

IN2015 Workshop 3:

Writing for Recruitment & Successful Applications



Learning Outcomes

- Understanding of application forms and why they are used
- Understanding of the different types of application form questions
- Understanding of competency-based and motivational approaches
- Awareness of the Star Technique, what this is and how to use it
- How to use GenAI for application form writing.



The importance of strong writing skills.

- Writing is a transferable skill; once you have learnt how to communicate in writing effectively, you'll be able to do it for multiple reasons.
- Practicing the skills of researching, critical analysis and communicating ideas, can all be transferred to any situation where you are asked to make a point, verbally or in writing.
- By learning to write a clear, logical, well-supported argument, you learn critical thinking and enhance your communication skills.
- That's what employers want, and it's an important skill that you can take with you to the workplace.



What strong writing skills can indicate to employers:

- Precise wording and well-structured sentences can help employers assess clarity of thought.
- A logical, easy-to-follow narrative can indicate strong organisational and critical analysis skills.
- How a person approaches tasks – i.e are they hasty or careful; are they thorough or superficial; do they consider how their work will be evaluated/received by others – clients, senior managers, stakeholders, etc.



Why strong skills are needed in the workplace:

1. A good way to communicate progressive ideas
2. A useful way to showcase your intelligence.
3. Demonstrate you can conduct thorough research
4. Showcases your ability for editing and fact-checking.
5. Shows good time management skills.



Writing for employability

An essential part of the recruitment process is the ability to write professionally

Developing your written skills will help you develop your:


- Ability to analyse and understand key information on job description.
- Ability to produce strong job applications
- Ability to convey your skills to potential employers
- Ability to communicate your personal motivation(s)
- Ability to convey complex, technical information



Employers often use job applications to indirectly assess a candidate's ability to write formally.

It is important to plan before you put pen to paper. Before you start, ask yourself:

- Why are you writing?
- Who is it for?
- What type of document is it?
- What examples are you going to use to evidence your points?



Start by writing a draft, then go back and refine it. Writing is a process:

- Think
- Plan
- Draft
- Edit
- Proofread

Remember:

- Any written communication provides a permanent record of your skill and ability to communicate effectively, so proofread your applications and have them checked before you submit them.
- Proof read your IN2015 assessments before you submit!!

7 c's of communication

When writing to employers, remember the 7 c's of communication:

What do you think these are:

Clear - be clear about your message. Why are you writing to this person?

Concise - keep your message focused and to the point.

Concrete - be clear (and sure) about the details you are providing.

Correct - make sure there are no errors; factual or grammatical.

Coherent - write your message in a logical sequence, connect all points and keep them relevant to the main topic.

Complete - include all relevant information – contact names, dates, times etc. Does the reader have all the information they need to take action?

Courteous - write in a polite, professional manner.

What is wrong with the following e-mail?

Hello,

Has your role been filled now or are you still considering my application? Its been 3 weeks since I sent my cv for you're placement and I haven't heard from you yet.

Michael

Clear – The full name of the placement role hasn't been specified. If the company is advertising multiple roles, they won't know which role this relates to.

Concise – Possibly a little too brief.


Concrete - Adding a specific date of application would have helped.

Correct – Its and you're are typos.

Coherent – The message would read better if the sentences were swapped around.

Complete – The e-mail would read better if addressed to someone, the full job title should have been included and the student's surname should have been included.

Courteous – The e-mail is not written formally and does not make a good impression. The tone of the e-mail could be interpreted as rude.



What would be a better way to word the e-mail to the company to find out if your placement application is still being considered?

Can you suggest some ways of re-wording the e-mail query?

TIP: Remember the 7 C's!

Role: Software Developer Intern
Company: Web solutions
REF: 2017SWD
Hiring Manager: Mr Smith
Closing date: November 21st
Date applied: November 18th
Application method: Online

Subject: Inquiry Regarding Software Developer Intern Application Status - REF: 2017SWD

Dear Mr. Smith,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to kindly inquire about the current status of my application for the Software Developer Intern position (REF: 2017SWD) with Web Solutions. I submitted my application online on November 18th, shortly before the closing date of November 21st.

I am very enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to your team, and I am keen to understand the next steps in your hiring process. Could you please let me know if the position has been filled or if my application is still under consideration?

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I appreciate the opportunity to apply for this role and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Warm regards,
Michael Smith

Explanation of the 7C's in the Email:

- 1.Clarity:** Clearly states the purpose of the email right from the subject line to the body.
- 2.Correctness:** Uses proper grammar, punctuation, and accurate details (like the reference number and application date).
- 3.Conciseness:** Keeps the email brief and to the point without unnecessary details.
- 4.Courtesy:** Polite and respectful tone throughout the email.
- 5.Concreteness:** Specific details about the role, reference number, and the dates related to the application process are mentioned to avoid any ambiguity.
- 6.Consideration:** Shows respect for the recipient's time by getting straight to the point but in a courteous manner.
- 7.Completeness:** Asks a specific question about the application status, ensuring that a response would provide the needed information.

Writing for employability checklist

Structure (the way the content is laid out)

- Is the layout clear and easy to follow?
- Do headings stand out?
- Is the information arranged in a logical sequence with a beginning (introduction), middle, and end (conclusion)?
- Does the introduction clearly state the subject and purpose?
- Does it briefly summarise the content?

