

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!

Vacancy Title: Process Engineer

Hours: 37.5 hours per week

Salary: £30,000 - £40,000

***Vacancy Description:** As a growing firm, we have identified a need to recruit experienced chemical process engineers with a technical specialisation in one of the following areas:

- Industrial process mixing
- Chemical reactor design
- Process intensification
- Nanoparticle manufacturing processes
- De-aggregation/de-agglomeration of fine particles
- Complex rheology
- Slurry transport
- Industrial chemistry

Qualifications:

A good first degree in Chemical Engineering or have equivalent experience. Applicants with a higher degree (PhD, MSc) in one of our listed technical areas and/or a proven background in industry will be considered very favourably.

Skills:

The applicant should demonstrate a good understanding of fluid mechanics (particularly mixing) as well as skills in data analysis. Experience in project management will be a significant advantage. In addition, they should be a team player with excellent written and oral presentation skills, a strong drive, 'can do' attitude and a high level of enthusiasm for their subject.

***Application Instructions:** Send CV and covering letter via email to: xxxxxxx

Craig Watford

Crawford House, Booth Street East, Manchester M13 9QS

email: xxxx.xxxx@student.manchester.ac.uk

Tel: 0161 123 4567, Mobile: 0123 4567 891, [linkedin.com/xxxxxxx](https://www.linkedin.com/xxxxxxx)

Education

2009 - 2013 The University of Manchester

MEng (Hons) Chemical Engineering

Expected Result 2:1

First year result: 58%

Second year result: 65%

- Modules include: Fundamentals of Biochemical Engineering, Process Control, Solid-Fluid Systems, Chemical Reaction Engineering, Catalytic Reaction Engineering and Computer Aided Design
- Leader of 3rd year team project to specify and design a process plant for the production of alkyl benzene sulphonate. My first role was to outline the brief and after initial technical and commercial research to develop an outline plan. I then worked with the team of five to agree the plan, assign tasks and develop a schedule. I approached a local chemical company to arrange a visit for our team to see a typical process plant similar to the one we were designing. We presented our final written report and presentation both to our design tutors and the technical director of the local company.

2002 - 2009 Park Royal High School, Surrey

A levels: Chemistry (A), Mathematics (B), Physics (A), Applied Mathematics (B)

GCSEs: 9 (5A, 3B, 1C) including Maths and English

Relevant work experience

**July - Sept
2012**

**Internship
New Synthetics Ltd, West Thurrock**

- Individually responsible for the project to reduce the percentage of “granule oversize” produced as part of the synthetic granule spray drying tower operation.
- Investigated current operation (both in terms of equipment settings and process parameters) by interviewing current production managers and technical operators and comparing this to manufacturing standards. Discussed possible causes with key technical experts in company’s R&D department.
- Proposed a one-week test programme to evaluate different settings and to measure changes to oversize production. Once approved I worked with the production team to run the trial and to train them in the changes required. Took charge of a night shift to manage a specific detailed test to measure temperature variations across the tower diameter.
- I analysed the results and reported the findings to the Plant Manager. As a result the changes would save £25,000 per month in waste oversize production. This has now been implemented on a permanent basis.

Other Work Experience

**July 2010 -
Sept 2010** **Children's Camp Counsellor
BUNAC, New Jersey, USA**

- Took lead role as Camp Sports Manager organising 12 other counsellors
- Created new games and activities to entertain and develop up to 100 young people aged 12 -15.
- Organised a day trip into New York for group of 50.

**Sept 2010 -
July 2012
(term time)** **Front of House Team Leader
Lorenzo's Tapas Bar, Chorlton, Manchester**

- Promoted to Team Leader after working for the company for ten months. Managed a team of five. Motivated them to meet individual sales targets by devising a graph which plotted the amount of bonuses they could earn through securing additional sales.
- Successfully trained two new members of staff to be able to perform well in all areas of the business.

Positions of Responsibility

2011 - present **Committee Chairman
University Chemical Engineering Society**

- Elected to committee and then to Chairman within one month.
- Set up visits to local Chemical Engineering companies.
- Increased membership by 35%
- Led team to organize annual Christmas Ball for 350 students and partners. Biggest attendance so far!

Additional Skills

IT Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office and SPSS statistical package

Driving Full clean driving licence.

Interests and Activities

- Student Member of the Institution of Chemical Engineering
- Member of University Golfing Society
- Keeping fit – ran The Newcastle Great North Run in 2009 and raised £350 for Cancer Relief

References available on request