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enquiries@sslcourses.co.uk
for more information



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Job Hunting

A GUIDE TO SUCCESS



Your essential guide helping you to find a work placement for an Apprenticeship or Traineeship programme at SS&L.

Do you...

Need a Part-time Job or Work Experience to go with your studies?

Are you...

Looking for an employer to start an Apprenticeship or Traineeship?

Then this guide will help you to achieve it.

For further information

or to book an appointment please, call us on **0330 332 7997** or email: enquiries@sslcourses.co.uk with your name, age, location and details of your enquiry.

Are You Ready?

Quick Checklist

- CV completed
- Letters completed
- Employer research and list written

You may be asked for one or more of the following documents as proof of identity if you have to claim additional funding, for example a bursary payment or salary, or if your area of work requires a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (a criminal record check).

- Your Birth Certificate
- National Insurance Number
- Bank Account Details
- Proof of address - usually a utility/mobile phone bill

Useful Websites

A growing number of jobs are being advertised on social media. Many small businesses rely on social networks and word of mouth to fill a position, rather than spending to advertise externally.

Useful websites:



sslcourses.co.uk

SS&L

Information on a range of local Apprenticeship opportunities, how to improve your maths and English, return-to-learn courses, part and full time accredited and non-accredited qualification, community and skills courses.

www.getingofar.gov.uk

National Apprenticeship Service

Information on all types of Apprenticeships and Traineeships and how to apply.

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

National Careers Service

Website provides careers advice and information on a wide range of jobs, training course resources and funding.

There are many job vacancy sites, below are only a few of these:

www.getingofar.gov.uk

www.reed.co.uk

www.monster.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

www.indeed.co.uk

Inside you will find easy tools to help plan your job search and examples of CVs and letters.

There are hints and tips for contacting employers and practical help with interviews.

Remember you may not always get a reply from letters and phone calls.

An interview does not guarantee a job, but don't give up! Every experience can be used positively to further improve your chances of success.

We're here to support you in your search for an employer, a career and your learning aims.



Traineeships

Traineeships have been introduced to support you to improve your maths and English and offer you high quality work experience to gain the skills and experience employers in Somerset are looking for.

Apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship is an excellent way of gaining both qualifications and real workplace experience in your chosen career. An Apprenticeship is a real, paid job with training and mentoring.

If you want to discuss our Apprenticeships, please contact our helpline on **0330 332 7997** or email enquiries@sslcourses.co.uk.

Traineeships

Apprenticeships

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The Interview

On the day of the interview take any letters or copies of emails and contact you have had with the company.

Make sure you know who to ask for and how to pronounce their name. Take any documents, qualification certificates and achievements that you have been asked to bring, including any additional information that supports your application such as your Record of Achievement.

Dos and Don'ts at Interview

Your interview begins before you enter the building. Be polite and professional with everyone you meet on or around the premises, including any reception staff. Interviewers often ask the receptionist what they thought!

Do shake hands with the interviewer, introduce yourself and smile - people make their mind up about you in the first 10 seconds! If they like you in the first 10 seconds the interview will go better for you!

- > Do turn your mobile phone off
- > Do make eye contact with interviewers.
- > Do listen carefully to the questions.
- > Do tell the interviewer if you do not understand the question.
- > Do ask questions.
- > Do thank the interviewer at the end of the interview and ask when you will be told the results.
- > Do disclose if you have a criminal record (when asked).

- > Don't accept the offer of tea or coffee you could be distracted or nervous and spill it – but do accept water if you feel you need it.
- > Don't fidget, be confident and be aware of your body language - sit up straight.
- > Don't stare.
- > Don't rush your answers.
- > Don't smoke or chew gum.
- > Don't make jokes.

Your interview lasts until you are well away from the building. Leave the interview and behave professionally until you are no longer in sight of the building - then you can relax!

After the interview

If you don't hear anything from the employer, give them a ring or contact your SS&L Account Manager. You are usually offered a job by phone or post. Think carefully before accepting; check all the salary details, work locations and benefits. If you don't think something is correct then query it. If you accept the job verbally confirm it in writing with a letter or email.