Style (the way it is written)

- Does it look neat, and professional?
- Is it concise?
- Are the paragraphs too long? *Paragraphs of less than 10 lines are easier to read*
- Are sentences too long? *A sentence should contain just one idea.*
- Is the first sentence interesting/does it draw the reader in?
- Have you avoided unnecessary jargon?
- Is the style suitable for the intended audience?
- Have you avoided repetition?

Content (what you are writing about)

- Have you carefully checked the spelling and punctuation?
- Have you a clear objective?
- Have you listed the essential points you wish to make?
- Have you made these points clearly?
- Have you developed your argument in a logical way?
- Have you allowed detail to obscure the main issues?
- Is the content positive and constructive?
- Have you edited it through several revisions, honing the text until it is just right?
- Have you left it overnight and come back with 'fresh eyes' the next day?
- Have you got a 2nd opinion?



**Application
forms and
the different
types of
questions
you could
come across**

What are application forms testing?



- Research skills
- Commercial awareness about the company and the sector
- Understanding of what the job will actually involve.
- Motivation for the role and company
- Potential for growth into the role based on previous success
- Writing style and technique
- Ability to follow instructions
- Ultimately - your 'fit' for the role and company

Preparation is key....

- **Use the job description** – work out what employer is looking for.
- **Gather information about the employer** – use job descriptions, person specs, company website, LinkedIn, etc
- **Tailor your skills** – consider your what evidence you can demonstrate from job roles, studies, interests, etc.
- **Read ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS before you start!** – be sure to read through all the information provided so you are clear on what the employer/recruiter is asking for.
- **Give yourself plenty of time** – don't rush as this leads to mistakes.
- **Keep a record of your applications (remember back to last week's workshop!)**
Document: when you apply, what stage of recruitment are you up to; closing dates, interview dates, etc

Some last checks before you start....

- **Check that you are eligible to apply** – UCAS points/relevant degree? Do you have the asked for core competencies?
- **Log-in to the company careers website** - register if required, look at the application process, make a copy of the questions, work on them from a Word document and paste in later (stick to the word limit).
- **Take note of any word count** – The allocated word count/spacing can indicate the importance of the question to the employer
- **Do not copy and paste from your last application** - the questions might seem the same for each company but they will be subtly different.
- **Presentation is important** – Use paragraphs to break up text and ensure grammar and spelling is correct!
- **Make a copy** – once you submit it is unlikely you can view your form again.

Motivational Questions – recap from Week 2

Motivation is what causes us to act – drinking when thirsty or reading for knowledge, sleeping when tired!

Designed to find out how much you actually know about the role and what will motivate you to succeed once you get there.

Two types of motivation:

1. **Extrinsic:** arise outside the individual and often involve a reward – money, praise, recognition
2. **Intrinsic:** arise from within – doing a crossword puzzle simply for gratification of solving a problem.

For job applications it is best to use examples of intrinsic

Shows to employers if you have researched the company and position as well as indicating how you will perform.

Typical questions are “Why do you want to work for us?” or Where do you see yourself in x years?



Tackling Motivational Questions

Last week we looked at how to tackle common motivational questions: “why do you want to work for us?” and “Why have you chosen the area of business you are applying to?”

Research the company - the company's values, mission, and recent projects. Focus on what excites you about their work. Mention any technologies, products, or innovations they've developed that resonate with your career goals or personal interests.

Align with Your Goals: Highlight how the company fits with your long-term career aspirations. If you're passionate about a particular area, like cloud computing or app development, and the company excels in that area, make the connection clear.

Emphasise Learning Opportunities: As an undergraduate, it's important to express your eagerness to learn. Mention that you're seeking a placement where you can grow and develop your skills, and explain how the company's culture or technology stack is perfect for that growth.

Cultural Fit: If the company has a strong culture (e.g., teamwork, innovation, work-life balance), talk about how this fits with what you're looking for in your placement year experience.

Mutual Benefit: Frame your answer to show how your skills and enthusiasm can benefit the company while also giving you the experience you're looking for.

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/interview-questions/320333-what-motivates-you-tricky-graduate-interview-question>



Competency-based Approach

Based on the premise that past behaviour is a good predictor of future behaviour.

Is a hiring method that evaluates candidates based on their skills, knowledge, and abilities relevant to a job role. It's different from traditional hiring methods because it focuses on competencies and behaviours rather than just education or work experience

These competencies can include problem-solving, leadership, technical expertise, teamworking, decision-making, planning, organising, providing quality services and more.

The aim to find out **how** you have used specific skills in your previous experience and how you approach problems, tasks and challenges

Particularly useful for employers looking for 'raw' talent (e.g. graduates for training schemes where prior knowledge may be less important than having the right aptitude).

Common Competency-based Questions

Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team to achieve a goal.

- **What is this assessing:** This question assesses **teamwork** and **collaboration**. The recruiter wants to see how well you contribute to a group effort, how you communicate with others, and how you handle different perspectives to achieve a common objective.

Describe a situation where you encountered a difficult bug or technical issue. How did you resolve it?

- **What is this assessing:** The recruiter is looking for your **problem-solving** and **debugging** abilities. They want to understand how you approach identifying and fixing technical problems, how you use tools or frameworks, and your process for finding an effective solution.



Common Competency-based Questions

Give an example of a time when you had to manage multiple coding assignments or deadlines for projects.

- **What is this assessing:** This question assesses your **time management** and **prioritisation skills**. The recruiter is evaluating how you handle competing tasks like coding assignments, project deadlines, and your ability to stay organised and productive under pressure.

