



APPLY

Online Applications, Assessments and Interviews



INTRODUCTION

This booklet helps you prepare for various stages of the job application process. The exact stages you complete depends on the employer, so always pay attention to application requirements for each role. For example, it might be simply emailing the employer a CV and Cover Letter, or with a larger employer submitting an online application with question responses, a supporting statement, plus additional recruitment stages.

Booklet contents:

- Researching Employers
- Making an Online Application: Application questions, statements and STAR
- Job interviews: Preparation, example questions and STAR
- Assessment centres
- Online Testing: Psychometric and gamification
- AI Usage in the Job Application Process
- Job Acceptance and Rejection

For CV, cover letter and speculative applications see our separate booklets on these topics.

Researching Employers

It's essential you research the employer and understand the role before you begin your application. This allows you to tailor your application and avoid giving generic responses, and it shows your enthusiasm to apply. Common questions such as 'What interests you about this role?', 'Why should we hire you?' and 'What do you know about our values?' can only be answered effectively with good background knowledge.

Research Resources:

1

Employer's website

- About Us: history, values, mission statements, goals, social responsibility.
- Products/Services: business areas, specialisations, clients, customer service.
- Careers Page: jobs, work culture, teams, professional development, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

2

Job description (JD)/specification – review the JD and identify:

- Essential skills, experience and knowledge requirements.
- Keywords - verbs, skills, industry terminology etc.
- Purpose and objectives of the role, team and organisation.

3

LinkedIn – look at the following:

- Employer page (similar to looking at employer's website as above)
- Recent posts: topics talked about, initiatives, expansions, achievements, awards
- Jobs page: roles they're advertising, common skill requirements.

4

Recent news – use Glassdoor, Google and news sections of other search engines to search for:

- Initiatives, expansions, investments, partnerships, mergers, current focus
- Reviews, achievements and awards.

Researching Employers

Research Template

After your research is completed test your knowledge of the role and employer by asking yourself the following questions:

What does the company/organisation do?

What are its values?

What recent achievements projects has it completed?

What is the main purpose of this role/why does it exist?

What skills are they looking for?

Why do you want to work there specifically?

How do your skills and values align with theirs?

Making an Online Application

Who uses online applications?

Large employers, higher education and public/government sectors, national charities and other not-for-profits. Roles advertised by these employers usually include detailed job descriptions and person specifications (JDPS). These must be referred to when writing the statement.

What information needs to be included?

- Personal information (name, email etc.)
- Education background
- Work experience
- Motivational and competency questions (sometimes referred to as the Supporting Statement. Use STAR to answer competency questions)
- Supporting statement (a separate statement addressing all key criteria)

Answering questions:

Application questions are very similar to interview questions. Questions may seem straightforward, but it is essential you write a well-developed response. See our Top Tips section for support with this. For motivational questions about why you want the role or want to work for this employer use your research to write impactful answers. For competency (skills-based) questions write strong and clear examples to evidence the competency using the STAR technique:



Situation

Describe the context or background – Where were you? What were you doing/working on? Who were you with



Task

What was your objective, goal, responsibility, or the challenge you faced?



Action

What did you do to achieve this objective or deal with this challenge? Be specific and describe the actions you took.



Result

What was the outcome of your actions/what did you achieve? What did you learn from the experience?

Making an Online Application

Example Application Questions

1. Why do you want to work for this organisation?

What they're assessing: Motivation, research, understanding of them and the role

Include the following in your response:

- What interests you about the organisation
- How its values align with yours
- Why the role appeals to you
- How it fits your career goals

2. Describe a time when you worked successfully as part of a team

What they're assessing: Teamwork, communication, and collaboration.

Use STAR to structure your response. Be sure to mainly use 'I' rather than 'we' in your response so it's clear what you contributed to the team. Explain:

- The team objective
- Your role within the team
- How you contributed
- The outcome

3. What skills and experiences make you suitable for this role?

What they're assessing: Your fit with the job requirements.

Structure your answer by:

- Identifying the key criteria (skills and experience) in the person specification
- Providing evidence for these skills and experience
- Explaining how your experience will help you succeed in the role

4. Describe a situation where you had to manage multiple priorities

What they're assessing: Organisation, time management, and prioritisation.

