

Guidance on completing local government applications forms

1. Read the job description and person specification carefully

Before you start an application, have a thorough read of the job description and person specification. The job description sets out the main duties of the role and the person specification sets out the qualifications, relevant work or other experience, skills & abilities and personal qualities required for the role. This is the criteria that will be used to shortlist all candidates against. Watch out for criteria marked as 'essential' – only if you meet all the essential criteria can you be shortlisted for interview. You should tailor each application to the job you are applying for ensuring you demonstrate clearly where you meet the criteria.

Where a job asks for a specific qualification or relevant experience as essential, it is expected that where you do not have the qualification you have experience in the same type of role you are applying for. Proof of qualifications must be provided during the job offer stage. If you have a qualification from outside of the UK please write in your application how this compares with the qualification that has been asked for.

2. Question - What attracts you to this role with East Renfrewshire Council?

In this section of the application form you should review the job profile and person specification and also undertake a bit of research about East Renfrewshire Council. You should match the job information with your own personal career goals to show that you have taken the time to think about whether this role is a good fit for you, your personal values, and that you're not providing a generic answer e.g. I live local and I am applying as I want to work closer to home. This might be the case, but this shouldn't be the only reason you have applied. Pick out areas of the job description that match up with your experience and showcase how your previous experience will be invaluable in this role, and this is why you have applied.

3. Question - Please study the job description and person specification and provide examples from your work experience and any other non-work activities which demonstrate your ability to meet the essential criteria for the role.

This is your opportunity to say how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the post you're applying for as per point 1 above. You should have a copy of the job description and person specification at hand while completing this.

Our recruiting managers are interested to find out about what you've done before and how this matches the role you're applying for. It might be tempting to copy and paste your CV in here, but you should spend some time on this and respond in a structured way.

It's helpful to the person reading your application if your responses address each point of the person specification in order especially covering off the essential criteria. Writing a separate paragraph on each point or numbering your points to match the person specification criteria will make your application easier to read. Keep the language clear and concise too – quality over quantity.

For example it is not enough when applying for an admin role to say, 'I have 5 years' experience in an admin role', you need to provide real examples which demonstrate the range of tasks that you can do, and the skills you have as well as your approach to work.

You want the recruiting manager to be in no doubt that you meet the requirements of the role in order to be shortlisted for the next stage.

For example:

Under essential criteria the job asks for "excellent communications skills"

It's not enough to say "I demonstrate excellent communication skills in my current role"

Instead, write about the communication skills you have. Think about:

Why you communicate - to provide information, get others involved in something

Who you communicate with - colleagues, customers, senior managers

How you communicate - face to face, by phone, by email or all of the above

An example response might be - I have been working in a customer service role for 3 years, an important part of my role is ensuring I have excellent communication skills. I am required to communicate in a range of ways to customers and colleagues, via phone, email etc. I tailor my communication style depending on who I am speaking to, and I check that the customer has understood the information I have provided to them.

4. Include examples

As demonstrated above, it's important to give examples to back up your experience to show how you meet the criteria. The example doesn't have to be work-related – it might be something you've done for charity or at school/college. Think about all your experience and how it could be relevant to the job you are applying for.

5. Tailor your application every time

My Job Scotland lets applicants reuse previous applications however it is important you tailor your application to each role you are applying for. You have until the job closes to apply for our roles and hiring managers do not undertake shortlisting until after the job closes so take your time so that you stand out from other applicants.

6. References

Please make sure you provide 2 references with your application which should be from your most recent employer, or if you are not in employment, please state the details of other references that can be contacted e.g. a person of standing within the community, a teacher etc. We will never take up references without first agreeing this with candidates, and usually references are only requested once a job offer has been made to the successful candidate.

If you have any questions about our recruitment process, please contact hrdirect@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk