

BENEFITS OF CITB APPRENTICESHIPS

Construction apprenticeship application support





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Introduction

This booklet has been designed to help you start a career in the construction and built environment industry. It starts with an overview of the industry and key things you'll need to think about when making choices about your future career.



For further information and guidance, visit these websites:

citb.co.uk/bconstructive

citb.co.uk/careers

goconstruct.org/careers

This booklet will help prepare you for a career in the construction industry, and looks at all stages of the job application process – from finding a vacancy, through to job interviews and what your next steps should be.

Each topic gives some good examples for you to follow, and in Appendix 2 you'll find a list of useful websites for you to continue your research and job hunting.

Your local CITB Apprenticeship Officer is available to help you with your next steps. You can make a note of their details in the table below.

My CITB Apprenticeship Officer is:

Phone number:

Good luck!

Career Opportunities in the Construction & Built Environment Industry

The construction industry employs around **three million people - over 8%** of the UK workforce - so anyone choosing a construction career will be joining one of Britain's largest, most exciting and rewarding industries.

CITB Apprenticeships is **the largest provider of construction apprenticeships** in the UK. We have a national network of providers that have successfully trained construction industry apprentices for over 50 years.

Skills and Opportunities

The wide variety of skills required by the construction industry means there is an interesting range of career opportunities available. You could be working in the office or outdoors, but both will mean you are working in an environment which is always changing.

A career in the construction industry may be of interest to anyone who is considering:

- **Using practical craft skills** - e.g. carpenter and joiner, demolition operative, floor layer, painter
- **Design and Management** - e.g. architect, building surveyor, civil engineer, facilities manager, landscape architect, project manager, quantity surveyor, structural engineer, town planner
- **Technical Support roles** - e.g. architectural technician, buyer, CAD operative, estimator, site engineer

With such a variety of different skills involved, the construction industry needs people from different backgrounds with different experiences and abilities.

Whatever your starting point, there is a career for you in construction.

What does a future in Construction hold for you?

As long as you are determined and work hard, there is plenty of opportunity to move up the career ladder in the construction industry and develop your skills and knowledge. You will also have the opportunity to learn on the job, with a massive range of training available at all levels.

Your career path is likely to be varied and may well change as you begin to specialise. More than a third of people working in the construction industry are their own boss, so you could even end up running your own business.

With the worldwide challenge to reduce carbon emissions, now is a particularly exciting time to start a career in construction. New processes are being introduced to ensure the industry becomes more sustainable, which means skills need to be adapted.

Looking for Employment

Where to start

Jobs within the construction industry may be advertised in local papers or via websites, but equally as often, vacancies are found out through word of mouth, and some are not advertised at all. This is why you need to be pro-active with your research and applications to make sure that you not only respond to the advertised vacancies, but are constantly seeking out potential employment opportunities through your own contacts.

The first tip in this section relate only to apprenticeships.

1

Register with CITB - www.citb.co.uk/bconstructive

By registering on the bConstructive website, you will be able to search for current vacancies for your preferred work location. Not only that but CITB works with thousands of employers across the UK and will contact individuals who have registered on bConstructive when they are aware of future vacancies, often before they are advertised.

2

Apply directly to construction companies

Write or email construction companies in your area. How to write a speculative letter/email is covered later in this booklet.

3

Family & Friends

As a large number of vacancies are heard of through word of mouth, make sure that your family and friends know that you are actively seeking employment in the construction industry, they may be able to give you some useful contacts.

4

Local papers and job websites

The job pages in local papers should be checked every week and many papers also advertise vacancies on their websites. In addition, specialist recruitment websites such as CareerMap, Careerbuilder and JobSearch should be checked regularly. (See appendix for useful websites.)

5

Trade Magazines

Advertisements for specialised jobs appear in the appropriate trade magazine, it's always worth a look.

6

Builders Merchants

Some builders' merchants may have a notice board where you can advertise your expression of interest for work. They may also be able to put you in contact with their customers that they know are looking to recruit.