Use STAR to structure your response. Examples could come from:

- University coursework and projects
- Professional or part-time jobs
- Extra-curricular and volunteering commitments

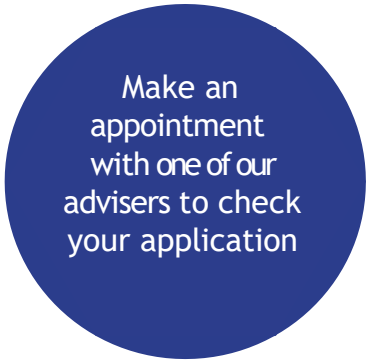
For more questions and example answers see the Interview Questions section of this booklet.

Making an Online Application

Top Tips for Completing Application Questions

The biggest mistakes candidates make is rushing application questions and giving general responses. To get to the next application stage it's essential to answer all questions with good structure and detail. Follow these tips:

1. **Analyse the Job Description** - highlight essential and desirable criteria, identify key words, make a list of skills, attributes and other behaviours required.
2. **Prepare STAR examples in advance** - many job roles require similar employability skills, such as communication, teamwork and problem solving. Save time by preparing example responses in advance. These can then be used for multiple job applications.
3. **Be aware of word count limits** - NEVER go over them. If a word limit is for example 200 words your response should be between 150-200 words. Anything shorter might not be providing enough detail.
4. **Use the STAR technique clearly and effectively** - an employer wants to know what you did so most of your word count should be spent on your *Actions*. Questions beginning with 'Tell us about a time when....', 'Describe a situation when....' always require a STAR example.
5. **Answer the question being asked!** - sounds obvious but it's a common mistake not to do this. For example, if the question requires an example about using strong communication skills to explain complex information to an audience, don't provide a general example of your communication skills - it must be linked to complex information.
6. **Be specific** - avoid generic claims or statements, such as being a strong communicator or hard worker. Instead, be specific by providing examples to support your claims. Quantify achievements if possible - numbers add impact to your claims!
7. **Show reflection** - it's not only about what happened but what you learned from the experience, so show reflection in responses where applicable.
8. **Check your work for accuracy and word counts** - write all responses in a word document and check it before copying it into the form and submitting.



Make an
appointment
with one of our
advisers to check
your application

Making an Online Application

Supporting Statement

What is a Supporting Statement?

The Supporting Statement (also referred to as Additional Information, Personal Statement and Supporting Information), is to show the employer you are a strong candidate for the role by thoroughly addressing all the key criteria (skills, knowledge, experience requirements) listed in job descriptions and person specifications (JDPS). The statement section is usually a blank text box and may have a word limit.

Criteria must be supported with examples for evidence. Most job specifications list Essential and Desirable criteria. Address all the essential criteria and try to address as many desirable criteria as possible in your statement.

Is a CV and Cover Letter also required?

Typically, a CV and Cover Letter are not required for an online application as the Supporting Statement and online application questions provide the employer with all the information they require. A CV may be requested or be an optional upload, however the employer usually focuses more on the application form content, not the CV. Therefore, when applying for a role with an online application you should focus more on this and less on the CV.

Making an Online Application

Top 10 Tips for Writing a Supporting Statement

1. Allow plenty of time - statements take longer to prepare than you think!
2. Align your statement closely to the job description and specification by addressing all 'essential' and as many 'desirable' criteria as possible.
3. Follow any requirements from the employer, such as statement length. If length is not stated then about one page of A4, two at the most, is acceptable.
4. Structure your statement well to make it easy to read and to show key criteria has been covered. A good approach is to use sub-headings, using the same or similar sub-headings as those in the job specification. If preferred use bullet points under each sub-heading to give different evidence examples. If sub-headings aren't used make sure the opening sentence of each section clearly states the criteria being addressed.
5. Give your most relevant examples. Consider examples from a wide range of experiences, such as part time jobs, studies, extra-curricular activities etc.
6. Use the STAR structure to give clear skills examples (see Interview section of booklet for details about STAR).
7. Add a brief introduction and conclusion to the statement to show motivation and interest in the role and organisation. The conclusion may restate your interest and include points not covered elsewhere in the statement, such as additional skills or experiences you feel are relevant.
8. Review draft statement for: organisation of content and ease of reading, inclusion of all key criteria, relevance of examples and STAR usage.
9. Have your statement reviewed in a Skills Appointment by a member of the Careers and Employability team.
10. Proofread for language and grammar errors before submitting!

Equality, Diversity, and Job Seeking

The Equality Act 2010 states that the following nine characteristics are protected within the law: age, disability, gender reassignment/identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex or sexual orientation. This means jobseekers and employees who belong to one or more of the protected characteristics should not be discriminated against.

