

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: Electrical Engineer

Salary: £20,000 - £25,000

***Vacancy Description:** This position will initially be in support of more senior Engineers with potential for career growth backed by education and experience.

The prime responsibilities include:

- Product electrical configuration of the BOM using an ERP system and a document control system)
- Review and (re)design of general arrangements and detail schematic drawings to meet project requirements
- Assessment of electrical components against European and international standards
- Liaison with the Assembly area to ensure electrical aspects of the product are delivered to specification
- Participation in electrical control configuration and preparation for installation/commissioning
- Liaison with suppliers on electrical design and product adoptions/adaptions into our systems.

Qualifications: BEng in Electrical Engineering

Skills: The successful candidate should be flexible and be prepared to travel. Must have excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to produce consistently accurate work and meet deadlines with a minimum of supervision.

***Application Instructions:** CV should be sent to the Engineering Manager: xxxxx

Sam Levenson

Crawford House, Booth Street East, Manchester, Manchester, M13 9QS
Email: xxxx.xxxx@student.manchester.ac.uk
Tel: 0161 123 4567; Mobile: 0123 456 7891; www.linkedin.com/xxxxx

Education

2009 - 2013 The University of Manchester

MEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering Expected Result 2:1

First year result: 58% Second year result: 65%

- Modules included Power Systems, Advanced Digital and Analogue Control Systems, Digital Communications, Advanced Power System Design & Operation
- Leader of 3rd year team project to specify and design a remotely controlled control and drive system for the drive unit of a Mars Landing Module vehicle:
 - I approached a local major company to arrange for our team to meet with their specialist Drive and Control Chief Design Engineer to discuss our project so as to identify key design parameters for a control and drive unit and then to identify the impact of the needs of a unit to travel to and operate safely on Mars after landing.
 - As part of the team, conducted research and then compiled a design specification using a technical brief template I had developed.
 - Once specification was agreed, I developed a list of key tasks to be done, resources needed and worked with the team members to agree responsibilities, outline timing and predicted obstacles. From this I developed our main control schedule.
 - I led the weekly review meetings and monitored progress. One of our team suggested we create a computer simulation showing our proposed design in operation and how it would withstand the phases of travel to Mars.
 - Whilst a big challenge we all agreed and so I developed back up plans to ensure that despite this extra work load we all were able to help each other as needed
 - We presented our final written design report and presentation both to our design tutors and the technical director of the local company. In particular the simulation received a big round of applause.

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 Plessey Digital Communications PLC (Stevenage, Hertfordshire) Internship

- Assigned to Technical Sales department
- Joined a team of 10 that was developing a new bid for an expansion of UK's international communications system for the MOD.
- Took responsibility for developing Technical Specification from MOD's initial user requirements.
- Met with MOD representatives and with MOD customers to review and agree final user requirements.
- Made technical presentations to Plessey Senior Management outlining user requirements and consequential impact on technical specifications. In conjunction with other technical departments identified key areas which were "routine" and those which were "developmental". Identified likely cost and timing implications
- Part of presentation team to visit MOD to give interim status report on bid preparation.
- My part was to focus on "risks". Used simple PowerPoint charts to show and grade data for review
- Attended Technical Trade Fair in Beijing as part of British Mission exhibition

Other work experience

**July - 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 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 - current

**Committee Chairman
University Electronic Society**

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

Additional Skills

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

Driving Full clean driving licence

Interests and Activities

- Student Member of the Institution of Engineering and Technology
- 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