A logo for careers and employment support

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**Master’s students**

**Completing Application Forms with impact**

Many recruiters, especially for graduate training schemes, use online application forms which may stand alone or be accompanied by a CV. The use of application forms allows selectors to ask all candidates the same questions enabling fair comparisons when sifting the applications. Part of making a strong application is being very clear about the benefits of your master’s degree. See the Analysing Your Skills handout for advice on drawing out the skills and knowledge you are enhancing and developing through your master’s degree.

**Do:**

* Make sure you carefully follow all the instructions, save any passwords, and check how you monitor your application process.
* Map out your experiences and the skills/knowledge you have developed through your master’s and other experiences to provide a database of what you can bring to the role/organisation.
* Read the job specification or role outline in depth and cross match the information above with the recruiters’ requirements.
* If you have a series of questions to answer, decide in advance which aspects of evidence you will allocate to which questions in order to avoid duplication and ensure the best answer.
* Answer the question asked not the question you’d prefer to answer and answer all parts of the question.
* For competency questions, remember STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.
* If you are asked to provide ‘an example’ or ‘a time when’, make sure you give a specific example of using a skill or personal quality rather than giving a generic answer.
* For additional information sections make sure you structure the answer to make your interest in the role and organisation, as well as what you can offer, crystal clear. Avoid writing an autobiography.
* Use **Keele Careers Online** See the Compete section for additional guidance: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/kco/>

**Don’t:**

* Ignore the word count as many IT systems will simply cut off excess words/characters.
* Use passive verbs such as ‘did’ or, even worse, ‘got’. Active verbs (sometimes called ‘power words’) such as organised, liaised, initiated, ensured…are much more effective at conveying a sense of pro activity and control.
* Use text speak (more common than you would think) or USA spelling.
* Forget to check it and recheck it for meaning, grammar and spelling. Remember, spellcheck doesn’t pick up the wrong word in the wrong context. If in doubt use a simple word rather than risk the wrong word.
* Cut and paste from one application each time you fill out a new form as mistakes will creep in and questions may be similar but rarely identical.
* Forget to keep a copy (you may need to screenshot or take a photo) as you may need to refer back to it prior to an interview or assessment centre.
* Become bored at the end and submit it without double checking that you have completed each section and/or added any attachments required.

You can also book an appointment with a Careers Consultant to discuss your application:[**https://www.keele.ac.uk/careers/**](https://www.keele.ac.uk/careers/)

Also see:

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/cvs-applications-and-tests/how-do-you-fill-job-application-form> and

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters>

**SL2023**