To find out more information about disclosure and your rights visit-

- TARGET jobs equality and diversity - www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/equality-and-diversity/668665-equality-and-diversity-issues-and-your-graduate-job-hunt
- University of Lincoln Careers and Employability - www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/equality-diversity/

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms

When you apply for a job, you may be asked to complete an equal opportunities form, which is separate to the rest of your application. This is not seen by the recruitment panel and will not have an impact on the rest of your application. Once an appointment is made, the data will be used solely by HR to make appropriate changes to the recruitment process to try to ensure more applications from underrepresented groups are received in the future.

Disclosure and Discrimination in the Application Process

The Equality Act 2010 provides the right to not be directly or indirectly discriminated against. You are not legally required to disclose your protected characteristics to an employer. If you feel you have been discriminated against during the recruitment process the following websites might be of help:

- University of Lincoln Students' Union - <https://lincolnsu.com/advice>
- Citizens Advice - www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) - www.acas.org.uk

Careers Support

The Careers & Employability service aims to support individual queries regarding equality and diversity. Whilst this page gives general advice it may not answer your specific concerns. If you have any concerns or questions about the impact your protected characteristics may have on your job applications or employment then please book a careers guidance appointment.

Job Interviews

The purpose of an interview is two-fold. It's a chance for the employer to assess your experience and skills for the role, decide if you will fit into the team and work environment, and to see how motivated you are by the role. The interview is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the employer and role and ask yourself if it meets your wants, needs and goals.

Interview nerves are common amongst all of us. They can be calmed by good interview preparation. Preparation includes employer and role research, understanding more about interviews and interview questions and practicing answering anticipated questions. The following sections will help you prepare.

Types of interviews



Remote: phone and video interviews

Remote interviews may be talking directly to a person or panel as you would in a traditional interview or answering pre-recorded questions which are then reviewed by the employer at a later stage. In both situations you need to be well prepared:

- Make sure you are in a quiet environment.
- Ensure you have a good signal or connection. For a video interview practice taking a call in advance to test your video and sound quality.
- Dress appropriately for video interviews and be aware of your body language.
- Keep a copy of any relevant information (the role description, your CV) nearby.



Face-to-face

In-person interviews can be conducted one-to-one or with a panel. Ensure you practice with a friend to note your body language and the confidence you have when answering questions.

Make an appointment with one of our advisers to practice your interview skills

Job Interviews

Preparation checklist



Location and travel details

Do you know exactly where the interview will be taking place? Do you know how you will get there and how long it will take, allowing for delays?



Date and time

Do you know exactly when it will take place? For remote interviews, allow an hour or two to ensure your environment is appropriate and your technology is working correctly. For face-to-face, aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early.



Appropriate dress

Are you dressed appropriately? Even if conducting a video interview, ensure you are able to dress the part so the impression you leave is the right one. Check carefully if the employer has detailed a dress code, otherwise assume you should dress in smart business-casual or a work suit dependent on the role.



Materials

Unless the employer asks you not to prepare anything, it is a good idea to have your CV for both yourself and the interviewer to refer to. Ensure you check to see if the employer has requested that you have anything else such as a portfolio, papers answering some questions for them, or a prepared presentation.



Employer details

If possible, it's a good idea to find out the names of those who will be interviewing you before going in for the interview. This will allow you to feel and appear more confident when you arrive and introduce yourself.



Luggage

If you have travelled for this interview, ensure you have a plan regarding your luggage. If you need to have it with you, check with the employer if you can leave your luggage with reception so it is out of the way.



Hydration

For phone or video interviews, be sure to have a drink of water nearby. Remember you can ask an employer for one if going for a face-to-face interview.



Body language

Practice your body language including a firm introductory handshake (for in-person interviews). Practice sitting without fidgeting if it is an issue for you. Be sure you know how to appear open and confident.



Questions

Use your research to prepare questions for the employer. Make a note to also ask about when you will hear back, or what will happen next. You may also like to practice asking questions to clarify what an employer has asked you if you are worried about mishearing or misunderstanding questions.

STAR Technique

In interviews, you will almost always be faced with Competency Questions that assess skills required by the role. These questions will often start with 'Tell us about a time when...', or 'Give us an example of a time when.....'. To answer these questions, we strongly recommend using the STAR technique to structure your answers clearly and effectively. We also recommend using STAR for any other question in the interview where you are giving an example to evidence a competency or attribute.



Situation

Describe the context or background - Where were you? What were you doing/working on? Who were you with?



Task

What was your objective, goal, responsibility, or the challenge you faced?



