

How to write a good application

When you apply for an apprenticeship at North Somerset Council, you are applying for a job and will go through a competitive recruitment process. This guide gives you some hints and tips on how to write a good application.

Every three months we hold assessment days to create a Talent Pool of potential apprentices. Those who are successful are matched to appropriate vacancies when they arise.

You can find out when assessment days are being held on our website www.n-somerset.gov.uk/jobs. Enter 'apprentice' into the search box. You will need to create a user name and password. Once you have done that, you can start completing the online application process.

Have you got any tips for writing a good application form?

Before you fill in the different sections of the application form, read the job description and person specification carefully.

When you fill in the different sections of the application, make sure you give all the information it asks for.

The most important part of the form is where it asks for "Relevant Experience". When you complete this section, it is really important that you make sure you explain and **prove** that you meet the criteria in the **person specification**.

This is the person specification for an apprenticeship:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		GUIDANCE: WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW
QUALIFICATIONS	5 GCSEs or equivalent, including Maths and English, grade A-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us about your GCSE qualifications and the grades you have achieved.
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: ICT	Experience in using ICT including Microsoft word-processing, database, and spreadsheets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us about the experience you have in using ICT • Tell us if you have a recognised IT qualification
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: TEAM WORKING	Experience of working flexibly and within a team setting, either in an educational, social or work context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us about your experience of working or being in a team. • Tell us about the role you took in the team. • What went well? • What difficulties did you have to overcome and how did you overcome them?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there anything you would have done differently?</i>
JOB RELATED SKILLS: TIME MANAGEMENT	<p>Able to use own initiative. Able to prioritise tasks and organise time effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Give examples of times when you have had to use your own initiative, how you are able to prioritise tasks and how you organise your time effectively.</i>
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: CUSTOMER SERVICE	<p>Able to demonstrate customer service skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tell us what you understand about customer service</i> • <i>Give an example of a time when you used customer service skills</i> • <i>Tell us about a time you have had to deal with a difficult person.</i> • <i>How did you resolve the situation?</i>
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: COMMUNICATION SKILLS	<p>Effective communication and interpersonal skills. Able to give information in an appropriate way, listen to and show respect for others, speak and write clearly, avoiding jargon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Give examples of how you communicate with other people: on the phone, face-to-face and in writing</i>
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: RESULTS ORIENTED	<p>Able to pay attention to detail, achieve consistent standards and help others to do the same</p> <p>Able to work independently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Give examples of anything you have done that demonstrates you have paid attention to detail, achieved consistent standards and helped others to do the same</i> • <i>Tell us about times you have worked independently</i>
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: PROBLEM SOLVING	<p>Able to identify a problem, define it, examine the options to solve it, act on a plan and review the consequence of your actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe a difficult problem that you have solved. State how you decided what the critical issues were, say what you did and what your solution was. What other approaches could you have taken?</i>
JOB-RELATED SKILLS: ANALYTICAL SKILLS	<p>Able to analyse situations</p> <p>Able to analyse data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Give an example of a problem you have solved that required analysis. What methods did you use and what conclusions did you reach?</i> • <i>Describe a situation in which you analysed data and solved a complex problem</i>
SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE	<p>A basic understanding of the range of services provided by the public sector in North Somerset Council, and its commitment to Equal Opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tell us what you know about our service and about our commitment to equal opportunities.</i>
SPECIAL WORKING CONDITIONS	<p>Some work undertaken within teams is of a confidential nature. The post holder must at all times maintain confidentiality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tell us what you understand is meant by confidentiality?</i> • <i>Why do you think confidentiality is so important?</i> • <i>What do you think the consequences are of breaching confidentiality?</i>

OTHER	A commitment to personal development and willingness to engage in training opportunities	
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Use each of the criteria categories as a sub heading for your text.

Remember, you need to tell us **how** you have gained your skills and experience. It's not enough to say you have it.

Here are some examples of what *not* to say:

"I have experience using IT"

"I am a good communicator"

Think about your transferable skills. If there is a skill in the person specification you think you do not have, try to think about something that is similar. You can use examples from school, college and work to playing in sports teams, voluntary and charity work – in fact anything that shows you have the skills and experience in the person specification.

Do some research. For example, the person specification asks you if you have a basic understanding of the range of services provided by the public sector in North Somerset Council, and its commitment to Equal Opportunities. Don't just say yes! Look at the website and give an overview of the services the council provides. Do the same to find out about its commitment to equal opportunities and say what it is.

Use any experience you have to show how you meet the criteria.

How do we select people to attend an assessment day?

When we look at someone's application, we make a note of whether you show that you meet each of the criteria that is listed in the person specification. If you do, you get a tick in the box – the more ticks you get; the more likely it is that you will be invited to an assessment day.

Good luck with your application!