CITB offer an Experience Construction Programme for work experience. Some employers may be eligible for **£200** if you complete a 2 week placement with them. Speak to your CITB Apprenticeship Officer for more information.

Work Experience

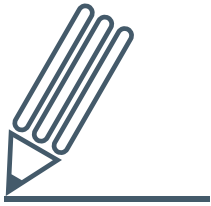
Applying for a full time job or apprenticeship without any work experience is possible, but if you have some work experience on your CV, it could increase the chances of being offered an interview. Work experience gives you an opportunity to try your chosen career so that you know you are making the right decision, you may also get a good reference from it. It shows potential employers that you have tried out your career and are still committed to it.

Work experience is a period of unpaid work, usually lasting from two weeks to two months, and can be done either one or two days a week, or full time. Some employers will be more willing to offer work experience than others. They need to have employers liability insurance and public liability insurance and therefore sole traders (one man bands), may not be able to offer you a placement.

Ask your friends, family and any contacts you have about work experience. You can also contact your CITB Apprenticeship Officer who may know some employers who are looking to take on an apprentice and who use work experience to assess whether an individual would be suitable for the job.

When applying for work experience, you still need to be prepared to write a covering letter and CV. You can use the guides below to help with this, just tailor the letter to work experience rather than a full time permanent position.

Applying for Jobs



How to write a CV

A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is often your first opportunity to impress a potential employer, so it is important to get it right.

Once you have decided that a career in Construction and the Built Environment is the right choice for you, use our CV writing tips to stand out from the rest and increase your chances of an interview.

A CV is about advertising yourself and your skills to a prospective employer. It is all about making you sound interesting and attractive as a potential apprentice/employee, or for a work experience placement.

Some employers will ask for a CV. Others may have a standard application form which they will ask you to complete, so always check the job advert details to make sure you apply correctly.

How your CV should look

Your CV needs to look professional. Always type it on a computer using a simple font such as Times New Roman or Arial. If you do not have a computer at home, you could see if you can use one at school, in a library or in a careers centre instead. Print it out in black ink.

Give each section a clear heading in bold type and use bullet points to make it easier for people to find key information.

Be concise - Employers read lots of CVs and will want to assess your skills and experience quickly. Try to keep your CV to no more than two sides of A4

Don't waste all your effort by sending a CV with spelling mistakes in it. Always double check it and ask someone else to read it through before you send it.

What you should write in your CV



Contact details

Write your name and full contact details clearly at the top. You do not need to include your date of birth or a photo.



Summary statement

Summarise some key points about yourself in a couple of sentences at the top of your CV, including relevant experience/skills and what you want to achieve.

Using words like 'motivated' can catch an employer's attention and can give them a quick idea about your personality and ambitions. For example, 'I am a motivated individual who always ensures attention to detail while working to clear deadlines.'



The right order

Include your most recent experience and qualifications/training at the top of each section.

Work down to older information in each section - You can include less detail for this. For example, If you have just got your A-level/Higher results, list the subjects and your grades. However for your GCSEs, you could just mention how many you got.



Interests and hobbies

Keep this area short and try to adapt it to the specific role you are applying to. For example, if you would like to become a Construction Manager, saying that you are the captain of a local football team demonstrates your ability to lead a team and communication skills.



References

Avoid putting your referees' details on your CV - Just write at the bottom that 'references can be provided on request.' If an employer does want to offer you a role, you can give them the names of your referees to double-check your background at that stage.



Be honest

Don't be tempted to exaggerate your grades, achievements or experience on your CV. You must be prepared to talk in detail about everything you put on it at an interview. Employers will quickly see if you have written things on your CV that aren't quite true.

Have a look at the example CV on the next page:

Curriculum Vitae (Example)

Rosie Green

29 High Street, East Thorpe, Eastshire, EA10 1PJ

Tel: (01234) 567890

Email: rosie@emailaddress.com

Personal Profile

I am an enthusiastic and hardworking individual, looking to secure my first choice of an apprenticeship and subsequently a career in painting and decorating. I am able to understand instructions quickly and complete tasks to a high standard. I am passionate about delivering high quality customer service and always aim to exceed expectations.

