

**POOL ACADEMY**

**GUIDANCE NOTES AND POLICIES**

**Guidance notes**

**On completing the application form**

**Introduction**

First of all, thank you for applying for a job with Pool Academy.

We have designed this guidance to help you complete the application form.

If you find the form difficult to complete, you may ask someone to do it on your behalf. If you have a disability and would prefer to submit your application in another format please contact us. We are here to help you and if you would like some advice or assistance on filling in the form, please do not hesitate to contact us or ask someone to call on your behalf on 01209 712220.

The application form is purposely printed in a print size that helps people with dyslexia or sight problems. If you require this document in an alternate format, such as a larger print, Easy Read, Braille, or audio tape, please do not hesitate to call us on 01209 712220. Please be aware that this may result in a short delay.

**General comments**

The Academy uses one application form for ALL staff covering a diverse range of jobs and professions, so you may find some sections and/or questions on the form do not apply to you. These questions and/or sections are clearly marked. Unless the form states that you are not required to complete a question or section please answer all the questions on the application form.

Our application form has been designed so that all applicants are required to present their details in the same format. In this way, we can be sure that all applicants are treated fairly and equally.

Completing the application form is an important part of the recruitment process. Sometimes our jobs need practical hands-on skills instead of administrative or office skills, so you do not necessarily have to be good at filling in forms and completing paperwork. The content explaining your experience is what is important to us, so the better you are able to show this on your application form, the easier it will be for us to initially assess your suitability.

The basic duties and requirements for the job are set out in the Person Specification and the Job Description. A Person Specification sets out the type of person that we are looking for and the Job Description sets out what you are expected to do in the job.

Please check before starting to complete your application that you **either** have a Job Description and Person Specification. If you do not have one or the other, please call the named advertisement contact. It will be very difficult for you to complete your application form properly without these important documents, as you will not be able to give us details of your relevant experience; which we need to see whether to take you forward for an interview.

**Presentation**

Please write clearly in black ink, so that your application can be photocopied; purely for those people involved in deciding to take your application to the next stage.

Remember to sign the form in all the relevant places to declare that the information you have provided is correct. If you submit your form electronically, you will be asked to sign your form at a later date.

If you are selected for interview, we will write to you with all the details and explain what you need to bring to your interview. As well as any essential certificates, please note you will also have to bring certain documents such as proof of National Insurance Number, birth certificate and/or passport etc which confirms your identity and your eligibility to work in the UK.

**Role applied for**

All our jobs have their own job titles; these can be found in the advert, the job description and the person specification.

**About You and References**

Enter your personal details fully and clearly so that we may contact you about your application.

All job offers are made subject to receipt to two satisfactory references, one of whom must be your current employer.

If you are not employed or are unable to provide an employment reference please give the name of someone you have known in a professional capacity, or in connection with any voluntary work. We do not accept references from members of your immediate or extended family. If this is your first job, you could ask a Teacher/Lecturer/Tutor from your most recent educational establishment. Please state each referee’s relationship to you (current employer, previous employer etc).

You may submit a testimonial, but you will still be required to supply 2 referees for us to contact independently on our own forms.

For applicants applying to work with children one of your referees must include where you have worked within this area before (whether as a paid employee, or as a volunteer), if this is not your first job in this field.

When we request references for applicants applying to work with children and/or vulnerable adults, we have a compulsory question that asks referees to comment whether there have been any disciplinary issues (e.g. conduct and/or behaviour) which may have a bearing upon an applicant’s suitability to work in such fields. We will ask whether there are any penalties which we call “time expired” (e.g. whether there has been a disciplinary matter in the past which may have expired).

If you have any concerns about this please write or call the contact number enclosed to discuss the matter in confidence further. If it is decided that the matter is relevant, we may be required to give the details to the panel who decide whether to take the application to the next stage. It may be decided that it is appropriate to request additional referees if a matter remains in doubt.

References will be taken up **before** interview. If you do not want us to take up references before interview, please explain why not.

**Where did you see this vacancy advertised?**

We would very much appreciate you completing this section as it will assist us in monitoring the effectiveness of our advertising.

**Qualifications Achieved from Secondary, Further and Higher Education**

Please list all your qualifications and examinations (with results) which you believe to be relevant. The Person Specification/Job Description or Role Profile will say which qualifications are essential to the post that you are applying for. Wherever possible, please try to add what your qualifications may be equivalent to e.g. a CSE Grade 1 is the equivalent to a GCSE Grade C. You will be asked to bring your original certificates or qualifications with you to your interview, so be prepared to ensure you can locate these, or ask the appropriate educational establishments for copies.

If you have qualifications which are not required for the job, you do not have to include them on your application if you do not wish to do so. You may continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**Other Qualifications**

You may have gained professional knowledge, skills and abilities by undertaking and / or personal development courses or kept your skills up to date in other ways. Please use this section to let us know.

We will take full note of any education or qualifications gained overseas or as part of an employment training scheme.

