



# **'How to Apply'**

## **Applicants' guidance**

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## Applicant guidance notes

### Introduction

Thank you for your interest in working with us. You are important to us and we want you to make the most of your job application. We have put this guide together to help you complete an online application, so please read it carefully before beginning.

### Equality Statement

We:

- value diversity
- challenge all forms of unfairness
- aim to promote self-confident and harmonious communities
- place fairness and inclusion at the heart of our strategies and services.

To achieve this we will develop targets that will help us to:

- reduce social, economic and educational disadvantage
- move towards a more representative workforce and governance structure.

We will:

- listen to our customers and communities and not make assumptions on their part
- use our procurement, commissioning and grant-giving practices to promote fairness and diversity

### Equality of information

All applicants will receive the same information about the job and if a contact person is given, all applicants are invited to phone for an informal discussion about the job prior to applying for it. This may help you decide if you meet all the criteria and whether you want to proceed with an application.

## **Prior to completing your application**

### **Job compatibility**

Please carefully read the job description, person specification and other related documents, to ensure that that the job and conditions are suitable for you and your level of experience. If you are happy to apply for the job, you may proceed with completing your application form.

It is important that you fill in every section of the form as fully and accurately as possible. Our decision on who to interview will be based on the information you give in your application form.

All applications from both internal and external candidates, are considered against the essential requirements given in the job description.

### **Documents and information**

The application form will require a variety of information from you. We strongly suggest that you find this information before you start.

The information required for an application includes:

- UK National Insurance number. If you do not have a UK National Insurance Number, this field should be left blank.
- Employment history. You will need to give details of the places and dates of previous employment including job title and duties.
- Education and qualifications. You will need to enter the dates, grades and types of qualification which you hold, as well as the details of the centres of learning where you obtained these.
- Referees. You will need to give the contact details including postal and email addresses (and/ or telephone number) of two referees, who will typically be your former employer, tutor, teacher or other non- family member, depending on your circumstance.

Please complete every page and section of the form as fully as you can by answering every relevant question, selecting from the drop down boxes and providing as much detail as possible in your responses.

### **Confirmation statement**

This guide will help you complete your application form. You will have to confirm you have read this guide.

### **Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy**

Please read the following SYMAT policy statement on the recruitment of Ex Offenders prior to completing your application.

- As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), SYMAT complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- SYMAT undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- SYMAT can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).
- SYMAT can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
- SYMAT is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process

- SYMAT actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position
- We ensure that staff in the SYMAT who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- We make every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

(Source <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>)

## **Personal information**

It is essential that you complete this section as fully as you can, as missing information may delay the recruitment process.

## **Contact details**

These are the details we will use to contact you about your application if necessary. Please include both a telephone number and an email address.

## **Employment details**

All employment history should be given with full contact details.

A brief explanation of your main duties and responsibilities in a role should be given. If you wish to give more detail on a role you may do so in the Supporting information section.

All periods of unemployment or gaps in employment of three months or more, must be explained in the 'Employment History Gaps' section.

## **Education and qualifications**

On this page you can enter any qualifications you feel are relevant or necessary for the post you are applying for.

Original copies of any relevant qualifications will be required to be verified for the successful candidate.

## **Additional qualifications**

If you have any qualifications that do not appear on the subject list please enter details in this text box.

## **Professional memberships and training**

If you have professional memberships or training, you feel that are relevant to your application, please ensure that you provide complete and full information to support these.

## **Supporting information**

The statement box in this section is your chance to really explain why you'd suit the role for which you are applying for, whilst addressing the knowledge and skills/person specification section in the job description.

**You should limit your supporting statement to one A4 page of text** (depending on font size).

This is the only place on the application form to demonstrate how your experience and skills suit the role. Additional documents or CV's will not be accepted.

In your statement, as well as providing any additional information about you which you feel is relevant to the role, please ensure that you have:

- Provided information, examples and evidence to illustrate how you meet each of the 'knowledge and skills' criteria in the job description. You should refer to any relevant experience acquired inside work and if appropriate, outside of work, (e.g. community, voluntary or leisure interests).
- To be selected for interview you must demonstrate that you meet these criteria to a greater relevance and/or depth than others.
- Evidenced your suitability, beyond making simple statements. For example, if the job description requires that you are "highly motivated with excellent communication and numeracy skills", simply saying "I am highly motivated with excellent communication and numeracy skills", will not be sufficient. You must include descriptions and examples from your experience (in and/ or out of work), which illustrate you having and using these skills.

## **References**

It is important that you give details for valid referees otherwise there may be a delay in confirming your appointment, should you be successful.

Please ensure that you provide the full details for two people who can comment on your suitability for the post. These people should be:

1. Your present employer or, if unemployed, your last employer; AND
2. Your former employer i.e. your employer prior to your present or last employer; OR
3. If you haven't been employed before or you have only one former employer, you may use, if they consent, the details of:
  - a. Your current or former teacher, lecturer or tutor
  - b. Some other person of a 'profession' who can comment on your suitability for the role eg policeman, doctor, solicitor etc.

**You cannot use a family member or a friend as a referee.** This applies even if you work for a family member.

All referees must be over 18 years old.

Please seek an alternative referee if you cannot comply with the above requirements. Contact us if you are unsure.