Qualifications & Education

	Qualifications (GCSE's)	Grades (Predicted)
East Thorpe Community College (2009 – 2014)	English Language	D
	English Literature	D
	Maths	D
	History	D
	Art	C
	French	C
	Science	C
	Product Design	C

Work Experience

Fry's Bakers 2011 – to date.

Saturday Assistant

Starting at 6am every Saturday, the responsibilities of this work include; ensuring the cleanliness of the bakery to meet with strict health & safety standards; dealing with customers including handling cash and credit card payments; monitoring stock levels and placing orders for Monday trading; and changing window displays. I enjoy the responsibilities of this role as I have earned the trust of my employer who leaves me to manage the bakery on my own when it's quiet, and allows me to design and change the window displays. I have learnt the importance of providing excellent customer service in a busy environment.

P&S Painters & Decorators 2011

For my school work experience week I worked with this company to redecorate a domestic property after flood damage. This involved stripping back existing wallcoverings, priming the walls, and then hanging lining and a patterned paper. We also had to undercoat, prime and gloss paint all the new skirting, door frames and doors in the property. I was involved in every process and enjoyed the precision needed to make sure that the paper was lined up correctly, and calculating how many rolls of paper we needed to complete the job. I learned that you need to be able to work in some confined spaces and how to remove radiators from walls. Since my work experience I have redecorated my room at home and am currently helping to redecorate the dining room.

Hobbies and Interests

I have always been interested in Art & Design and visit the Ideal Home's Exhibition every year to get ideas and keep up to date with the latest trends. I volunteer every year to help with set design for our school Christmas productions, and even though I am due to finish school this summer the school have asked me to continue to do this.

References Available Upon Request



Covering letters and emails

Employers receive a lot of applications and CVs, so a well-written cover letter or email can be key in getting an employer to read your CV.

A cover letter is your chance to show how you match the criteria for the job or training opportunity.

Using the following tips for your cover letter will help to make sure your application gets noticed:



Make sure you know what the role involves before you write your letter. This might mean researching it on the internet or telephoning the company to ask for more information.



Make sure your letter is concise – no more than one side of A4 and laid out neatly. Do show you are enthusiastic and keen to learn but avoid being funny, cheeky or sarcastic.



Address your letter to a specific person wherever possible but avoid being over-familiar. If you have used a person's name, you should end the letter 'Yours sincerely.' Alternatively, if you have used 'Dear Sir or Madam,' finish your letter with 'Yours faithfully.'



Clearly explain which role/job/apprenticeship you are applying for and where you heard about it.



Summarise in around 2 - 3 short paragraphs why you think you are suitable for the role. List any key relevant skills and experience and give clear examples to show how you have demonstrated this. Always refer to the role description/job advert and make sure you cover all the skills they mention.



Explain what you could offer to the role and why you are interested in the company.



Always check the spelling and grammar in your letter. It is a good idea to ask someone else to read through it as well just to make sure it's correct before you send it.

Here's an example of an advertised vacancy from the National Apprenticeship Vacancy website:

Apprentice Painter & Decorator Required – Dot & Dab Painters

Painting & Decorating is more involved than decorating a room in a house. The role could vary from working on oil rigs or bridges applying heavy-duty coatings, to working in newbuild homes or grand hotels skilfully applying ornate decorations. As you would expect, you will need good practical ability to succeed in this role. Most of the work is carried out indoors, but you should be prepared to work outside and travel to different sites. Work can also range from large jobs to very intricate projects. Day release to college once a week is a requirement of this apprenticeship and applicants will be expected to ensure that college work is completed alongside their work activities.

Dot & Dab Painters is a leading property maintenance and refurbishment company. It carries out work in the social housing, education, healthcare, retail, commercial & industrial sectors.

To apply send or email a covering letter and your CV to:
Mrs D Jenkins, HR Manager, Dot & Dab Painters,
12 Ashfield Road, Anytown, BE7 QUZ, d.jenkins@dotanddab.co.uk .