Action

What did you do to achieve this objective or deal with this challenge? Be specific and describe multiple (3-4) actions you took. Focus on what you did, not what others did



Result

What was the outcome of your actions/what did you achieve? In reflection what did you learn from the experience?

Preparation for Competency Questions and Using STAR

To prepare for interview Competency questions do the following:

1. Read the job description or person specification and highlight the key competencies required in the role.
2. Think of strong examples of when you have demonstrated these competencies. Use examples from paid jobs, work experience, education or extracurricular activities. Choose examples that are most relevant to the role, for example a work example may be stronger than a study example. Also use recent experiences rather than those that happened several years ago.
3. Practice your response using the STAR structure. Don't try to memorise it but instead keep it an authentic response.

See the *Making an Application* section of this booklet for more about Competency questions and STAR as written responses and verbal responses to these questions are generally the same

Example Questions and Responses

1. Why do you want this role?

What type of question is this?

- An Opening question. Often starts the interview and is usually about you, the role or the organisation. Try to use a structure for answering opening questions, for example: Why this organisation? - Why this role? - Why you're a good fit?

Why are they asking this question?

- Employers ask opening questions to make sure you understand the role and the organisation, are genuinely interested and will remain enthusiastic about the role if they hire you.

Consider the following in your response:

- Be sure to show the research you've done into the employer and role so you can talk specifically not generally about why you want this role. Make it clear you understand what you'll be doing in the role and how your skills, experience, values and other attributes are a great fit. Show motivation and passion in your response through your words and body language.

Example answer (marketing and fundraising role in the charity sector):

"What particularly attracts me to this role is that it offers the chance to build a career in charity fundraising and marketing while contributing to a cause that makes a real difference in the lives of young people with mental health issues.

The combination of content creation, digital marketing, relationship building and fundraising administration means I would be able to use some of what I've learned through my studies and work experience and develop a broader range of technical and soft skills.

I am searching for communications roles where I can see the impact of my work. Knowing that effective fundraising and communications help more young people access support is something I would find very meaningful."

Example Questions and Responses

2. Describe a time when you worked successfully as part of a team

What type of question is this?

- A Competency question based around key role requirements and requiring a STAR answer.

What are they assessing in this question?

- Teamwork and collaboration skills. The actual task is of less importance than what you did in the situation.

Consider including the following in your response:

- Working with different people towards a shared goal, supporting others struggling with tasks/deadlines, communicating clearly and regularly, keeping others informed and engaged, listening to and considering other viewpoints.

Example answer:

S

"In my part-time job at Tesco I worked as part of the floor staff team during the busy Christmas period last year when customer numbers and sales are much higher than usual. We had the usual staff, plus some new Christmas hires in the team.

T

Our goal on the shop floor was to keep cashier checkout queues moving, support self-service checkout areas, ensure shelves were well stocked, help customers find items and solve any customer queries.

A

The experienced floor staff rotated across the different work areas as per the duty rota. We were also asked to be flexible and support other areas as needed. I communicated regularly with my floor manager and team to make sure everyone had the support they needed. I also made sure the new hires in my work area were clear about what they needed to do, to ask questions as needed and refer difficult customer queries to me. I liaised with staff in the stockroom letting them know when stock was running low. Self-service check out areas were technically problematic and caused checkout delays. I suggested to the floor manager the experienced staff spend more time covering self-service checkout and Christmas hires mainly cover shelf stocking and working on the tills. This greatly helped the self-service area.

R

The strong teamwork meant shelves were mostly well-stocked and checkout waiting times were kept to a minimum. Our customer service reviews were very positive during this period, including comments about efficient, helpful and friendly service. The holiday season taught me a lot about the importance of strong teamwork collaboration in a busy workplace, particularly supporting colleagues, strong communication and flexibility"

Example Questions and Responses

3. Give an example of a situation when you had to prioritise your workload to meet competing deadlines

What type of question is this?

- A Competency question based around key role requirements and requiring a STAR answer

What are they assessing in this question?

- Time-management, planning, organisation skills, communication and possibly negotiation skills.

Consider including the following in your response:

- Working with competing deadlines whilst maintaining high standards, responsibilities and professionalism. Try to also include non-study demands to make your example stand out from other students and graduates.

Example answer:

S

"During my final year at university, I had to manage several competing priorities at the same time. I was completing coursework for two modules, preparing for an assessed group presentation, working part-time in retail 20 hours a week, and helping organise events for the Creative Arts society I was involved in.

T

The main challenge was that the coursework deadlines and society event planning all fell within the same two-week period. If I didn't plan and organise my time well I risked missing deadlines or producing work that wasn't to the 2:1 standard I was achieving.

