

National Careers Service London

Guide to Online Job Applications



Introduction

E-recruitment is now the standard recruitment tool for many companies and allows companies to compare applicants more easily. Many employers are now favouring online assessments before inviting candidates in for an interview and to assess the candidate's suitability for the role. This guide covers the following:

- Employers that use online applications for recruitment
- What you need to apply online
- Tips for completing your CV and cover letter
- Online applications: what sections are you typically required to complete
- Tips for completing online assessments
- Tips for completing the personal statement
- Tips for answering competency questions
- Job search apps
- Further information and useful links

Employers that use Online Applications for Recruitment

Online applications are common in many industry sectors, for example the public sector where protocol and fairness are part of the culture. The retail industry use E recruitment to recruit sales assistants and management. Companies who use E recruitment include Tesco's, Marks and Spencer's, Topshop and Lidl.

What you need to apply online

To apply online, you will need access to the Internet and an e-mail account. Before you can apply online, you first need to register with the job website. This simply means that you need to create an account. To do this, you will need to choose a login name and a password. Many websites will use your e-mail address as your login. You will have to register separately for each job website. Once you have an account, you can transfer the information from your CV and Cover Letter. See below ways you can do this:

- **Upload CV/Cover Letter.** Many applications allow you to browse for a file on your computer or USB drive. They often ask for a PDF, text, or Microsoft Word file. Select your file and click "ok" or "insert." It's just like attaching a file to an e-mail message. Online applications often indicate if the file has been successfully uploaded.
- **Copy and paste your entire CV into the online application.** Open your CV file. Highlight all the text using the mouse. Select "Copy" from the menu or by right clicking. Go to the online application to insert your CV. Select "Paste" from the menu or by right clicking. Make sure you check the formatting of your CV. You can add your CV to an e-mail message using the same method.
- **Enter your work history manually one field at a time.** Some online applications have different fields for different information. For example, you enter a past employer's name in one field, your dates of employment in another, and your duties in yet another. This type of application can be very time-consuming to complete. To save time and reduce errors, cut and paste text from your CV using the method above.

Tips for Completing the CV and Cover Letter

Before you upload your CV and Cover Letter remember:

- Your CV is your own personal advertisement that should highlight your skills, experience, knowledge and potential value to the company.
- Your CV should be work processed.
- Always keep your CV to two pages.
- Use a professional looking font such as Arial.
- Never use more than two different font sizes.
- Never make false claims or statements.
- Your CV should include – personal details, personal profile, key skills, employment history, education, training, hobbies, interests and references.

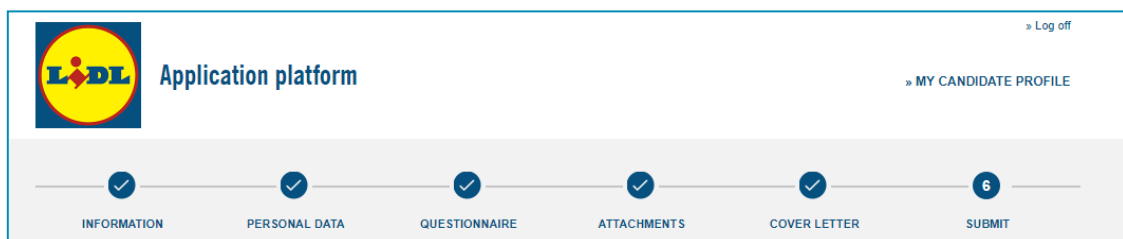
The **cover letter** is a chance for you to explain why you are best for the job. You do this by highlighting relevant skills and experience. Keep your cover letter brief, while making sure it emphasises your suitability for the job.

Your cover letter can be broken down into the following sections:

- **First paragraph** – State the position you are applying for and explain why you are writing.
- **Second paragraph** – Your experiences and qualifications – briefly explain your current job and if applicable, qualifications relevant to the role.
- **Third paragraph** – Highlight your skills and qualities. State why the employer should employ you and why you would be a good employee.
- **Fourth paragraph** – Explain why you want the job and explain why you would like to work with them.

Online applications: What Sections are you Typically Required to Complete?

Many online applications will ask you to fill out your personal details, work history, attach a Cover Letter and upload a CV.