Applications close on 25th August.

An email reply might look like this:

To: d.jenkins@dotanddab.co.uk

Subject: Apprentice Painter & Decorator Vacancy

Dear Mrs Jenkins

Please accept this email as my application for the painter and decorator vacancy advertised on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy website.

As you will see from my CV, I have recently completed full-time education and am now looking to make the first step on my career path. I have always been interested in painting & decorating and have helped with decorating jobs for my family which has included wallpapering and gloss paintwork. I have applied for a full time college course in painting and decorating to start in September but would be very eager to transfer to a day release course if I was successful in my application to your company. I am a hard worker and would make sure that college work was completed alongside my apprenticeship.

For work experience I spent a week working for a general builder which involved travelling to different sites and working both inside and outdoors. I enjoyed the variety of working with different people and in different places. I am very practical and my best subject at school was design technology where I had to design and make some detailed items such as headphone carriers and a table with inlaid design.

I have attached a copy of my CV and would be very willing to attend an interview to discuss my application.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
James Jones

A covering letter is not that different, but you need to know how to set one out properly. Here's an example for the same vacancy:

34 Parkfield Mews
Long Road
Anytown
BE7 XYZ
1st August 2017

Mrs D Jenkins
HR Manager
Dot & Dab Painters
12 Ashfield Road
Anytown
BE7 QUZ

Dear Mrs Jenkins

Ref: Apprentice Painter & Decorator Vacancy

Please accept this letter as my application for the painter and decorator vacancy advertised on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy website.

As you will see from my CV, I have recently completed full-time education and am now looking to make the first step on my career path. I have always been interested in painting & decorating and have helped with decorating jobs for my family which has included wallpapering and gloss paintwork. I have applied for a full time college course in painting and decorating to start in September but would be very eager to transfer to a day release course if I was successful in my application to your company. I am a hard worker and would make sure that college work was completed alongside my apprenticeship.

For work experience I spent a week working for a general builder which involved travelling to different sites and working both inside and outdoors. I enjoyed the variety of working with different people and in different places. I am very practical and my best subject at school was design technology where I had to design and make some detailed items such as headphone carriers and a table with inlaid design. I have enclosed a copy of my CV and would be very willing to attend an interview to discuss my application.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



James Jones

Enc: CV

How to complete an application form

Some companies will not ask for a covering letter or a CV but will instead have a standard application form for everyone to complete. Use the tips below to make sure you get it right.

Application forms are a way of finding out how suitable you are for a job, apprenticeship, course or scholarship and whether you should be invited to an interview. They can sometimes be completed online but may also be in paper form. Each application form will be slightly different but most will ask for similar information.

Use the guide below to make sure you cover what is needed.



Personal details

This includes your name, address, telephone number and email address. You may be asked to provide your National Insurance Number.



Education and employment history

Include your most recent experience and qualifications/training at the top of each section. Work down to older information in each section - you can include less detail for these.

All application forms will ask for your previous employers, job title and how long you were there. If you have not yet had a permanent job, you could include part-time work e.g. weekend work and work experience placements.



Skills-related questions

Application forms often have questions about skills, including specific questions on skills that the employer is looking for e.g. 'Give an example of a time when you had to use clear communication skills to achieve your goal.'

Read the question carefully and think of a few examples of things you have done where you have clearly demonstrated these skills. For example, for the question above you could write about a presentation you delivered at school.

Never be tempted to make an answer up as employers may ask you for more information at an interview.



Personal statements

Application forms often ask you to complete a personal statement to show how your skills and experience match the role. These can be a bit trickier than the skills-related questions, but you can often get a good clue about what the employer is looking for by reading the description of the role. Look for phrases such as 'good communication skills needed' and 'must be IT literate.'

Summarise in around 5-6 paragraphs why you think you are suitable for the role. List any key relevant skills and experience and give clear examples to show how you have demonstrated this such as weekend work and work experience placements. Always refer to the role description to help you work out what is appropriate.



