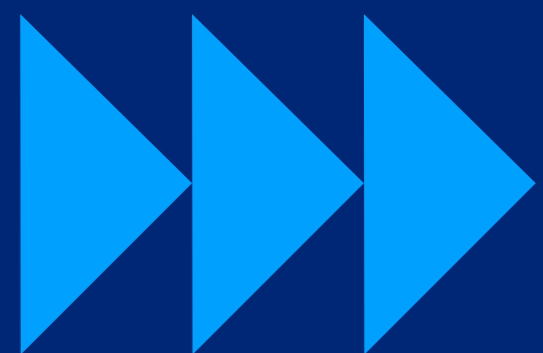


# MY JOB SEEKER TOOLKIT

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR  
A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH



# WHAT'S INSIDE?

This Jobseeker Toolkit provides you with all the tools and resources you need to find your dream job.  
Read on to access advice to help you at each stage of your job search journey:





# WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE **STARTING** YOUR JOB SEARCH



# WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE **STARTING YOUR JOB SEARCH**

It can be tempting to dive straight into writing your CV to kick off your job search. But, if you want to create a document which is going to deliver the results you're looking for, it's important that you first take some time to think about what you really want in your next move.

So, before going any further, ask yourself these questions:

- 1** ▶ **Why are you looking for a new role?**
- 2** ▶ **What salary and benefits package are you looking for?**
- 3** ▶ **Which role would be a sensible step towards your long-term career goals?**
- 4** ▶ **Which technical and soft skills are you looking to develop?**
- 5** ▶ **What size company do you want to work at?**
- 6** ▶ **What sort of company culture and values are you looking for?**
- 7** ▶ **Do you want to be based in the workplace full time, fully remotely or in a hybrid model?**

Once you've asked yourself these questions:

- ▶ **What are your deal-breakers?**
- ▶ **What are you prepared to be more flexible about?**
- ▶ **Which strengths and weaknesses will affect my options?**





# UPDATING YOUR CV

## YOUR GUIDE TO WRITING A WINNING CV

Applying for jobs and want to make sure your CV stands out from the crowd? Or perhaps you just want to be ready in case a recruiter contacts you with your dream job?

Whether you're writing your first CV or updating an old version, here you'll find all the tips and advice you need to ensure it gets noticed by a recruiter who can put you forward for your desired roles.





Actual references are rarely included on CVs; it is usually fine to simply write 'References are available on request'.

The image shows a wireframe of a resume template. The template is divided into several sections, each represented by horizontal lines indicating text placement. The sections are: 'Education' (top left), 'Work Experience' (middle left), 'Skills' (bottom left), 'Hobbies & Interests' (top right), and 'References' (bottom right). A large blue triangle is positioned on the right side of the page, and a smaller blue triangle is at the bottom left. The overall design is clean and modern, with a blue and white color scheme.

# PLOT OUT YOUR **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

Now, it's time to plot out your employment history, starting with your most recent role. Remember to:

## 1. FORMAT EACH JOB IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

- Job title
- Company (and location)
- Dates of employment
- Type of contract
- Key responsibilities and achievements

## 2. LIST YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

If you were unemployed for a period of time, explain how you made use of this time; whether it was job searching or travelling. Whatever your reasons, be as transparent as possible. Within each entry of your employment history, focus on the value you added, not what your duties were. If any of your roles were temporary, say so.

## 3. RESEARCH KEYWORDS

Identify keywords for the job vacancy you are applying for and use these where relevant in your role descriptions.

## 4. PROVIDE ADDED DETAIL

Be sure to add more detail to previous roles that are most directly linked to the role that you're applying for.

### EXAMPLE:

**FINANCE MANAGER [INSERT COMPANY NAME] JULY 2017 – JANUARY 2021**

- Management of monthly management accounts and P&L
- Planning and managing budgets
- Preparation of balance sheet schedules
- Analysis of key accounts and expenses
- Supporting in year-end audit

**VANESSA PLUM**  
Finance Manager

Personal Statement

Skills Summary

Employment History

Education & Training

Hobbies & Interests

Achievements

References

# BRING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS TO LIFE

As you write your employment history, make sure you use action verbs to communicate your successes and evidence your achievements.



