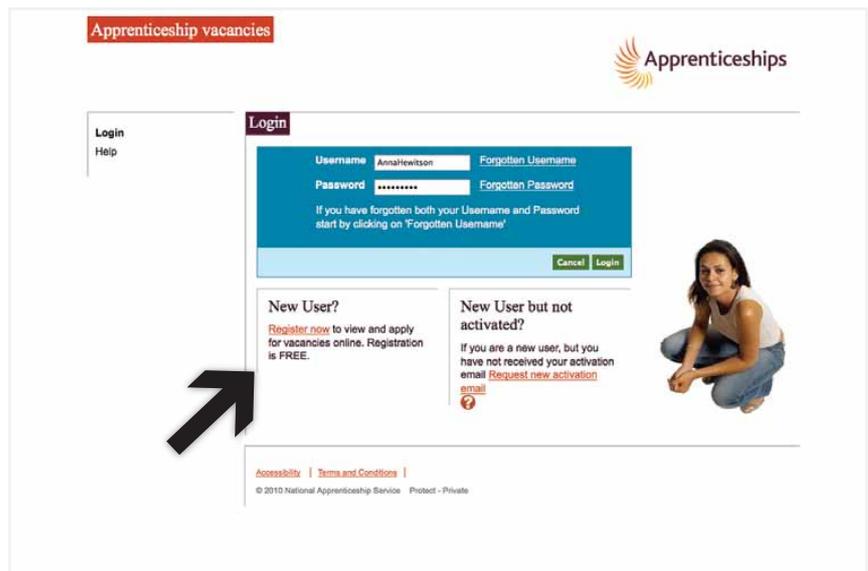
Registering on the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) vacancy website is completely free of charge.

To start your search you need to visit the website [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk)

From the home page you can find out lots of useful information about apprenticeships. Click on **Login to Apprenticeship vacancies** as shown below (top left hand corner of the home page).



A new window will open and you need to click on the link that says **Register Now**.



You will work through a form to complete your details and create a new account that looks like this:

The screenshot shows a registration form for 'Apprenticeships'. The form is titled 'Register Your Details' and is part of the 'Apprenticeship vacancies' section. It includes a 'Login Help' link on the left. The form is divided into two main sections: 'Your Details' and 'Contact Details'. The 'Your Details' section includes fields for 'First Name \*', 'Middle Name', 'Surname \*', and 'Date of Birth \*' (with a hint '(e.g. 01/09/1980)'). The 'Contact Details' section includes fields for 'Email Address \*' and 'Confirm Email Address', both with hints. Below these are fields for 'Postcode \*' (with a hint '(e.g. CV1 2WT)' and a 'Lookup Address' button) and 'Address'. At the bottom, there is a note about providing telephone details and a partially visible field for 'Preferred home, mobile or work'.

## Notes

When writing your date of birth you need to put the full year that you were born e.g. 01/03/1994 (not 01/03/94).

Select a User Name that you are going to be able to remember

Setting up the password is quite complicated because you have to

- Make it 8 – 20 characters
- Include a capital letter
- Include a number and
- Include a special character (something like a ? or !)