The screenshot shows the 'STEP THREE: UPLOAD CV' page for TOPSHOP TOPMAN. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: ABOUT US, RETAIL, HEAD OFFICE, INTERNATIONAL, and JOB SEARCH. The main heading is 'STEP THREE: UPLOAD CV'. Below this, a message states: 'Please upload a copy of your CV. Our technology is pretty clever and will extract a lot of the information that we require, but there may be a few boxes that you still need to fill in to complete your application.' There are three upload options: 'Upload via Computer: Choose File', 'Upload via Dropbox: Choose from Dropbox', and 'Upload via Google Drive: Choose File'. A note specifies: '.doc, .docx or .pdf files only - 2048 Kb max.' Another note says: 'Please note that your CV will be scanned for viruses so we can only accept it if it is not encrypted or protected by passwords.' An 'IMPORTANT NOTICE' states: 'TOPSHOP TOPMAN have no control over the information you enter on the uploaded document. TOPSHOP TOPMAN cannot and will not amend these documents so please make sure you only include information that you are happy to disclose.' At the bottom right, there is a button labeled 'Upload & Continue >'.

Other companies for example Marks and Spencer's, Tesco's and Sainsbury's will include assessments. The assessments usually consist of questionnaires or online ability tests which can be completed at home or in a controlled environment. These will vary depending on the company or job role.

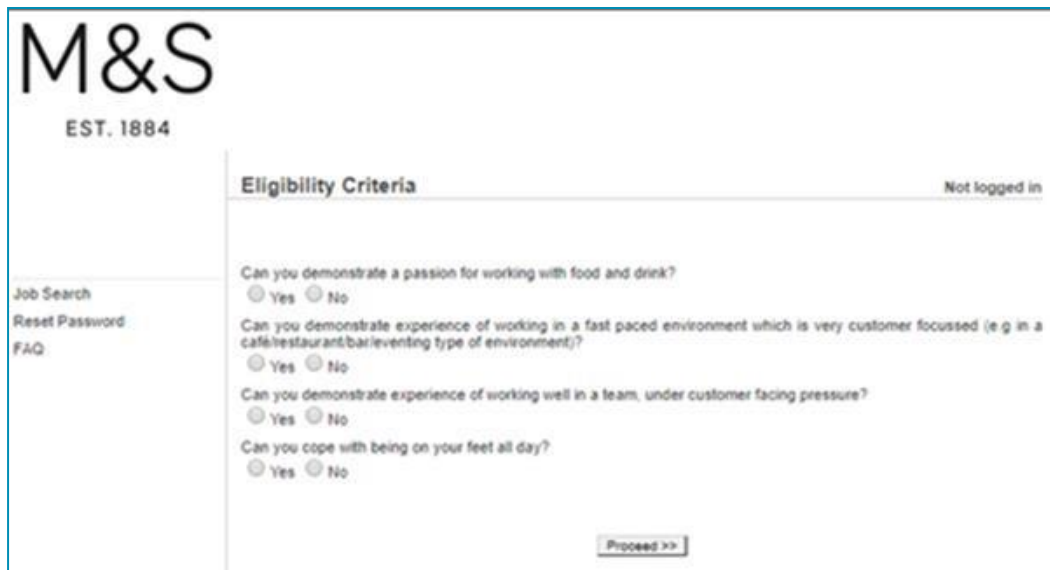
You may be presented with different scenarios relating to the job role and will be required to select the "best" answer available from multiple responses. The tests are often used by companies to pre-screen applicants, so the most suitable candidate can be put forward to the next stage of the recruitment process. Please see an example below:

The screenshot shows the 'TESCO Careers' website. The user is signed in as 'joanne.ray@prospects.co.uk'. The navigation bar includes links: Dashboard, Profile, Jobs, Social, Resources, Help, and Logout. The main heading is 'Application process for Customer Assistant - Stock Control - Step 3 of 7'. A progress bar shows seven steps: 1 REGISTER / LOGIN, 2 PROFILE BUILDER, 3 QUESTIONNAIRE, 4 RIGHT TO WORK, 5 CV UPLOAD, 6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE, and 7 CONFIRM AND SUBMIT APPLICATION. The current step is 'Step 3: Questionnaire'. The question is: 'A member of your team is preparing a customer promotion. She has just been asked to help on checkouts and asks if you could take over. You are currently helping a customer. How do you respond?'. There is a dropdown menu with the text 'Please select an answer'. Below the dropdown, there are four radio button options: 'Say I am sorry, but I am helping a customer and cannot take over the promotion', 'Tell the team member I will help after I finish helping the customer', 'Suggest that they tell their manager that they cannot help on checkouts', and 'Back'. There are also buttons for 'Save and continue later' and 'Next'. A 'Guidelines' box on the right says: 'Please select one answer. If you are having trouble viewing the whole answer, please press 'Ctrl' and '0' (zero)'. At the bottom, there are links for 'Terms & Conditions', 'Privacy Policy', and 'Cookie policy'. The footer says 'Tesco copyright © 2019' and 'TribePad Powered by TribePad ATS'.

