

Guidance Notes

On the application and recruitment process

This advice note is designed to assist you with your application and to explain the process that we will use to select the most suitable applicant for the post.

Applying for a job

As part of Cambridge City Council's Equal Opportunities Policy we want to ensure that every applicant is treated fairly. The information you provide in your application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be short listed for the selection process. (Please do not send in either CVs or testimonials, as these will not be taken into consideration). Your application form is therefore very important and the following advice is designed to help you complete it as effectively as possible.

If you already work for the City Council, we will still require the same range of information in relation to the job you are applying for.

Completing an application form

The job description lists the main duties of the post and the person specification details the experience, skills and knowledge required. Please look at these carefully and consider how you can match them in terms of your own experience, skills and knowledge.

Tailor your application to the specific job – don't submit the same one for a series of jobs unless it is equally appropriate.

Ensure the information you give is well organised and relevant. Your application needs to show the relevant skills, interests and experience you have gained and how you meet the criteria on the person specification. Give examples of the work you have been involved in and write in a positive way (eg. I was responsible for ... I organised...). Always remember to specify your own responsibilities rather than those of your section or department.

If you have any difficulties completing this form or require any assistance in its completion please contact Human Resources on 01223 458100.

Personal Information

This section of the application will be detached and will not be used for short-listing purposes.

Personal/ Contact Details

Please enter your personal details fully and clearly so that we can contact you easily and quickly should you be short-listed.

Eligibility to work in the UK

Please indicate whether there are any restrictions to your residence in the UK that might affect your right to take up employment in the UK and also whether you require a work permit.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act & Criminal Records Disclosures

You should complete this section if:

- You have been court martialled or have criminal convictions that are not considered 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; OR
- There is court action pending against you.

You will be advised if the post for which you are applying requires a Criminal Records Disclosure.

References

We will require two satisfactory references before a job offer is made, one of which should be your present/ most recent employer. If you are leaving school/college or university you may list a Teacher or Tutor as one. Your references will normally be taken up if you are short-listed for an interview, unless you state that a referee should not be approached until you have been contacted. Please note: personal references are not accepted.

Employment History

We are interested in any present or past employment you consider relevant to your application. If you have already left school, college or a training programme and have not yet had a full-time or permanent job, please give details of any other employment you have had such as work experience gained on Government training schemes, part-time work, holiday work and voluntary work.

Education, Technical & Professional Qualifications

We are interested in any form of education you have followed, including any course which did not lead to an examination or qualification. The information you give should, therefore, include details of any technical, professional or other relevant qualifications. We will take full note of any education or qualifications gained overseas or as part of a Government training scheme. We would also like to know if you are a member of any professional bodies.

Personal Development

We are interested in any form of personal development you have undertaken. Therefore, please include details of any relevant training courses but also other forms of learning, voluntary work or responsibilities held.

Further Information

This is your opportunity to 'sell' yourself to us. You should clearly demonstrate how your knowledge, skills and experience match the requirements of the job, as detailed in the person specification and job description.

Declarations

If you are related to a Councillor or employee, we ask you to tell us so that we can make sure that all applications are treated fairly. Canvassing any Councillor or employee of this Council (ie. seeking to gain an unfair advantage through personal contacts) will disqualify your application.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Cambridge City Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in employment as well as service provision. To ensure that our Equal Opportunities Policy is effective we ask you to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form attached to the Application form.

The form is confidential and will be detached from the application form on receipt. It is not seen by those responsible for short listing and interviewing applicants. The information will not be used for selection but will be used for statistical monitoring purposes and to ensure no discrimination takes place.

Returning your application

Please ensure all sections are fully completed and the declaration signed, or box ticked if you are applying on-line. If additional space is needed please continue on a maximum of two A4 sheets. Do not attach CVs unless this has been requested in the advert and/or the application pack letter. The completed application form, equal opportunities monitoring form and acknowledgement postcard (as appropriate) should be returned to the correct person/department (see covering letter) by the closing date. Any forms arriving after this deadline will not be considered for short listing unless there are exceptional reasons.

Shortlisting

After the closing date the application forms are read carefully to see how much each person's knowledge, skills and experience match the requirements of the job. Applicants who, in the opinion of the selection panel, best meet the requirements of the job are normally short-listed for interview. When looking to see who meets what we are looking for, officers are trained to only assess the information given on the application form and not to make assumptions about anyone, even if they already work for the City Council.

Although we would like to contact all applicants who submit an application form, we are aware of the extra costs these additional letters would create. Therefore, if you have not received a letter four weeks after the closing date inviting you to an interview, please assume that on this occasion you have not been short-listed.

