

Completing the Online Application Process of Employers

Most online candidate application programs enable the recruiter to conduct a search for qualified applicants after typing in key words or skills needed. When completing the online application form, candidates should include key words to reinforce particular strengths. In the case of new graduates, you should include areas where you have extensive course work or experience. For example, if a new graduate has taken several statistics courses and considers her statistical knowledge and skills to be advanced, she should list this somewhere on her online application and resumé, preferably in a list highlighting some courses completed.

The key to staying in the hiring process, whether it is through an online application or in face-to-face recruiting, is to be thorough and honest in presenting a complete picture of your qualifications and transferable skills. Other suggestions include:

- Follow directions. Be careful to enter the correct data in the correct field.
- Ask for advice on completing the application from an organization recruiter or an alumnus who may work at the organization.
- Tailor your application information to the position. Don't copy and paste text from your generic resumé.
- Use key words, buzz words, and industry verbiage. Use the verbiage in the job ad as your model. Employers search on key words when they're looking for people to fill specific positions.
- Create a skills inventory section if the application doesn't require it. You might put this in a "comments" section.
- You should also include remarks in the "comments" section that demonstrate you have researched the organization and industry.
- Include numbers and statistics that demonstrate your achievements or responsibilities. For instance, say "Counted five cash drawers daily; responsible for more than \$10,000 per 8-hour shift."
- Complete all fields—even those that aren't required.
- If the organization offers an optional assessment test online, take it. (One employer recently admitted that students who don't take the "optional" assessment test are automatically screened out.)
- In some cases, you may be asked to attach your resumé to or paste it into the application. Make sure your resumé format is simple in design. Fancy bullets, italics, and bold do not convert well in an electronic application. Many employers scan paper resúmes into their applicant systems. As a result, even if you aren't required to apply online, there's a good chance that your information will end up in the same place as if you had. Keeping your resumé format simple is good advice whether or not you're applying online.
- If possible, spell check and grammar check your application before submitting it. It's important that your application be error-free because it serves as the employer's first impression of you.
- Include a strong objective. Ask a career counselor to help you word your objective.
- Follow-up your electronic application with a personal e-mail to the recruiter. A follow-up phone call is acceptable if the job posting or ad does not say, "No phone calls."

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