A member of your team is preparing a customer promotion. She has been asked to help on checkouts and asks if you could take over. You are currently helping a customer. How do you respond?

The correct answer for this question will be - *'Tell the team member I will help after I finish helping the customer'*. This type of question will show the company how you can prioritize tasks and how you can handle situations successfully.

The review of an online assessment is often faster than that of an offline assessment so often you will get feedback straight away.

The screenshot shows the M&S online application interface. At the top left is the M&S logo with 'EST. 1884' below it. On the left side, there are links for 'Job Search', 'Reset Password', and 'FAQ'. The main section is titled 'Eligibility Criteria' and has a 'Not logged in' status in the top right corner. It contains four questions, each with 'Yes' and 'No' radio button options: 1. 'Can you demonstrate a passion for working with food and drink?' 2. 'Can you demonstrate experience of working in a fast paced environment which is very customer focussed (e.g. in a cafe/restaurant/bar/leisure type of environment)?' 3. 'Can you demonstrate experience of working well in a team, under customer facing pressure?' 4. 'Can you cope with being on your feet all day?' At the bottom right of the form is a 'Proceed >>' button.

Tips for Completing Online Assessments


- Online application forms are usually completed through a company's website. You will need to create a profile and register before completing the form.
- Before you start filling it out, get to know the application system and read through all the questions first. If a question includes two or three sub-questions answer all of them.
- There is usually little space on online forms, so keep your answers to the point.
- Draft your answers in a Word document so you can use spell check to proof read your work and save it to your computer in case you have any internet connection issues when completing the form. Avoid completing the form at the last minute!
- Your final check should always be to read it through in every detail.

Tips for Completing the Personal Statement

Personal Statements – How to demonstrate you meet the criteria required?

On an application form, you will be assessed on your suitability for the post against the requirements of the Person Specification. All the competencies that will be assessed at the application stage are included in the application form so ensure that you provide a response for each one. If any of the essential criteria has not been completed your application will be automatically sifted out of the recruitment process.

Application forms need to have clear evidence and examples that demonstrate your proven experience and competence for the post.

**Civil Service Jobs**

BETA Your [feedback](#) will help us to improve.


[Home](#) [Sign in / create an account](#)

CMA1091 PA to the Deputy Chief Economic Adviser

Competition & Markets Authority

Closing date: 7 May 2019

[Return to search results](#)



[Apply now](#)

Reference number
1629960

Salary
£25,838 - £28,243

Grade
Executive Officer

Contract type
Permanent

Business area
Economics and Markets - OCEA

Type of role
Administration / Corporate Support Secretarial

Location
London, WC1B 4AD

About the job

Job description
The CMA is one of the world's leading competition and consumer agencies. With markets changing fast and the UK leaving the EU we are currently undergoing rapid business expansion, presenting new opportunities, especially within the expanding Economics unit. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) are seeking a Personal Assistant who will play a key role supporting the Deputy Chief Economic Adviser (DCEA).

Personal Assistants at the CMA provide a vital support function to Directors and Senior Executive teams, assisting with the management and prioritisation of time. Responsibilities include diary management, arranging travel arrangements, booking meetings, and carrying out administrative tasks and event planning when required. They are a key link with senior

Before you start to fill out the personal statement, read through the job description carefully, highlighting key words and terms which you think are going to be important.

Behaviours

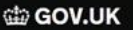
We'll assess you against these behaviours during the selection process:

- Delivering at Pace
- Managing a Quality Service
- Making Effective Decisions
- Communicating and Influencing
- Working Together

Technical skills
We'll assess you against these technical skills during the selection process:

- A strong knowledge of Microsoft Office packages, particularly Outlook, Word, SharePoint, Excel and PowerPoint

You want to highlight to the employer that you are the perfect match. Refer directly to the job description using the same language and then relate that to your own experiences.

**Civil Service Jobs**

BETA Your [feedback](#) will help us to improve.

[Home](#) [Applications](#) [Job alerts](#) [Account details](#) [Sign out](#)
[Application guide](#) [Print](#) [Job description](#) [Submit](#)

✓ Confirm your eligibility >

Your details >

Behaviours >

Your CV >

Personal Statement

Diversity and inclusion >

Additional requirements >

Personal Statement

Don't include any personal information that could identify you.