Tell me about a time you received feedback on your code or approach to a project. How did you incorporate it?"

- **What is this assessing:** The recruiter is assessing your **receptiveness to feedback** and **adaptability**. They want to see how you respond to code reviews or feedback on your technical approach and how you make improvements to enhance your work based on suggestions from others.

**Can't think what to
write.....**

**.....try the STAR
Technique**





Quick Question:

What does STAR stand for?

1. Scenario, Timing, Achievement, Result
2. Situation, Task, Achievement, Reflect
3. Situation, Task, Action, Result
4. Scenario, Timing, Analysis, Reflect

STAR Technique – how to structure your answers

Situation: Set the scene, give context, what? when? where? what? who?

Task: What did *you* do? What was *your* task, responsibility or challenge?)

Action: You then describe how you completed the task or endeavoured to meet the challenge. Focus on what you did, rather than what your team, boss, or co-worker did. (Tip: Instead of saying, "We did xyx," say "I did xyz.")

Result: What was the outcome? What did *you* achieve? Did *you* make a profit or efficiency saving? Try to make this part quantifiable. What did *you* do well? Did anything go wrong? How did *you* cope?



Learn: To really impress, show that you have reflected and say what you learnt – if relevant include how you might do it differently next time or what skills you need to develop

Using the STAR technique well

- Use recent and relevant examples – these are easier to recall.
- Try to include a task and action that are related to the role.
- It's easy to get too bogged down in detail explaining the first stages, but the most **important parts are action and results**.
- Make sure that the action you took shows that have the skills *and* qualities the company are looking for
- **Try to choose an example with a positive outcome**; if it was not positive show what you learnt or what you might do differently next time (STARL)

Source: <https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/star-technique>

Lets go back to 2 our earlier questions:

Tell me about a time you worked as part of a development team to complete a project.

Situation: During my second year at university, I worked with a team of three other students on a group project to develop a web application for managing student assignments.

Task: My role was to handle the backend development, particularly setting up the database and API integration, while collaborating with the front-end developers.

Action: We used Git for version control and held regular team meetings to track progress. I ensured that my API endpoints were functional and communicated effectively with the front-end team to integrate our work smoothly.

Result: The project was completed successfully and presented on time. We received positive feedback from our lecturers, particularly on the seamless communication between the front and backend components.

Learn: After the project was completed, I reflected that even though our collaboration went smoothly, scheduling more frequent sync-ups could have helped us avoid minor integration issues early on. I learned that maintaining continuous communication in team-based development is crucial for avoiding bottlenecks and improving efficiency.

Give an example of a time when you had to manage multiple coding assignments or deadlines for projects.

Situation: Last semester, I faced a situation where I had three major deadlines in the same week: a coding assignment, a group project, and a final exam preparation.

Task: My task was to manage my time effectively to ensure I completed each task on time, without sacrificing quality.

Action: I created a detailed schedule, breaking down each task into smaller steps. I prioritized urgent tasks like the coding assignment, which had the closest deadline, and allocated time for each project in a balanced way. I also worked with my group to delegate tasks efficiently for the team project.

Result: I successfully completed all the assignments on time. My coding project received high marks, and the group project presentation was well-received. This experience taught me how to balance multiple responsibilities under pressure.

Learn: After completing these assignments, I realised that although my time management strategies were effective, I could have improved by allocating buffer time for unexpected issues. In future projects, I plan to include more flexibility in my schedule to accommodate last-minute changes or improvements without feeling rushed. This experience taught me the importance of both structure and adaptability when managing multiple deadlines.



Tips for answering competency-based questions

- Treat each question like an exam question - answer the set question.
- Focus on what the employer is looking for - refer to the job spec and person. specification and match your answers to their requirements.
- Highlight your *achievements* - use *relevant*, recent, specific examples.
- Vary your examples – use experiences from your education, employment, voluntary work and extra curricular activity.
- Try to be original; extra-curricular activity will make you stand out.

Group Activity – Using the STAR technique



Objective: Use the STAR technique to answer the first two technical questions on the GORS application form, using information from your own CV.

Instructions:

- Log into the IN2015 Moodle page and download the GORS Application Form and Analyst Placement job description.
- Open up a copy of your own CV.
- Pair up or form small groups of no more than four participants.
- Take a few minutes to review the job description to familiarise yourselves with the essential criteria and main job role responsibilities.
- Focus on the first two technical questions provided in the GORS application and answer them drawing on evidence from your own skills/experience from your CV.
- **You will need to use the STAR Technique to structure your answers.**
- You have 10-15 minutes to complete this activity.

Technical Skills Questions – examples you can use!

Q1 - Describe examples of where you have applied mathematical, statistical or other operational research techniques (including computer programming, spreadsheets, databases or other specialist software) to solve a complex problem.

- Have you designed an app, game or software that solved a specific problem using a combination of programming skills and other operational research techniques. Explain the problem, your approach, and how the application made a difference.
- Reflect on any tasks from internship or academic studies where you were asked to analyse a problem or process. Describe how you went about the analysis, what tools or methods you used, and how your conclusions were used by the company. Detail how you reported these findings, whether through formal reports, presentations, or informal updates.

Q2 - Provide details of when you have been able to draw effective conclusions and/or advise others using your analysis, including how you presented your results.