If you are not offered the job, ask the employer for feedback so you don't make the same mistakes and can improve at your next interview.

Try not to get too discouraged if you don't get the job - practice always helps!

Question Time

Think about possible questions which may arise about you, the job role/vacancy and the company.

Questions about you

- > How did you get on at school/college/most recent job?
What do you do in your spare time?
What are you good at?
- > Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
- > What do you think are your strengths/weaknesses?
- > Give me an example of when you had to overcome a problem/situation.

Questions about the job role/vacancy and the company

- > Why do you want this job?
- > What do you know about the company? What do you think is involved in the job?
- > What previous work experience have you had?

Questions you can ask the interviewer

- > Will I receive training and does it lead to a recognised qualification?
- > Are there opportunities for promotion?
- > What is the starting pay?
- > What hours will I work?

Example Questions & Answers

- > What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- > What personal qualities make you suited to this occupation?

Good Answer: ✓

"I am well organised and able to meet deadlines. I showed this when managing my time to meet coursework deadlines, as well as meeting my volunteering and football team commitments."

Bad Answer: ✗

"I am reliable but I can be late sometimes."

- > What are your goals?
- > Who motivates you?

Good Answer: ✓

"In my current/previous job I developed excellent communication skills, but I am ready for a new challenge and want to use these transferable skills in a different working environment."

Bad Answer: ✗

"I'm not sure; I'll see how it goes."

Getting Started

Be ready to apply for jobs using different methods. These could include phone calls, speculative letters, application forms (written and online) or a covering letter and Curriculum Vitae (CV).

Planning and preparation is important!

What type of employer?

What industry, sector or type of company do you want to work for? Focus your efforts where your career aspirations lie.

Where will you look for an employer?

Think about things like: can you get there by public transport, if necessary? Do you have any friends, family or neighbours who work in different areas that could help with transport?

Write or update your CV (and keep it updated). You will need to have more than one version, dependant on the employer or the type of job you are applying for.

Write a speculative letter to send to employers.

Be prepared and organised

If you have a computer, make a folder for job search. If you don't, keep a record of all contact with employers.

Attend all interviews

They are a good way to find out more about different jobs, practice answering questions and improve your interview skills.

Make notes after interviews

Were you asked any difficult questions? How did you answer them? What, if anything, would you do differently? Ask for feedback and use this to keep improving.

Don't waste time when you find out about a vacancy, act quickly.

When you send a CV or speculative letter always follow it up with a phone call.



Writing your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A CV is a summary of your skills, abilities, experience and achievements. A good CV is an excellent tool to let a potential employer know what you have achieved and what you can offer them. It lists your skills and interests and any work experience you have. Your CV is the first impression an employer will have of you so use it to persuade an employer to give you an interview.

There are no fixed rules when writing a CV, but you should ensure that you set the CV out clearly and all information is relevant and concise. If possible try to keep your CV to one side of A4. You need to be factual and honest with the information you include. Remember you will be asked questions on the content of your CV at interview.

There are no fixed rules when writing a CV

A CV should include:

- Full name, Contact details (address, telephone numbers and email address)
- > Personal profile.
 - > Education history.
 - > Qualifications or predicted grades
 - > Work experience (including any part time or voluntary work).
 - > Personal interests and hobbies (include any clubs and sports teams you are involved with as this shows commitment and the ability to work with others).
 - > References - these can be from your teachers, someone you have worked for or friends of the family.

You should not ask a member of the family to write you a reference.

CV Advice

- > Always have your CV in an emailable and printable version - make sure the formatting is good on both.
- > If printing your CV, use good quality paper.
- > Keep your CV up to date and keep a copy for your own reference.
- > Make sure your CV is relevant to the vacancy. You may need to have two or three different versions which emphasise your different skills and abilities.

Using Key Words

I am a friendly and confident individual looking for employment in customer services.

I am positive and helpful with the ability to communicate with customers.

I am experienced in selling a range of products and being effective at meeting sales targets.

Social Media

Your Social Media Footprint

Most people have some sort of social media account these days - whether that be Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube or any other.

