Writing a *CV*

Your *cv* should showcase your skills and achievements, and be tailored to the requirements of the position you are applying for.

An employer should be able to quickly identify that you have the skills, experience and qualifications needed. Be clear and concise.

Please note the suggestions in this document, relate only to *cv*s used for the UK job market.

Personal Details

Include your name and address, phone number and email. **Do not** include age, date of birth, marital status, religion, nationality — these are not required. A title of 'curriculum vitae' is not necessary.

Career Profile / Career Objective

Some employers read these, others do not. If you include a statement, keep it very brief, specific and relevant to the job. Avoid general descriptions like 'excellent communicator'. Instead, provide clear examples elsewhere in the *cv* that demonstrate you have effectively applied the skills required for the job.

Education

Briefly detail your education with dates and qualifications. Many employers look for high academic achievement, so include good grades if you have them.

Your current or most recent degree or postgraduate qualification is likely to be the most significant part of your education. It may even relate directly to the job, so list it first. You might list some of your modules, but only if they show knowledge relevant to the job.

Employers in areas like IT and engineering like to see brief detail of any practical elements of your study, such as projects, case studies or a dissertation, if applicable.

Earlier qualifications, such as A-level and GCSE (or overseas equivalents), should be mentioned briefly with grades if they are good.

Relevant Work Experience & Other Employment

Detail full-time or part-time work, placements, internships, or casual work. Include your duties, responsibilities and achievements.

Professional Skills

This section is for you to demonstrate your level of competency in areas such as computer software and spoken languages. Technical skills associated with your industry may also be important; for example, programming languages for some IT roles or legal research software for legal roles.

Achievements & Awards

Your academic achievements and contributions to work and volunteering can be highlighted throughout your *cv*. You may want to include other achievements and awards in a separate section, for example music or sport related awards.

Extracurricular Activities / Voluntary Work

This section presents another angle on the kind of person you are through the activities you choose to get involved in. Examples include membership of societies, groups, teams (inside and outside of university), committee experience, or being a student/course representative. These activities should demonstrate skills such as leadership, teamwork and communication.

Interests

Some employers like to talk to you about your interests. They might do this to put you at your ease. Think about what makes you unique, but be honest and brief. Try to back this up with achievements in your activities, e.g. instead of saying you are interested in basketball, say that you play in a team.

References

Ask at least two people if they will write a reference about you if an employer asks. Someone you have worked for and someone who has taught you, e.g. an academic from your current course.

CONTACT

Careers, Student Development & Outreach
Northampton Square, London EC1V OHB

@ **Email enquiries**
careers@city.ac.uk

Telephone enquiries
020 7040 8093

Find out more, visit
www.city.ac.uk/careers

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CAREERS, STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH

Writing a CV

Do not use family members as referees. Employers expect you to have references. You do not need to include them on your *cv* or write 'references available on request', however you should be prepared to provide your references when the employer asks you for them.

A few tips on formatting

• No more than 2 pages in length

• Use plain font (Arial)

• Check spelling and grammar

• Font should be no smaller than 10pt

• Use bullet points to present your responsibilities and achievements more concisely.

• Align dates and bullet points

• Use the same bullet points throughout

• Keep layout clear and simple

• Avoid colour, borders and elaborate graphics unless applying for a design or creative role

• Use bold sparingly to highlight headings or significant achievements

• Avoid using the first person. Instead of "I have strong leadership skills which I developed..." say "Strong leadership skills developed through…."

Use a *cv* when:

• Requested by the employer

• Applying speculatively

• Attending networking events where you may meet a potential recruiter

Do not use a *cv* when you have been asked to fill out an online application, unless the employer asks for a *cv* to be attached.

Different styles of *cv*s

There are three main types of *cv* formats: Chronological (Traditional), Skills-Based and Academic. The style you choose will be the one which best sells your skills and abilities. See examples of each here.

Chronological *cv*s are the most common. You can see a sample chronological *cv* on the last page of this document. Different sectors may be looking for particular information so consider including:

Law: A section detailing your legal experience

IT: A skills section detailing technical IT skills.

Engineering & IT: Brief, clear detail of practical elements of your course e.g. projects

Journalism: Brief detail of published work and/or link to online portfolio

Academia: Include details of publications, conferences and research.

Online submission of *cv*s

It is common to submit your *cv* online. In some cases initial screening is electronic. Ensure you use key words that link to the job requirements and positive, action words indicating skills and achievements.

Emailing your *cv*

If there are no clear instructions from the employer, it is common to send your *cv* and cover letter as attachments with a short email to the address stated in the vacancy posting.

Posting your *cv* on the internet

Many online jobsites require you to upload your *cv*. Consider whether you are likely to reach your target employers this way and if you want your *cv* to be public to lots of people. Check:

• Can it be updated easily and at no cost?

• Is it listed in a database?

• How long will it be in the database?

If you do put your *cv* online, make sure to remove your address.

For some job areas you may want to showcase your skills or examples of your work by creating your own website. Include the URL in your *cv* to enable potential employers to link to it if they wish. Ensure the website and content are professional and positive examples of your skills.

Sample *cv* format

The format and type of *cv*, such as chronological, skills-based, industry specific, academic, is your choice. Target it to the position you are applying for, and research the job and the skills & experience required.

The sample format on the next page is a guide only. You can arrange and expand your sections so they fit your most relevant achievements and experience. The sample is one page – make sure that your *cv* is no longer than 2 pages maximum.

Checking your *cv*

Once you have a draft of your *cv* you can book an appointment with a Careers Consultant to review your draft and help you improve it. Book appointments on CareersHub.

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Name
Address
Contact details (phone number and email)

Career Profile (Optional)
- A brief statement (2-3 lines) about specific skills and experience you have to offer the employer
- Remember that you are applying for **THIS JOB** not A JOB. This must be tailored to the application.

Education

Date	Course	Institution / University / Secondary School / College

- Classification grade / mark / awards / scholarships / etc.
- Relevant modules and projects
- Dissertation project
- Use the same format for secondary school education (including A-levels and GCSEs or equivalent)

Relevant Work Experience (you may want to put this section first if you have a lot of experience)

Date	Position	Employer Name

- Include statements using bullet points about duties/responsibilities/contributions (use action words to start each statement)
- Focus on things you achieved and contributions you made to the company
- Include all paid and voluntary work (placements and other relevant experience)

Professional Skills

Languages: e.g. Arabic (fluent)

IT Skills (include computer packages): e.g. Microsoft Office, Bloomberg, SPSS

Technical Skills (related to discipline/industry/job): e.g. Web development, computer programming in Java

Achievements / Awards (optional, or incorporate into education / employment section)

Date	Achievement / award title and/or details

Extra-curricular Involvement / Voluntary Work

Date	Position	Organisation

- Include statements about duties / responsibilities (use action words to start each statement)
- You may want to include involvement with charities, community involvement, etc.

Interests (optional, 2-3 lines)

If you list interests. make they are interesting as conversation starters: e.g. Tae Kwon Do, rock climbing, ballroom dancing, rather than "enjoy reading books and listening to music".

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