## EXAMPLES OF ACTION VERBS:

|                   |                                                                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CREATIVE SKILLS   | ▶ Built, crafted, devised, implemented, pioneered, initiated, established |
| EFFICIENCY        | ▶ Enhanced, advanced, capitalised, maximised, leveraged, improved         |
| LEADERSHIP        | ▶ Headed, coordinated, executed, managed, operated, organised             |
| IMPROVEMENTS MADE | ▶ Refined, remodelled, strengthened, upgraded, transformed                |

## ACTION VERBS IN ACTION:

|                      |                                                                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COMMUNICATION SKILLS | ▶ 'Wrote', 'published', 'edited' or 'swayed'                           |
| ORGANISATION SKILLS  | ▶ 'Facilitated', 'programmed', 'arranged' 'coordinated' or 'allocated' |
| TARGETS MET          | ▶ 'Reached', 'surpassed' or 'accomplished'                             |

## WANT MORE ADVICE ON WRITING A CV THAT GRABS THE READER'S ATTENTION AND GETS YOU AN INTERVIEW?

- ▶ How to write an eye-catching personal statement
- ▶ Presenting your employment history in the clearest way possible
- ▶ The best way to showcase your skills
- ▶ Which common clichés the reader is already tired of
- ▶ Checking for “easy-to-miss errors”

## DOWNLOAD OUR USEFUL GUIDE

CV GUIDE  
DOWNLOAD





# USING LINKEDIN TO **FIND A NEW JOB**



# HOW TO BOOST YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

A CV isn't the only way for you to market yourself to recruiters and hiring parties. From meeting the right people to finding the right job vacancies, LinkedIn provides numerous opportunities for you to move forward in your career.

To do this effectively, you'll need to ensure that your profile is up to date and you're making the most of what's on offer.

## CHOOSE A PHOTO

- Dress professionally, but make sure your attire suits the role you want
- Feel free to express yourself, but keep it professional
- Don't crop a group photo or have a busy background

## MAKE CONNECTIONS

- Connect with people you don't know, including 2nd or even 3rd connections
- However, don't send a request to somebody you don't know without a personalised intro message
- Don't re-send too many requests – you might be marked as spam



## BUILD YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

- Consider what you want people to know about you, and what sets you apart
- Don't be shy to get involved in conversations
- Try to stay positive when you post

## BE #OPENTOWORK

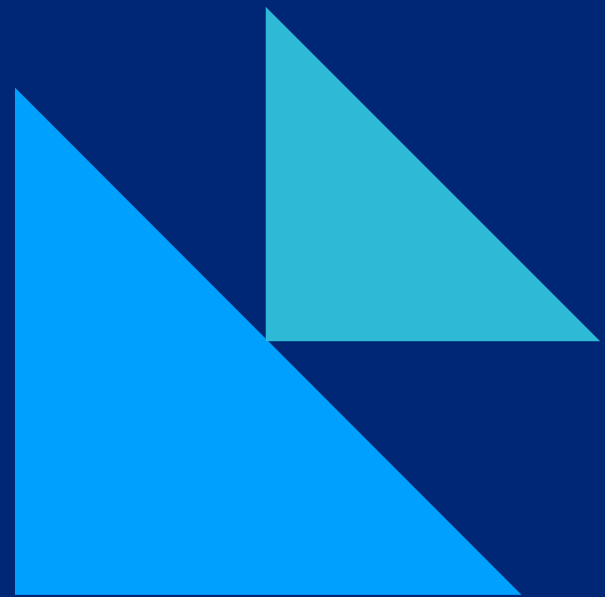
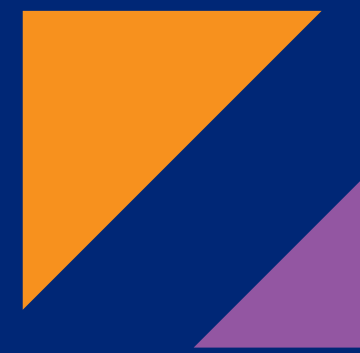
- Use the #OpenToWork photo frame to show recruiters that you're looking for a new opportunity
- Make sure to select which job roles you're interested in
- Decide whether you want this to be visible only to recruiters outside your organisation, or to everybody

To find out more about using LinkedIn to find your next job, watch our webinar



**LINKEDIN WEBINAR**

# APPLYING FOR JOBS



# TAILOR YOUR CV TO THE ROLE

Once your CV and LinkedIn profile are in order, it's time to start applying for jobs.

When you write your CV, you should create a 'generic' version. This should include everything that a recruiter or hiring manager would be interested in, from your complete employment history to your skills and achievements.