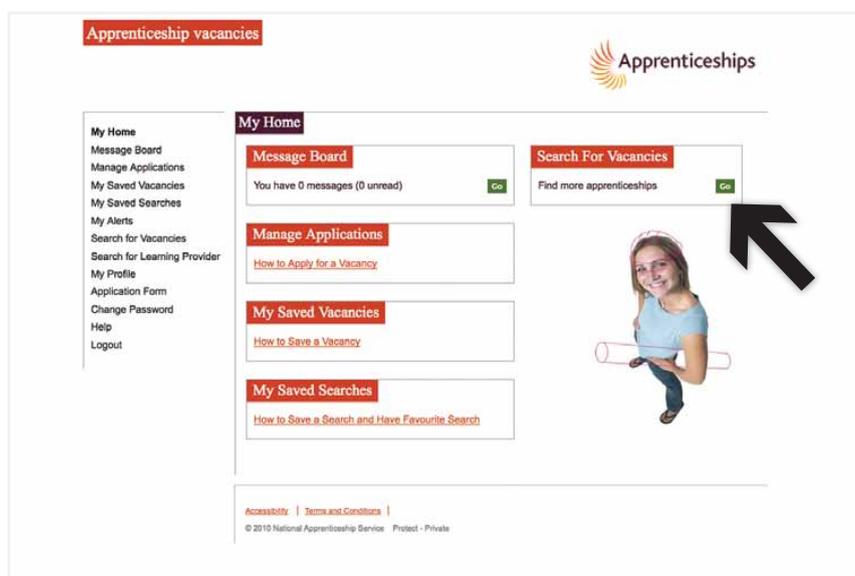
## ! Tips

- Make sure you use an email account that you can access straight away. Once you have completed your application you will receive an email so that you can 'activate your account.'
- Always try to include a telephone number if you have got one, it is important that training providers can contact you to discuss your application if they need to.
- Write down your username and password straight away before you forget.

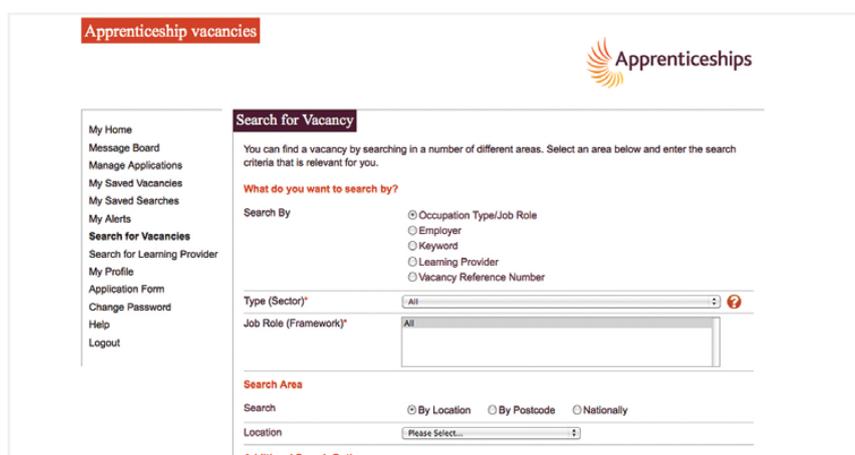


Once your account is activated and you have logged on, you will see the **My Home** page with 5 boxes on the screen. There will be a welcome email waiting for you in the Message Board.

To start searching for vacancies, click on **Go** in the Search For Vacancies box on the top right.



There are 5 ways in which to search for a vacancy.



When searching by Occupation Type/Job Role, use the drop-down menus to enter the broad area of work in which you are interested and then, if you can, narrow it down to the Job Role. For example, in Business Administration and Law, job roles include Accounting, Sales and Telesales, and Marketing. If you don't want to do this, leave it on All.

## Notes

## Step 2: Search

### Notes

### Search Area lets you search in 3 ways:

- If you search by Location, use the drop-down menu to choose your area but note that this will be a whole county, city or region in England.
- If you search by Postcode, the postcode that you used in your address will appear automatically or you can enter another one. Type in the distance from the postcode that you are prepared to travel to work. Widen your local search area for more vacancies.

Take account of easily available bus, train and underground routes as a longer distance might not necessarily mean a more difficult journey.

### ! Tips

- If you are looking for inspiration try a postcode or location search to see what is in the area.

- Searching Nationally will give you all the vacancies for your selected occupation in England. Beware that this will give you a very large number of opportunities which might make selection difficult.

## Notes

**Additional Search Options** enables you to narrow your search more:

The Vacancies Posted Since drop-down menu will probably be of most use once you have been using the website for some time to look at vacancies. It will save you having to sort through vacancies that you have already seen.

## ! Tips

- Look every day at the Vacancies Posted Since Yesterday to give you the best chance of being one of the first applicants and not missing out on a great opportunity before the closing date.