- Think about open source projects, describe how you analysed existing issues or feature requests, contributed code, and how you discussed these changes with the project community. Highlight your use of platforms like GitHub for presenting your work and how you advised on solutions through pull requests and issue discussions.
- Have you completed an academic project where you created or managed a database. Discuss how you analysed the data stored to optimize retrieval, ensure data integrity, or improve user interface design. Explain how you presented these findings to your peers, lecturers, or during a project showcase.

Using GenAI for applications

It may not surprise you to know that Generative AI's poster child, ChatGPT, [reached 100 million users in just two months](#) – exponentially faster than TikTok (9 months), Instagram (30 months), and Uber (70 months).

[ArticShores](#) carried out a survey in September 2023 and around **72% of students and graduates** were using GenAI regularly – and for an average of 1hr 14 minutes per week.

As of June 2024, that number is significantly higher. In fact...

- **88%** of students and graduates are using GenAI tools every week – for an average of 1 hour 29 minutes.
- **86%** would describe themselves as proficient
- **59%** have or would use GenAI in the selection and assessment process

Key Ways that Recruiters Can Identify GenAI-Written Applications

1. Generic language

AI-generated cover letters often rely on broad, non-specific language. Common phrases like "I am excited about this opportunity" or "I am confident my skills will contribute to your team".



Recruiters expect a cover letter to be tailored to the job and company and the use of vague statements make it appear as if the letter could be sent to any employer for any position. This signals that the applicant hasn't put in the effort to tailor the letter for the role, which might suggest laziness or lack of genuine interest.

Example of a generic AI phrase: "I am a hard-working individual with skills in programming and problem solving. I believe my experience make me a great fit for your company."

What would be better: "'I am particularly drawn to [Company Name]'s focus on innovative AI solutions. During a recent project at for my *An Introduction to AI* module, I developed a machine learning model that increased prediction accuracy by 10%, which I believe aligns with your company's ongoing work in predictive analytics."

2. Lack of specificity in skills and experiences

AI-generated cover letters often provide a surface-level description of skills or experience, such as listing technical skills without context or failing to mention specific outcomes, challenges, or achievements.



Recruiters want to see how your skills have been applied in practice, not just a bullet-point list of what you know. Specific examples that quantify results (e.g., "improved system efficiency by 15%") help you stand out and show that you're results-driven

Example of a Lack of Specificity: "I have experience working with various programming languages like Java, Python, and C++. I also have experience with web development."

What would be better: "At my previous internship, I developed a Python-based script to automate data collection, reducing manual input by 30%. I also collaborated on a web development project using JavaScript, where I improved the application's response time by 25%."

3. Generic Job Role or Industry Focus

AI-generated cover letters often fail to clearly explain why the candidate is applying for *this specific role*. Instead, they focus on broad, industry-level statements that lack direct relevance to the job description



Recruiters are looking for applicants who understand the particular demands of the job and how their background fits. A cover letter that doesn't mention the specific responsibilities of the role may feel disconnected from the job itself.

Example of generic industry focus: "I am passionate about the technology industry and would love the chance to work at your company in a software engineering role."

What would be better: "As a software engineering graduate, I am excited about the opportunity to work on the Azure IoT Operations platform and my experience with cloud computing will allow me to contribute immediately to Microsoft's ongoing development projects."



GIGO stands for garbage in, garbage out.

It is a computer science and mathematics concept that the quality of the input determines the quality of the output.

This principle applies when writing job application prompts for generative AI.

When using generative AI models to generate text based on prompts, the quality, clarity, and specificity of the prompt strongly influence the quality of the AI's response.



As we saw last week you can use AI to help build your CV. You can also use it for applications forms/cover letters!

How to best use GenAI to help with applications:

Give the programme clear and specific tasks - Define your request clearly and be specific about what you want the AI to generate. Vague or ambiguous prompts can lead to unexpected outputs.

- ***Vague:*** Generate some interview questions.
- ***Clear:*** If I upload a role description, could you suggest some interview questions I could be asked at an interview for this opportunity?

Contextual information helps the AI generate more relevant content. For example, feed in your CV if you want to ask the programme to generate a tailored application form content, otherwise the AI has no context about your skills and experiences.

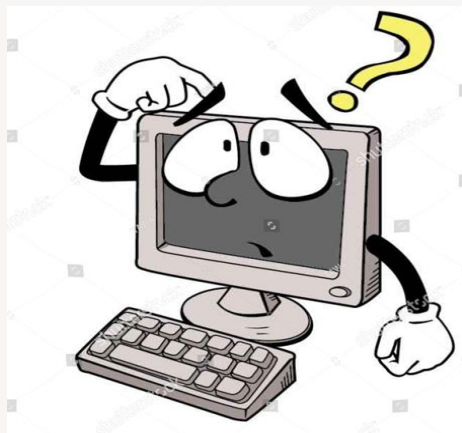


Desired tone: If you have a specific style, tone, or voice in mind, mention that in the prompt. This guides the AI's output to match your expectations.



Constraints: If there are any constraints, restrictions, or guidelines to follow, communicate them. For instance, if you want a response within a certain word limit or you want the AI to avoid certain topics, make sure this is part of your prompt.

For example, "I have uploaded information about an opportunity. Suggest some interview questions based on this role, but avoid highly technical questions and focus mostly on motivation questions."



Lastly consider prompt length While being clear and specific is important, overly long prompts might confuse the AI. Keep the prompt as concise as you can while conveying all the necessary information.