However, **do not** send this as part of an application.

Instead, take this generic CV as your starting point and adapt it for each role that you apply for. Taking the time and effort at this stage of the process will pay huge dividends.

## 1. LOOK AT THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Highlight the keywords and phrases in the job description and sort them by category: experience, technical skills and soft skills. Copy these onto another page so you're ready to incorporate them into your CV.

Remember that hiring managers and recruiters will use keywords when searching for candidates, so it's important that yours are relevant and reflect you accurately.

## 2. RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Learn what you can about the employer from their website, as well as any recent news stories and their social media (LinkedIn is a great place to start). Think about what would be relevant to your role.



# TAILOR YOUR CV TO THE ROLE

Next, it's time to use this information to tailor your CV:

### 3. REWRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Explain why you don't just want to work in this specific industry or field, but for the hiring company in particular. Portray yourself as someone with the qualities and experience sought in the job description.

### 4. TWEAK YOUR WORK HISTORY AND SKILLS

To demonstrate your suitability for the role to which you're applying, adapt the content of your CV by highlighting the responsibilities and skills mentioned in the job description. Consider any duties in past roles that aren't so relevant for this opportunity, then remove them or cut them down to keep this application on topic.



# ADD A COVER LETTER

Submitting a cover letter to complement your CV can boost your chances of standing out to the recruiter or hiring manager.

Here are some tips on drafting one:



## 1. RESEARCH BEFORE YOU START WRITING

You should have done this when creating your CV, but you'll have additional opportunities here to make reference to the hiring company's industry, culture and values.

## 2. PERSONALISE IT

Don't copy and paste your cover letter for every application with a few minor adjustments. It's worth taking the time to write one from scratch, since the reader will know when you've just edited a few words of the same cover letter that you send to everyone.

## 3. START WITH A STRONG INTRO TO HOOK THE READER IN

The first sentence will either grab the reader's attention or lose it. Instantly tell your story and communicate how you're the solution to the hiring manager's problems, instead of the generic "I'm applying for the role of XXX."

## 4. MENTION WHETHER YOU'VE COME ACROSS THIS OPPORTUNITY VIA A FRIEND OR CONNECTION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

It could be that it was suggested to you because they thought you were a good fit for the role, or you crossed paths as an intern or an employee at one of the company's suppliers or competitors?