When you come to the Weekly Wage boxes, if you are uncertain about wages it is probably better to leave this field blank. Please be aware that Apprenticeship wages vary depending on the Employer/Occupation Type and where you live.

Select the level of Apprenticeship you are looking for from the Apprenticeship Types drop down menu.





## Step 3: Apply

### Notes

### Education History

The first section of the application form asks you to input the last school or college that you attended. Don't worry if you haven't been at school or college for a number of years as it won't affect your application.

The screenshot shows the 'Application Form' interface. On the left is a navigation menu with options like 'My Home', 'Message Board', 'Manage Applications', 'My Saved Vacancies', 'My Saved Searches', 'My Alerts', 'Search for Vacancies', 'Search for Learning Provider', 'My Profile', 'Application Form', 'Change Password', 'Help', and 'Logout'. The main content area is titled 'Application Form' and contains instructions: 'To apply for a vacancy you need to fill in the application form below. Fields marked with an asterisk \* must be filled in before you can send your form.' It also states: 'We will share your personal information only with Learning Providers, Employers, Schools and Colleges so they can contact you to talk about suitable opportunities. You can ask for a copy of the information we have and change any details that are incorrect. Please note that personal information does not include date of birth, gender, ethnicity or health information at this stage.' The 'Education History' section is highlighted in red and asks the user to 'Please enter the name of your current or last school or college attended and select from the list of schools returned'. It features two input fields: 'School/College \*' and 'Enter a town, locality OR postcode \*', both with asterisks indicating they are required. A green 'Search' button is to the right of the second field. A large black arrow points to the 'School/College \*' field. Below this is the 'Subject/qualification' section, which asks the user to 'Please enter the qualifications you have achieved e.g. GCSE Maths. If you have not yet received your grades please write that they are predicted e.g. B - Predicted. Please note that these grades will be discussed with Learning Providers.'

### Subject/qualification

The Subject/qualification section enables you to enter all of the qualifications that you hold or are currently undertaking.

The screenshot shows the 'Subject/qualification' section of the application form. It includes a navigation menu on the left with 'Help' and 'Logout'. The main content area has the following fields: 'School/College \*' (required), 'Enter a town, locality OR postcode \*' (required) with a green 'Search' button, 'Subject/qualification' section header, 'Please enter the qualifications you have achieved e.g. GCSE Maths. If you have not yet received your grades please write that they are predicted e.g. B - Predicted. Please note that these grades will be discussed with Learning Providers.', 'Subject' (text input with a red question mark icon), 'Qualification' (dropdown menu with 'Please select...' and a red question mark icon), 'Grade' (text input with a red question mark icon), 'Year Attained' (text input with a red question mark icon), 'Cancel' and 'Add Subject' buttons, and 'Other qualifications or training undertaken' (text area with a red question mark icon and a 'Text Count' indicator).

## ! Tips

- Remember to include all of your predicted grades and any other qualifications or grades that you hold. e.g. sport, music, dance, drama, Duke of Edinburgh, Asdan, St Johns Ambulance etc.

## Work Experience/History

This section enables you to enter all of your work experience, whether this is paid or unpaid work.

When you start typing in the box that says 'Type of Work' you will notice that a character count will appear underneath the box. You have 200 characters to describe the type of work that you completed.

If you can't remember the exact dates then you can select the approximate dates.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Work Experience/History". It includes a text area for "Employer", a "Type of Work" text area with a "Text Count" indicator below it, and two radio button questions: "Was this a partially completed apprenticeship?" and "Was this voluntary work?". Below these are "Employment From" and "Employment To" date pickers. At the bottom of the form are "Cancel" and "Add Employer" buttons. Below the form is an "About You" section with a text area for "What are your strengths? (e.g. team working, organising etc)" and a "Text Count" indicator. A large black arrow points to the "Type of Work" text area.

## Notes

A vertical column of horizontal dashed lines for taking notes.

## ! Tips

- Practice writing your statement in a word document first, then you can cut and paste it into the box when you're happy with how it reads
- Remember to check the spelling and punctuation.
- Make sure you focus on tasks that you undertook that might be relevant to the types of jobs that you are applying for in the future.