Make sure all your social media settings are set to Private - only able to be viewed by close friends and family. Some employers will search for you online and they will come across your social media 'footprint'.

Having sexist, racist, rude or profane material on your social media pages is generally unacceptable, and an employer will usually decide not to take your application forward if they see this type of activity.

Ensure your personal profile is kept private from your work or professional profile.

LinkedIn is the exception. LinkedIn allows you to put your CV, work experience, career interests and qualifications online, and you can follow and network with people and companies in your industry to increase your knowledge and build a business profile. However, ensure you remain professional and put a sensible photo of yourself online in business attire - not a snap of you on holiday in a swimsuit!

Also ensure your email address is professional.



Key Words and Skills

These words can be included at any interview or on an application form that you complete.

Conscientious Versatile
Adaptable Efficient Resourceful
Problem solve Honest **Willing** Competent
Polite *Methodical* Initiative Good communicator
Creative
Friendly Motivated Positive Capable
Loyal Considerate Enthusiastic **Participated in**
Determined **Sociable** **Committed**
Flexible Caring **Effective at** Dependable
Hardworking Organised
Helpful Computer Literate **Trustworthy**
Confident **Responsible** Consistent
Dedicated
Experienced in
Team Work
Reliable

Make sure you know the meaning of a word before you use it.

General CV template

Christine Mallory
24 Mansfield Drive, Taunton, Somerset TA1 7QT
07763 446000
c_mans@ukonline.com.uk

Personal statement

An articulate and self-motivated customer service professional with three years' experience in banking and financial services sectors. Demonstrable skills in telephone handling and online customer service. An adaptable and dependable team player with a proven track record of service excellence, winning 'Outstanding Service Award in Q3 2011 and Q1 2012.

Core skills

- My core skills include:
- Shorthand and touch typing (60 wpm)
 - Excellent customer service skills
 - Staff management: teams up to 20 staff
 - IT skills: Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint
 - Language skills: Bi-lingual in English and Spanish

Employment history

Customer Service Advisor, Goliath National Bank, Jan 2011 - present
Responsibilities include:

- Managing customer interactions using the CRM database
 - Responding to and triaging customer calls
 - Providing pre and after sales support to customers by phone and email
 - Training new customer service advisors
 - Promoting customer service best practice throughout the team
- Key achievements:
- Achieved on average 115% call targets
 - Awarded employee of the month, January 2012
 - Promoted to Senior Customer Service Advisor after 6 months

Education & qualifications

- BA (Hons) English, Grade 2:1, Northampton University
- NVQ Level 2 in Engineering Maintenance, Highbridge College
- GCSEs: 8 grades A-C, Wimbledon High School

References available on request

Your CV can be adjusted to suit your needs. Just follow the main headings and put in your own personal details.

Covering & Speculative Letters



A covering letter should be sent with a CV or an application form in response to an advertised vacancy. This will provide the potential employer with some additional information about your skills and why you think you are the right person for the job.

A speculative letter is used to let an employer know that you are looking for work. Always enclose a copy of your CV with a speculative letter, as some employers keep speculative letters and CVs on file in case a job opening arises.

When contacting an employer by letter, try to find out to whom the letter should be addressed. A phone call to the company should establish this.

Remember that an employer's impression of your suitability for any vacancy will be based on your letter and CV. You are selling yourself, your skills and abilities. Highlight key details about skills and experiences that are most relevant to the job.

Well-written letters can draw attention to good points.

Both letters should include:

- > Your address and telephone number.
- > The date the letter will be sent.
- > The employer's name and address.
- > The job you are applying for or the type of job you are looking for.
- > Your school/college, leaving date and exams you have taken or are taking.
- > Reasons for your application or enquiry.
- > Details of any relevant work experience.
- > Your interests - be prepared to discuss these at the interview.
- > Details of anything that is enclosed with your letter such as your CV.
- > The correct ending to your letter
If you have addressed the letter to a particular person, end the letter with 'Yours sincerely'. If using Dear Sir/Madam, end with 'Yours faithfully'.
- > Your signature. Sign your name and then print your name underneath the signature.

