

Recruitment and Selection at the Refugee Council

- Guidance notes for applicants



Completing your application

Please read the following carefully before completing your application form

1. Selecting the best person for the job

As part of the Refugee Council's commitment to equal opportunities all applicants are treated fairly throughout the recruitment process.

It is vital that you take care to complete the application form as fully as possible. The information in it will guide us in considering whether you have the right skills, knowledge and experience for the job. We cannot make assumptions about your skills or experience – please spell them out.

2. Job description and person specification

The **job description** describes the duties of the job. It sets out the range of responsibilities and tasks.

The **person specification** describes the person we are looking for by listing the experience, skills and abilities needed to do the job. We will be looking at your application form to see how you fit the person specification – the extent to which you have the relevant skills and experience.

You need to consider:

- **is the job description one you are interested in?**
- **do you think you have the skills and experience to apply for the vacancy?**
- **can you demonstrate this on your form?**

3. The application form

i) Personal Details

Make sure that your contact details (name, address and post code, email address and telephone number) are clearly written or typed. If your details change after sending in your form please let us know as soon as possible.

Other personal details will not be used as part of the selection process unless there is a Genuine Occupation Requirement which applies to the post. For example, if a post requires that a woman be appointed. A small number of jobs can be specified as having a Genuine Occupation Requirement where certain criteria apply.

ii) Education, Qualifications and Training

Give a list of formal and informal training that is relevant to the job. Formal training is that which is certified, a degree, for example. Sometimes we ask for specific qualifications. You may need to provide information so we can assess whether you meet the qualification requirements, for example relevant qualifications needed for social work or accountancy.

iii) Present and previous employment

Starting with your current or most recent employer, list all the employers you have worked for. Provide the job title and the period you worked for them. If possible give the exact dates, for example 25/2/02 to 31/3/07. Describe the **main duties** of the post in one or two sentences only.

This information may be used to assess whether you meet the experience required for the vacancy. Check that the dates are correct and in order.

iv) Personal statement

This is probably the most important part of the form. You have to make a case here for selection. Do not repeat your career history. Use only the relevant parts, drawing out the skills you have developed.

Please do not send a CV as it will not be considered.

Do not just repeat what we're asking for. You have to demonstrate how your experience matches the criteria.

An example of meeting the criterion "*Ability to write clearly*" in the person specification might be met by the following:

In my last job, I produced written reports (or minutes), prepared agendas, and distributed relevant papers to the Resources Group Committee, recognising the need to be able to sum up points clearly and confidently, set out actions, and provide an accurate summary of the meeting, proof reading the final copy. I enjoy writing and believe I express myself well.

In considering your experience, remember all of your previous work and draw on this to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills. Do not forget other relevant experience outside work, such as community/voluntary/leisure and other interests – if they contribute to meeting the person specification. Describe any relevant skills this has helped you develop.

Remember, it is your skills and abilities **relevant to this job** that we are looking for. You do not have to write several pages in support of your application, but rather focus on ensuring you meet the essential criteria in the person specification.

v) Some general points to bear in mind

- Your form should be written in a concise, well organised and positive way. Use active words such as I organized, or I planned, or I do.
- It may help you to do a rough draft first. This avoids mistakes and allows you to organise your application properly.
- The selection panel members will be reading many applications so if completing the form by hand please use clear handwriting in an organised way.
- Do not send in the same application for different jobs – pay attention to the requirements listed in the person specification for each job.
- Send your completed application form to the Refugee Council Human Resources Department. Ensure you are clear about the title and reference of the job you are applying for. If you have any queries, call Human Resources on 020 7346 6724 and ask for clarification.
- Make sure that your application form is sent in plenty of time to meet the closing date. Only in exceptional circumstances can the closing date be extended.

Vi) Legal and organisational requirements when filling in an application form

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974: You should not sign the application form without being clear about what you have to reveal about yourself. For instance, you do not need to disclose convictions which would be deemed as being spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, or cautions, reprimands and final warnings which are over five years old, unless they are exempt from the Act. If you are not sure about what declarations to make, you should ring a Human Resources Adviser at the Refugee Council, who will give you confidential information about declarations (see Application Form).

Referees: These must be known to you in a work capacity, and should be your line manager. If this is not possible you should clearly explain the relationship and the reason for giving another person as a referee. It may be someone who can comment on your ability, skills, experience, for example, a community leader you have been doing community work with, setting up a crèche or sports club, etc.

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006: You will be asked to bring relevant documentation to the interview, where it will be photocopied and returned to you (please see the *Information for job applicants* for more details).

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1. The Interview

All shortlisted candidates will be invited by email, letter, or by telephone, to attend an interview. You will be informed of the time, location, and contact for the interview, as well as notice of any test or exercise you may be asked to do at the interview.

The recruitment and selection panel will be comprised of a minimum of three people, and will normally include the relevant line manager of the post. The panel will always try to ensure that gender, ethnicity, and refugees are represented on the selection panel. All panel members will have undertaken training on the Refugee Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures.

Applicants will be asked questions relating to the job description, person specification and application, and the panel will take notes during the course of the interview. This is part of the procedure to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly.

If you are not sure that you have understood the question, do not be afraid to ask for it to be repeated, or rephrased. Take your time and ensure you have included all the main points you want to get across in your answer.

In preparation for the interview, take the opportunity to read through the job description, application form, and any other literature sent as part of the information pack, and be prepared to talk about your experience, giving examples that illustrate your ability to do particular parts of the job.

2. Feedback

All unsuccessful interviewed applicants are encouraged to request telephone feedback. This will be given within seven days of the request, usually by the chair of the recruitment panel.

Receiving constructive feedback can be useful for helping you in future interviews.

Feedback should be a two way process. It is important to use the information given to you positively. You should also give feedback on how the process felt for you.

3. Internal Candidates

Internal candidates will have to carry out competitive interviews with external applicants, unless:

- They have been in a temporary post for 12 months and the post becomes permanent;
- Their post becomes redundant and they are eligible for a redeployment interview.

Internal applicants therefore have to follow the same procedures as external applicants, and will be shortlisted and interviewed on the basis of their application form, i.e. by meeting the criteria in the person specification. No assumptions about previous knowledge and experience of the job can be taken into account by the selection panel.

The recruitment manager will invite a member of Human Resources onto the panel whenever there are internal candidates.

Unsuccessful internal candidates will be offered face to face feedback, when requested, to be given within seven days of the interview whenever possible.