

## Online Applications

The use of online applications as the first stage of the recruitment process is now standard practice for many organisations. Often companies receive 100+ applications for a single role so with this level of competition it's more important than ever that your application stands out from the crowd and, furthermore, that you ensure silly mistakes do not end up ruining your chances! For all of our voluntary and paid internships Graduate Advantage (GA) require you to complete an online application. Therefore, GA would like to offer you a few tips picked up as a result of our collective experience...

Our first piece of advice would be: **be selective!** Some graduates make the mistake of panic applying for any and every internship advertised on the GA website, irrespective of whether they meet the requirements of the position or whether the position is relevant to their career goals.

Instead, relax and formulate a clear and considered game plan – consider what you would really like to do, and the career steps required to get there. Then make a list of the key internships that appeal to you and apply for them!

### Consider the location of the internship

A number of graduates are very keen to submit online applications for internships but they haven't considered the feasibility of getting to the internship location. It is essential that you assess whether or not you can travel to the organisation and the time it would take, especially if you do not have your own means of transportation but use public transport instead. This may influence whether or not a particular internship is right for you.

### Always think before you type

- Do you meet the Internship Provider's minimum requirements? Check this carefully before wasting your time applying for a role. If you do not meet the minimum requirements you will automatically be ruled out of the running.
- Always read the whole application before you begin filling it in. This way you will not repeat yourself.
- Check the deadline and set aside sufficient time to write your responses and apply.
- Provide strong answers for the **Vacancy Specific Questions**. This is your chance to really set your application apart from all the other applicants. The strongest answers use examples to evidence the skills and/or experience of the graduate against the question asked and incorporates the key skills that the Internship Provider is looking for.
- Research the Internship Provider and ensure you really understand the role. What do you think they are really looking for? In which ways do you have what it takes and can you evidence these with practical examples?

### Tailor each application

Although it can be tempting to cut and paste responses to similar questions from previous applications – recruiters have a sixth sense for this kind of thing and won't be impressed! Try to avoid this wherever possible and make every effort within each answer to show why you want the particular position you are applying for.

### Show your writing skills

Clarity, accuracy and attention to detail are important skills for jobs in all sectors. Therefore, it is vital you demonstrate that you recognise this!

- **Check your spelling and grammar** carefully – wherever possible use Word to spell check your text. If you are unsure, get a trusted friend or family member to double-check what you have written.
- Wherever possible **avoid waffling**. Make sure you include all the information required but at the same time, don't waste words talking about nothing. A common mistake when answering competency-based questions is to use too much space recounting the scenario, space that is much better used for describing what you did, or the outcome.

### Write the right amount

It can be difficult to gauge how much to write when no word count is given. As a general rule, a couple of well-written, carefully structured paragraphs are enough to answer most questions. If too brief, the recruiter may question your motivation and how interested you are in the role. However, on the whole, too little is better than too much.

### Use the right language

Formality in your application is a **must** so always write in full and grammatically correct sentences.

### Check it through

- Make sure you've not missed out any Vacancy Specific Questions. Do not leave anything blank! Some may not be relevant – in this case you can just write 'non applicable'.
- Ask a trusted friend or family member to check your application thoroughly for readability – there may be grammatical or phrasing errors the spell checker hasn't picked up.

### Do follow up

Always aim to follow up your application with a phone call a few days after it's been submitted online. The recruiters and Internship Providers will hopefully be impressed by your enthusiasm. However, be careful not to call too soon or too often as you don't want to come across as pushy!