TOP INTERVIEW TIPS

TIP

Make sure you know where you are going and how long it will take you to get there. The company may have a website with a map and directions to where they are based. Work out your route in advance and, if it's not somewhere you are familiar with, you could try a practice run and time your journey.

TIP

If you are taking a bus or a train, make sure you know which one to catch and any connections you have to make.

TIP

You may need proof that you can work in the UK. Useful documents include your original full birth certificate (not a photocopy); your passport; National Insurance (NI) number (if you do not have your NI card you could take an official letter containing your NI number).

TIP

Make sure relevant certificates or evidence relating to your qualifications or skills are up-to-date.

TIP

Prepare yourself for questions you are likely to be asked such as 'why did you apply?' or 'what are you good at?' Also prepare some relevant questions to ask about the job and company. This shows you have given it some thought and are interested.

TIP

Some interviewers may ask you to give them examples of how you have dealt in certain situations. If you have little work experience, you can give examples from school, sport or other personal situations. These are just as valid and the interviewer really wants to know how you problem solve or cope in certain scenarios.

TIP

Give careful thought to what you are going to wear to the interview. The key is to look smart but also be comfortable and confident in what you are wearing. Be discreet with make-up, jewellery, piercings, personal hygiene, clothing, perfume or aftershave.

TIP

Try to get a good night's sleep before your interview. If you are unable to attend an interview, because you are ill or have changed your mind, you must contact the company to let them know immediately.

Interviews

Interviews are the next stage in your job search and provide the employer with the opportunity to meet you in person and ask you questions relating to your own personal skills and qualities, their vacancy, and the information included in your CV, application form and letters.

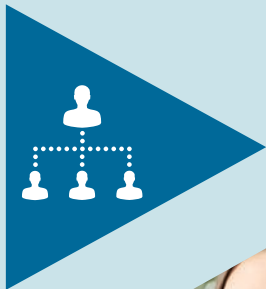
Before the Interview

Find out as much as you can about the company and what the job you have applied for involves. You can do this by checking the company's website, using a search engine or social media, or picking up corporate literature in person.

If you have been asked to attend an interview as a result of a speculative application or letter, think about the type of job you would like and research that. nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk has over 750 job profiles and www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship has a section on the types of apprenticeships available and the different job roles.

Can't attend the interview at the last minute?

Make sure you let your contact know as soon as possible and try to reschedule.



Covering Letter Example

29 Timpson Crescent
Boxtown
Somerset
MM2 2TY
01245 564123

Mrs R Talbot
Talbot Business Supplies
Alton Road
Boxtown
Somerset
MM6 9PL

Dear Mrs Talbot

My name is Andrew Brown and I am writing in response to your advertisement for the post of a Business Administrator which I saw advertised in the Somerset County News on the 21st September 2013. I have enclosed my CV for your consideration.

I have recently completed my GCSEs at Boxtown Community School in Maths, English, Science, Business Studies and Art. I have put the theory from my course into practice with extended work experience at Boxtown Council where I worked within a variety of different departments including Human Resources and Finance. My responsibilities included liaising with members of the public via phone, written and electronic communication. I was also responsible for recording invoices on the relevant databases and spreadsheets.

I am now looking for a position where I can use the experience and knowledge I have gained which include customer service, competent use of Microsoft Packages and organisational and time-management skills.

Having researched your company, I am keen to apply to your organisation. I am particularly interested in the training and development opportunities you provide for staff and the progression available within the wider company.

If you would like to discuss my application further or to arrange an interview, please contact me on 01245 564123 or at andrewbrown@email.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Brown

Speculative Letter Example

43 Wood Street
Boxtown
Somerset
MM4 6YZ

Mr Lawson
Personnel Manager
Boxtown Council
Corporation Mews
Boxtown
Somerset
MM1 6LM

Dear Mr Lawson

I am 16 years old and have just completed my GCSEs at Boxtown Community School. I am writing to enquire if the council will be recruiting over the summer or if you have considered taking on an Apprentice.

During June last year I undertook a two week work placement at Wet Brothers computing where I had the opportunity to job shadow one of their software developers in addition to carrying out basic administrative and customer service tasks.

