

CVs and Covering Letters in Brief

THE CV

The reverse Chronological CV is suitable for most situations. It lists education and work experience in reverse date order (most recent first). Evidence of skills and achievements are built into the CV against the relevant experience.

Format and Structure

- Most UK CVs should be two A4 sized pages, unless otherwise stated by the employer.
- Your best selling points should always come first within a section.
- Allocate space according to importance to the job for which you are applying – expand on areas of relevance.
- You can draw the recruiter's attention to relevant experience by grouping it together under an appropriate sub-heading eg Legal Work Experience, Financial Work Experience, Scientific Work Experience, Technical Work Experience or Relevant Work Experience.
- Use headings which best describe the content of the section. Adapt the headings to fit your needs eg Awards and Achievements, Positions of Responsibility and Achievements.
- Putting lines between sections and the use of boxes or tables with lined borders can clutter up your CV making it difficult to read. Tables without borders can be useful for formatting neatly in columns.
- Use a standard font that is easy to read and looks professional. Use the same font style throughout.

Style

- Keep sentences short and precise.
- Bullet points can look effective and help you to write short, dynamic sentences. If you want to use paragraphs keep them short.

Content

- Must be tailored to the requirements of the reader. What skills and experience are they looking for?
- Spelling and grammar are very important; do not rely on spell checks.
- Personal profiles are optional; they are best suited to speculative applications or in circumstances where you are not using a cover letter.
- All skills claims must be backed up by evidence.

Structuring your examples - the CAR Model

Context – What was the situation – keep it brief, but specific.

Action – What did YOU do? What was your role? What actions did you take? Use action words.

Result – What was the outcome? What did you achieve? What was improved? Qualify and quantify.

References

Unless otherwise stated, provide names of two referees. These will depend on the role, your circumstances and what has been requested. More on references: www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/applicationsinterviews/af/references

THE COVERING LETTER

When sending a CV, you need to include a covering letter. The covering letter is your personal sales pitch, where you introduce yourself as a candidate and discuss why you want the job. It should be professional and business like in style and layout. In brief it should cover:

1. Why you are applying to this company? - What makes them stand out from other similar companies?
2. Why you are applying for this role? - Your motivation for applying, show your understanding of the role.
3. The skills and experience you have that match the job description.

Covering letters should be tailored for each job. If you cut and paste the company name and use the letter for any other employer, your letter will not convince the reader that you want to work for them. Even the least experienced recruiter can spot a 'mailshot' at a glance!

Graduate Programme: Research & Development

In a business whose very purpose is to make products people love, our future begins in Research & Development (R&D). You'll be undertaking research to understand what consumers want and need and develop the technology and science to bring innovations to life. You'll be making things even healthier, more appealing, more efficient, more environmentally friendly – improving our products in any way possible. This could mean developing the next flavour of ice cream, saving water and energy in washing, or saving millions of lives through clean water and better washing of hands. Our teams work closely with people right across the entire company – and the world.

What do we look for?

We are looking for people that want to make a difference globally, tackling the real challenges of the next 50 years. You'll need a strong technical qualification in either a Chemical, Biological, Physical or Food-related Science or Chemical/Materials/Mechanical Engineering or a related discipline. You need to be the kind of scientist/engineer who has a genuine business interest: bags of enthusiasm mixed with commercial acumen. (Please note these discipline requirements only apply to our placement and graduate programme. We accept a broader range of disciplines within R&D for other roles, visit our website to search these vacancies)

Competencies

Growth Mindset: You have a positive attitude about the company's future and a passion for growth and winning. You take the lead and seek fresh opportunities; insist on innovation and never settle for 'good enough'.

Consumer & Customer Focus: You have a passion to improve the lives of our consumers and customers and bring their voice into everything we do and the decisions we make. You are externally focused and go the extra mile in order to exceed consumer and customer expectations.

Bias for Action: You bring a sense of urgency to getting things done and making tough decisions, avoiding over-debating or over-analysing issues. You're results-focused, and drive for simplification by keeping the end goal in sight at all times.

Accountability & Responsibility: You make commitments and hold yourself accountable for delivery. You take pride in delivering work to the highest standards and acknowledges when things are not up to scratch. You let people know clearly, at the beginning what is expected in terms of performance and hold them accountable for delivery.

Building Talent & Teams: You inspire through action and lead by example. You challenge people to do their best work and spend time coaching individuals and teams to ensure that they realise their full potential. You constantly challenge yourself to grow and improve.