Progressive prompts: If the initial response isn't what you're looking for, consider building upon the previous responses to guide the AI in the right direction. For example, you could ask the programme to "rewrite this in a formal tone,"

Iterative refinement: Don't hesitate to refine your prompt if the initial output isn't satisfactory. Tweaking the prompt can often lead to better results. Think of content produced by generative AI programmes as a first draft – you will still need to finalise the content and style it to suit your purposes.



Generative AI models will give you outputs based on the application form it has been trained on, **but that doesn't mean they'll be perfect for you!**

Don't be afraid to rewrite them to let your personality come through.

AI isn't magic – it only knows what you tell it

Better prompts = better results: let's try it out

Prompt 1: "Write me a cover letter for a placement."

Why it's poor: Too vague. Doesn't mention the company, role, skills, or experiences. The AI can only generate something generic because it has almost nothing to work with.

Prompt 2: "Write me a cover letter for a software engineering placement at IBM. Mention my skills in Python and Java, and that I want to develop my technical skills."

Why it's ok: More specific — includes company, role, and some skills. But still surface-level, no context about projects, achievements, or motivations. The AI will produce something a bit better, but still quite generic

Prompt 3: "Write me a cover letter for a software engineering placement at IBM. Highlight my experience in backend development using Python and Java, including a group project where I integrated APIs and used Git for version control. Emphasise my interest in IBM's AI and cloud computing work, and link this to my career goal of developing scalable software systems."

Why it's good: Provides clear detail — role, company, skills, specific project example, tools used, and motivation. The AI now has enough context to generate a tailored, stronger cover letter.

Group Activity – Part 2



Objective: Use the STAR technique to answer the two behavioural questions on the GORS application form, utilising experiences from your own CV as evidence AND the GORS job description, with the assistance of a GenAI platform.

Instructions:

- Ensure that you still have the GORS application form, job description and your own CV open to view.
- Upload the GORS job description and your CV to the platform (****remove any personal details from your CV such as name, email address, mobile number!****). This will help you leverage AI tools to analyse the documents and assist in creating more relevant answers.
- Focus on the two behavioural questions provided in the GORS application form.
- Use the GenAI platform's insights along with the information from your CV and the job description to draft your answers.

Behaviourial Skills – examples you could use

Q3 - Managing a Quality Service.

- Think about a time when you had to deliver a project or a piece of work on a very tight deadline. Explain how you prioritised tasks, managed your time efficiently, and perhaps coordinated with others to meet the client's deadline successfully.
- Use a time when you handled a client complaint. Detail how you listened to the client's concerns, took responsibility, and took action to remedy the situation

Q4 – Working Together

- Have you participated in hackathons, case competitions, or other similar challenges? Discuss how you and your team divided tasks and merged different skills to solve a problem within a limited timeframe.
- Have you undertaken part-time work or an internship where teamwork was essential. For example, if you worked in a retail or restaurant setting, discuss how you collaborated with your colleagues to manage busy shifts, address customer needs efficiently, and support each other to ensure smooth operations.

We tried this out using the DWP job description and a dummy CV. This is what we learned:

Over-embellished work experience:

- Without specific info inputted GenAI will generate responses based on typical or assumed responsibilities relating to a role.

Discrepancy with word count: Needed further prompting to provide an answer that fully utilised the allocated word count 1) 188, 2) 210, 3) 248

- If the prompt is ambiguous or the word count limitation is mentioned in a way that the AI does not recognize as a strict constraint, the response may not comply with the word limit.
- The AI requires clear and unambiguous instructions to apply constraints effectively.**

Restricted use of examples: Needed specific prompting to use examples from CV other work experience. Remember recruiters like to see personal examples drawn from different areas of your life

- While other experiences like volunteering, hobbies, or academic projects could also demonstrate relevant skills, GenAI might default to work experience unless specifically guided otherwise.

JOE BLOGS

E: JBlogs@email.co.uk M: 07111111111

Education

City, University of London	BSc Software Engineering	2023-2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Modules include: Programming in Java, Mathematics for Computing, Systems Architecture, Object-Oriented Analysis and Design, Programming in C++, Data Structures and Algorithms.		

London School and Sixth Form	A-Levels and GCSEs	2019-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A-Levels: Mathematics (B), Physics (B), Information Technology (A)GCSEs: 10 subjects, grades 9-7 including English and Mathematics		

IT Skills and Projects

Programming Languages:	Java, C++, Python, SQL
Software Packages:	Microsoft Office, Adobe, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Visual Studio, Visual Paradigm
Operating Systems:	Windows, Linux, IOS

- Created a multiple level game using Java
- A database system in SQL using visual paradigm to solve queries
- Created a satisfiability problem algorithm as part of my coursework
- Currently learning Python and C++ on code academy as a personal interest

Employment

Visual Express	Optical Assistant	Mar 2023-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proficient in analysing prescription needs, facilitating check-ins, and measuring for tailored eyewear solutions.Experienced in teaching contact lens use for patient comfort and confidence.Skilled in using diagnostic machinery for eye health assessments and providing lens information.Trained and supervised new staff, adapting well to new management and fostering teamwork.Managed closing duties, handled customer complaints, and resolved eyewear issues.		

Tesco	Customer Assistant	2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide prompt, friendly, and efficient customer service by assisting customers with their shopping needs, answering questions, and resolving any issues or complaints. This includes guiding customers to products, providing recommendations, and ensuring a positive shopping experience.Operate cash registers and handle financial transactions accurately. This responsibility includes scanning items, applying discounts or promotions, processing payments, and ensuring a smooth and efficient checkout process for customers.		

