

## 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](http://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:** Graduate Opportunities 2012

**Vacancy Description:**

Join us as a graduate and you'll get to work with and learn from the best. You'll work on real projects, with real responsibility, for a company that's built a global reputation for excellence. We offer first-class opportunities for top graduates across our business – from consulting to technology, sales to finance:

- Asset Management Consultant
- Business & Technology Consultant
- Business Specialist
- Financial Management Consultant
- Human Capital Management Consultant
- Information Developer
- Management Accountant
- Sales Specialist
- Software Developer
- Strategic Analytics Consultant
- Technology Solutions Specialist

**Number of positions available:** Various

**Salary:** £27,000 - £32,000

**Position Start Date:** Various

**Qualifications:**

We don't ask for a specific degree, but you will need to have or be expecting at least a 2:1.

**Skills:**

For our graduates a typical week doesn't exist, so, you'll also need to adapt to whatever situation you find yourself in.

A flair for solving problems creatively would be beneficial.

**Region(s):** North West England, East Anglia, East Midlands, North East England, South East England, London, South West England, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales

**Location:** London, Southampton, Portsmouth, Warwick, Manchester and various others

**Occupational Area:** Information Technology, Management Consultancy

**Vacancy Type:** Full time

**Application instructions:**

Ready to put the knowledge and skills you've learnt at university into practice, and turn them into real results? Ready to expand your world? Apply through our website: [www.xxxxxx.com/graduates](http://www.xxxxxx.com/graduates)

# David Petrie

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LinkedIn: [www.Linkedin.com/xxxx](http://www.Linkedin.com/xxxx) Member of LinkedIn NW IT Professionals Group and student member of BCS

## Education

### 2008 - 2012 The University of Manchester

BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Industrial Experience Expected result 2:1

First year result: 58%

Second year result: 65%

- Achieved a first-class grade for first year team project developing group, communication and self-management skills and using enquiry-based learning.
- Enjoyed my fundamentals in Java module which helped to put skills into context.
- Took part in the 'Practical and Transferable Skills' course at the start of my second year to help prepare for my Industrial Experience year and perfect my CV.
- Developing an interest in Artificial Intelligence taking the AI and Games module in my final year.

### 2001 - 2008 Park Royal High School, Surrey

A levels: Computing (A), Economics (B), Mathematics (A)

AS level: Physics (B)

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

## Industrial Experience Placement

### June 2010 - Sept 2011 Technical Solutions UK Ltd based in Altrincham, Cheshire Placement student

Spent the year dividing my time between four areas of the business – R&D, Sales, Finance and Operations. Agreed objectives with line manager, supported by mentor and in regular contact with the placement manager.

#### Research and Development

- Joined a project team investigating new software for effective e-commerce functions.
- Attended planning meeting suggesting ways to record actions. Based on ideas from university.
- Observation of coding and testing provided an insight into the need for attention to detail and perseverance.
- Visit to the manufacturing lab to watch a prototype launch gave a sense of a final outcome.

#### Sales

- Arranged meetings with existing clients in order to update them on new systems.
- Assisted in the preparation for our presence at a pan-European trade fair.
- Observed four client meetings which increased confidence. Asked for contributions in each.
- Cold calling of potential retailers and businesses arranging future visits by the sales team.

#### Finance

- An enjoyable first day joining the celebration for a successful external audit.
- Good opportunity to observe financial systems in action. Appreciated the benefit of effective IT.
- Gained an insight into commercial pressures of balancing the books while maintaining innovation investment.

#### Operations

- Spent time with the administration team observing the daily workload pressures.
- Time in reception enabled me to understand the sheer breadth of enquiries received in person and on the phone.

## Technical Skills

<i>Programmes and applications</i>	<i>Where used</i>	<i>Level of competence</i>
C, C++, C#	University group project	Medium
Visual Basic	University programming assignment	Medium
SQL	Comparing databases for student society	High
Java	Modules in year 1 (gained 72%)	High

<i>Operating systems</i>	<i>Where used</i>	<i>Level of competence</i>
HTML	Designed interactive website for local charity <a href="http://www.socialcareinmanchester.co.uk">www.socialcareinmanchester.co.uk</a>	High
LaTeX	Produced report for first year group project	Medium
Linux	As a Hornet Rep	Low
Unix	As open source during placement	High

<i>Hardware and peripherals</i>	<i>Where used</i>	<i>Level of competence</i>
Android phone	Daily use to communicate and organise	High
Tablet	In lectures and seminars	High
Lap-top	For assignments and project reports	High
Printer	Professional fliers for a fundraising event	Medium

<i>Foundation skills</i>	<i>Where used</i>	<i>Level of competence</i>
Microsoft Word	Constant use for university assignments	High
Microsoft Access	Compiled database of society members	High
Microsoft Excel	Spreadsheet analysis on placement	Medium
Microsoft Outlook	Email contact with tutors and mentees	High
Microsoft Publisher	Final report for industrial placement	High
Skype and Vimeo	International networking during holidays	High

## Other Work Experience

**Sept 2011 - June 2012**     **Hornet Rep - University of Manchester Halls of Residence Network Team**

- Help students access the intranet system within halls, trouble-shooting problems.
- Received technical and customer service training which helped to perform well in my new role.
- Had positive feedback for my speedy service and clear instructions.

## Positions of Responsibility

**2009 - 2010**     **Peer Mentor - School of Computer Science, University of Manchester**

Responsible for twelve first-year students.

- Conducted regular meetings to discuss assignments and deadlines.
- Had good feedback when results out.

## Interests and Activities

**Societies**     Member of Man-Up (Manchester Ultimate programming). Attend meetings and participate in hackathons. Helped me to develop skills, experiences and ideas beyond my degree course.  
BCS (British Computer Society) member. Keep up to date with developments in IT.

References available on request