



STEM Placements and Internships Application Forms Guide

Many employers, especially those who receive large numbers of applications, use online application forms for their placements or internships. These include questions that allow you to reflect on your skills, qualities, achievements, and experience, to help you show them you are a strong candidate for the role being advertised.

Application forms are a perfect opportunity for you to demonstrate how well you match up to the requirements of the role, and convince the employer to consider interviewing you

Read the application form carefully. What skills/ experience/qualities are being sought?

Follow these steps:

STEP 1: Identify interesting, relevant, specific examples from different areas of your life, e.g. university, work experience, volunteering, interests, and so on, where you have demonstrated different skills, strengths and qualities. Think about what skills are needed for the role you're applying for. What are they looking for in candidates?

STEP 2: Use the **STAR method** to shape your written answers. This will allow you to give fully evidenced examples for each of the set criteria. You need to say when you have SHOWN the skills you say you have:

- S: Situation** → Set the scene. When and where did the situation take place e.g. work/university/elsewhere
- T: Task:** → What were you tasked with, or requested to carry out?
- A: Action:** → What did you do? Explain your individual contribution. What were your responsibilities/actions?
- R: Result:** → What was the outcome? You could include measurable results such as grades or explain how it proved beneficial. What did you learn from the task/experience?

STEP 3: Review your answers. Make sure you have included specific examples with details; used active keywords (such as organised, supervised, planned, researched etc.); checked the spelling and grammar is correct

**** Remember: Employers shortlist from what they read on application forms; they will not "read between the lines" Make sure your experience is clearly demonstrated ****

* Top tips*

- ✓✓✓✓ Allow yourself plenty of time to write a good application
- ✓✓✓✓ Read each question carefully. If a question includes sub-questions, make sure you answer them all
- ✓✓✓✓ Use past experience and/or current skills to match the criteria set – you will be shortlisted on this
- ✓✓✓✓ Use as much of the word limit as you can, make sure no spelling or grammar mistakes.
- ✓✓✓✓ Make every word count and tailor your answers to the job advert
- ✓✓✓✓ Always include specific examples with details (remember STAR)

Get it checked before you submit – by emailing stemplacements@brighton.ac.uk

STAR Method Example:

Application Form Question: Please give an example of when you had to deal with a complaint from a customer and explain how you went about solving the issue

By using the STAR method, you could structure an answer in the following way:

(S): Situation: Whilst working with my last company, a customer phoned up complaining that they had yet to receive an order which was now well outside of our advertised delivery timescale

(T): Task: Firstly, I needed to address the customer's concerns in a professional and courteous manner, identify the problem with the delivery and make sure the customer received a replacement without further delay

(A): Activity: I apologised to the customer, asked for their delivery details and agreed to telephone them back as soon as possible with a solution. By checking our database, I was able to establish that their postal address had been misspelt on the delivery note, in addition a back-up contact method had not been recorded. I re-contacted the customer, confirmed the correct delivery details and made sure the goods were with her the next day. In addition, I offered a discount on her next purchase as a goodwill gesture.

(R): Result: I spoke to my line manager about the situation and had a system put in place where a confirmation text message was sent to all customers once an order was placed confirming delivery details. A week later I contacted the customer, and she had not only used her discount, but had posted a positive review on the company website.

The key to the STAR method for both application forms and interviews is to re-tell specific examples of where you have demonstrated the competency being referred to in the selection criteria.

Identify actual examples from University life, employment, volunteering, leisure interests etc.

Exercise: How might you use the STAR Method to frame your answers to the following types of questions on an application form (or in an interview setting)?

Question: Tell me about a time you made a mistake, and what you did to rectify it

Question: Describe a successful group project. What was your role in the outcome of the project?

Question: Tell us about a time when you used your communication skills to make a difference

Question: Give us an example of when you dealt with conflict within a team

Question: Tell us about a time when you have dealt with multiple deadlines. How did you ensure they were all

REMEMBER!!!

EMAIL THE STEM PLACEMENT AND INTERNSHIP TEAM WITH YOUR DRAFT APPLICATIONS: stemplacements@brighton.ac.uk