

## Additional guidance for job applicants

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust receives many thousands of job applications each year. Many of them are not put forward for interview because of the poor quality of the application form. We have produced this guide to help you to write good job applications. It is divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
- 9 steps to applying for a job in the NHS
- Your supporting statement
- References
- A 'positive about disabilities' employer
- Declaring a criminal conviction

### Introduction

Your application form is often the first contact an NHS employer will have with you. Most of the time, it is the only thing that they will use to decide if they are going to invite you to interview. So if you want to be offered a job interview, it's really important to get your application form right. Once you learn the art of writing a really good job application this will stand you in good stead for the rest of your career.

The NHS uses an online application system (NHS Jobs) for most of its recruitment. Many NHS Trusts will offer a hard copy version for anyone who has difficulty using an online system, but generally speaking it is much quicker and easier to process your application if it is completed online. And it's easier for you to change and submit as well.

### 8 steps to applying for a job in the NHS

To apply for a job in the NHS you need to follow these steps:

1. Visit the NHS Jobs website [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) and search through the jobs currently being advertised.
2. If you find a job you like the sound of, or would like to be sent details of future jobs which are advertised, then your next step is to register with the website. Once you are registered you can then apply for jobs.

3. For jobs which are of interest, first read the job advert carefully. There may be useful information to help with your application. The advert will also give you the salary, working hours, and location of the job.
4. Now look at the documents which are attached to the advert. In particular the job description and person specification (often one document) will give you much more information about the job and the skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications required for the post.
5. Now click on apply and this will take you through to the application form.
6. Complete the personal details section. Your personal details will be saved and so you only need to enter them once.
7. Complete the equality and diversity section:
  - This information will be saved and can be re-used for future applications.
  - You can choose not to give answers to these questions if you prefer – simply select the ‘Prefer not to say’ option
  - This information is used to ensure that adverts and jobs appeal to a wide range of job applicants. It is never seen by managers who decide who to interview, or interview panels. It is usually only seen by people in the Human Resources department.
8. Complete the rest of the application form. Some of this information will change for each job you apply for. Some things like your previous jobs, qualifications or courses will remain the same. Unless a CV is specifically asked for, it will not be used.
9. Now you are ready to submit the application.

### Your supporting statement

Some posts advertised by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust have additional ‘key questions’ which we ask you to answer. These will be included in the person specification and relate to the job you are applying for. If you do not answer these questions you may not be shortlisted for interview. You should answer these questions in the supporting statement.

When you write your supporting statement it is worth bearing in mind that this is probably the most important section on the form. The information here is a large

part of what managers will use to decide whether or not to invite you for an interview.

To write a really good supporting statement you will need to explain clearly and concisely how you meet all of the essential criteria for the post. If you don't then the manager is likely to assume you aren't suitable for the job. You are more likely to be invited for interview if you are able to show that you meet some or all of the desirable criteria as well.

It is a good idea to give examples for both the essential and desirable criteria. Think about what skills and experience you have that may be relevant to the job advertised. These maybe in a paid job of work, volunteer or work experience placement, school, college or university, or in another area of your life. For example if the person specification asks for someone with good team working ability, you could include something like:

“I worked on a group project at school. My role included writing and presenting part of the project. Team working was essential for this project.”

Do this for each of the criteria.

All person specifications are different so if you save your application form make sure you change the information to suit each job you apply for.

Now make sure you have completed the rest of the form correctly, and included all of your work history (including work experience and volunteering), qualifications and other courses.

## References

Obtaining references is one of the most difficult parts of the recruitment process. It often means a long delay before we can offer someone a job. You can help by taking time to make sure that you have:

- included up-to-date contact details for your referees – including an email address if possible
- checked that your referees are happy to give you a reference
- informed your referees that that we will be contacting them

The following information may help you to work out who is the best person to be a referee for you:

- You must give names and contact details of at least two referees with whom we can confirm the information you have given and who can comment on your suitability for the post you have applied for. If you are currently employed, your referees should be your line managers and should be from your most recent employers. Internal candidates should give their head of department. Students should give the name of the head teacher, or tutor as appropriate.
- If you cannot give referees please state clearly why you are unable to, so that we consider all circumstances. Please note that personal referees will NOT be accepted and will delay the recruitment process.
- If you do not wish your referees to be contacted prior to interview, please indicate on the application form. Please note that no offer of employment can be made without satisfactory references.