## GET YOUR COVER LETTER TEMPLATE HERE

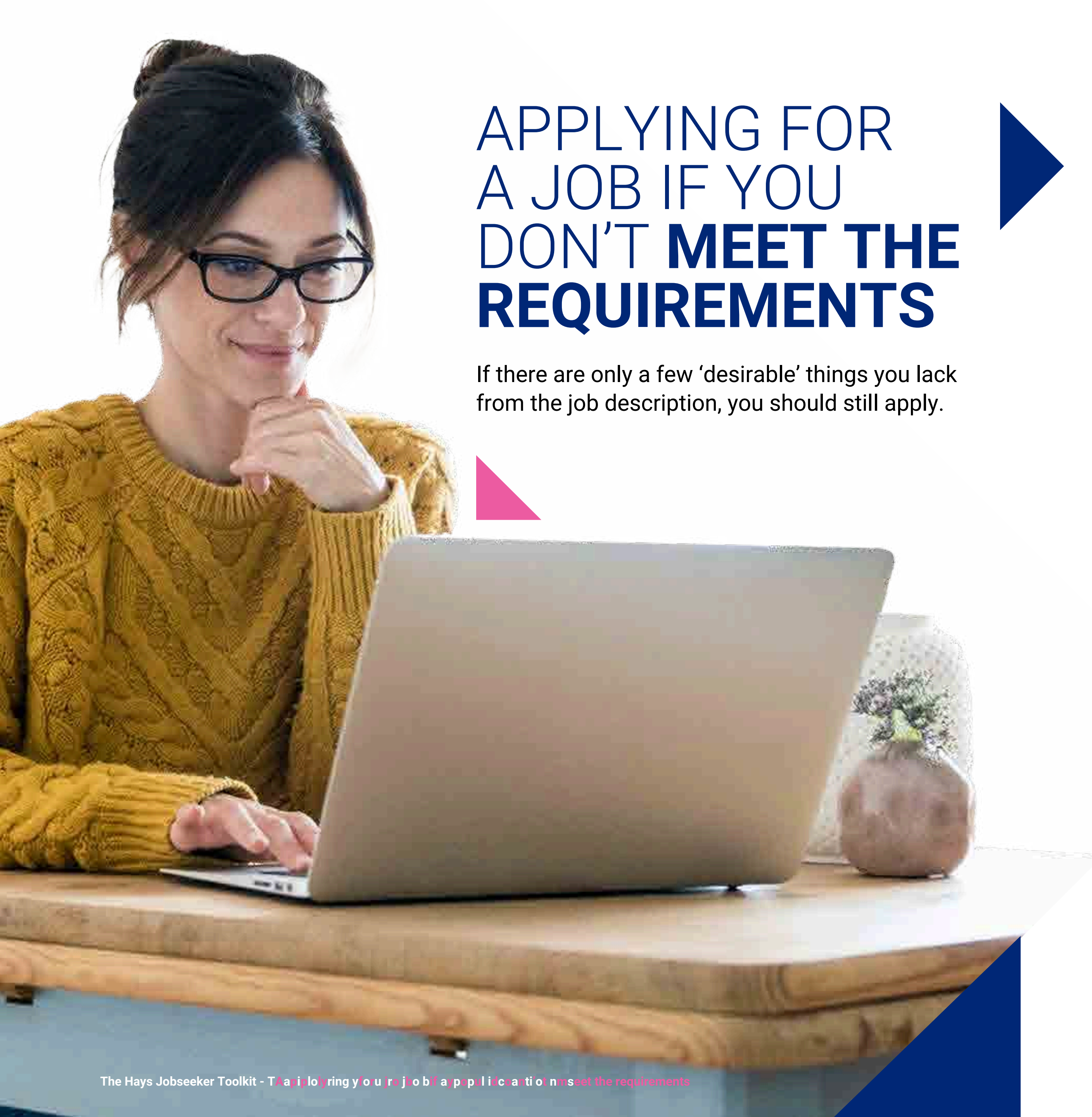
**COVER LETTER  
TEMPLATES  
DOWNLOAD**



## FOR MORE ADVICE ON TAILORING YOUR CV AND WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR COVER LETTER, DOWNLOAD OUR GUIDE

**CV GUIDE  
DOWNLOAD**





# APPLYING FOR A JOB IF YOU DON'T **MEET THE REQUIREMENTS**

If there are only a few 'desirable' things you lack from the job description, you should still apply.

## WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY?

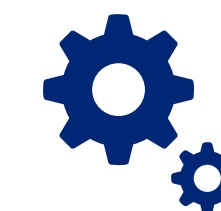
- 1 IT'S UNLIKELY THAT THE EMPLOYER IS LOOKING FOR AN EXACT MATCH
- 2 YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LEARN CERTAIN SKILLS 'ON THE JOB'
- 3 YOU CAN BRING OTHER QUALITIES TO THE ROLE

## HOW?

Focus your CV, cover letter and interview answers on what you can bring to the role.



Demonstrate your willingness to learn



Demonstrate your passion for the industry and role



Provide examples of your work and demonstrate your expertise



Connect the dots and prove your transferable skills



# SUCCESSING IN **YOUR** INTERVIEW



# YOUR PRE-INTERVIEW TO-DO LIST

Now that you've updated your CV and LinkedIn profile, you've secured an interview. Congratulations! It's time to turn your attention to ensuring that this is a success - whether it's taking place in person, over video or phone.

- ▶ **Do your research**
- ▶ **Plan how you are going to introduce yourself**
- ▶ **Prepare your answers to common interview questions**
- ▶ **Learn how to use the STAR technique for situational interview questions**
- ▶ **Be ready to explain any gaps on your CV**
- ▶ **Plan the questions you're going to ask your interviewer**

# ON THE DAY OF YOUR JOB INTERVIEW

You've prepared as best you can.

Here are a few final tips for the interview itself.

