

Hone your writing skills: Job applications and funding proposals

Liz Wilkinson


Techne Careers Consultant

Hone Your Writing Skills: CVs, Job Applications and Funding Proposals


From 17/06/2021 12:30 to 17/06/2021 13:30

--- PLEASE NOW MARK YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THIS ACTIVITY ---


Mobile App Users

1. Open the Inkpath App
2. Press this button 
3. Scan this QR Code

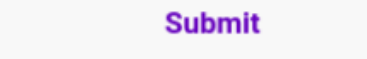



4. Confirm attendance 

Web Users

1. Open webapp.inkpath.co.uk
2. Press this button 
3. Enter this unique code

1623864820

4. Press 
5. Confirm attendance 

Session Outcomes

You will be more confident and comfortable in:

- Identifying the context and the readership for your writing
- Summarising and targeting your message
- Editing and polishing your text for maximum impact

Liz Wilkinson, Technē Careers Consultant

- 30 Years in Careers and Recruitment
- Former Director of Careers and Employability at Royal Holloway
- PGR Careers Lead at Kings College London
- Academic & Postgrad Careers Specialist



Contact via

4 techne.careers@careers.lon.ac.uk

Session Structure

- Switch on your writing brain
- Put yourselves in the recruiter's shoes
- Evidence your skills
- Target and summarise your PhD experience
- Top tips on CV & Covering Letter structure

Ask me anything

- Puzzled about the norms and conventions in CVs , Linked In profiles, Application Forms etc
- Type your questions into the chat box

Talent in the room

- Name
- PhD stage & discipline
 - (Year 3, Geography & Visual Art)
- My favourite author...

Writing craft matters in persuasive applications

- “ The space of translation between the record (of achievement) and the outcome is a space of tremendous creativity and meaning – it is a kind of self making – and its deserves deep care and attention.”
- Karen Kelsky, 2015, p.68
- Former university professor and founder

It's helpful to look at application writing from a fresh perspective

“What surprised me was hearing from someone who is able to see things from a very different angle. I was getting too bogged down in the creative ideas and trying to write them creatively that I don't think I was looking hard enough at what institutions actually want. I think it has made me more pragmatic about the whole thing, and rather than giving up on putting in for these kinds of opportunities (which can be time consuming and you can get very emotionally invested and then feel let down), I now feel more equipped to spend more productive and focussed time on future applications and to know that even if I don't get them, a, its good practice and b, the ideas I produce writing them generally lead on to other ideas - for example I am now developing a project around an archive that I originally put in as a funding bid, and realised that even though I didn't get it, I am really keen to explore a particular aspect of that archive and to try to find funding from elsewhere.”

Rachel Cattle, Techne graduate on her experience of application rewriting with the support of the Techne Careers Service

ACTIVITY:

Switching on your critical, creative writing brain

- Type into the chat box
- What adjectives might you apply to a good piece of academic argument/critical thinking writing

ACTIVITY: What sort of persuasive application writing are you likely to do in the next six months?

1. Speculative emails for placements/internships
2. Funding proposals for artistic commissions and residencies
3. Application forms for public/not-for-profit sector jobs
4. Updating my CV!

Think like a selector – Write down a shopping list

Applications will be scored against the following criteria for selection:

- Creative proposal and examples of previous work (40%)
- Response to the commissioning theme of Health & Well-being (30%)
- Previous public art experience and / or working in public spaces (10%)
- Previous experience of creative community engagement and / or consultation (10%)
- Strength of project budget (5%)
- Strength of project timeline and commitment to meeting the completion date (5%)
- Meets all of the Network Rail stipulations outlined in Appendix B (ESSENTIAL)

Denmark Hill Station public artwork – commission advertised on <https://creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk/>
June2020

Think like a researcher: What makes an organisation distinctive

- Mission and Vision – what does that tell you about their purpose and culture
- Who are their stakeholders
- What is outside scope?
- What are their successes and challenges
- How is their arena of operation likely to change in the next 5 years?

Apply imaginative empathy – Ask yourself these questions

If I was recruiting for this job/opportunity:

Why has this opportunity arisen/ What problem is it solving?

what would be on my shopping list?

- What would be my top priorities?
- What **evidence** would help me defend my recruitment decision?