A

To manage this, I created a detailed schedule and prioritised tasks based on urgency and importance. I broke larger projects into smaller tasks, set personal deadlines ahead of the official submission dates, and used my Google calendar to block out dedicated study, work, and society commitments. It didn't look manageable to be working 20 hours a week so I spoke with my line manager in good time to see if I could drop my hours to 15 hours a week for a month. I also communicated clearly with my group presentation team and the student society committee so everyone understood timelines, individual responsibilities and the importance of sticking to them. This helped a lot of us as others were going through this busy period too.

R

In the end, I submitted all assignments on time, delivered a successful group presentation and coursework which maintained my 2:1, and helped run a well-attended society event. It was a great learning experience. I couldn't have achieved it all without planning ahead, keeping organised, and being realistic about my commitments."

Example Questions and Responses

Questions 4 and 5 are Strengths-based questions

Key points about Strengths-based questions:

- Identify what you enjoy doing, your natural abilities and what energises you
- Assess how you'll fit into the team/workplace and areas you'll perform well in
- Demonstrate self-awareness
- Often no wrong or right answers - employers are looking for authentic responses

4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Consider including the following in your response:

- Provide 2-3 strengths which directly or indirectly benefit the role. Give brief evidence of these strengths. Provide one weakness (something you feel challenges you) which is not detrimental to the role. Elaborate on what you are doing to support or improve your weakness

Example answer:

I think my three main strengths are organisation, communication, and adaptability.

During university I've had to be very organised balancing studies with a part-time job and extracurricular activities, so I developed strong planning and prioritisation skills to meet deadlines.

My communication skills have developed through building relationships with other students, to complete group projects and presentations and customers to listen to and deal with complaints and other issues.

I've become more adaptable through my student years by learning new skills and quickly adjusting to changing priorities and unexpected situations, such as changing my research topic at the last minute due to research ethics issues and suddenly having to move accommodation

One weakness I'm working on is being overly self-reliant. I can spend too long trying to solve a problem independently before asking for help. I've realised that asking for help at the right time is often more effective, so I've been making a conscious effort to collaborate with others and ask questions earlier when needed. This has definitely helped me work more efficiently.



Example Questions and Responses

5. What is your greatest achievement?

Consider the following in your response:

- Be authentic and passionate about something you achieved that is memorable and special to you. It doesn't have to be a huge achievement, but one you are personally proud of. Explain what it is and why it's your greatest achievement.

Example answer:

"Travelling abroad alone for the first time is probably my greatest achievement. It involved a lot of independent planning and organisation for flights, accommodation and budgeting, whereas in the past I'd shared this with family or friends.

Travelling to South-East Asia took me out of my comfort zone. I was in unfamiliar environments, learn things quickly, handling challenges and putting myself out there to meet others as I didn't have travelling companions to rely on for company.

It definitely built my confidence, communication and problem-solving skills, along with resilience and adaptability. I loved the experience and am proud of how I handled it.

Assessment Centres

An assessment centre may come as a late phase of a recruitment process. Many employers use these centres as an opportunity to see how candidates behave when faced with a diverse range of situations. These tasks will test your competencies, give you a chance to meet the team, help you gain a better understanding of the team and contribute to your decision of whether or not you would like to work there.

Assessment centres vary in structure and format. Throughout the exercises you work through, it's important to remember that you will be scored for your individual performance. Remember that you will be watched at all times, even during breaks. Make sure you remain professional throughout the day, and ask for feedback at the end.

Preparation checklist

- ☐ **Research**
Have you researched the employer and role thoroughly? See if you can find out exactly what to expect of the day as well.
- ☐ **Location and Time**
Check the time and location carefully - it may not be at the employer's main building. Plan your route in advance, allowing extra time for delays.
- ☐ **Appropriate dress**
Dress smartly as you might for a job interview. Ensure you have read instructions, as some employers will ask you to bring a change of clothes for physical exercises.
- ☐ **Materials**
Check all instructions to ensure you have everything asked of you such as presentation materials. If there is an interview component, you may wish to bring your CV.
- ☐ **Luggage**
If you have travelled overnight, ensure you have a plan regarding your luggage. If you need to have it with you, check with the employer if you can store it somewhere.
- ☐ **Body language**
Practice your body language including a firm introductory handshake.
Practice sitting without fidgeting if it is an issue for you. Be sure you know how to appear open and confident.