References may be taken up prior to interview for posts within schools. If you have any objection to references been taken up at this point please make the recruiting manager aware of this.

Confirmation of the offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory pre employment checks including references.

### **Equal opportunities and sensitive information**

We are required by law to request certain personal data from applicants and employees, so that we can monitor and enforce our commitment to equal opportunities in employment.

The school is committed to equality and aims to ensure that everyone who works for us is treated fairly and is not subjected to unlawful discrimination on grounds of their sex, age, race, ethnic or national origins, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, family responsibility, disability or political beliefs. Applications are welcome from all sections of the community.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities section in full. This is a mandatory section, however, in each category (except Nationality and Carer) there are "prefer not to say" or "unspecified" options, which you can use if you would prefer not to provide this information.

This section of the form is confidential and for monitoring purposes only. It will not be used as part of the selection process or disclosed to the recruitment panel.

### **Disability information**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) protects disabled people. The DDA defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term impact (i.e. has lasted or is expected to last at least 6 months) and has an adverse effect on people's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

If any of the following apply, you should indicate this and then give details in the space provided:

- Physical impairment, such as difficulty using your arms, or mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches
- Sensory impairment, such as being blind/ having a serious visual impairment or being deaf/ having a serious hearing impairment
- Mental health condition, such as depression or schizophrenia
- Learning disability (such as Down's syndrome or Dyslexia) or cognitive impairment (such as autism or head-injury)
- Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- Other, such as disfigurement (please specify if you wish)

### **Carer responsibilities**

SYMAT values and embraces all people, regardless of any caring responsibilities that they may have, and strives to ensure that all people are treated with dignity and respect.

A carer is defined as someone who looks after family, partner or friends in need of help because they have a disability, mental health problem, an addiction or are frail or ill. The help they provide is unpaid (except for Carers Allowance). This excludes childcare/ family responsibility.

A relative includes a spouse, partner (including exes), parents, grandparents, siblings, adult children, grandchildren and corresponding relatives of one's spouse or partner (ie in-laws).

## **Guaranteed interview scheme**

SYMAT guarantee, under the 'Positive about Disabled People' scheme, an interview for all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria on the person specification.

If you are applying under this scheme you must say so in the relevant section of the form.

Recruiting Managers will be informed of candidates applying under the scheme but will not have information on the disability or background.

Applicants must show on their application that they meet the minimum criteria on the job description under 'skills and knowledge' to be guaranteed an interview.

## **Job sharing**

Job sharing is a form of employment where the duties and responsibilities of the post, which would normally be held by one person, are shared. Terms and conditions of employment differ to those of part time working.

The school supports job sharing, where reasonable and practicable, and where it will not have an adverse impact on operational requirements.

## **Criminal Records, Convictions and Cautions**

Posts involving working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

This means you must disclose information about any spent or unspent convictions when applying for these posts except where they are protected convictions and cautions as described in article 2A of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. See \* below for more information).

The school will check all information relating to prospective employees through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). By completing the declaration at the end of the online application, you confirm that you

understand the provisions and give permission to carry out this DBS check (if you are successful at interview).

The DBS Code of practice can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Answers to the questions on the application should be answered taking into account the DBS filtering guidance which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>

If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions and you are shortlisted, the panel will discuss this at interview.

Failure to disclose information or convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' but not 'protected' under the provisions of the Act, will normally result in the offer of employment being withdrawn. Dismissal may also happen if we find out any relevant information after we have appointed you.

Any information you provide will be confidential and will not necessarily exclude you from appointment.

\* For further information and guidance on 'spent' convictions, cautions or bind-overs please refer to:

- DBS <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

or

- NACRO' <http://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/>

### **Relationship with the SYMAT**

You must not canvass or seek the support of members/ employees of SYMAT, in relation to your application. If you do, your application may be disqualified.

We appreciate that you may already be related to or connected to such a person. Please disclose and describe this connection to protect the status of your application.

## **Eligibility to work in the UK**

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 requires proof of the right to work in the UK. If you are offered employment, you will be required to prove your eligibility to work in the UK as part of the pre-employment check process.

If you need or have a permit, we will have to check your documents confirming your right to work in the UK. Please detail the reason, status and duration of your permission as well as any relevant other relevant information.

## **Teaching registration details**

If you are applying for a teaching post you are required to provide details of our teacher registration status and your teacher reference number (Dfe number).

These details can be found by contacting the Teacher Registration Agency.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/individual-teacher-records-information-for-teachers>

## **Declaration**

You must complete this section to confirm that the information you have provided is, to the best of your knowledge and belief, true and complete and also so that we can process your application in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

You are also giving permission for any number of past employers to be contacted regarding this application for employment.

## **Consent**

We may need to contact regarding you application using the information you have supplied on your application form. By ticking yes you are confirming that we can do this.

We may also ask you for your feedback either verbally or in writing/email on the application and/or the recruitment & selection process. By ticking yes you are confirming that you are happy for us to do this.

### **Retention and storage of information**

Personal data is collected to facilitate the recruitment process and is also used for anonymised reporting purposes.

Information supplied through the recruitment and selection process will be stored in line with the schools Storage, retention and disposal of information policy.

### **Submitting your application**

We strongly recommend that you take time to review your application before submitting

If you have any queries or questions about the application form or the recruitment and selection process please contact the school.