

CVs and Covering Letters in Brief

The CV

These notes are meant to be read alongside the sample CV, which has been put together as an example of how to present a CV. We would like to stress that the degree subject was chosen at random and for no particular reason.

There are different styles of CV and at the Careers Service we find the one that tends to work best is the Reverse Chronological CV as it 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 relevant experience.

Format and Structure

- It is important to remember that the average length of time spent reading a CV is under a minute. A CV therefore has to be easy to read and well presented. A good test is the 'arm's length' one where you check to see what a CV looks like from afar. If it appears densely written, it probably needs revising.
- Most UK CVs should be two A4 sized pages, unless otherwise stated by the employer.
- To check the protocol for global CVs, *Going Global* is a useful resource:
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/findingwork/overseas/goingglobal/
- 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 heading eg Legal Work Experience, Financial 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, Extra-Curricular activities.
- Be wary of putting lines between sections and using boxes or tables as these can clutter up the CV and make it difficult to read. Tables without borders can be useful for formatting neat columns.
- Use a standard font that is easy to read and looks professional. Use the same font style throughout.
- Save in a standard file format so when attached to an email the CV is easy to open.
- A career objective/personal profile (a few lines included under your name and address) is optional on this kind of CV. It may be useful to include one when preparing a CV that you will hand out or when applying for a job in the creative industries, as they tend to favour these. A career objective/personal profile should be written in the third person and tailored to each role applied for. Think carefully before including because although they are only a few lines long they can be difficult to write well.

Degree information

- Consider what information is of most interest to the person receiving your CV.
- You may want to include relevant modules, brief details of a dissertation, a summary of transferable skills gained, language competency, your study abroad year and any awards.

Style

- Keep sentences short and concise.
- 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, particularly US ones.
- All skills claims must be backed up by evidence.

References

Unless otherwise stated provide 2 references. Who you provide depends 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. It is more personal and is 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 to each job. Although tempting to do, 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!

**For more detailed information, please refer to
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/applicationsinterviews/**

Vacancy Title: Graduate Marketing Intern

The successful applicant will primarily support the team in preparing sales presentations, running reports and creating surveys, but will be expected to turn their hand to whatever needs to be done!

Skills:

We are looking for a bright graduate with an analytical mind and a creative eye to join our team for a six month placement. This is a great opportunity for someone who is keenly interested in working in marketing and/or media research to get their career started with the world's best publishing company.

Knowledge of software packages such as PowerPoint, Keynote, Excel, InDesign, Adobe Photoshop would be beneficial. Full training will be given in the specific research tools used such as NRS, TGI, etc.

Accuracy, numeracy, good writing skills, imagination, and a good visual eye are essential, as are common sense, being a good communicator, adaptability, high level of motivation, the ability to work well as part of a team, and a genuine interest in publishing.

Rebecca Simpson

Address: Crawford House, Booth Street East, Manchester M13 9QS

Telephone: 0161 123 4567 E-mail: xxx.xxxx@hotmail.co.uk LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/xxxxx

Education & Qualifications:

2009 – 2013 The University of Manchester

BA (Hons) Modern Languages (Spanish) and Business & Management (first class predicted)

- Studying a joint honours degree requires that keeps me constantly on my toes, switching daily between Spanish classes and diverse business lectures. Over the past two years I have covered topics such as; global markets, product and process innovation, sales, management, marketing and finance.
- Placement year in Ecuador.
- I am taking part in a group project with Greater Manchester Police in which I have conducted a market research campaign gathering responses from over 900 people. I contributed my analytical abilities to take charge of collating the data in a business report submitted to the GMP.

2002 - 2009 Makersville College

A Levels: Economics (A), English Literature (A), Spanish (A), AS-Levels: History (C)

GCSEs: 9 GCSEs including English and Maths (A*-B).

Relevant Work Experience:

August 2012

Circulation & Subscriptions Intern

Condé Nast Publications LTD London:

- Learnt the basics of subscriptions sales and gained confidence in every task I undertook. Jobs I completed included updating Insert Plan reports and PIP reports, and research into pricing strategies for iPad subscriptions, which increased my commercial awareness.
- Gained an understanding of the functions and organisational processes used by a publishing house, bettering my Excel spread sheet handling ability and improving my analytical skills through processing reports.

June-July 2012

Assistant

British Embassy, Guayaquil, Ecuador

- I was able to gain a six-week internship in the British Embassy after developing a strong relationship with them during my time in Ecuador. This involved giving Visa information to British nationals in the country and writing reports outlining official emergency procedures.
- The time I spent on the phone dealing with visitors' queries improved my telephone manner and communications skills. Interacting with a wide range of people on a daily basis meant I thoroughly challenged my Spanish language ability. Working in a high profile office taught me the importance of professionalism, organisation and accuracy.

Jan – June 2012

**Marketing Intern
Agripac S.A, Guayaquil, Ecuador**

- Completed my University work placement in Ecuador for the leading producer of agricultural products in the country. Although predominantly a marketing intern I rotated around departments allowing me to gain insight into how a multinational company runs.
- I learnt how both the internal magazine and external newspapers are edited increasing my knowledge of publishing techniques, as well as co-managing the customer loyalty scheme. I participated in writing delivery and dispatch policies for the Operations department.
- Learning the intricacies of a multinational business, working on important projects and communicating with team members all in a foreign language meant I had to adapt and push myself on a daily basis.

Sept – Dec 2011

**Marketing and Communications Intern
Andalucía Imagen,; Malaga, Spain**

- The first three months of my work placement were spent at a small Internet based company selling the rights to photos and vectors as well as running a football social networking site.
- On a daily basis I contacted current clients via email with promotions and offers allowing me to use my creativity to produce the offers. I sought potential clients through photography forums, whilst also managing their advertising via Facebook. This gave me insight into some of the many ways companies communicate and advertise to clients.
- Responsible for translating Spanish web pages, consisting of over 2,000 words, into English. This improved my language skills immensely as well as strengthened my time management skills and ability to work under pressure as I was working to a deadline to send the English website live.

June – Sept 2011

**Trading Centre Analyst
Aviva, UK**

- Being thrown straight into a high-powered business environment meant I had to pick up complex concepts from day one, and quickly learn how their pensions and insurance schemes worked.
- Co-worked on a sales project that looked at re-analysing millions of pounds worth of sales through examining data using Excel and its pivot table functions. The independence I was given with this project allowed me to gain confidence in my own abilities to fit in to a corporate environment.

Skills:

Languages: Spanish – Fluent, with special focus on business Spanish language and translation.

Driving: I hold a full, clean UK driving licence.

IT Skills: Proficient skills in Microsoft office applications, including confidence and experience using PowerPoint and Excel. Experience of Photoshop. Comfortable using both Mac and Windows.

Sport: Member of the University hockey team.

References available upon request