London Vaccination Centre	Vaccination Volunteer	2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborated with Public Health England, Brent Health Matters, and NHS officials to successfully deliver over 15,000 vaccines in the local area, ensuring efficient and organized operations.<u>Managed vaccination bookings</u>, handled ad-hoc administrative tasks, and maintained effective communication with users to streamline the vaccination process.Developed and distributed communication materials, leveraging social media platforms and personalized messages, including phone calls, to promote vaccination events and increase community engagement.		

Additional Skills and Information

Languages:	English (fluent), Spanish (beginner), Arabic (beginner)
Fundraising:	Fundraised over £2,000 for a local food bank through a charity walk and bake sale.
Music:	I enjoy playing the piano and guitar in my spare time.

Example of GenAI 'over-embellishing' work experience

During my time as a Customer Assistant at Tesco, I was part of a diverse team responsible for managing the seasonal rush, a critical period that demanded excellent teamwork and communication. The goal was to ensure a smooth shopping experience for customers during the holiday season, which required meticulous planning and coordination among team members.

To handle the increased workload and customer inquiries efficiently, **I initiated a shift-planning strategy that involved all team members in decision-making, ensuring shifts and responsibilities were distributed equitably and according to individual strengths.** This approach not only optimized our resources but also fostered a sense of ownership and collaboration among the team.

Furthermore, I led a daily briefing session where we discussed the goals for the day, addressed any issues from the previous day, and shared strategies for improving our service. These sessions became a platform for team members to voice their suggestions and concerns, enhancing our collective problem-solving capacity.

The results of our teamwork were evident in the enhanced customer satisfaction scores and the smooth handling of a 40% increase in store traffic during the holiday season. Our team was recognized by store management for outstanding performance and maintaining high service standards under pressure. This experience at Tesco reinforced my ability to collaborate effectively with others, ensuring team objectives are met while maintaining high standards of customer service.

Further prompt: “can you simplify the example to fit more closely with someone who has more junior experience that would be more realistic for a student working part-time around their lectures.”

In my current role of Customer Assistant at Tesco, I am primarily responsible for overseeing the self-checkout area during the store's busiest periods, including weekend shifts. This role was crucial in ensuring efficient customer service and maintaining high customer satisfaction during peak shopping hours.

Working in the self-checkout area involved more than monitoring transactions; it required active engagement with customers to assist them with the machines and resolve any issues they encountered. **Common problems included scanning errors, payment difficulties, and promotional code misreads, all of which could lead to delays and increased wait times if not addressed promptly.**

To improve the operation of this busy area, I suggested implementing clear, user-friendly instructions at each self-checkout station. I collaborated with my supervisors to design these instructions, which highlighted step-by-step usage tips and troubleshooting advice for frequent errors. These guides helped reduce the common issues that customers faced, allowing them to complete their transactions more independently and efficiently.

Additionally, I regularly communicated with my team to help create a more streamlined process, where team members could better manage their stations and provide quicker assistance, significantly cutting down on customer wait times. Through this role at Tesco, I developed key skills in customer service, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Before you submit your application/cover letter

- Check it spelling and grammar!
- Correct any casual/informal language.
- Make sure your answers are not too generic or vague.
- Check that you haven't typed the wrong company name.
- Ask somebody to proof-read it for you.
- Make sure you haven't lied or exaggerated – your interviewer may quiz you on anything you wrote.
- Print or save a copy for future reference – always review your application before an interview.
- Make sure you have followed all of the instructions.

Self Study Options - reminder

Each IN2015 student should select ONE Self Study Option (SSO) to engage with.

The SSOs are generally online tutorials which you are required to **work on in your own time. This time is factored into the recommended self-study hours for this module.**

The SSOs will develop your skills and will be a fantastic **addition to your CV** – it will give you a competitive advantage over other placement and graduate job applicants, **make your applications stronger** and give you more to talk about at interviews.

Examples of PDO Options

Bright Network

We're delighted to partner with Bright Network to bring you this free e-learning platform, full of expert advice to help you prepare for the world of work and graduate applications. This is our top recommendation and a fantastic way to kick-start your professional development. City students can explore the Bright Network Academy through our exclusive portal and access sector-focused courses to help you discover your passions, build top skills and be trained by leading employers. Completing a course in full boosts your career skills and unlocks a unique certificate you can add to your CV. There are over 50 modules, 100s of videos and we're constantly releasing new courses - so there's something for everyone.

Unreal Engine 4

Unreal Engine 4 is a complete suite of game development tools made by game developers, for game developers. From 2D mobile games to console blockbusters and VR, Unreal Engine 4 gives you everything you need to start, ship, grow and stand out from the crowd. Unreal Engine 4 has features such as:

- Mobile – Develop mobile games for both iOS and Android devices
- Blueprints – Blueprint visual scripting enables you to rapidly prototype and build complete games
- Tools – The Unreal Editor is a fully integrated suite of tools for building every aspect of your project.

....continued

Codecademy

Codecademy is the easiest way to learn how to code as it is interactive and fun. If you are a BSc student, you may want to consider this option as many placements and graduate positions require some basic understanding of code. There are a number of language skills you can gain, such as:

- HTML & CSS
- JavaScript
- jQuery
- PHP
- Python
- Ruby

Codecademy allows you to keep track of the skills you are currently learning and skills that you have learnt, making it easier for you to track your development. You can even set your own goals and learn how to use popular APIs to make your own applications.