Worry like a selector – Think reassurance & defence

Applications will be scored against the following criteria for selection:

- Creative proposal and **examples** of previous work (40%)
- Response to the commissioning theme of Health & Well-being (30%)
- Previous public art **experience** and / or working in public spaces (10%)
- Previous **experience** of creative community engagement and / or consultation (10%)
- Strength of project **budget** (5%)
- Strength of project **timeline** and commitment to meeting the completion date (5%)
- Meets all of the Network Rail stipulations outlined in Appendix B (ESSENTIAL)

Denmark Hill Station public artwork – commission advertised on <https://creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk/>
June2020

Taking stock of your offer list

- Relevant experience/examples
- Relevant skills
- Languages
- Professional qualifications
- Subject knowledge
- WHAT CAN I DO in a context informed by WHAT I UNDERSTAND

Type into the chat box an item from your “offer list”

TOP TIPS

Embed and evidence skills in your narrative

- More powerful:
 - “I led an initiative to..”
 - I demonstrated leadership through..
 - I progressed the project by...
- Less impact
 - Leadership skills
 - Organisational skills
 - Communication skills

TOP TIPS

Using the STAR + NUMBERS approach

- **S**ituation: Organising conference
- **T**ask: New event so not much profile
- **A**ction: Analysed issue, proposed new approach to senior colleagues, trialled new marketing approach , tweaked it and evaluated results
- **R**esult: Achieved XXX social media views and mention by XXX which established strong presence for this event going forward

How to write about your PhD thesis

- “Search committees don’t want to know about your dissertation (thesis) beyond proof that you wrote one and that it’s (soon to be) finished and defended. What they want to know is how that dissertation (thesis) accomplishes specific goals that serve the hiring department: that is, how it produces refereed publications, intervenes in a major scholarly debates, wins grants and awards, translates into dynamic teaching, transforms quickly into a book...and inspires a viable second project. Kelsey p.39

ACTIVITY: Summarise your PhD offer

- *“Relate all elements of the dissertation to specific elements of productivity, such as participation in debates in the field, publications, grants and so on.”*
- *Kelsky, 2015 p40*
- SUGGESTION: Write 3 bullet points on why your specific PhD experience might be useful to this employer/opportunity provider

TOP TIPS

ACTIVITY: Add impact to your PhD offer with numbers

- NOW ADD SOME NUMBERS!

- How many (interviews, records, hours, data points...)
- How often (weekly, monthly...)
- Changed by what percentage
- Numbers boost credibility
- Numbers support the expanded conceptualisation of your PhD into the successful project management
- Type into the chat box a number linked to your PhD

Mainstream CV with Impact: Sections and Heading

Name

Contact details

Education

Work experience

Want your relevant experience to stand out?

***Relevant* e.g. Heritage/Policy/Arts experience**

Additional work experience

Other key skills

Interests

References

Academic CV with Impact: Sections and Heading

Name & Contact details

Education – emphasizing the PhD

Research Publications

Academic awards/funding

Conferences

Teaching experience

Administration experience

Summary of employment history

23 References

Mainstream covering letters

- Opening paragraph – who the candidate is, what they are asking/applying for
- 3-4 clear selling points – the skills and **evidence** the recruiter is looking for
- Show you have taken time to **research** and analyse the organisation & their needs
- Motivation- but not just how great it would be for you! – make the **match in what you bring**

And finally from Rachel

“Try to be clear and succinct. Take time to look in depth at what Institutions and funding bodies are asking for and tailor your ideas very specifically in these directions. Try not to try to be too creative in the form of the writing - unless that is particularly asked for, and don't invest too much emotional energy and don't take the results too personally - see it as practice for later. Get someone else to read through it.”

Ask me anything


- Puzzled about the norms and conventions in CVs , Linked In profiles, Application Forms etc
- Type your questions into the chat box

Hone Your Writing Skills: CVs, Job Applications and Funding Proposals


From 17/06/2021 12:30 to 17/06/2021 13:30

--- PLEASE NOW MARK YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THIS ACTIVITY ---


Mobile App Users

1. Open the Inkpath App
2. Press this button 
3. Scan this QR Code

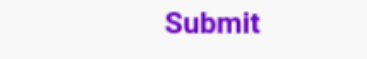



4. Confirm attendance 

Web Users

1. Open webapp.inkpath.co.uk
2. Press this button  Record Attendance
3. Enter this unique code

1623864820

4. Press  Submit
5. Confirm attendance 

Useful Resources: Techne

Thurs 24 June 12.30-1.30 **Online Interviews, Pitches & Presentations**

- How to impress at virtual interviews
- How to structure and perform selection presentations and pitches
- How to avoid digital bloopers – and how to recover
- **Congress 5 & 6 July 21 – 3 careers sessions**
- **1:1 confidential career coaching**
 - Phone, MSTeams, Zoom, Email
 - Book via techne.careers@careers.lon.ac.uk

I love working with you to improve and target your application documents

More Useful Resources

- The Professor is In (2015) by Karen Kelsky
- <http://theprofessorisin.com/>
- www.jobs.ac.uk
- <https://creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk/>
- www.vitae.ac.uk
- www.beyondthephd.co.uk