- ▶ **Refresh your mind of the job description, your CV, and any key notes you have made.**
- ▶ **Plan your route to the interview early, or ensure your tech is working for a video call.**
- ▶ **Arrive early. If you're running late because of factors outside of your control, then let your interviewer or recruiter know.**
- ▶ **Ensure you build rapport with your interviewer by smiling, using their name frequently and showing that you're engaged with what they have to say**



# HOW TO TALK ABOUT SALARY EXPECTATIONS IN YOUR INTERVIEW

To help you confidently ask for the salary you want and deserve, we have the following advice:

Use your recruiter to help negotiate with the employer

Prepare to ask salary questions in your interview

Know your worth and your priorities

Use the opportunity to ask about the entire benefits package



Research the market rate for your role

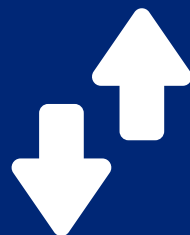
## THINGS TO AVOID:



Indicating salary is your main motivator



Asking about salary first



Over or under-selling yourself

# WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR JOB INTERVIEW

## Do

- ▶ Reflect on how the interview went by identifying what went well and where there's room for improvement
- ▶ Talk to your recruiter straight after the interview
- ▶ Give your references a heads up

## Don't

- ▶ Don't cut ties with your recruiter – as for feedback from the interview and keep in touch for any future opportunities
- ▶ Let your performance drop in your current role, or in your job search
- ▶ Lose track of who you have interviewed with
- ▶ Call off the job search, even if you have a good feeling about the interview

LOOKING FOR FURTHER  
ADVICE ON HOW TO PREPARE  
FOR AND CONDUCT YOURSELF  
THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW  
PROCESS? **DOWNLOAD OUR  
USEFUL GUIDE**

- ▶ Tips for getting into a positive mindset
- ▶ The structure for your introduction at the start of the interview
- ▶ Ways to explain gaps on your CV
- ▶ Ideas for questions to ask your interviewer
- ▶ What to do if your mind goes blank

