

Application Forms

Matching Yourself to the Role

Graduate applications are based on a matching process. Put simply, an employer will analyse their vacancy and decide which qualifications, aptitudes, personal qualities, skills and interests are required to do the job. Your objective is to clearly demonstrate to the recruiter that you match their requirements by providing specific and relevant evidence of what they are looking for!!

You will often find out what the recruiter is looking for by reading the job description and person specification details in the advert.

However, these criteria are not always explicit and so you will need to do a bit of research to find out what the role might involve.

Remember, you can always get help from your Careers Adviser to help you gain more insight into both the job role and the company.



Do This First!

1. 'Grab' the questions that are on the online application form (if possible) and copy them into a word processing package (e.g. MS Word).
2. Go through the questions carefully and produce your 'draft' answers.
3. Make an appointment with your Careers Adviser to discuss and review your draft answers. Appointments can be made at: www1.hw.ac.uk/careers/
4. Make adjustments/amendments and get them checked until you are happy that you have answered all the questions to the best of your ability.
5. Copy your 'final version' answers into the online form and submit your application!

IMPORTANT!

Completing an application form to an acceptable standard will involve a significant time commitment!!

Analysing the Questions!

So that you can demonstrate to the employer that you are an ideal candidate for the role, you need to carefully analyse exactly what it is they are looking for in each of the questions.

Below are examples of typical question types that are used in application forms - complete with hints and tips on how to deal with them.

For each question type, it's a good idea to always ask yourself:

1. Why are they asking me this?
2. What do they really want to know?.
3. What's the best example I can think of that gives them what they want!

Questions About Your Career Motivation

E.G Why do you want to join this company? What has attracted you to this role?

Employers ask these questions to be certain that you have done your research and have made a positive and informed decision to join them in the role you are applying for.

They are looking for evidence that you have thought carefully about your career and are able to explain why this particular company is the one that stands out for you and what you can offer them.

You might want to include some of the following as evidence:

- When thinking about your career/company choice, what was important to you?
- What research did you do to investigate the job/company that matched your strengths/interests?
- What specifically was it about this company/role that made you feel that this is the right choice for you?
- What you can offer them in terms of your strengths, skills, experience, subject knowledge and personal qualities?

Questions About Your Experience

E.G. Please provide details of any work experience/volunteering/project work etc.

Employers ask these questions to find out what impact you have made on any work related activities you have taken part in.

They are looking for evidence that you have used your skills and personal qualities to add value to the organisation you were working for.

You might want to include some of the following as evidence, as and when applicable:

- Examples of your main contributions
- Examples of how you dealt with problems effectively
- Examples of contributing to team efforts
- Examples of taking on responsibilities
- Examples of successes that you have had
- Examples of promotions
- Examples of using applying relevant degree subject knowledge

Questions About Your Skills, Strengths and Competencies

E.G. Give an example of a time when you...solved a problem/made improvements/motivated a team etc.

Employers ask these questions to get evidence of how well you have already demonstrated the skills that are essential to do the job you are applying for.

They are looking for detailed, specific evidence that you have successfully utilised your skills to ensure a positive outcome.

You might want to include some of the following as evidence:

- Use examples of activities that show you performing at your absolute best!
- Use examples from university, work, volunteering, extra curricular activities etc.
- Focus on WHAT you did and WHY you did it that way
- Emphasise the skill in question in the process of you coming to a successful resolution

Questions About The Business Area/Sector

E.G. Which company would make an ideal client for us? Describe a controversial issue in our sector?

Employers ask these questions to determine your real understanding of the sector they operate in.

They are looking for evidence that you keep up to date with developments in their sector and that you are aware of issues that might have an impact on them or their clients/customers.

You might want to include some of the following as evidence:

- Demonstrate you know how businesses operate in the sector
- Demonstrate you know who the main organisations are - and which organisations are growing/reducing in importance
- As a general rule, show that you know how the company makes it's money!!

Additional Information/Personal Statement

E.G. Please supply any additional information that might support your application?

Employers often add this section to allow you to add information that you have not been able to include elsewhere.

They are looking for evidence of your skills, drive, determination, and knowledge that they have not been able to get from the set questions.

This is your chance to:

- Fill in any 'blanks' that you feel will add value to your existing answers
- Emphasise personal qualities such as enthusiasm, determination, self drive, ambition etc
- Reiterate your genuine desire to develop your career with that company

REMEMBER!

Completing an application form to an acceptable standard will involve a significant time commitment

Before You Submit Your Application - Final Checklist

• I have followed all the instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have checked my answers for any spelling/grammar errors	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have had my answers checked over by my Careers Adviser	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have not left any questions/sections unanswered	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I've understood what the employer is looking for in each question	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have used my best examples as a basis for my answers	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My answers are mostly close to, but not over, any word limits	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have shown my knowledge and understanding of the role, company and industry sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My motivation and enthusiasm for the position is clear throughout my application	<input type="checkbox"/>



www.facebook.com/HWCareers



[@HWUCareers](https://twitter.com/HWUCareers)