APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT GUIDE

1. The application form

1.1 We understand the job application process can be quite arduous, particularly for people who have not had much previous experience of applying for jobs. We are committed to fairness and we have very clear criteria on which we base our recruitment. Therefore, we need to allow people the opportunity to provide as much information relating to the selection criteria as possible. This way, everyone's application is treated fairly and we can make the best and most informed decision.

- You may be offered the opportunity to discuss the job with us informally before applying. This can be done over the phone or it may be possible for you to visit the office and discuss the job in person.
- All applicants who we are interested in interviewing will need to complete and submit an application form beforehand.
- The completed application form is often the only information we have on a candidate when short listing for interview. It is very important that you take the opportunity to complete your application as fully and concisely as possible, based on the information you have been given about the vacancy or vacancies.
- You must provide the job title for the job you are applying for, taken from the job advertisement or Job Description.
- We do ask that our application form is completed by hand. You may find it helpful to prepare a draft copy first.
- You may choose to hand write or alternatively word process your response to the question on 'relevant skills, knowledge and experience'. This is the most important part of your application.
- You can also word process your response to the question on your 'interests and voluntary activities'. All other parts of the form must be completed by hand.
- You need to make sure that you have completed all questions and sections on the application form.

Disclosing Information

1.2 To assist us in our assessment, all applicants are asked to provide details of any unspent criminal conviction at application stage.

1.3 Job roles that involve an element of direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults are likely to require that we undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on the successful applicant prior to an appointment being confirmed. Such job roles are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such we will require such applicants to provide details of all previous convictions at application stage - whether they are considered 'spent' or not.

1.4 The Job Description/Person Specification will state if a DBS check will be required. This will involve checking for information on any convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer and on local Police records. The check may also include information from lists held by the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills of those considered unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults.

1.5 Details of spent convictions are only requested from applicants for posts which are considered exempt from the 1974 Act.

1.6 Notwithstanding the need for applicants to declare previous convictions, our policy at UOB is that each application is assessed on the skills and experience demonstrated by the applicant, rather than their background, unless the nature of the applicant's background is strictly relevant to the job role.

1.7 Failure to disclose information about a criminal record may disqualify an applicant from appointment or result in summary dismissal if this comes to light once appointed.

1.8 All information on criminal records provided both by the applicant and within the Disclosure will be used, stored and disposed of in confidence and in line with legislative requirements and codes of practice.

Relevant Skills, Knowledge and Experience

1.5 We will provide a Job Description and Person Specification for all vacant positions. You should read this carefully as the information will help you to decide if you want to apply for the job. In particular, each item on the Person Specification should be referred to in your application in order to demonstrate that you have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience required to do the job.

1.6 You are advised to use only relevant examples and explain how these meet each requirement in the Job Description and Person Specification. **Your selection for interview will depend on this.**

- Please respond to each competency listed in the Person Specification. It is helpful if you use each competence as a heading.

- Your examples should show how you meet, or what you have done to meet the criteria. Provide evidence of past performance (i.e. how you have carried out tasks/achieved results) which will provide evidence of your ability to succeed in this job. Be specific about your skills and specify your own responsibilities and not those of others.

- Be aware of the wording of each person specification criteria. It will help you assess how to respond in your application as well as what will be required of you in the role if appointed.

- If you cannot meet one or more of the criteria specified, then you might reconsider whether the job is right for you. You might choose to discuss this informally with us before applying if the opportunity to do so is provided.

2. How to demonstrate you meet the criteria

Technical Competencies/Specific Skills and Knowledge

2.1 The Person Specification will include criteria that will ask applicants to demonstrate that they are able to carry out duties specific to the role. For example:

- The ability to receive, sort and distribute mail
- The ability to maintain accurate records and produce simple reports
- The ability to prepare and photocopy documents

2.2 Ensure you address each part of the criteria i.e. *receiving mail* AND *sorting mail* AND *distributing mail.* This leaves nothing to the shortlisting panel's imagination. If you do not state it than the shortlisting panel may assume that you are not able to do it.

Example:

Communication Skills

2.3 This will be assessed through the examples given but also how you present yourself on the form itself. Remember to check your spelling, grammar and wording before submitting your application. Examples of communication skills could include:

- Writing letters
- Writing emails
- Communicating with customers
- Resolving a dispute
- Negotiating
- Communicating with a variety of people

2.4 Communication is important to most roles and therefore, attention should be paid to Job Description and Person Specification in terms of which communication skills will be required in the role.

Examples

Criteria: 'Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing.'

Answer 1: *'I have good communication skills and relate well to others.'*

☒ **This answer does not address exactly what is required and there are no examples given.**

Answer 2: *'Whilst working at 'X' it was part of my role to cover some hours on reception. Here, I gained a lot of experience in communicating verbally with colleagues and customers. I would always be polite and professional.*

Once I had a caller who was verbally abusive to me. I remained polite throughout and encouraged him to calm down. I explained to him that it was our organisations policy to terminate all abusive calls. The caller calmed down and then I attempted to resolve his problem.

I have also been required to send letters and emails as part of my role at 'Y'. When using such forms of communication I would always check my spelling and grammar was accurate and that the items were addressed properly.

☑ **This answer illustrates that the applicant understands what the requirements of the job will be and shows that they will be able to meet those requirements.**

Final checks

- Check you have completed every section of the application form.
- Check for correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and wording.
- Check you have completed the Fairness in Employment Monitoring form.
- Sign and date your application form in your own hand.
- Return your completed application form marked 'Private and Confidential' on the envelope to the name and address provided on the form. You can post it or deliver it by hand.
- Don't include any certificates or other original documents with your application form.
- You are advised to make a photocopy of everything you have submitted.