Assessment Centres

Common features & exercises

1

Employer introduction and information

This could involve a presentation about the company or role(s) being recruited, and may include a tour of the workplace. Pay attention to everything that is said; take notes if it will help you. Look interested, and ask questions - being careful that you aren't asking something that has already been covered.

2

Informal networking

Throughout the day, you may be introduced to different members of staff who you will be able to socialise with over break periods. This is your opportunity to ask questions about what it is like to work in the company or industry in a less formal environment than that of an interview. Be aware of what you say - some companies will ask employees their opinions of candidates they have talked to.

3

Group exercises

These will usually comprise of a group discussion and/or problem-solving task, with candidates assessing your individual behaviour within a group setting. Assessors here will be looking at your ability to communicate with other candidates - you'll need to use active listening, persuasion, analytical thinking and rapport skills. Read more about these on the next page.

4

In-tray exercises

This will test how you would respond to challenges that you would likely face in your day-to-day role. You will be given a variety of documents like letters, voicemail messages and emails. You'll be asked to prioritise and respond to them within a timeframe. Be analytical, using what you know of the priorities of the organisation and role to help you. Use all of the information given to you, and keep within time and word limits.

5

Psychometric Tests

Read more about these in the relevant section of this resource.

6

Presentations

This is an opportunity to show your research and communication skills. You may be asked to prepare this before the day, or be given some time on the day. In both situations, read all information carefully and practice to time. Speak clearly, and use short bullet points at most to read from so you can keep eye contact. If possible and relevant, bring handouts for the assessors. Ensure to back up your slides if you have any to use.

7

Interviews

Some assessment centres will include a standard job interview as part of their day.

Assessment Centres

Group exercises

These exercises will usually involve you working with anywhere between five to twelve other candidates. While you will be working as a group, always keep in mind that assessors will be looking at you as an individual. Often you will be given a large amount of information to read and discuss as a team within a set time frame. This information will usually be relevant to the role you applied for - for instance, a case study of a situation the company has been involved in before.

There may be too much information to read through thoroughly in the time given. If so, skim through and highlight key points as you do. Think about how you communicate with those in your team at all times - including how much you listen to them. You will need to strike a balance between taking on opinions from your group, and leading with your own. You can always use sector knowledge to assist you here. Ensure you read the key instructions as closely as possible to pass the task.

Common group exercise issues

One or more of your peers is aggressive and attempting to dominate the group

Body language and tone are important. Don't shout down aggressive members of your group, but make sure you are clear if you do speak up. Diffuse aggression with interest, listening and calm/clear communication. Remember to focus on your own performance.

You are speaking too much or too little

Share your thoughts when relevant, but only if they have not already been covered. Praise your group member's ideas, and encourage those who have not spoken much to speak more - then be careful not to interrupt them and discourage others who try to. When they are done, don't be afraid to challenge any ideas you disagree with.

You are indecisive and hesitant

If the group is having trouble coming to a decision, present two options that have been motioned. Ask if anyone has further opinions to present and go forward with a short vote.

The group is going off track and losing time

Quality over quantity. Keep your contributions short and keep an eye on the time to note when you should move on to cover all that is asked of the group.

Psychometric tests

Why am I being tested?

Employers will often use psychometric tests as part of the recruitment process to assess aspects of a candidate that that might not be clear to them in a CV, interview or other kind of assessment task. Psychometric tests can look at:

- 1** Verbal/numerical skills
These could involve exercises such as word sorting and sequential tests. They will look at your reasoning, logic, and analysis.
- 2** Diagrammatic and spatial reasoning
These will look at your sense of logic, visual thinking and your organisation skills.
- 3** Technical skills
These tests will relate directly to the role you are applying for. This may involve syntax for computer programming, data checking or mechanical questions depending on the role.
- 4** Personality and behaviour
These tests are assessing you for a cultural fit - answer honestly rather than saying what you believe the employer wants to hear. If your honest answer would get you eliminated, it is likely you would not enjoy the role. These tests give employers a profile of your interests and working style.

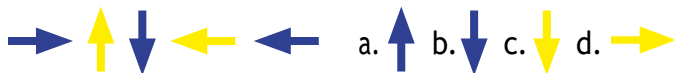
Example test questions

1. Verbal

In the 100m Mens Running Final, Yohan Blake finished ahead of Akani Simbine.
Yohan Blake did not place higher than Andre De Grasse
Justin Gatlin finished ahead of Andre De Grasse, but was beaten by Usain Bolt.
What place did Justin Gatlin finish in?

2. Diagrammatic

Which arrow comes next in this sequence?