In addition to these we look for well-rounded individuals that have passion for business, the desired business area, and the consumer goods industry.

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Education

2009 –2013

The University of Manchester

BSc (Hons) Biochemistry with Industrial Experience

Expected result 2:1 (Year 1: 65%, Year 2: 67%)

- Relevant modules: genetic engineering, gene expression, molecular cell biology, metabolism and metabolic control, structural biology and proteomics. Also studied module in Spanish for extra credit.
- Research skills project: the histological and genetic analysis of a mouse model of bone dysplasia', working alongside a research group in the Faculty of Life Sciences.
- Group leader for a tutorial exercise on the ethics of GM food. My team was awarded 70% for our presentation and final report.

2001 –2008

Cheadle Hulme High School

- 3 A levels: Biology (A), Geography (B), Chemistry (C)
- 1 AS level: Spanish (B)
- 10 GCSEs (5A, 4B, 1C) including Mathematics (A) and English (A)

Industrial Experience

2011-2012

Assay Biologist, ABC Pharma, Macclesfield

- Insight gained into the daily operation of the Clinical Pharmacology and DMPK section of a large drug development company.
- Demonstrated the ability to work unsupervised in a professional laboratory environment, managing my own work and producing results to the high standards required in accordance with GLP/GCP.
- Performed assay studies such as enzyme kinetics and inhibition using UV-visible spectrophotometry. Gained experience in method development of HPLC, LC-MS/MS and bioanalytical assays.
- Used robotic automation to prepare biological fluid samples from clinical and pre-clinical studies.
- Project: Analysed the effect of a chemical introduced into human plasma samples, to ascertain the hydrolysis rate and plasma esterase activity to investigate whether a correlation exists between drug metabolism, biochemistry and genetics. I presented my results in an academic report, and both in-house and external poster presentations (UK and overseas).

Technical Skills

Laboratory

SDS-PAGE, western blotting, tissue dissection, embedding, sectioning, antibody staining, RT-PCR, histological techniques and protein extraction. Achieve consistently high marks for lab reports and practical examinations.

Computing

During my placement I gained experience in the use of Laboratory Information Management Systems, Laura 4 for radio-chromatography, Analyst LC/MS software and Spectramax for UV-visible HPLC.

Excellent working knowledge of MS Office, good knowledge of Excel for data analysis.

Other Work Experience

- Summer 2011** **Children's Science Presenter, Mad Science, Manchester (Part-time)**
- Delivered after-school science clubs to primary school children, each lasting 8 weeks.
 - Built effective working relationships with the participating schools and children, in several cases resulting in extra sessions being offered.
 - Responsible for maintaining equipment and for the health & safety of children during the sessions. Fully CRB checked.
- 2008 – 2011** **Bar Supervisor, The John Millington pub, Cheadle Hulme**
- Worked for 6 months during my gap year to fund travel, returning to work part-time and during university vacations.
 - Received a customer service award from the Brewery following positive feedback from a mystery customer assessment.
 - Supervised food ordering and oversee 2-4 staff members in the restaurant. Selected to attend food brand training by the manager.
 - Assisted the manager with weekly stock takes and frequently given the responsibility of cashing up tills at the end of the night.
 - Worked flexible hours to meet the demands of the business.
- 2006 – 2010** **Checkout Assistant, Somerfield, Cheadle Hulme**
- Trained to work in all areas of the store.
 - Assisted manager with monthly stock takes.
 - Trained 3 new staff members.

Positions of Responsibility and Awards

- Peer Assisted Study Session Co-ordinator in the Faculty of Life Sciences. I facilitate PASS sessions for groups of up to 15 students. I introduced some new revision exercises, a treasure hunt for new students and motivated fellow Co-ordinators during the exam period.
- Social secretary of the Faculty of Life Sciences Society. I organised an annual programme of events for the society and introduced a popular quiz night. Working to tight deadlines, I coordinated the printing and sale of tickets for the society's summer ball and negotiated with a local hotel to get a good rate for the venue.

Other skills

Languages Basic conversational Spanish and some written ability.

Driving Licence Provisional – test scheduled for Spring 2013.

Interests

- I took a gap year before university, travelling with a friend to South America and volunteering with a charity educating street kids in Colombia.
- Enjoy running and recently completed the Great Manchester Run, raising over £300 for a local hospice.
- My reading includes the New Scientist and National Geographic magazines.

References available on request