## Step 3: Apply

### Notes

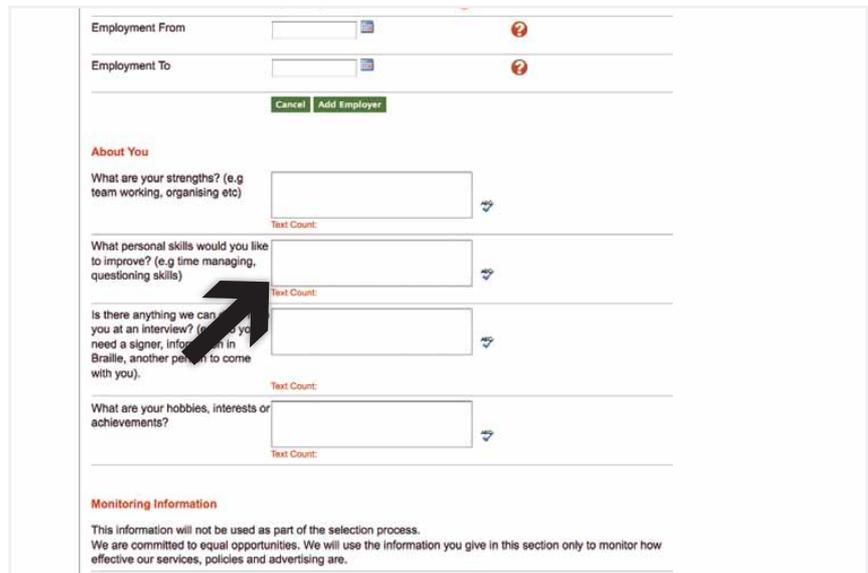
#### About you – What personal skills would you like to improve?

Although you have 4000 characters for this question you only need to write a good paragraph or a few sentences that answer the question, but in a clever way and linked directly to the job that you are applying for. For example, if you were going for a job in the IT industry you could say something like this:

**'I would like to improve my knowledge and awareness of the latest programming techniques being used in the workplace to increase efficiency and decrease costs to the employer'**

Or if you were going for a job in hairdressing you could say something like this:

**'I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest cutting and colouring techniques being used within the fashion industry and how these could be adapted to suit high street fashion trends'**



The screenshot shows a web-based application form. At the top, there are two date fields: 'Employment From' and 'Employment To', each with a calendar icon and a red question mark icon. Below these is a green button labeled 'Add Employer' and a grey button labeled 'Cancel'. The 'About You' section contains four text input fields, each with a 'Text Count' label below it. The questions are: 'What are your strengths? (e.g. team working, organising etc)', 'What personal skills would you like to improve? (e.g. time managing, questioning skills)', 'Is there anything we can help you at an interview? (e.g. do you need a signer, information in Braille, another person to come with you).', and 'What are your hobbies, interests or achievements?'. A black arrow points to the second question. At the bottom, there is a 'Monitoring Information' section with a disclaimer: 'This information will not be used as part of the selection process. We are committed to equal opportunities. We will use the information you give in this section only to monitor how effective our services, policies and advertising are.'











## Step 3: Apply

### Notes

### Additional Employer Questions

With every job application that uses the Apprenticeship Vacancies form, the employer is only allowed to change one thing, the rest of the form has to stay the same.

The only thing that they may change is to ask you two questions that are relevant to their job application. They will be displayed at the bottom of the application form and will look something like this:

The screenshot shows a section of an application form titled 'Additional question \*'. It contains two text input fields. The first field is labeled 'What do you think makes a good sales person?' and the second is labeled 'List, in order of importance, the key elements of a successful team?'. Both fields have a 'Text Count' label below them and a question mark icon to the right. A large black arrow points to the first question.

You do need to answer these questions and you need to think about the job advert, the employer and what you can tell them that might make you stand out from other applicants.

You should research their company through the internet so that you can tell them something interesting about your future career plans in that industry.