The interview

At the interview, the panel will ask questions which are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to demonstrate the extent to which you meet the requirements of the post. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the job, conditions of service etc.

The interview panel is made up of at least two panel members who will ask each candidate the same basic set of questions and supplementary questions may be asked based on your answers. In addition you will be asked specific questions which relate to areas unique to you eg. previous work history etc.

All the interviewers will take notes throughout the interview. Do not be put off by this. It is done so that we can be fair to you and the other candidates. The notes will enable the interviewers to recall which candidate said what and thereby determine the best candidate for the job. It also provides a method of recording the interviewer's decision in a clear and consistent way.

In addition, the Council conducts tests and written exercises in appropriate circumstances and you may therefore also be asked to undertake such exercises as part of the selection process for this vacancy. If this is the case, you will usually be notified in the interview letter.

Applicants with disabilities

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This covers a wide range of impairments from mobility, sight, hearing and speech impairments to 'hidden' impairments and illnesses such as arthritis, asthma, dyslexia, epilepsy, clinical depression, mental illness, cancer and multiple sclerosis. Under the Act, the Council has an obligation to ensure that:

1. Disabled people receive fair treatment throughout the recruitment and selection process and in their employment with the Council;
2. Adjustments are made wherever reasonable to do so to allow disabled applicants to compete to the best of their ability during the recruitment process and to assist them in their employment with the Council.

The Council is committed to fulfilling these obligations. In order to do this we will need to ask you questions about your disability at various stages of the recruitment and selection process. Please remember that although you are not obliged to tell us about your disability, any details you provide us with will help us to help you demonstrate the full extent of your skills and abilities. It also helps us to establish what adjustment we may need to make to enable you, or assist you, to do that job. Any information you give us will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

If you require assistance in completing the application form or need to make your application in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact Human Resources on 01223 458100.

Positive about disabled people

The Council is committed to all people with disabilities. Since 1994 the Council has been an accredited user of this symbol. This means we have made a commitment to assure people with disabilities that we are taking practical steps to offer them positive employment opportunities and are committed to developing the full potential of employees with a disability, on an equal basis with others.

If you are unable to meet some of the requirements of the job specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all other criteria, you will be short-listed and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements. This could include adjustments to premises and equipment or job duties.

Conditions relating to offers of employment

City Pay Band 'Entry Zones':

Each City Pay Band has a defined 'entry zone' and it is Cambridge City Council policy that appointments to City Pay Bands will generally be made within the 'entry zone'. Appointments above the 'entry zone' are made in exceptional circumstances and are agreed by the appointing manager with Human Resources.

Employing people over 64:

The Council is not obliged to employ anyone who is over the age of 65, although it may, at its discretion, recruit people of 65 years or above if it wishes. If you are successful in gaining a post, and are 64 years or older, you will be offered a fixed term contract of no longer than one year. However, in these circumstances, you are legally entitled to request to continue working after your next birthday. Your date of birth is not seen by those responsible for short listing and interviewing applicants and therefore the information will not be used for selection purposes.

All offers of appointment are subject to:

Satisfactory medical clearance: All successful candidates complete a medical questionnaire for submission to our Occupational Health Doctor and may be required to attend for a full examination.

Satisfactory references: Please note if you choose not to give permission on your application form for your referees to be approached before an interview, your permission would need to be sought before a job offer could be made.

Satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures: This is required for some posts eg. those that involve 'substantial access' to children and the elderly. You will be advised if this is the case and asked to give written authorisation for the check to be undertaken.

Asylum & Immigration Act documentation: All successful applicants are required to provide evidence of their status to work in the UK, by providing an original document(s) as specified by the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996. Information on which documents are acceptable will be provided at interview stage.

Fair recruitment

The City Council puts great importance on ensuring that every stage in our recruitment process is fair and properly carried out. All our managers involved in recruitment and selection are fully trained. We have a duty to ensure that everyone is treated in a non-discriminatory way. We hope that you will feel that you have been treated fairly even if you are not appointed. If you want to discuss why you have not been successful, please contact in the first instance the manager who interviewed you who will be pleased to give you feedback.

If you remain dissatisfied after speaking to the manager, you should write to the Head of Human Resources, giving details of the post you have applied for and we will ensure that the matter is properly investigated. If your complaint is found to be valid we will review as appropriate our recruitment procedures.

Thank you for your interest in this vacancy.

We hope that you will be successful in your application. However, if you are not, please don't be discouraged from re-applying – your skills and experience may be what we need for our next vacancy.