Windows Dev Centre

You'll find everything you need to create great apps and make them available to customers. You can access tutorials to help you target all Windows devices from a single project, in the language you prefer. They also provide guidance, references and code snippets to help you build your apps. You can even build apps for Windows 10.

Tizag Tutorials

Tizag Tutorials are designed to provide the skills for beginner web programmers on how to use HTML and CSS. Additionally, tutorials are also provided in scripting languages such as JavaScript. These tutorials are in the form of written notes and are also free of charge.

Assessment 1 – Professional Presentation

- Deadline:** **11/12/25** This assessment will be delivered in place of the final lecture and workshop. **N.B.** Keep all day free until your PDIT tutor confirms your presentation time (a time slot will be given to you in advance).
- Submission:** Your Professional Presentation is delivered in person, on campus. *Please be aware that IN2015 Assessment 1 does not qualify for either extensions or late submissions (the only exception to this is for any students with a SSP which states flexible deadlines can be agreed).*
NOTE: You are not required to submit anything to Moodle for A1. The purpose of the A1 submission area on Moodle is for mark release only.
- Structure (5m):** **Introduction:** Enter the room and briefly introduce yourself in a professional manner. You will then be required to answer 2 questions:
- **Q1:** Commercial awareness question.
 - **Q2:** LEPSI question.
 - **Conclude:** Thank the interviewer, concluding remarks and leave.

Assessment 1 – Professional Presentation

Assessment 1 is an in-person assessment which will simulate a professional job interview (for a placement year at the NHS).

Your individual assessment will last approx. 5 minutes.

You will be asked 2 questions: one question will assess your commercial awareness and the other will assess your understanding of the legal, ethical, professional, and social issues affecting IT professionals. Both of these topics will be covered in full in our workshops.

You will also be assessed on your professional conduct and your ability to communicate your ideas clearly and professionally.

At the assessment, you should conduct yourself as you would at a professional job interview i.e. you should consider your dress code, body language and choice of language.

You should formally begin and end the interview (just as you would at any professional interview).

Assessment 1...continued

As with any professional interview, you will **need to prepare appropriately**.

You will need to use the '[A1 job description](#)' (available on Moodle) to prepare for the interview.

In order to demonstrate your commercial awareness effectively you will be **required to research the organisation** and the work it does.

- For example, you **may be asked about the NHS's values**, strategic plan or current challenges facing the organisation.
- You may be asked about the technology sector and **your motivations for working in IT**. *In the week 10 workshop, we cover Commercial Awareness in full.*

In order to demonstrate your understanding of the legal, ethical, professional, and social issues affecting IT professionals you will need to:

- **refer to the content we will teach in week 9 and 10** and research more about the topics discussed.
- For example, you may be asked about professionalism and ethics, legislation such as data protection and professional codes of conduct.

Assessment 1...continued

Questions will be selected randomly from a pool to ensure fairness while maintaining variety.

When answering your questions, **remember to use professional language** and articulate yourself clearly.

Remember to **show your passion and enthusiasm**.

Take care to **structure your answers clearly** so that you can be easily understood. *We will cover this in the week 5 workshop when we focus on interviews.*

5 minutes are allocated per student. You should practice answering possible interview questions concisely.

Information which we cover in the **upcoming workshops will help you prepare** for this assessment (interview technique, commercial awareness, LEPSI, presentation skills...).

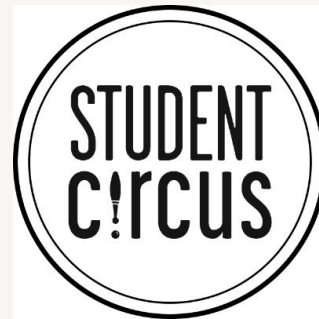
The assessment task, job description and assessment scheme can be found in the assessment area of Moodle (and in the handbook).

Core Event Tech@City
Placements and Internships Fair
9am – 11am, Thursday 30th October
Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre Foyer

- You will have the opportunity to visit the stall of different organisations, who will be recruiting for 2026 internships/ placements.
- Do your research prior to the event, to ask tailored questions on the opportunities available.
- Consider bringing some copies of your CV.

