# Applying On-Line

More and more employers use the online application process to help them find the right person for the job. So, it's likely that you'll have to apply online for some job openings that interest you.

Like many students, you may be worried that an online application makes you "one of a million" instead of "one in a million" and that your particular skills and unique talents will get lost when you click "send" and your application gets swallowed up by cyberspace. That doesn't have to be the case: In fact, employers say there are lots of things you can do to ensure your application gets the attention it deserves. In a recent survey, employers offered the following advice for how to make an electronic application outstanding:

- Follow directions. Be careful to enter the correct data in the correct field.
- Tailor your application information to the position. Don't copy and paste text from your generic resume.
- Complete all fields—even those that aren't required.
- If the company offers an optional assessment test online, take it.
- In some cases, you may be asked to attach your resume to or paste it into the application. Make sure your resume can hold its own in a very simple format: Fancy bullets, text, italics, and bold do not convert well in an electronic application. (Many employers scan paper resumes into their applicant systems. As a result, even if you aren't required to apply online, there's a good chance that your information will end up in the same place as if you had, so keeping your resume format simple is good advice regardless of whether or not you're applying online.)
- Spell check and grammar check your application before submitting it. Have an error-free application because this application serves as the employer's first impression of you.

You might also follow-up your electronic application with a personal e-mail to the recruiter. A follow-up phone call is acceptable if the job posting or ad does not say, "No phone calls."
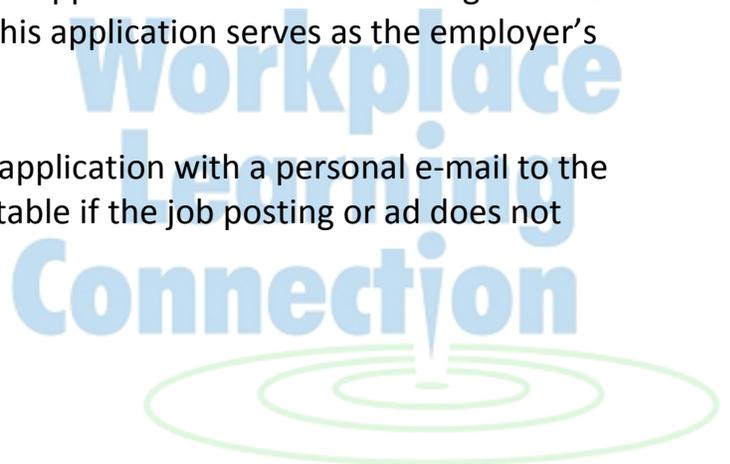
Applications

Most employers will require you to complete an application form in order to apply for the job. Some may send them to you or post them on their website but most will have you complete it in their offices before you are interviewed.

Most applications are similar and require basically the same information you would include on a resume. It is important to fill in the form honestly, without exaggeration or understatement. Employers will check the reliability of the information gained through the Application Form before offering you the job.

When completing an application take your time and read through the whole application before you begin to fill it out. If there is a question you don't understand or are unsure of ask someone to explain.

Tips for Filling Out an Application

- Try to obtain two (2) copies (one can be used as a rough copy).
- Read and follow the instructions carefully.
- Always use black or blue ink .
- Print all your answers clearly.
- Provide all information requested.
- Use your resume to help you fill in the form, but do NOT write "See Resume" in any of the blanks. Take the time to re-write whatever information they are seeking on the application.
- When a question does not apply, write "Not Applicable or N/A"- do not leave it blank.
- Keep the rough copy for your files.

Writing Your First Resume

The goal of your resume is to generate interest and interviews. It doesn't have to get you a job and it doesn't need to cover your life history. It simply has to pique the interest of the reader and answer the only question he cares about: will this candidate add value to my company?

Many students and recent graduates worry that they don't have enough experience to create a compelling resume. Don't be concerned. Once you start to really think about your background, you'll be surprised at what you have to boast about. The content of your resume will be determined by your own unique experiences, skills and background but - as a general guideline - you should include:

- Positive personal characteristics
- Technical and computer skills
- Coursework relevant to your desired profession
- Educational accomplishments (include your GPA if it's over 3.0)
- Skills and experience gained during internships or summer jobs
- Other related accomplishments (design awards, recognition, winning competitions, etc.)
- Work History (include unpaid work if it relates to your target positions)

The key is to emphasize those things that demonstrate your value and to leave out those things that don't. For example, if you are looking to work in Information Systems, your ability to program in C++ will be important - but the fact that you have won awards for water skiing won't! Don't include hobbies unless they directly relate to your goal.

Cover Letters

When applying for a job a cover letter should be sent with your resume. Your cover letter should be specific to the position you are applying for, relating your skills and experience to those noted in the job posting. Your cover letter is your first (and best) chance to make a good impression!

An effective cover letter should explain the reasons for your interest in the organization and in the job you are applying for. Take the time to review cover letter examples, then make sure that your letter explains how your skills relate to the criteria listed in the job posting.

A cover letter has three general sections. The first section should create interest and explain why you are writing. It should state the type of position you are applying for, as well as how you heard about the company. Also in your first paragraph, refer to your enclosed or attached resume.

The second part or paragraph should explain your interest in this type of position. You should relate your qualifications to the job opening, and use action verbs to describe your experience. This should be brief. Be specific in what you have to offer the company.

The third part is the closing paragraph. Here you request action, such as an appointment, an interview, or some other definite action. Make this action easy for the reader to take by listing the best time to call you, the best number to reach you on, and/or your email address to contact you electronically. Close by restating your interest in the company.

The following are general guidelines to follow in writing your cover letter. You should follow a format for your cover letter even if you are emailing it, since many managers will print it out.:
- Whenever possible, address the letter to an individual
- Use a block style business letter with one inch side margins
- Use the same font and type size as used for your resume

1234 Hire Me Drive
Anytown, USA 12345

Date

E. M. Ployment
Director of Recruiting
CompanyCo
567 E. Opportunity Way
Jobsville, USA 34567

Dear Mr. Ployment:

I am responding to the employment opportunity listed on your Web site. Please accept this letter and accompanying resume as evidence of my interest in applying for the (position title) at (company name).

I have the following experience (add experience here) which makes me uniquely qualified for this position.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how my skills would meet the needs of your company. Attached is my resume for your consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature
Your Full Name Typed Out