**INTERVIEW GUIDE  
DOWNLOAD**





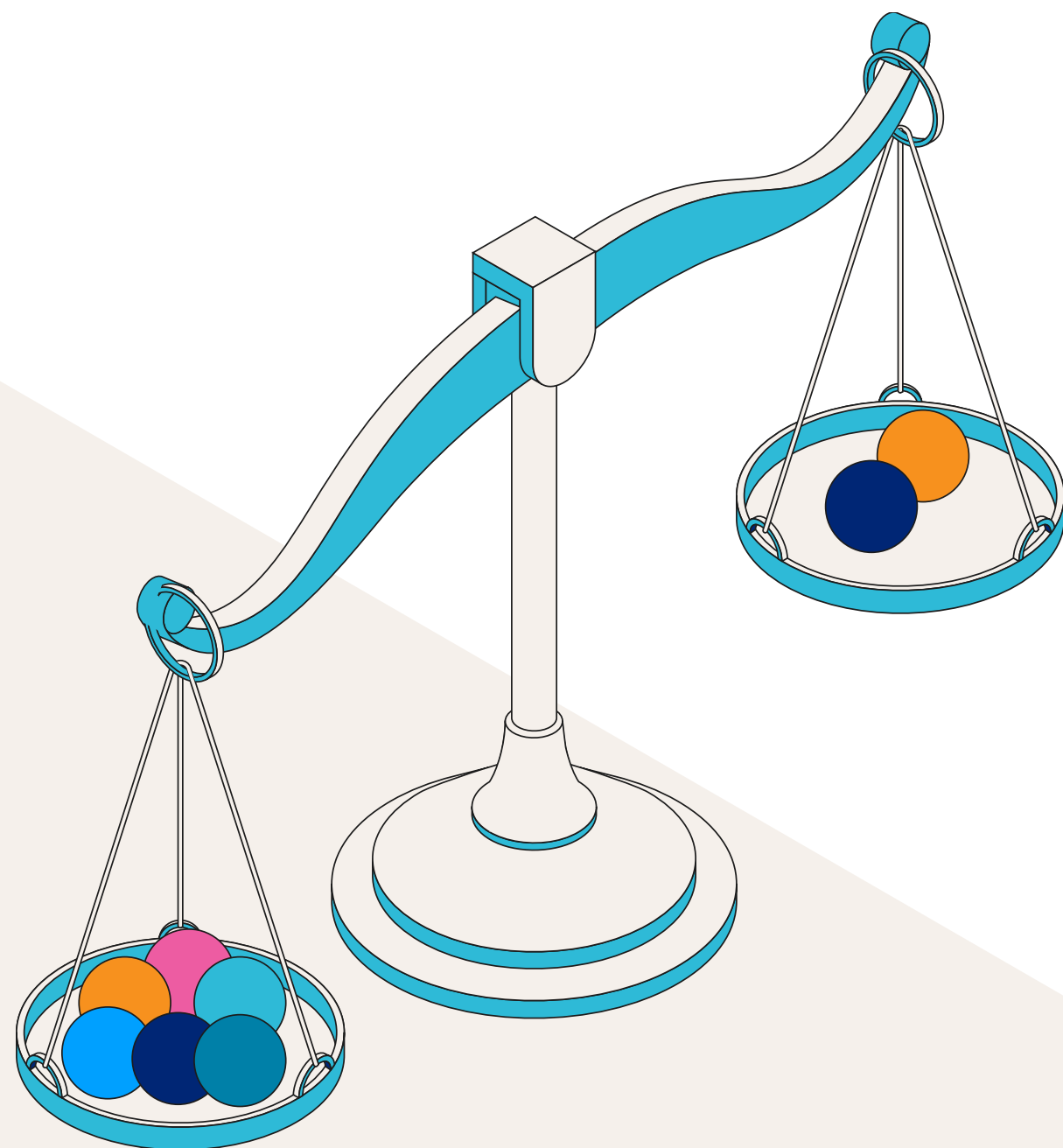
# ASSESSING JOB OFFERS **AND MAKING THE RIGHT DECISION FOR YOU**



# IS THE JOB YOU'VE BEEN OFFERED RIGHT FOR YOU?

**After your interview, it's time to ask yourself whether you can picture yourself joining the organisation.**

Here are some questions to consider when making your decision on whether you want to proceed with your application.



1

## DO YOU FEEL EXCITED ABOUT THE JOB?

- Does it align with your career plan?
- Did you feel excited when the interviewer was explaining the role in more detail?
- Did you find yourself asking more questions about the opportunity?

3

## WHAT DID YOU THINK OF YOUR POTENTIAL NEW MANAGER?

- How did they come across during the interview?
- Were they a strong communicator?
- Did they explain the job and their expectations for the role clearly?
- Did they answer all of your questions fully?

2

## IS THE COMPANY RIGHT FOR YOU?

- How did you feel about their purpose, values and culture?
- Would you feel proud and passionate about working there?
- What were your first impressions of potential colleagues?

4

## WHAT IS YOUR "GUT" TELLING YOU?

- Did you walk away from the interview feeling more excited than when you walked in?
- Do your feelings for this align with the objectives you set out at the start of your job search?



# HANDING IN YOUR NOTICE

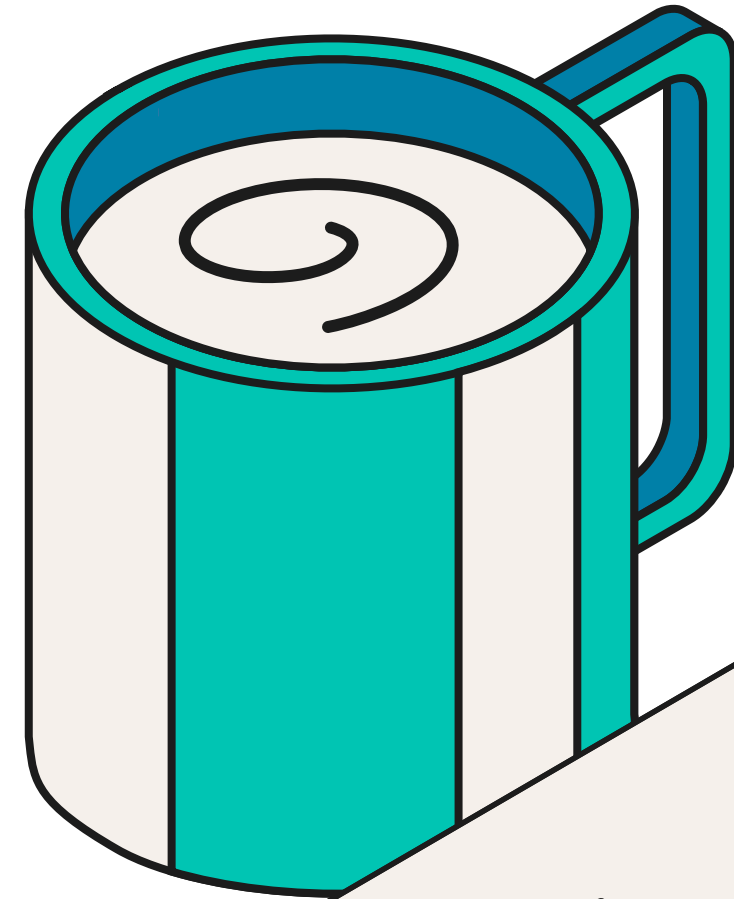


# HOW TO WRITE YOUR **RESIGNATION LETTER**

Handing in a resignation letter can feel like a daunting process and most would like to leave on good terms. So, here's how!