### A 'positive about disabilities' employer

If you have a disability or long term health condition then you may find the following information helps with your application.

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust welcomes applications from people with disabilities or long term health condition. The Trust works hard to retain their 'Two Ticks' symbols. This is a quality standard award made by Job Centre Plus.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was extended in 2006 and now covers a wider range of conditions including long term health conditions such as migraine, asthma, eczema, heart conditions etc. A condition is covered by the DDA if it is a physical or mental health condition which has a significant adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for more than 12 months. If you require any adjustments for your interview then please make sure you complete the relevant section of the application form.

Whilst you do not have to discuss your disability or health condition at interview, you are encouraged to do so if you think you may require any adjustments. If you do not feel able to do this, then it is important that you discuss this with the recruiting manager as soon as possible after you receive your offer letter. This will enable you to start work effectively on the first day of your new job.

### Guaranteed Interview Scheme

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is a 'Two Ticks' symbol user, then they guarantee an interview to anyone with a disability whose application meets the

essential criteria for the post. The essential criteria will be listed on the person specification which is attached to the advert.

If you wish to apply under the 'Guaranteed Interview Scheme' please tick the relevant box on the application form. You should also ensure that you have stated that you have a disability in the equality and diversity section, as the scheme is only open to job applicants who are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). In the supporting statement, make sure you explain clearly how you meet all of the essential criteria, giving examples where possible. If you do meet the essential criteria you will then be invited for an interview.

### Declaring a criminal conviction

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily mean that you won't be offered a job with us. Each case is considered on an individual basis, in compliance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the Criminal Records Bureau policy. We would look at things like how relevant the incident was to the post you have applied for, how recent it was, and if there appears to be a pattern of offending.

It is important that you answer questions about any conviction, caution, warning, reprimand or bind-over you may have honestly. If you don't then this is fraud and you may find that a job offer is withdrawn or in some circumstances you can be dismissed from a job.

The questions will vary according to the type of job you have applied for:

- All applicants must declare unspent convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands or bind-overs.
- Some of our posts require you to declare these even if they are considered spent; and some of our posts will require you to have a Criminal Records Bureau.
- Some of our posts which involve working with children will require you to have an additional Protection of Children Act (POCA) check.

### Submitting your application

- You can save your application at any time and come back and work on it later.
- Make sure you have answered all of the mandatory fields.
- When you have completed the form, double check the information. Check the spelling and that dates etc are correct. If possible ask someone else to read

your application. Remember an application form is a legal document and it is important that you have completed it honestly and accurately.

- Now click on 'Submit'.
- Remember make sure you submit your application before the closing date or it won't be accepted.

### Interviews

- Once applications are received a recruitment administrator will automatically send rejection letters to anyone who has not answered any key questions. All other applications will be sent to the manager who will decide who they would like to interview. This is known as shortlisting.
- If you are shortlisted, you will be contacted by email, (or telephone, if you have not applied online) usually at least one week prior to the interview. You will also be informed of any additional requirements at this time such as a presentation, typing test etc.
- If you do not receive a reply within 10 days you have not been shortlisted for the post.
- It is therefore essential to regularly check your email to see if you have been short-listed.
- You should confirm your attendance at interview as soon as possible by email.

### If you are successful

- An offer of employment will be made subject to satisfactory references, Health Clearance and Criminal Records Bureau Clearance (if applicable). You will receive a formal offer in writing from the recruitment department.
- If you have accepted the offer, you will be asked to confirm a start date.
- You will receive a Confirmation letter prior to your start date.

### If you are unsuccessful

- If you are unsuccessful at interview you will receive notification by email.
- If you wish you may obtain feedback about your interview from the chair of the interview panel. Please contact the recruitment administrator to arrange this.

Good luck with your application.