References

Most employers will ask for references at some stage of an application. This should be someone that will write a positive statement about you, for example a previous employer or a teacher from your secondary school. A referee should never be a family member or someone who is just a friend. When you are asked to provide details for a referee, always check that the person is happy for their details to be included before you send your application.



Keep a copy

Always save a copy of your application form so you can read through it if you are invited to an interview. In an interview you will almost certainly be asked for more information about some of your answers.



Always meet the deadline

Always make sure you send your application in before the deadline so your hard work is not wasted. Punctuality is a key skill which employers are looking for, so it does not impress them when an application form arrives late and they may not even look at it.

Check you have included everything that is needed – sometimes employers ask for a CV or other information as well.

Task: Complete the following application form:

You can choose a vacancy from the National Apprenticeship Vacancy website, or use the examples from pages 12 and 14 of this booklet.

Sample Application Form.

Title:		Address:	
First Name:			
Last Name:			
NI Number:			
Tel no:			
Mobile no:			
Email:		Postcode:	
Position Applied For:			
Employment History:			
Dates (from and to)	Employer Name and Address	Job Title & Key Responsibilities	Reason for leaving
Education:			
Dates (from and to)	Educational Establishment Name & Address	Qualifications gained	
Personal Statement			
Please provide a statement of no more than 500 words on why you are applying for this role.			
References			
Please provide the details of two individuals we can contact for a reference. One must be your current or most recent employer			
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Postcode:		Postcode:	
Tel:		Tel:	
Email:		Email:	
Relationship to Applicant:		Relationship to Applicant:	

Application forms may also ask for additional personal data and ask you to sign a declaration:

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

Please state your nationality:

Do you have a valid Permit or Visa allowing you to work in the UK? Yes/No/Not Applicable

If you have answered YES or NO, please provide details:

Criminal Offences

You are required to answer either Section A or B

Disclosure of a criminal offence does not automatically exclude applications from consideration. Minor traffic offences resulting in fixed penalty fines need not be disclosed.

Section A: If you are applying for a vacancy that requires an Enhanced Disclosure:

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? Yes/No

Do you have any criminal charges or summonses pending against you? Yes/No

If you have answered YES to either of the questions above, please provide detail of the type, sentence or fine imposed.

Section B: If you are applying for a vacancy that does not require an Enhanced Disclosure:

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence that is not SPENT as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act? Yes/No

Do you have any criminal charges or summonses pending against you? Yes/No

If you have answered YES to either of the questions above, please provide detail of the type, sentence or fine imposed.

Convictions that are SPENT, as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, need not be disclosed.

Disabilities

Do you consider yourself to have a disability, as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act, which would alter the way in which you carry out your normal day to day activities? Yes/No

If yes, please give details and indicate whether you would need any help / special equipment to carry out the duties outlined.

Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained within this application is true and correct. I appreciate that if it is found that I have deliberately given false or misleading information, I will, if appointed be dismissed without notice.

I understand and consent to the data contained in this application being held and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signed:

Date:



How to apply by phone

Watsons Limited have a vacancy for a Brickwork Apprentice

40 hours per week (includes 1 day at college), must be capable of working as part of a team and willing to work in all weathers. Own transport not required but ability to get to main depot in Anytown on time each morning essential.

Telephone in the first instance Mrs J Ambrose on 0987 654321

Some advertisements are very brief and don't give much detail. Remember to do some research and try and find out more about the company. This type of advertisement asks you to "telephone in the first instance." The telephone is the fastest means of communicating with an employer. Learning how to use the telephone correctly could help you to get an interview.

1

Before you make the call know: -

- Where you are ringing, get the number right!
- Who you want to speak to?
- What you are going to say?

2

Be organised, this is your chance to make your first impression, be prepared and confident:

- Write the person's name on a notepad
- Have the notepad and pen ready
- Make a list of things to ask
- If you are using a mobile phone, make sure you have plenty of credit and a good signal

3

Make the call, make sure there are no loud background noises, e.g. music, loud voices

- Speak confidently and clearly, don't mumble
- Listen to the person and answer their questions concisely, but not abruptly
- If you don't understand what you are asked, ask them to repeat the question, this will give you time to think.