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Make sure the letter is correctly dated and addressed, print out two copies
- Inform the reader of your resignation in a clear and concise way, state your notice period and departure date
- Outline that you're happy to help your employer in any way during the handover period and thank your employer for the opportunity and time they've given you
- Complete the letter with your name and signature
- Pass your resignation letter to the responsible person who will confirm receipt of the document by signing.



## WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE



**Complaints or negativity towards the employer, your boss or colleagues**



**Details on your new employer**



**The reasons you're resigning**

**RESIGNATION LETTER  
TEMPLATE  
DOWNLOAD**



# HOW TO SERVE YOUR **NOTICE PERIOD**

Once you've handed in your resignation letter, you can begin to look ahead to starting your new role soon.

Be careful, though. It's natural to want to relax in this situation, particularly after a job search that might have lasted for months. However, it's important not to let it affect your behaviour in your current role.

Why? Your attitude at this time will contribute heavily to how you'll be remembered once you're gone. Even if you aren't considering a return, you need to leave on good terms with your manager for the sake of your references and reputation. It's the same with colleagues who could form a valuable network in the future.

**Here's how.**



## 1. EXTEND AN OLIVE BRANCH

- Take the time to personally explain to your closest colleagues why you are leaving.
- In your explanation, focus your reasons on the positive aspects of your new role, rather than the negatives of your current one.
- Let everyone know how much you have valued your time working together.

## 2. DON'T LET YOUR PERFORMANCE SLIP

- Sit down with your boss and discuss which projects and tasks you need to complete, and which ones to hand over to your successor.
- Confirm the handover process, plus who you should transfer your skills and knowledge to within your team.
- Remain professional – arrive punctually, meet deadlines and dress professionally.

## 3. KEEP THE DOOR OPEN

- Start planning your personal farewells and thank yous, especially for anyone who has particularly helped your career or acted as a mentor.
- Let colleagues know that you want to keep in contact and stay true to your word by checking in regularly after you leave.
- If appropriate, write a recommendation on LinkedIn or endorse your colleagues for a skill.



# PREPARING FOR **YOUR** **NEW ROLE**



# HOW TO OVERCOME **NEW JOB NERVES**

## **REACH OUT TO YOUR NEW MANAGER**

Try to build a connection and relationship with your new boss before the first day even arrives. Perhaps you could send them an email or meet them for a coffee. Just getting to know them could greatly help to lessen your nerves and fear of the unknown.

## **UNDERSTAND YOUR NERVES ARE ONLY TEMPORARY**

Think about all the things that motivated you to take this new job in the first place, including the chance to embark on a new chapter of your life, meet new people and the opportunity to work for a new and interesting company.

## **STOP WORRYING ABOUT HOW YOUR NEW COLLEAGUES WILL PERCEIVE YOU**

Resist the temptation to put huge pressure on yourself to be perfect from day one. It'll take you a few weeks, or even months, to get up to speed in your new role.

## **KEEP YOUR IMPOSTER SYNDROME IN CHECK**

Remind yourself that you were chosen from many different candidates for this job, because your now-boss recognised the unique skills and experience you could bring to their business.

Remember how excited you were when you were offered the job, so that you can bring this positive mindset into your new workplace.

## **SHARE YOUR FEELINGS WITH THOSE CLOSE TO YOU**

Discuss with your friends and loved ones any concerns or worries that you might have in the run-up to your first day in your new job. They'll be able to give you useful advice and assist you in keeping things in perspective.

## **PREPARE**

Make sure you're feeling as comfortable as possible by preparing for your first day. This could be as simple as planning your breakfast and lunch for that day, making sure you're ready to arrive on time, or researching the company again. You could even ask your new boss if there's any reading you could be doing to prepare.



# HOW TO MAKE A **POSITIVE START IN YOUR NEW ROLE**



## MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

### 1. BE EARLY AND SUITABLY DRESSED

Remember: If you're early, you're on time.  
If you're on time, you're late!

### 2. REMEMBER NAMES

Greet everyone by name and repeat these when conversing to help embed this information and build rapport.

Try to see the bigger picture, including various colleagues and your relationships with them.

### 3. LISTEN – AND ASK QUESTIONS

There will be a lot of important information to learn on your first day, and throughout your on-boarding period, so make sure you're all ears at all times and take notes.

Use this opportunity to ask broad questions about the business which you might feel silly asking later on.



## SETTLE INTO YOUR NEW TEAM

### 1. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

You'll quickly work out which colleagues you'll be working most closely with. Get to know them better by asking lots of questions. Finding something in common with each of your colleagues is a good way to build individual bonds.

### 2. GET INVOLVED

Show you're a team player by getting your hands dirty in your new role and enjoy some valuable early experience.

Attend as many social events as possible. This is the perfect way to get away from your desk and meet some of the biggest personalities in your new office. Just be careful not to take on too much!

### 3. FIND A MENTOR

Find somebody who can help you feel settled quickly. Make use of their knowledge, and in return offer whatever wisdom you may have acquired from your previous role.



## GET THE MOST FROM YOUR FIRST WEEK

### 1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THOSE AROUND YOU

Don't be afraid to gradually expand your introductions area outside your team. The more people you know, the easier it'll be to ask for or even offer up help.

### 2. PREPARE FOR EACH INDUCTION MEETING

Prior to the meeting, find out who you're going to talk to and their role within your new company. Ask for advice and suggestions – they'll most likely be flattered that you value their opinion and expertise.

### 3. SEEK OUT ONE-TO-ONE TIME WITH YOUR NEW BOSS

Your aim here is to start building a positive relationship with your boss. Find out what they expect of you, how they like to be communicated with, and (subtly) identify the type of traits that they value in an employee.

# YOU ARE NOW READY TO START YOUR JOB SEARCH

Whatever stage of the job search journey you find yourself at, we hope that you've found the information in this toolkit helpful.

For further step-by-step advice on writing a successful CV and nailing your next interview, why not take a look at our updated guides? You'll find plenty more tips on what – and what not – to do when preparing for each of these crucial steps in your journey.

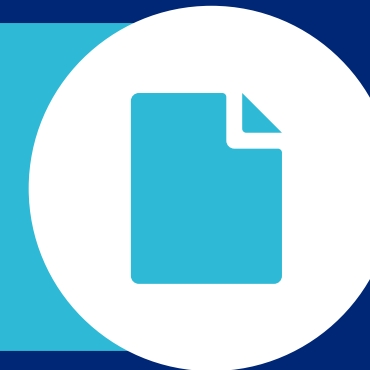
Meanwhile, if you're looking for a head start in writing your applications, download our editable CV and cover letter templates. Or, if you're further ahead in your journey and ready to hand in your notice with your existing employer, our resignation letter template might come in use.

Taking the time to review these resources will leave you even better prepared for the path toward starting your dream job.

Good Luck!

Download the following resources to help you in your job search and application process:

**CV GUIDE  
DOWNLOAD**



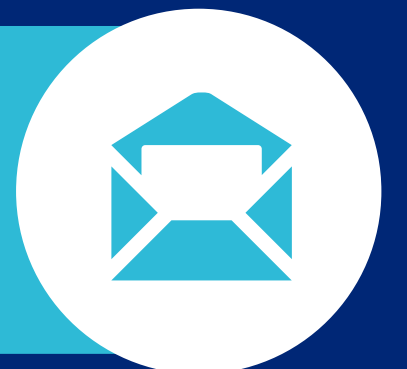
**COVER LETTER  
TEMPLATE  
DOWNLOAD**



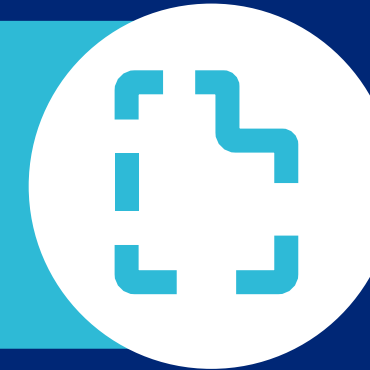
**INTERVIEW GUIDE  
DOWNLOAD**



**RESIGNATION  
LETTER TEMPLATE  
DOWNLOAD**



**CV TEMPLATE  
DOWNLOAD**





# GET MORE CAREERS ADVICE FROM HAYS

Hays has plenty of resources to help you boost your career and climb the career ladder.

Follow us on social media to get the latest news and workplace advice delivered straight to your feed, every day.