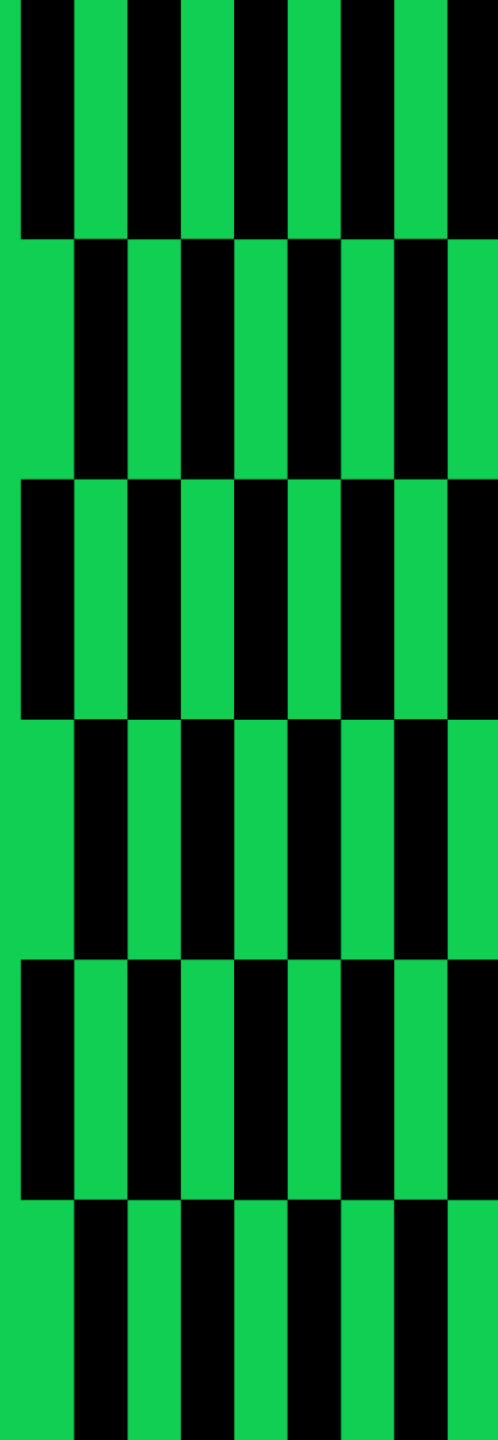
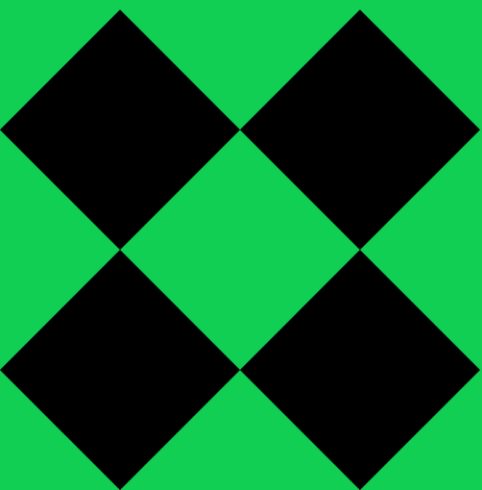


Tech@City:Exhibitors



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Covering letters






Cover letter guidelines


Your letter should explain:

- 1- Why you want to work for their organisation
- 2 - Why you want to work in that particular role
- 3 - Why your strengths, skills and experience make you the right candidate

- 
- Keep it to one page
 - Don't copy and paste from your CV – nobody wants to read anything twice
 - Expand on relevant, interesting and impressive points from your CV
 - Use the tips below to help you to think about what to include in a cover letter.
 - Note that they are just *suggestions*. You will not be able to address all of these points or the letter will be far too long

Personal Statements

- Used to more explicitly position you for a role than is possible through a CV or application form alone.
- Recruiters will tell you what points they want you to address – usually why you want the job, why you think you are a good fit for it and how you meet the requirements of the person specification.
- Follow the guidelines carefully. Your aim is to perfectly match yourself to the role and show your knowledge of the role and company
- Start at the top of the list of 'skills required' and work your way down providing examples that evidence your competence
- Check the word/character length allowed before you finalise your statement.
Be concise

- 
1. Breaking the task of writing a personal statement down into small, manageable steps can help you write a strong statement While your introduction, body and conclusion sections should be in that order,
 2. Write an introduction that reflects you and your personality.
 3. The body of your personal statement lets you share more about your relevant skills, interests and experiences. Write about personal details that relate to the job or course for which you are applying:
 - a. **Your achievements and experience:** Write about your degrees, certifications, awards, years of industry experience and positions you have held that relate to the job's responsibilities or the university's educational offerings.
 - b. **Your relevant skills and talents:** Describe the talents and skills you have learned during university or on your career path. Consider mentioning specific skills discussed in a job listing or values the school is looking for in students.
 - c. **What you would bring to the organization:** Discuss why you feel you would be an asset to the company or university. You can mention your experience or eagerness to learn specific skills, perform tasks or earn credentials in a field.
 - d. **Your professional or academic goals:** Write about how the job or course you are applying for fits into your dreams for the future. Consider selecting a specific goal the job or course can help you achieve

....continued...the conclusion

4. Craft a conclusion that leaves a strong, lasting impression on the prospective employer
In this final section of your statement, you can include:

- **Extension of your professional goals:** Some statements for job applications may include specific reference to your goals and how the position can help you achieve those goals. Consider discussing relevant short- and long-term goals, such as what you hope to achieve in the position
- **Summary of your personal statement:** A brief summary of the main points in your statement can be an effective strategy for a one-sentence conclusion or one sentence of a larger conclusion. Be sure to connect your achievements, experiences and skills directly to your future contributions with the company. **Link back to your introduction:** Revisit your introduction and what interested you in the position, Ending a personal statement on your enthusiasm for the opportunity can influence a company to consider your candidacy seriously as well as showing your commitment to your career goals.

The conclusion of your personal statement for a job should be a single sentence, so consider selecting only one of the above strategies.

Using generative AI to write your cover letter

As with CVs, generative AI can be a great tool to use but should be utilised with caution...

- Can help save time and boost efficiency
- Can help you maintain a professional tone and style.
- Boost confidence.

Be aware of the pitfalls:

- Over-reliance on AI-generated content – it's a starting point not the final result.
- It can make grammatical and spelling errors – still need to proof-read.
- Lack of specific tailoring – AI tools may not always create content relevant or tailored to the specific job role.

*“Your interactions with ChatGPT will feel like a back-and-forth conversation, where you refine your requests or share information as you go along to help it improve the quality, accuracy, and relevance of the responses it provides.” **Keith Spencer***