3. Personality

I can work efficiently even when my environment is disorganised.

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neutral ☐ agree ☐ strongly

Correct Answers

1. Second 2. c 3. Which ever answer most applies to you

To learn more
about testing
and free tests to
practice
visit our Tests Page
[https://uolcareers.co.
uk/students-
graduates/online-
resources-and-
learning/psychometric-
tests/](https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/online-resources-and-learning/psychometric-tests/)

Gamification Assessment

What is Gamification Assessment?

Increasingly employers are using video games as part of their assessment process. This is called gamification or game-based assessment. They have been developed from neuroscience theory and literature. Like psychometric tests they assess your skills and help employers discover more about your behaviours in certain situations. They are quick and engaging due to their game format, often with no wrong or right answers. No gaming experience needed.

Top 5 Tips for Gamification Assessment:

- 1 It may be called a game, but it is a behavioural assessment so give it your full attention
- 2 Read instructions carefully
- 3 If given practice questions before the test, use this time well to understand the activity
- 4 Ensure you have good internet connection if it takes place online
- 5 Find a quiet and distraction-free environment to take the assessment in

AI Usage in the Job Application Process

The Pros - How AI Can Support Job Applications

- **Research employers** - use AI to help you do your initial employer research
- **Tailor applications** - use AI to select and highlight the key responsibilities and requirements of a role to help you tailor your application documents and prepare for interviews
- **Preparing for interviews** - use our mock [Interview Review Tool](#) to practice common interview questions and build confidence

The Cons - How AI Can Negatively Impact Job Applications

- **Authentic voice** - there is a lack authenticity, personality, passion and your own thoughts if AI is used to create application content for you
- **Generic applications** - Straight copy and paste from AI means employers are receiving large volumes of generic applications, many of which are immediately rejected
- **Language issues** - AI may generate inappropriate language or terminology for entry-level/graduate level candidate, for example referring to management-level experience
- **Competence gap** - skills, experience and knowledge included in an application written by AI will be assessed at the interview stage and may highlight a competency gap between what was written and what has been experienced

Top Tips If Using AI in your Job Application Process

1. **Check employers' guidelines** - employers offer guidelines to follow on how and how not to use AI when applying for a role with them
2. **Review, revise and personalise** - use your unique voice and your own examples
3. **Use clear and precise prompts** - e.g. use the PART (Persona - Action- Requirements - Task) model to ensure AI is providing you with relevant and accurate information
4. **Check for accuracy**- AI can produce incorrect facts and figures!
5. **Protect your data** - use Copilot for data protection, data is not saved and not used to teach the AI

See our [AI and Job Applications webpage](#) for more detail on the above points to help you decide whether to use AI, and if so how to use it effectively.

Job acceptance and rejection

How to deal with being rejected

Rejection at any stage of a job application process can be a troubling and hard prospect to deal with, especially if you were passionate about the role being offered. It is completely valid and normal to feel upset about being unsuccessful - but also important to learn from it and not let rejection defeat you.

1

Reflect

Take some time to identify exactly what went wrong. If possible, send a polite note to the employer asking for feedback. Ensure you keep this constructive and don't argue about their decision, simply see if they can assist you with future opportunities. A positive request may mean they keep you in mind for future roles.

2

Plan

Using the information you have learned from your reflection and any feedback you have received, create a plan to improve and move onto your next steps. Remember that you can always visit the Careers Centre or contact us to receive assistance in building a plan or figuring out what to do next.

3

Go to your support network

When you are feeling rejected, it's natural to feel like you want to isolate yourself. While difficult, it's a healthier option to work through this feeling and surround yourself with your friends, family or supportive staff members within the University (such as Careers & Employability, or Student Wellbeing). Be open about your troubles, and you will often be surprised by the support you receive.

4

Find what makes you happy

Remind yourself that this is not the end of the world. Taking a moment to be thankful for even small things you enjoy can help lift your mood and assist in motivating you to move onto more positive thoughts and actions.

5

Do something different

While going through a jobseeking process, it is easy to be caught in a routine. Find a new hobby to be passionate about or think about investigating opportunities in a different industry. A different direction can be refreshing and constructive.

6

Take purposeful breaks

While it is important to get back into jobseeking quickly after facing rejection, it is equally important to take care of your mental health. Plan breaks for yourself to relax and take your mind off your hunt for small and purposeful amounts of time.

Job acceptance and rejection

Receiving an offer - next steps

If you have received a job offer, well done! You will now need to take some time to reflect and make some final considerations on whether or not the offer is right for you. Contact the employer, thank them for their offer and request a day or two to read over everything. Always get a full offer in writing. Request a written offer if you have not yet received it.