**Other typical 'Employer' questions that you might see could include:**

- Why do you feel you are a suitable candidate for this role?
- Why are you interested in completing an Apprenticeship?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- What experience of dealing with customers do you have?
- What qualities do you think are important in this job role?
- What do you think makes the difference between a good customer experience and an excellent one?



# Interview Checklist

**Do you know how to make a positive first impression at a job interview? Use this checklist to help prepare for your next interview.**

## Prior to submitting an application:

- Ensure your voicemail message on your mobile phone is appropriate
- Make sure your email address is sensible and will represent you in a mature way
- Spell and grammar check your CV, ensure it is up to date

## Prior to interview:

- Research the organisation and job that you are applying for
- Prepare at least 2 or 3 questions that show an interest in the job and organisation
- Work out how to get to the interview and how long the journey will take – allow enough time to arrive at least 15 minutes early
- Prepare answers to some typical interview questions e.g. 'why do you want this job?'
- Prepare examples of when you have used skills relevant to the job

## Appearance:

- Take a bath or shower prior to interview
- Wear clean and ironed clothing
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear – formal shoes, not trainers e.g. see back page
- Wear matching socks
- Polish/clean your shoes
- Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean
- Wear conservative makeup, accessories and jewellery (including nail varnish)
- Brush your teeth
- Wear subtle perfume/aftershave
- Cover tattoos with long sleeves
- Remove facial piercings (one set of small earrings is fine)
- Remove chewing gum prior to interview

## Body Language:

- Shake hands firmly
- Smile
- Sit when you are offered a seat

- Use good posture, sit up straight
- Be attentive, nod or take notes
- Make eye contact but avoid staring
- Avoid negative behaviour (yawning, crossing your arms, checking your watch, looking at your feet etc.)
- Be composed (no fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping your feet)

## Responsiveness:

- Bring a copy of your CV, the application form and the job advert with you
- Bring a pad and pen to take notes if necessary
- Switch off your phone or set to silent (turn off vibrate as this can still be heard)
- Be on time (even better – be early)
- Use interviewer's title and surname (address as Mr/Ms)
- Refer to the job advert/job description when answering questions
- Show enthusiasm
- Speak clearly, using proper grammar
- Avoid slang, swear words and suggestive language
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Focus on your strengths
- Avoid interrupting the interviewer

## Attitude:

- Be respectful
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Be attentive
- Be knowledgeable about the company
- Use the interviewer's name
- Be professional and mature

## Closing the interview:

- Ask any questions about the organisation/job that you prepared prior to the interview
- Stand and shake hands
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time
- Emphasise your interest in the job
- Ask when a decision will be made

## Interview Checklist

There are a variety of ways you can describe yourself and your strengths. Try using the following:

### 'I am...'

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Skilled at...        | <input type="radio"/> Excellent at... |
| <input type="radio"/> A skilful...         | <input type="radio"/> Able to...      |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent in...      | <input type="radio"/> Very good at... |
| <input type="radio"/> Extremely good at... | <input type="radio"/> Talented at...  |
| <input type="radio"/> Familiar with...     | <input type="radio"/> Qualified to... |

