Online Applications Form – Some basic rules and Information.

Today more than ever companies are using online application forms. A shift from the traditional 'send-a-CV-and-Cover-Letter' approach. These application forms take anywhere between 60-120 minutes to complete. With different sections having 4-5 questions each.

General application form structure:

- Personal details
- Education details
- Employment history
- Competency based questions
- Reasons for applying
- Activities and Interests
- References

Personal Details - this section is the easiest to fill out and as its name suggests only requires personal information such as name, age range, etc.

Education Details - in this section you are asked to enter your education history along with grades. In some cases, you might be asked to give detailed information of your University modules with grades. Remember if there are gaps in your education, don;t try to cover it up, you will be given a chance to explain these gaps in later stages. Or you can call the HR and explain before proceeding further on the application.

Employment History - this section requires you to fill in your work experience or employment history. It can include part-time job, internships, industrial placements, year in industry. You cannot enter voluntary work and position of responsibilities (i.e. team captain, university project manager) as employment history. Although your references can come from any of the mentioned sources. If you have had too many jobs, it is best to use the most relevant one. Usually there is a word limit of 200-300 words in which you have to fit your answer.

Best practice to answer employment history questions in description is to use the format

- what was the job...
- job responsibility...
- skills gained from the job...

Competency Based Questions - this section is generally accepted to be the most difficult and time consuming section. It requires you to answer specific questions about events you might have encountered in the past. These are the same for every

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applicant within that graduate scheme application. Again the word limit ranges from 200-300 words.

An example question - *Give an example of a time when you were managing a team. How did you manage it and what was the result?*

OR

Tell me about a time when you failed to complete a task or project on time, despite intending to do so?

The above question is an example from wikijob.co.uk and different ways to answer the question is given on their page here.

Best practice to answer questions in competency section is to follow the **STAR** technique of answering

- **Situation:** describe the situation
- **Task:** what was the task at hand for you
- **Action:** what planning / action did you undertake
- **Result:** conclude with what was the direct result of your involvement (good or bad)

Reasons for applying - this section is like a mini cover letter. You have to give reasons of why are you interested in the job, or that particular scheme. This section again has word limits hence you need to chose your words wisely. You need to go through the employers website and use forums online to search for past-experiences from students who applied to the employer. wikijob.co.uk andthestudentroom.co.uk are good resources for such research.

Activities and Interests - in this section you can list out your interests and other activities. It may include giving details about your voluntary work or positions of responsibility. Again if there are too many choices it is good practice to list out the most relevant one's to the job.

References - you know all about this section. It is the same standard as the one on your CV. You simply give them details of your referees.

Review your form after completion

It is good practice to read and review your form once completed for any spelling mistake or grammatical error. Don't make the famous mistake of writing '*carrier*' instead of '*career*'. Remember the fact that some companies have a three strike rule with spelling mistakes i.e. three spelling mistakes and your application is rejected at that point itself without even reading your credentials.

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