This will help us recruit based on your knowledge and skills and not on your background, gender or ethnicity. Recruiting this way is called [name blank](#) recruitment.

Remove any reference to your:

- name or title
- educational institution names
- age or gender
- email address
- postal address or telephone number
- nationality or immigration status

Please provide a statement (no more than 750 words), detailing the experience that makes you suitable for the role and demonstrating why you wish to apply.

Enter your statement
For example, give your reasons for wanting the job, your most relevant skills and any transferable skills you have.
Not to exceed 1200 words

In the statement you could include:

- Experiences from your education/career to date that make you especially suited to the job (including volunteer work/work experience): it is important to be able to write about these experiences enthusiastically.
- What it is about the job that especially attracts you to it.
- The skills/knowledge base you have that is relevant to the job.
- What is the unique contribution you can make to the company?

Tips for Answering Competency Questions

Many online applications will use competency-based questions to assess your skills and ability to do the job.

Competency based questions or **competency questions** are questions that require you to provide real life examples as the basis of their answers. These questions can be used in interviews or online application forms to assess a candidate's suitability for a particular job.

Candidates should not talk in broad terms, be too general or use their imagination when responding to such questions. Instead, you should use specific situations from your life as examples when answering this type of question. You should explain why you made certain decisions, how you implemented these decisions and why certain outcomes took place.

Why are competency questions used in interviews and online application forms?

Recruitment professionals believe that the best way to distinguish a candidate's potential future performance is to find out about examples of past performance. Assessors usually isolate specific key competencies that they believe suitable employees should possess and ask competency based questions designed to encourage candidates to reveal their skills in these areas.

Examples of **key competencies** are:

- Teamwork
- Responsibility
- Decision making
- Communication
- Leadership
- Commitment to career
- Commercial awareness
- Career motivation

Typical competency-based questions are:

- Tell me about a time when you had to use your initiative
- Tell me about a time when you have coped particularly well under pressure
- Tell me about a time when you have had to persuade someone to your way of thinking

Tips for answering competency-based questions

- When answering competency questions, you can give examples from work, study or personal life, but make sure you give a wide variety of examples and a different example to answer each question.

- Always make sure you provide concise, highly specific answers that are well explained, thought out and detailed.
- Don't go into too much background detail when answering competency questions. Your Assessor only wants to know about your past behaviors.

Answering competency questions using the STAR technique

A good technique to use when answering this type of question is the STAR technique. To do this, split your evidence into Situation, Task, Action and Result. The situation and task can often be combined to provide a background or induction. The STAR technique will help you to answer the question accurately. It will also encourage you to give an example of you performing the competence and most importantly demonstrating the impact of your actions.

The **STAR technique** consists of four sections:

- **Situation:** what was the situation and when did it take place?
- **Task:** what task did you have to complete, and what was the objective?
- **Action:** what action did you take to achieve this?
- **Results:** what happened because of your action?

Additional requirements >


Word count 0

Managing a Quality Service
Deliver service objectives with professional excellence, expertise and efficiency, taking account of diverse customer needs.
Give an example of when you have demonstrated this behaviour
Not to exceed 250 words

Word count 0

Save and continue

[Clear page](#)



How to Answer Competency Questions using the STAR Technique

An example of a competency question:

“Managing a Quality Service” Give an example of when you have demonstrated this behaviour?

In my current role as a Training Assistant I support the Training Team for the National Careers Service. I am responsible for liaising with careers advisers attending training and I manage bookings, send out joining instructions and collate feedback.

We had an approaching Matrix Standard inspection which is an accreditation that all companies delivering careers guidance must have. Training of advisers is a key area the assessor reviews. We had excellent data, but I identified that it needed to be pulled together to demonstrate to the assessor the impact of the Training Team’s work on adviser development and performance.

I suggested to my manager that I create a training report based on the data collected that year. With her approval I calculated and presented the numbers that attended training. I analysed evaluations of training and presented my quantitative findings in an easy to read pie chart. I also investigated the impact of training by demonstrating that 90% of those who attended a session on interview technique were graded ‘Outstanding’ in their next observation. Finally, I invited advisers to complete a Training Needs Analysis, so I could include a ‘Recommendations’ section on future courses we could offer advisers based on their feedback.