3. What happens once your application is submitted

3.1 Once the closing date has passed, all the applications will be sorted and then assessed by a shortlisting panel to see how closely each submission meets the criteria of the Job Description and Person Specification.

3.2 Those applicants, who meet the required competencies and have the most relevant experience, will be invited for interview. Successful applicants will be notified by post or email that they have been invited for an interview. Unless the interview date(s) are provided within the job advertisement, we aim to give at least 7 days notice. The invitation will include: the date, time, venue, directions and the interviewers' names. You will also be notified if there will be an assessment and if so, what this will entail. You should confirm your intention to attend the interview as soon as possible.

3.3 If you are unsuccessful at short listing and are not invited to interview, you can request feedback.

4. Interviews/assessment

Preparation

4.1 Preparation is vital but needn't be difficult. There should be no real surprises when it comes to the questions you will be asked during the interview.

4.2 When preparing for answering questions at the interview, you should refer back to the criteria within the Job Description and Person Specification. The questions asked will be based on these and how they will apply in the role.

4.3 These are a few sample questions that you could use to prepare and practice. It is unlikely that you will get the same questions in the interview, but these questions are worded in a similar way to our interview questions.

Work Related

- Can you please give us a brief outline of your work background?
- Can you briefly explain your experiences / knowledge of…….?
- Is there a particular project / initiative you would like to expand on?

IT Related

- Could you outline your experiences of using Information Technology and any particular software packages you are familiar with?
- Can you tell us about instances where you have used Information Technology to input and retrieve information and to prepare reports?

Communication Related

- In your role, you will be required to work in a team. What do you think enables a team of people to work together successfully?
- In your role you will be required to effectively communicate with people both internal and external to the organisation. What do you think makes good communication?
- Can you give us an example of when you communicated effectively?

Customer Focus Related

- Urban Outreach has policies which describe how our customers and clients should be treated. How would you deal with a less than patient colleague who wants information urgently for a report? Unfortunately you may not be able to meet this person's deadline because of other work commitments.
- Can you give us an example of when you have gone 'above and beyond' to help a customer or client?
- How do you feel that 'customer care' will apply to you in this role?

Valuing Diversity Related

- Urban Outreach is committed to equality of opportunity and to valuing the diversity of its customers. How would you go about living out these values in this job role?

Training and Development Related

- Urban Outreach is committed to the development of its staff. If you were successful in your application for this post, what would you see as your immediate development needs?
- How would you meet you developmental needs if formal training wasn't available?

A good answer

- Outline your understanding
- Provide at least one example which is relevant and demonstrates your skills
- Talk about what you learnt from the process
- Think about what you're saying with your body language
- Where appropriate, try to include information which demonstrates customer focus and valuing diversity
- Ask the interview panel if they would like more information

Things to think about before the interview

First impressions

Think about what you are intending to wear. A good general guideline is to look smart and coordinated. Appropriate presentation is important to our customers and clients and therefore, to us.

Asking questions

You will be given time at the end of the interview to ask the interview panel questions. These could include questions about the role or training provided. The purpose is to allow you to gather further information which will help you decide if the role is right for you.

Assessment

You may be required to complete an assessment as part of the interview process. If this is the case, this will usually occur just before or immediately after the interview. When you receive the letter inviting you for interview, it will say if there is to be an assessment and if so, what this will entail. Examples of assessment include: presentation, report writing, basic literacy and numeracy, word processing or use of Excel. We will not assess anything that is not relevant to skills required for the job role.

Key points

Remember to:

- Analyse the job – what are we looking for?
- Gather all the relevant information
- Try to think of possible questions
- Review the application form and answers
- Prepare for any tests
- Confirm attendance
- Know where to go and when
- Be 5-10 minutes early
- Be enthusiastic
- Be positive – even if things go a bit wrong
- Be conscious of what you say and how you say it
- Give relevant examples
- Be conscious of your non-verbal communication
- Talk to everyone on the panel; don't direct all your answers at one interviewer.
- Prepare questions to ask at the end

After the interview

At Urban Outreach we will offer feedback regarding the interview to any candidate who asks. Often there are only one or two small points separating the successful candidate from the runner up and what is learnt from the process can make all the difference.

5. What happens if you are offered the job

If you are successful in your interview and provisionally offered the job, this will be subject to certain conditions and checks that will be made against the information you have provided in your application and at your interview. This includes:

- **Receipt of satisfactory references:** one of which will need to be from your current/last employer or learning institute. Please note, we cannot accept references from family members and please avoid asking close personal friends as the references need to be as impartial and objective as possible.

- **Medical Clearance:** a form will be enclosed with your offer letter for completion by you, and confidential return to our Office Administrator.

- **Verification of your professional qualifications and/or licenses:** where these are a requirement of the job as detailed in the Person Specification which is attached to your Job Description. You will be asked to bring in your original certificates so that we can make a copy for our files.

- **Proof of your right to work in the UK:** you will be required to provide proof of your right to work in the UK. You will be asked to produce your passport, or your birth certificate and an official document giving your permanent National Insurance Number. If you don't have either of these, we will advise you of acceptable alternatives. We will need to retain a file copy.

- **A disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):** We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. When required, you will therefore be required to complete a DBS check form prior to your commencement with us, and possibly at further intervals during your employment, as determined by prevailing policy and conditions that may be imposed by funders of our services.
- **Declaration of Personal and other Interests:** you will be required to complete a declaration which details your personal interests and involvements. This is to ensure that neither you nor the charity is exposed to conflicts of interest.