**Teacher Training - for teaching posts only**

Teachers are required to answer all questions under this section as well as the highlighted section of the Current or Most Recent Employment.

**Your Current / Most Recent Employment**

If you have recently left school or college, or a training programme and have not yet had a job, you can either provide details of any relevant work experience that you may have had, (including holiday or voluntary work), or you can go straight to the section entitled Educational Qualifications obtained.

**Previous Employment or Experience**

Details of your current employment should not be included here. Start by giving us the details of the job prior to your current job and then add the details of all your jobs working backwards, so that your first job is at the bottom of the list. **All gaps in employment must be explained,** for example, if you took a break from work, for whatever reason, please explain the circumstances.

Job title, duties and responsibilities - under this heading, briefly outline your main duties in your current or most recent job.

You can attach an additional sheet if you wish.

**Safeguarding children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults**

The Academy is committed to safeguarding children and has adopted a rigorous recruitment process, therefore, **if** **you are applying to work with children or in a school, in ANY role,** you are required to give examples of how you would contribute to ensuring our school and services remain a safe environment for children. These may be discussed further at interview.

**Your Supporting Statement**

This is a very important part of your application and is your opportunity to explain why you believe that your skills, knowledge and experience make you a suitable candidate for the job. You may want to consider drafting this before you actually enter your chosen information into this section. Consider this section of the application form, as your best opportunity to sell yourself and present skills, knowledge and experience in the best light.

Firstly, we would advise you to examine the Job Description and Person Specification or Role Profile and think about how your skills, knowledge and experience match the requirements of the job.

Secondly, think about how the person reading this section will judge whether you are a suitable candidate. Does the information that you have written clearly tell the reader that not only do you want the job but that you could do the job well?

Look at each of the requirements listed on the Person Specification and show how your skills, knowledge and experience gained from paid or unpaid work, domestic responsibilities, education, leisure interests or voluntary work match the requirements identified and give specific examples of things you have done which demonstrates your abilities.

Remember that unpaid work or work at home can be just as valuable and valid as being in a paid job. You may have transferable skills which can be applied to the post, for example if the person specification says “able to organise self and others to complete projects within deadlines” you should do more than say “I am a very organised person and can work to deadlines”. You should give an example, by describing something you have done which proves that you can do it, e.g. “I organised a fund-raising event for the local playgroup within three months and with a group of five helpers”, or give details of a work-related experience.

If we have stated it is essential that you have worked on Excel spreadsheets, explain in what context you have used them.

**Interview Requirements**

The selection process of applicants is measured on each individual’s own merits and abilities. We have made a commitment to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities and adopted the Employment Department’s Disability “Two Ticks” Symbol “Positive about disabled people”. This means that we have undertaken to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential shortlisting criteria for a job vacancy and as such we will consider them on their abilities.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments where, compared to a non-disabled person, a disabled person is substantially disadvantaged by either the working arrangements (which include the recruitment process) or the working environment.

If you have a disability, please identify this in the box provided so that we can make suitable arrangements if you are called for interview and/or work-based exercise / test.

**Declaration of Criminal convictions**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provides that certain criminal convictions become “spent” after the passage of time. That is, the Law will treat them, for most purposes, as if they had never happened and it is not necessary to disclose them.

However, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and 1986 contain certain classes of employment where a person can be asked to disclose all criminal convictions, including any which may be “spent”.

The post for which you are applying falls within these Orders and you are therefore required to detail all previous convictions on the form entitled “Declaration of Criminal Convictions” whether or not they are spent. Details of what constitutes a conviction are given below;

**A conviction includes:**

* a sentence of imprisonment, youth custody or borstal training;
* an absolute discharge, probation order, conditional discharge, bind-over order;
* a fit person order, supervision or care order arising from criminal conviction;
* simple dismissal from the Armed Forces, Cashiering, discharge with ignominy, dismissal with disgrace or detention by the Armed Forces;
* detention by direction of the Home Secretary;
* detention centre, remand home, approved school or attendance course orders;
* a suspended sentence;
* a fine or any other sentence not mentioned above.

Please note that you should also include details of any cautions, reprimands or final warnings which, although not considered to be criminal convictions and become “spent” immediately, have to be considered in relation to exempt posts such as this one.

In accordance with the Police Act 1997, any offer of employment will be subject to a criminal record check (“Disclosure”) from the Criminal Records Bureau (DBS). This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions.