The matrix assessor was presented with the report during the inspection as evidence of the training delivered that year and its positive impact on advisers and their delivery. As a result, we were successfully reaccredited to the Matrix Standard and were praised for the high-quality training provided to advisers.

The screenshot shows the 'Civil Service Jobs' application form on the GOV.UK website. The user is logged in as Joanne Ray. The form is titled 'Behaviours' and contains a list of competencies on the left and their descriptions on the right. The 'Behaviours' section is highlighted in blue. The 'Making Effective Decisions' section is expanded, showing a text box for the user to provide an example of when they have demonstrated this behaviour. The word count is 0.

GOV.UK **Civil Service Jobs**

BETA Your [feedback](#) will help us to improve.

Joanne Ray

[Home](#) [Applications](#) [Job alerts](#) [Account details](#) [Sign out](#)

[Application guide](#) [Print](#) [Job description](#) [Submit](#)

Behaviours

- ✓ Confirm your eligibility >
- Your details >
- Behaviours**
- Your CV >
- Personal Statement >
- Diversity and inclusion >
- Additional requirements >

Making Effective Decisions

Tell us about a time when you have demonstrated the behaviour described.
Find out more about [Success Profiles and Behaviours](#).

Use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, expert decisions and advice.
Carefully consider alternative options, implications and risks of decisions.

Give an example of when you have demonstrated this behaviour
Not to exceed 250 words

Word count 0

Managing a Quality Service

Deliver service objectives with professional excellence, expertise and efficiency, taking account of diverse customer needs.

Give an example of when you have demonstrated this behaviour
Not to exceed 250 words

How to Answer Competency Questions using the STAR Technique

An example of a competency question:

“Making effective decisions”. Give an example of when you have demonstrated this behaviour?”

As a Training Assistant I am required to coordinate training events. A key part of my role is welcoming delegates, signing them in, taking them to the classroom and settling them in before the training commences.

On one occasion I organised a workshop that had attracted a large number of delegates from all over London. With just half an hour to the start time I realised the trainer had not arrived which was unusual. I keep records of all trainers' details and so I contacted him to discover he had a family emergency and could not deliver the training. I knew the workshop was critical to the delegates' business needs, so I made the decision not to cancel it and endeavored to find a solution.

Using my list of contacts, I called trainers in the local area who had the skills-set to deliver the workshop. None of them were available and so I contacted another highly skilled trainer who could deliver the training but would not be able to reach the venue by the start time.

I suggested that I give the delegates the resources for the session and set them an icebreaker activity. The trainer agreed this was a good idea. I then joined the delegates, explained the situation to them and set the task.

As a result, the workshop started on time, the trainer picked up the session seamlessly when she arrived, and we received excellent feedback from the delegates whose objectives were met.

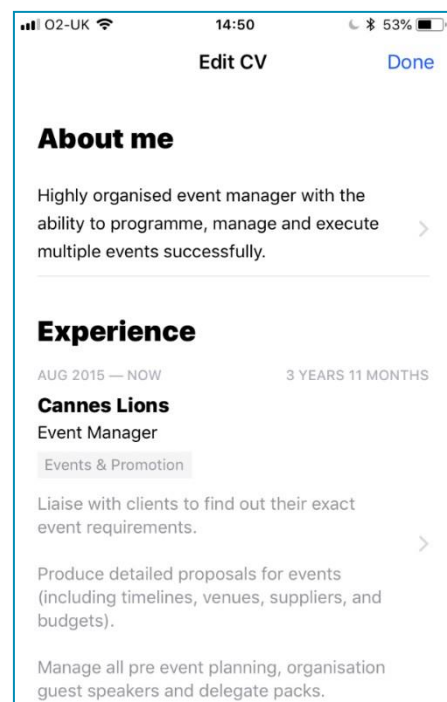
Using Job Search Apps

There are several job search apps and job search tips that can help you stay connected and on top of your job hunt, even while on the go.