I am keen to begin a career in business administration and ICT and would welcome the opportunity to take up an apprenticeship offered to me by Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L) by securing employment with the council.

If you would like any further information on apprenticeships please contact SS&L on 01278 426828 or email employers@sslscic.co.uk

I have enclosed my CV and a stamped, addressed envelope for your reply.

Alternatively you can contact me on 01245 69123 or email GGreen@email.com

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Green

Telephone Advice

Always prepare well in advance before making the phone call, taking into consideration you may be asked standard interview questions.

Speak clearly and listen carefully. If you create a bad impression with the employer it will be very difficult to overcome this.

Make sure you know your phone number or have it written down just in case they need to contact you.

Answer your phone! Or listen to any voice messages regularly. It may be the employer or account manager wishing to speak with you.

Have a pen and paper to hand so you can write down any information



Contacting Employers by Telephone

Before you phone:

- > Write down the name and job title of the person you want to speak to and the title of the job you are enquiring about. Write down questions you have about the job.
- > Have the job advertisement with you to check details and to serve as a prompt.
- > Have a pen and paper to hand so you can write down any information you are given.
- > If you are using a mobile, make sure it is fully charged with plenty of credit available. Make sure your answer phone message service is working and the message is professional, not jokey.
- > Have your CV ready to refer to during the call.

Once you are on the phone:

- > Ask for the person you need to speak to.
- > Speak clearly.
- > Give your full name and say which job you are interested in and where you saw the advert or why you have chosen to contact that employer.
- > Be prepared to talk about yourself, why you are interested in the job and why you feel that you would be suited to it.
- > Write down any information you are given about the job.
- > If you arrange an interview, write down the details and read them back to the employer to check that you have written them down correctly.
- > If you don't know how to get there, don't be afraid to ask for directions.
- > If you don't hear something clearly, don't be embarrassed about asking the person to repeat what they have said.
- > If you get through to an answering machine, don't panic! If you don't feel prepared to leave a message, put the phone down without saying anything and call back once you have had the opportunity to prepare a message.



Letter Advice

Many employers are happy to receive emailed letters and CVs but check in case they have requested a postal response. If you haven't had an email acknowledgement, make sure you follow up to ensure your letter has not gone into a spam file.

Some employers request handwritten covering letters, make sure your handwriting is neat and legible with no spelling or grammar errors.

You may want to post a speculative letter instead of email it as it may get noticed rather than lost in hundreds of other emails.

Finally, make sure you ask someone to look over your cover letter and CV to check for advice or errors.



A speculative letter is used to let an employer know that you are looking for work.



Application Forms

Many vacancies advertised, including Apprenticeships, will ask for a fully completed Application Form. There are several ways you may be asked to complete these:

- > via email.
- > via an online form and online submission.
- > paper copy which is handwritten and posted.

For every job advertised there are generally dozens, maybe hundreds, of applicants.

Filling in an application form is therefore very important. From an application form an employer can tell whether you:

- > Take care in the presentation of your work.
- > Can follow instructions.
- > Have the skills to match the job
- > Possess relevant qualifications and work experience.

When completing a handwritten form:

Always make a photocopy of the original blank form which you can use to practise on. After practicing, and before you put pen to paper, read through the form carefully to ensure you have understood the instructions how to complete it.

Follow all instructions, for example 'complete the form in black ink'.

- > Check all spellings.
- > Ensure your handwriting is clear and easy to read.
- > Keep the form in good condition.
- > Coffee rings and smudge marks do not create a good impression.

When completing forms:

- > Make sure that you have all the details of your qualifications, achievements and other relevant information to hand before you start. If it is all detailed on your CV, you could copy the information.
- > Make sure the information is relevant to the job you are applying for. You can change things around for different jobs.
- > Answer all the questions. If any do not apply to you, write 'not applicable' or 'N/A' in the space.
- > Allow plenty of time to complete the form. If you rush you are more likely to make mistakes.
- > Always send a covering letter with your application form.
- > Make sure you know how to add attachments to online application forms.
- > Use a non-joke email address to avoid embarrassment or give the wrong impression.