**Explanatory notes**

1. Any information that you provide on the “Declaration of Criminal Convictions” will be treated in strictest confidence and will be considered only in relation to the post you have applied for on this occasion.
2. Pool Academy aims to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from diverse candidates. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only where the conviction is relevant. Disclosure of a conviction, caution etc does not necessarily mean that you will not be appointed to this post; your suitability will be looked as a whole in light of all the information available, merit and ability. Main considerations will be whether the offence is one which renders you unsuitable to undertake the duties of the post for which you have applied and the circumstances and background to the offence.
3. Relevant criminal convictions and other associated information that you provide on the “Declaration of Criminal Convictions” form will be discussed at interview in order to assess job related risks.
4. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any Disclosure information provided by the DBS before a final recruitment decision is made. Should you think that a mistake has been made by the DBS you will be given the right to appeal to them.
5. In order to request information from the DBS, Pool Academy has registered through Cornwall Council with them. As part of this registration it is necessary for Cornwall Council to comply with the DBS “Code of Practice”. A copy of this Code of Practice is available on request. The Council has policies on Criminal Record Checking, Security of Disclosure and Disclosure Information and Recruitment of Ex-offenders, copies of which are available on request from their HR services department.
6. Any information regarding offences will be kept confidential and on a “need to know” basis. Disclosures will not be retained for longer than 6 months after the date on which recruitment or other relevant decisions have been taken or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the Disclosure information has been resolved. This period will only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances which justify retention for a longer period.

**Disclosure of Interest**

**Driving licence**

If your Job Description/Person Specification or Role Profile states that you do not need a car for the job you are applying for, please tick **Not Applicable.**

**Working Time Regulations**

We need to know whether you work for any other organisations, as we are required to fulfil our duty of care to all our employees under the Working Time Regulations 1998.

**Canvassing of our Governors and employees**

You must declare if you are related to any officer, teacher, governor or member of the Academy. This includes declaring if you are wife, husband, common law partner, parent, grandparent, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of an existing Governor or employee.

If you have been dismissed from any previous employment, we need as many details as you can provide and we are required to follow this up with the relevant employer concerned.

If you have previously received a redundancy payment from any Council, let us know as this might affect your employment eligibility.

**How we protect your personal information**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 all information given on the application form will only be used to determine an applicant’s suitability for the post and will be kept only for those purposes and equal opportunities monitoring.

**Your declaration**

Please make sure that you have signed and dated the application form to confirm that your details are correct and complete. If you email you application to us, you see we have asked you to tick the box to confirm that your information is correct and if you are shortlisted, you will be asked to sign your form at your interview. Please note that applicants who conceal or misrepresent relevant information at any stage will be disqualified from appointment, or if appointed, may be dismissed without notice.

**Equal opportunities monitoring form**

We would appreciate you completing the form as this enables us to assess the effectiveness of our policies

**Disability**

You are asked if you consider you qualify for protection under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995).

A person has a disability under the DDA if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities, or if they have a history of such a disability. Included in this definition are the following;

* Physical impairments
* Mental impairments relating to mental functioning, including learning difficulties and mental health issues which are either clinically well recognised or which can be substantiated by a medical practitioner.
* Sensory impairments such as a hearing and/or visual impairment (which is not correctable by glasses or similar visual aids)
* Severe disfigurement
* Progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy or HIV infection
* People who have had an impairment (covered by the Act) in the past but have since recovered

An impairment has a substantial effect if it affects mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift or otherwise move everyday objects, speech, hearing, eyesight (excluding those who wear glasses / contact lenses) memory and/or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.

Long-term means has lasted, or is likely to last for at least 12 months, or for the rest of the life of a person.

Examples of reasonable adjustments are: making adjustments to the premises; allocation of work; being flexible about working hours; providing training; using modified equipment; making instructions and manuals more accessible; using a reader or interpreter; and appropriate supervision. There are no prescribed rules as to what adjustments can and cannot be made as individuals’ circumstances can vary so much. However, Pool Academy is open to considering all requests for reasonable adjustments.

If you require a reasonable adjustment, Pool Academy’s Human Resources and Occupational Health Provider will contact you to discuss the requirements you have requested.

**And finally…………..**

Due to the high volume of applications received by the Academy, it is not always possible for us to respond to every unsuccessful applicant. Therefore, if you do not hear from us within 14 days of the closing date, this will mean that you have not been successful on this occasion. We would however, actively encourage you to apply for any other vacancies that you may believe are suitable.

We thank you for the interest you have shown in working with Pool Academy and wish you the very best with your application.

**Policy statement**

On the recruitment of ex-offenders

**Purpose**

Pool Academy is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and, subject to the over-riding consideration of protecting children and vulnerable people, undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

**Policy statement**

As stated within the Academy’s Equal Opportunities Policy and Action Plan, Pool Academy 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 and marital status.

In addition, it is committed to the fair treatment of all applicants for employment positions who have a criminal record and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure service to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, Pool Academy complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice, and undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. This policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote 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.

A disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment information will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of an individual being offered the position.

Where a disclosure forms part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants who are shortlisted to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. This information is to be sent under separate, confidential cover to the person identified within the recruitment pack at Pool Academy and we guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows the Academy to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We will only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 unless the nature of the post allows the Authority to ask questions about entire criminal records.

The Academy ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. The Academy also ensures that appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 is given to all involved.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, an open and measured discussion will take 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. The Academy makes every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and makes a copy available on request.

The Academy undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing any conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working for Pool Academy. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences with due consideration given to our responsibilities to protect children and vulnerable adults.