Employers are looking for various qualities and characteristics in a potential employee. Use the following list of words to help you when describing yourself, whether in an application or at interview:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Able                | <input type="radio"/> Drive                 | <input type="radio"/> Keen              |
| <input type="radio"/> Accurate            | <input type="radio"/> Dynamic               | <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable     |
| <input type="radio"/> Adaptable           | <input type="radio"/> Educated              | <input type="radio"/> Leadership skills |
| <input type="radio"/> Alert               | <input type="radio"/> Effective             | <input type="radio"/> Loyal             |
| <input type="radio"/> Ambitious           | <input type="radio"/> Efficient             | <input type="radio"/> Mature            |
| <input type="radio"/> Analytical          | <input type="radio"/> Energetic             | <input type="radio"/> Methodical        |
| <input type="radio"/> Articulate          | <input type="radio"/> Enjoy a challenge     | <input type="radio"/> Objective         |
| <input type="radio"/> Assertive           | <input type="radio"/> Enthusiastic          | <input type="radio"/> Organised         |
| <input type="radio"/> Astute              | <input type="radio"/> Fast learner          | <input type="radio"/> Patient           |
| <input type="radio"/> Bright              | <input type="radio"/> Fast worker           | <input type="radio"/> Perceptive        |
| <input type="radio"/> Capable             | <input type="radio"/> Flexible              | <input type="radio"/> Persistent        |
| <input type="radio"/> Calm                | <input type="radio"/> Focused               | <input type="radio"/> Polite            |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident           | <input type="radio"/> Friendly              | <input type="radio"/> Positive          |
| <input type="radio"/> Committed           | <input type="radio"/> Good communicator     | <input type="radio"/> Practical         |
| <input type="radio"/> Common sense        | <input type="radio"/> Gifted                | <input type="radio"/> Pro active        |
| <input type="radio"/> Competent           | <input type="radio"/> Hardworking           | <input type="radio"/> Punctual          |
| <input type="radio"/> Computer literate   | <input type="radio"/> Helpful               | <input type="radio"/> Rational          |
| <input type="radio"/> Consistent          | <input type="radio"/> Highly motivated      | <input type="radio"/> Reliable          |
| <input type="radio"/> Cooperative         | <input type="radio"/> Honest                | <input type="radio"/> Resourceful       |
| <input type="radio"/> Cope under pressure | <input type="radio"/> Imaginative           | <input type="radio"/> Responsible       |
| <input type="radio"/> Creative            | <input type="radio"/> Impressive            | <input type="radio"/> Supportive        |
| <input type="radio"/> Decisive            | <input type="radio"/> Insightful            | <input type="radio"/> Tactful           |
| <input type="radio"/> Dedicated           | <input type="radio"/> Inter personal skills | <input type="radio"/> Team player       |
| <input type="radio"/> Dependable          | <input type="radio"/> Independent           | <input type="radio"/> Tenacious         |
| <input type="radio"/> Desire to succeed   | <input type="radio"/> Innovative            | <input type="radio"/> Thorough          |
| <input type="radio"/> Determined          | <input type="radio"/> Initiative            | <input type="radio"/> Trustworthy       |
| <input type="radio"/> Diplomatic          | <input type="radio"/> Intelligent           | <input type="radio"/> Versatile         |
| <input type="radio"/> Diverse             | <input type="radio"/> Intuitive             | <input type="radio"/> Willing           |





## What the shortlisters say...

"Good applicants have well written application forms where they have taken the time to give examples of their skills and have a good balance between academic achievement and enthusiasm for the job/industry that they are applying for"

**"When we shortlist, we do look to see if the applicant has the desired GCSE results that the employer is seeking. However, this isn't the only thing that we look at. If the applicant can demonstrate that they have taken the initiative to set up and undertake work experience to add to their skills then this is sometimes enough to get them through to interview"**

"Your application must be submitted on time and be free from errors. Weak applications are written in a hurry and are under-prepared."

**"Avoid poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is critical if you want to be taken seriously in your application. Ask someone else with a good eye for detail to proofread your application before you submit it"**

"Your application needs to sell you, be engaging, show your interest and enthusiasm and give an insight into your personality. Avoid humour though, this is still a professional document"

**"A busy shortlister is looking for a reason to reject you as much as to offer you a place. Don't give them an excuse to put you on the 'no' pile because of a poor application"**

"Your application needs to show that you have thought about why you are applying for the job."

**"Remember to tailor your application for the job that you are applying for"**

Interview Dress Code



# How to write a winning Apprenticeship application

## Final checklist:

### Before you submit make sure you...

- Check the closing date for applications to be submitted.
- Ask someone to read your application to check for spelling and grammar mistakes.
- Include some examples of your skills, not just a list of strengths.
- Check your application is relevant to the job advert and that you have used some of the 'buzzwords.'
- Save a copy of your application.
- Print off a copy of the job advert and your application.
- Check the location of the job that you have applied to.
- Check that you have answered all of the questions.

Find jobs on the move with the 'Av Search' app