Tips for Using Job Search Apps

Tips that will help you search and apply for jobs with just a few taps on your phone and tablet:

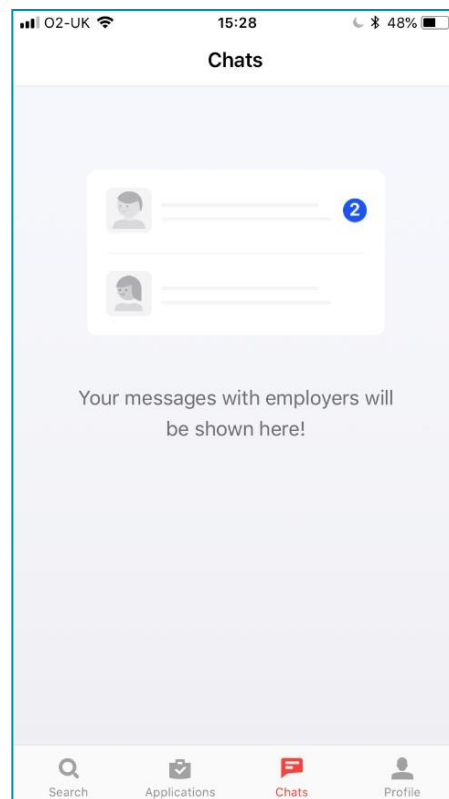
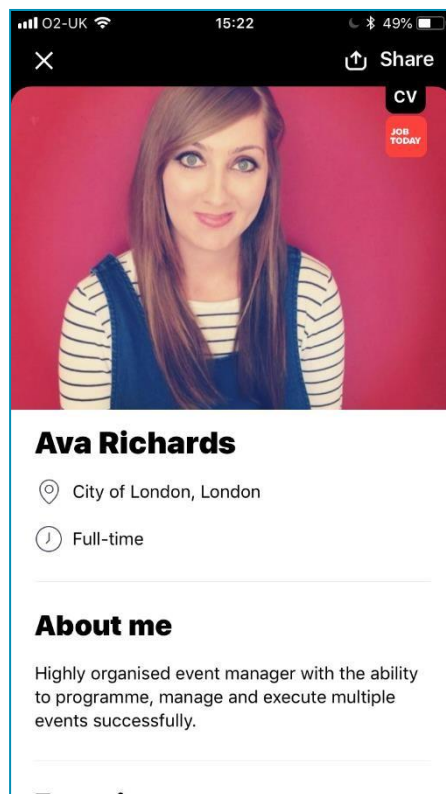
- Mobile job apps require a brief display of your skills and experience. If formulated correctly, less can be more
- Be certain to prioritize your most marketable qualifications to capture the hiring manager's attention.
- Know the keywords - The best job apps use smart algorithms to match relevant candidates with open jobs and vice versa. These algorithms rely on keywords that illustrate certain experiences and skills, those that candidates may possess and job listings may include as requirements for a position. If



Guide to Online Job Applications

you are an event manager with expertise in budgets, for example, ensure you've listed that under your skills.

- Polish your profile. A professional photo, a compelling headline, and a clear outline of skills and experience can help separate you from the crowd and inject some much needed personality into your professional profile



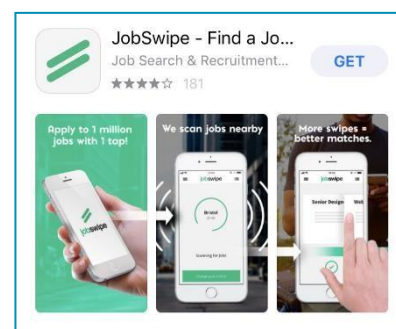
- Make the first move. Many job apps match candidates and employers in a one-on-one chat once they've shown mutual interest. At this stage, it's important you be assertive and initiate the conversation.
- Be attentive - Job search often rewards the timely and attentive, and this is especially true with job apps. Being more streamlined than traditional job boards and company websites, job apps require more consistent engagement and typically move rapidly. Keep track of your matches with employers and messages with hiring managers or recruiters. For apps within app chat, your response time should be quick.

How to Download Apps to your Phone

- Click on your App Store on your home screen
- Type an app name or keyword into the search box
- Tap the search screen key
- Select an app from the search results
- Tap install
- Tap open

Useful Job Apps to Download

- LinkedIn Job Search



Guide to Online Job Applications

- Hirewire
- Express Jobs
- Snag
- Job Today
- Ziprecruiter
- Good and Co
- Coople
- Jobmagnet



Further information and useful links

- The Civil Service has recently developed a new website to promote the range of career opportunities on offer. To find out how you can drive your career with the Civil Service please visit Civil Service Careers - <https://www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/> Further details can also be found on the GOV.UK [blog](#).
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv> - Wide range of career information tools, graduate jobs and internship vacancies. Includes CV and interview information.
- <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/> - CVs, interviews and job search information.
- <https://www.jobapplications.co.uk/sainsburys-applications> - Contains information on answering companies online job applications.
- <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/jobseeking-tips/1209/top-tips-for-online-job-applications> - Provides tips and advice.