If you still don't understand then be honest and they are likely to re-phrase the question

- If the person you want to speak to is not available when you telephone, ask when they will be there so that you can ring back; don't leave it up to them to make contact with you.
- Never eat, drink or smoke whilst making the call.

The telephone call to apply for the bricklayer's vacancy might go something like this:

Watsons	"Good morning, Watsons Builders"
Applicant	"Good morning, can I speak to Mrs Ambrose please?"
Mrs Ambrose	"Mrs Ambrose speaking, how can I help you?"
Applicant	"Good morning, my name is Jo Smith and I'm interested in applying for the apprentice bricklayers job you have advertised"
Mrs Ambrose	"Hello Jo, tell me a little about yourself and why you are interested in the job?"
Applicant	"I'm just coming to the end of year 11 and I've been looking for a bricklaying apprenticeship. I had a week's work experience in year 10 with a general builder and really enjoyed it, he was really pleased with me and I got a great report. I'm used to working in a team as I've played for the local rugby team for 4 years and I live a short walk away from your depot so getting to you every morning wouldn't be a problem. I've been accepted for a full time bricklaying course at college but they have said if I can get an employer they'd be happy to put me on the apprenticeship course."
Mrs Ambrose	"Thanks Jo, have you got an up to date CV and some people we could contact for references?"
Applicant	"Yes"
Mrs Ambrose	"OK, well if you can post those in to me I'll have a look. We'll be interviewing the successful applicants next Friday, if we want to see you would you be free then?"
Applicant	"Yes I would. I will get my CV and references in the post to you today."
Mrs Ambrose	"Great, I look forward to receiving them."
Applicant	"Thank you Mrs Ambrose, I look forward to hearing from you. Goodbye."

If you have to make an application by telephone it's best to practice what you will say with a friend or relative first.

You could be on the phone a lot longer than our example. Look at the appendix and practice your replies to some of the interview questions listed to help you prepare.

How to write a speculative letter/email

Speculative letters and emails can be sent to companies you are particularly interested in working for, but who have not advertised any vacancies.

For speculative letters it is important to do your research about the company you are applying to. Make sure you have visited the company's website. If they don't have a website try to find out more about them from listings in yellow pages or read your local paper for any articles that may mention construction companies so that you can show a specific interest in their organisation.

For speculative letters you should always try to address the letter to a named individual who is responsible for taking on staff. If you don't know who this is ring the company and ask who the most appropriate person would be to send the letter to.

Here's an example speculative letter. Emails will follow the same rules as those for covering emails on page 12.

Mr S Arland
Director
Cranmers Construction
Lords Road
Anytown
BE5 LLT

34 Parkfield Mews
Long Road
Anytown
BE7 XYZ
1st August 2017

Dear Mr Arland

I am writing to enquire whether you will be considering recruiting any Apprentice General Construction Workers in the near future? A recent article in the Anytown Herald focused on the recent renovation project you conducted on County Hall and said that as a result you have seen an increase in your business which may lead to recruitment.

Having completed an Introduction to Construction course as part of my education, I am very interested in following a career in this industry. I am particularly interested in working on renovation projects for existing buildings and heritage sites as these help us preserve our architecture whilst making the buildings fit for modern day use. I have seen from your website that this is a particular area you specialise in. Since leaving school two years ago I have been working as a labourer for a number of building contractors which I have enjoyed, but I would now like to train as a general construction operative and gain the industry qualifications for this job. I have contacted Anytown College who have a day release course I can enrol on which will start in September.

I am confident that I would make a valuable addition to your staff. I am hard working and have experience of working on a variety of sites in all weathers. My CV is enclosed for your information.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to find out more about any potential opportunities and tell you more about myself.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



James Jones

Enc: CV



Employability skills

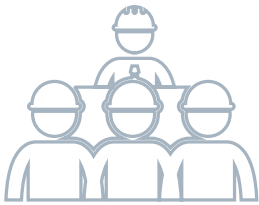
Employers, colleges and universities like to attract people who can demonstrate they have the right skills and commitment to succeed. These are known as 'Employability Skills'. If you don't have any work experience you will still have gained a variety of these skills which you can use to give examples of your suitability to a job. For example, if you play a sport, are a member of an association such as the cadets, have been on a school committee or even if you organised a holiday with your friends, you will have used employability skills.