In some cases, you may have received an offer while you are still waiting to hear from another employer. This is especially difficult if the other employer is one you would prefer to work for. In this case, request some time to consider the offer but set an exact timeframe of no more than a week. It may be that you will need to risk rejecting the offer if you are determined to wait for a better offer.

Think carefully and do not accept an offer until you are confident it will suit you. Request a meeting to negotiate the terms of your employment if necessary.

Areas to consider

- 1 What are your expectations of this role and this employer?
- 2 How does this offer fit in with your career wants and needs?
- 3 How much are you really able to compromise on?
- 4 Do other benefits make up for not having something you wanted?
- 5 What impact will this job have on your life?
- 6 Will you enjoy and feel appropriately challenged by this role long term?
- 7 Are the benefits (e.g. retirement pension) appropriate?

Job acceptance and rejection

Asking for time to consider an offer or negotiate

Employers should be happy to allow you time to consider your offer if it is something you really need. The key is to set yourself a deadline, be positive, and not to dither on decision making. Know exactly what you need to know to make a decision (for example, you may need to ensure you have the offer in writing), and ensure the employer knows they won't be waiting forever for you. Generally it's advised to ask for this over the phone, only using emails if that has been your primary communication. Here is a sample of how you might approach this situation. This is not something you will need to do for all offers you receive - if you receive an offer you are happy with, accepting it outright is fine:

Dear Mr Garwood,

Thanks so much for giving me this opportunity. As I said in my email following the interview, I am very interested in the role and your company and excited about a future working with you. That being said, going from university into this role is going to be a significant transition for me and I would appreciate being allowed some time to consider this offer fully.

Firstly I would just like to clarify what is included in the healthcare plan - it's not clear if dental care is covered or not. I don't believe it will be an issue if it isn't covered, just hoping to make sure I have a complete picture. Could I please check with you that all details of this role have been sent to me in writing so that I can review them thoroughly?

I don't want to keep you waiting for my decision, and so would like to confirm my interest in this role by next Wednesday at the latest. Would you be available for a meeting before then so that I can ask a few more questions in person?

Thanks again for this great opportunity and offer, hope to speak with you in person soon.

Kind regards,

Johnathan Patch

Rejecting an offer

It's possible you may realise after an interview that a role is not one you want to work in. It can be a positive thing to withdraw from the process before the employer makes you an offer. Rejecting an offer, or potential offer, that is not appropriate for you early will save the employer time and leave you in a favorable light if you would like to take a role with them in future.

At whatever stage you turn down a role, it is important to be polite and gracious, even if you feel they have mistreated you at some stage of the process. Remember that the employer has invested time and effort to offer you what they believe to be a great opportunity. Keep positive about your experience, and you may even gain a valuable extension to your network for future opportunities. In most cases it is more personal and polite to call the employer, but here is a sample email that may assist you in the wording to use:

Dear Ms Robinson,

Thank you for inviting me to interview. It was a pleasure to meet you and learn about the Accounting Assistant role and your team.

However after careful consideration, I felt that the role did not fit quite in line with my career goals.

I would like to wish you and the company all the best for the future.

Thank you for all your time and support and the opportunity to work for the company.

Kind regards,

Johnathan Patch

Get support from your Careers & Employability Service

What we offer

- **Careers Guidance**
Our Careers & Employability Advisers offer 1:1 appointments to support you in exploring your career options and planning.
- **Career Events**
We have daily events running to provide information and support your development; some are run by our expert Adviser team and others by employers. All events are advertised here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/events
- **Lincoln Award**
Our employability award is designed to support you in developing and learning how to demonstrate your employability skills. At the end of the award you get the chance to put your learning to the test in our Assessment Centre Experience! Each one is partnered with an employer and students find the opportunity to practise and the feedback they receive invaluable. Full details can be seen here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/lincolnaward
- **Vacancy Postings**
CareerLinc is our online portal where all vacancies are advertised; part-time, placement, work experience and graduate roles. All students are already set up on the system so simply use your University log-in to get started! www.careers.lincoln.ac.uk
- **Online Resources**
We have our own Careers & Employability online learning pathways on LinkedIn Learning. We also provide many other online careers resources. More information can be seen here; www.uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/online-resources-and-learning/



Careers Centre
Ground Floor, Library
Mon-Fri: 09:00-16:30
01522 83 7828
careers@lincoln.ac.uk

www.uolcareers.co.uk