

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

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:

<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/applicationsinterviews/faqs/>

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!

Sample Job Advert

Think of us as fashion at its fastest. We help millions of people enjoy fashion forward clothes at great prices. We've been featured in Vogue. Celebrities attended our very own fashion show. We've just moved into a brand new office. We even have colleagues who blog – voluntarily – about us. Fashion retail is about style and numbers and at XXXXX both of those are growing all the time.

You won't just be living and breathing fashion – you'll be making a living out of it. We're expanding so fast that early responsibility means you'll be making an impact from day one.

Expect to use product knowledge, customer insight and sales results to:

Key responsibilities will include:

- Sourcing and managing ranges that give customers what they want at prices they can afford.
- Developing relationships and negotiating the best deals with suppliers.
- Getting to know customers and products inside out.
- Working with the design team to create big sellers.

We help you to know your strengths and develop them. We give you leadership training, send you on development days and provide a great support network – you get a buddy, a mentor, and a director as your sponsor.

At the end of your first year you meet with a senior manager to review and reflect on your placement so far. You may also get the opportunity to fast-track onto one of our graduate programmes. Whatever your career goal, we support your passion and drive all the way.

Qualifications

- 2:1 degree classification in any subject area
- 300 UCAS points

Skills

- To eat, sleep and breathe fashion.
- An eye for numbers and a head for interpreting data.
- To manage a fast-paced workload.
- Good computer skills, including Word and Excel.
- The commitment to complete your studies while working.
- To work with others and achieve success together.
- To put people and our customers at the heart of what you do.
- To be agile in the way you think, make decisions and handle change.
- To stick to your values and do the right thing, even when it's tough.
- Positive attitude, and a way of inspiring confidence in others.
- To be connected to the latest thinking, inside and outside of the business.
- Hunger to drive your own career and become one of our leaders.

Sam Willis

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sam.willis@student.manchester.ac.uk, 07881233333, LinkedIn profile

Education

2014 - 2017 **The University of Manchester, BSc (Hons) Fashion Buying**
Expected Result: 2:1

- Relevant modules included: Consumer Behaviour & Fashion Retailing, Product Performance & Evaluation, Applied Clothing Technology and Trend Forecasting & Product Planning.
- Completed two business-led projects, including the creation of a new sub-brand for Tommy Hilfiger. Project included an analysis of the military trend and the production of a consumer profile and brand board to target the sub-brand effectively.

2007- 2014 **Park Royal High School, Collingley**

- A Levels: Mathematics (A*), Textiles (A), Business Studies (A), Psychology (B)
- GCSEs: 11 A* - B including Maths and English

Relevant Work Experience

July - August 2016 **Burberry, London, Design and Development Intern**

- Analysed product data of ranges on Excel which required strong numeracy skills to work out profit margins and numbers of designs and colourways.
- Worked alongside colleagues supporting with labelling and pricing product samples for SS17 collections and scanning designs into the database to develop the visual merchandising guidelines.
- Gained a strong appreciation of the brand and adapted to the demands of working in a fast paced, luxury retail environment through delivering business critical projects with colleagues.
- Improved my effectiveness in the workplace following successful completion of in-house training courses in 'Project & Time Management' and 'Understanding Customer Needs'.

June - September 2015 **Harrods Departmental Store, London, Sales Associate**

- Selling and handling Burberry Brit Lingerie and nightwear, which demanded excellent product knowledge of fabric structure, washing instructions and key unique selling points such as drape.
- Provided the highest level of customer service and built quality relationships with customers, which resulted in increased sales, repeat business and achieved an award for gaining record sales (20% above monthly target).
- Worked creatively and effectively to ensure stock was presented in accordance with visual merchandising standards and customer expectations.

Work Experience

Sep 2013 - Jul 2015 **Bull's Head, Chorlton, Bar supervisor (term time)**

- Promoted to Bar Supervisor after working for the company for twelve months. Responsible for two staff members, and for ensuring all aspects of a shift ran smoothly in a demanding, customer-focused environment.
- Successfully till trained two new members of staff and received a customer service award from the Brewery following positive feedback from a mystery customer visit.
- Day to day duties included organising stock replenishment and rotation systems, assisting the manager with weekly stock takes and deliveries and accurately cashing up tills at the end of the night.

Positions of Responsibility

2015 - Present **The University of Manchester Fashion Society
Social Secretary**

- Elected to committee by peer group after heading up a challenging recruitment campaign on campus and using social media.
- Set up visits to local fashion companies e.g. organised for 30 students to visit The Fashion Network head office via an academic contact.
- Increased membership by 35% through effective use of Facebook and creative activities during Welcome Week.

2015 - Present **The University of Manchester
Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS) Leader**

- PASS is designed to help first year students settle into University and support them with their studies.
- Organised and facilitated weekly meetings with up to ten mentees, providing a safe environment for students to work together to solve complex course-related problems.
- Exercised strong time management to schedule and run sessions, as well as responsibility to guide students' understanding, rather than just give them an answer.

Additional Skills

IT: Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office, including Excel to create spreadsheets and analyse complex data sets.

Driving: Full clean UK driving licence.

Languages: Basic conversational level French and Spanish (GCSE plus visits).

Interests

Passionate about dance and drama. Member of University Dance Society and previously part of Chorlton School of Dance and Drama for 16 years. Shown a high level of dedication and involvement throughout, taking part in national competitions, examinations and holding assistant teaching positions.

References available upon request