Employability skills include:

- Ability to keep calm under pressure
- Attention to detail
- Commitment
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Computer skills
- Creativity
- Decision making
- Flexibility
- Following instructions/procedures
- Gathering and analysing information
- Leadership
- Listening skills
- Meeting deadlines
- Negotiating
- Planning and organising
- Problem solving
- Presentation skills
- Punctuality
- Research/Investigation skills
- Self-motivation
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Using your initiative

Refer to this list and try and give examples when you are writing your CV or application letters. It's easy to say that you have the skills but the employer will want to have real examples of how you use them. For example:

'As part of my business studies coursework, I had to deliver a presentation to the schools employer business meeting!'



Interview skills

The best way to make a good impression at an interview is to be prepared and our tips will point you in the right direction.

An interview is all about showing your potential and demonstrating how your skills and experience are useful to a prospective employer. It is also an opportunity to show them you would be an interesting person to have in their team.

It is perfectly acceptable to take notes with you into an interview. This shows the employer that you have given a lot of thought to what you are going to say and what you want to ask them.

Before you arrive:

Read the description of the role and your application form (or your CV if you sent one) several times and try and think of potential questions you may be asked about.

- Make sure you know what the role involves and what the company is about. This might mean researching it on the internet or telephoning in advance to ask for more information. You should think of some clear reasons why you have applied.
- If possible, talk to someone who is doing something similar already.
- Read through some common interview questions (see Appendix 1) and think how you would answer them – even if you don't end up being asked exactly the same questions, you will get used to thinking about appropriate answers in interviews.
- Prepare some examples of times when you have demonstrated employability skills like 'team working' or 'problem solving'.
- Interview skills can improve with practice. Ask a friend or colleague to practice asking you some questions about yourself and see how well you can answer them. This should also give you confidence.
- Watch people around you and look out for people who look or sound enthusiastic/bored etc. Think about what makes a good impression?
- Think about your body language, for example do you keep eye contact with people when you talk to them, or do you look at the floor? Think about how you might behave in an interview.
- If possible, record yourself so you can see how you can improve your interview performance. Alternatively you could practice in front of a mirror – it might feel silly but it will help.
- Many interviewers will ask if you have any questions at the end. Think of a few questions beforehand with the aim of asking two or three on the day. For example 'How do you see this role developing?' (See some sample questions you can ask in Appendix 1).

The day before your interview:

- Think carefully about what to wear – this will depend on what the interview is for. Make sure you look neat and tidy.
- Pack a smart bag with several copies of your application form or CV, the role description, your interview notes and any samples of relevant work.
- Find out how to get to the place where the interview is being held and how long the journey takes. Always aim to arrive well in advance in case there are any travel delays. You will also be a lot calmer when you go into the interview.



During the interview:

- Smile – It will give you confidence and shows the interviewer that you are enthusiastic.
- Maintain strong eye contact and build a rapport with the interviewers as well as answering the questions. This forms a big part of an interviewer's decision.
- Use the interview to show what you know and what you have gained from your experience.
- Vary the tone of your voice and always answer enthusiastically and positively.
- Nod or make some movement to show you are paying attention to and acknowledge what the interviewer is saying.
- Listen carefully and check you understand all parts of the question before answering.
- Provide short, real examples to demonstrate what you have said.
- Remember that the interview should be a conversation. Give a short response and then ask the interviewer if they would like more information. For example, you could say: 'would you like an example of that?'
- If you cannot think of an answer to a question ask for it to be repeated, this will give you time to think of an answer. If you still can't answer the question you can either ask to come back to it later (if you think you will remember), alternatively be honest and say that you don't know the answer, your interviewer will appreciate your honesty.



