Applying for jobs involves demonstrating as clear a match as possible between your experience, skills and personal qualities and the employer's requirements.

**Most employers are looking for**

• a thorough understanding of the job

• reliability, the ability to get on with people and to learn from experience

• a clear interest and enthusiasm for the job

• relevant experience, specialist skills and qualifications if required

**The practical tasks of applying for work, include**

• finding out as much as you can about the job and the employer is important - you may be able to talk to someone informally before you attend for interview or find out more about the employer through company literature, newspaper articles etc...

• writing a brief but informative letter of application in response to an advert

• filling in application forms clearly and fully

• preparing a concise, well-designed and tailored CV

• writing speculative letters and sending them to employers together with your CV

• phoning a company in response to an advert or on the off-chance that there may be a vacancy - always think about what you want to say in advance and have your CV to hand

• attending interviews, having prepared some thoughts on why the job appeals to you and what strengths and skills you have to offer

**Additional notes**

• numerous books have been written offering detailed advice on the above -

• staff recruitment and selection is not an entirely rational process - whilst many of those applying for a job will have the necessary skills and experience, the successful applicant may be chosen on the grounds of purely personal preferences and prejudices

• in the current economic climate many people cannot find paid work or are forced to work well below their abilities and aspirations. It is important that we don't blame ourselves for things beyond our control and that we make the most of our talents and live our lives as fully as we can.