After the interview:

- Don't get too upset, if you are not offered the job – there will be plenty of others to apply for.
- You may find it useful to ask the company you applied to for feedback so that you can improve your interview technique. Interviewers are usually quite happy to do this. Remember to keep looking for a job.
- Seek advice from a careers professional if you feel you are getting turned down for lots of jobs. It may be that you need to improve your CV or interview skills and they can help you develop in these areas.

Successful job offer

Congratulations if you are successful with your interview. You may be offered the job over the phone or by letter. Once you have accepted, you'll be sent a contract. Read this through carefully, before you sign it. In particular, check the following:

- Salary/pay details and how it is paid
- Job title
- Holiday entitlement
- Start date
- Training details

Once you have signed the contract and returned it with your acceptance letter, you have entered into a legal agreement to take the job – so only sign when you are absolutely sure.

Appendix 1

Interview questions

These are a list of questions that could be asked at your interview. Not all of them will be relevant to the role that you are being interviewed for, but these will help you to be prepared.

- 1 Tell me about yourself?
- 2 What are your greatest strengths?
- 3 What are some of your weaknesses? And what have you done to improve your weaknesses?
- 4 What are your long and short range career goals?
- 5 Why do you want a career in this industry/with this company?
- 6 What is your greatest achievement?
- 7 What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- 8 Can you work under pressure? Give me an example
- 9 Are you willing to go where the company send you?
- 10 How would you go about the task of managing others?
- 11 What interests you about this job?
- 12 What are some things you find difficult to do? Why?
- 13 What aspects of this job do you consider to be the most critical?
- 14 What are your interests outside of work?
- 15 You do not appear to have much experience in this industry. What do you think you will need to do to succeed?
- 16 What would you like to improve on?
- 17 What things do you feel confident about doing?
- 18 What motivates you?
- 19 Why should I employ you?

Sample questions to ask at interview

The questions you ask at an interview can be as important as those you answer and are part of the two-way interview process. Remember you are also interviewing them.

Here is a selection of questions that you could ask, depending on the circumstances.

The company and its policies

- 1 Can you tell me more about the organisation?
- 2 How is the company dealing with changes in the industry?
- 3 What are the development plans for the future?
- 4 What are the career opportunities for someone entering this position?
- 5 What are the short and long term plans for the company? (expansion or growth of the company).

The Job

- 1 What are you looking for in a candidate?
- 2 What specific skills or experiences would help someone do well in this job?
- 3 How would you describe a typical day in this position?
- 4 Will I be working with a team or on my own?
- 5 Can you tell me about the training programme which new employees receive?
- 6 How does this position fit into the company structure?
- 7 Who would I be reporting to?
- 8 What supervision I will receive?
- 9 Can you describe my area of responsibility?
- 10 What percentage of my time will be spent travelling?
- 11 How often will my performance be reviewed?
- 12 Are there opportunities for further training?
- 13 How and when will I be told if I've been successful or not?

Appendix 2

Apprenticeships

CITB Careers in Construction and Apprenticeship Registration	www.citb.co.uk/bconstructive
National Apprenticeship Service	www.apprenticeships.org.uk
Apprenticeships in Electrical & Plumbing	www.jtltraining.com

Careers & Employment Advice & Guidance

GoConstruct	www.goconstruct.org/careers
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Equality and Human Rights Commission	www.equalityhumanrights.com
Free employee advice line	www.acas.org.uk
Inland Revenue (Tax)	www.hmrc.gov.uk
National Careers Service Website (Admissions Service)	www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk
UCAS (University & College Admissions Service)	www.ucas.com

Employer Search Details

Federation of Master Builders	www.fmb.org.uk
UK Business Search	www.yell.com
UK Directory of local businesses	www.ufindus.com

Job Vacancies/Recruitment Websites

CareerBuilder	www.careerbuilder.co.uk
Just Construction	www.justconstruction.net
Monster	www.monster.co.uk/construction
Reed	www.reed.co.uk/jobs/construction
Universal Job Search (Government website)	www.gov.uk/jobsearch



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