

## 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:

<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 and 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!

## Actuarial Trainee

Our Actuarial trainees work with a diverse range of both corporate and trustee clients, advising on the design, funding, administration and communication of all types of retirement plans. They also help our clients manage a variety of benefit plan related risks. Actuarial trainees will be instrumental in driving forward the shape of future pension provisions and delivering innovative solutions to our clients, whether it be via "defined benefit" or "defined contribution" pension arrangements.

Graduates will work as part of a team supporting more experienced consultants in all areas of pensions consulting work for corporate and trustee clients. Through our structured development programme and on the job training you will be supported, coached and developed into an actuarial retirement consultant with, ultimately, your own clients. As you progress there will be a range of career paths available allowing you to focus on your strengths and interests. These include:

- Becoming a scheme actuary responsible for the actuarial work associated with the pension arrangements of a portfolio of clients.
- Becoming a general consultant and overall relationship manager for a portfolio of clients.
- Becoming a consultant in one of our speciality groups.

To aid you in your professional development you will study to be an actuary through the exams run by the Institute/Faculty of Actuaries. We provide a comprehensive study package to support you in your studies.

### Key duties will include:

- Performing calculations to support corporate, trustee and individual decision making around retirement choices and pension scheme management
- Developing and applying relevant legislation knowledge to client issues
- Communicating effectively to external and internal clients in a non-technical manner
- Developing understanding of client needs in order to be able to deliver high standards of client service
- Performing in accordance with financial targets and standards; time recording, budget monitoring, billing and all other aspects of financial management
- Working in partnership and developing relationships with internal teams, across lines of businesses and with both corporate and trustee clients
- Developing coaching and delegation skills

### Key skills and qualifications:

A minimum of 300 UCAS points obtained in three subjects, including a numerical A level at a minimum of grade B, with a 2:1 honours degree in a numerical or semi-numerical degree (equivalent qualifications are accepted)

- An interest in pensions and financial markets is essential
- A strong customer service focus and desire to work with clients to help them achieve their objectives
- Ability to work in a team with rapidly changing priorities and demands
- Excellent interpersonal and relationship building skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Strong numerical, analytical and problem solving skills with the ability to assimilate data, review and solve client issues
- An ability to work to tight deadlines
- Ability to balance work, study and personal life effectively

# Sam Willis

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## Education

2013- 2017 **MMath (Hons) Mathematics, The University of Manchester**  
**Current average 74%**

- Gained a strong understanding of the major fields of mathematics including probability, statistics, pure and financial mathematics.
- Used mathematical modelling and problem solving skills, along with MATLAB and R software packages, to assimilate, analyse and review numerical data and to plot and interpret graphs.
- Enhanced oral and written communication skills by regularly working in small supervision groups to produce accurate mathematical reports and communicate results effectively.
- Awarded the Dalton Scholarship for excellent performance in examinations.

2006 - 2013 **Park Royal High School, Collingley**

- A Levels: Mathematics (A\*), Further Mathematics (A), Chemistry (A), Physics (B)
- GCSEs: 11 A\* - B including Maths and English

## Relevant Work Experience

July 2016 – Aug 2016 **Towers Watson, Manchester**  
**Actuarial Intern (Retirement benefits)**

- Supported the team with various calculations, spending the majority of time performing individual calculations with members who had requested to know the value of their pensions.
- Learnt how to calculate transfer values, monthly yields and market value adjustments.
- Undertook a project, within strict timescales, investigating the redesign of pension benefits, using CAD to simulate scenarios.
- Received commendation from a senior partner for my presentation skills and ability to answer difficult questions under pressure.

Oct 2015- Mar 2016 **Manchester Gold Mentoring Scheme**  
**Mentee – Aon**

- Selected to take part in this competitive and well recognised mentoring programme.
- Regularly met with an actuarial consultant gaining information, advice and guidance about the profession.
- Negotiated the opportunity to spend a week shadowing their daily activities and gained an invaluable insight into their role. This included gaining a better understanding of how consultants predict and forecast the probability of risk by formulating data on software such as Excel.

## 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 Mathematics Society  
Social Secretary**

- Elected to committee by peer group after heading up a challenging recruitment campaign on campus.
- Set up visits to local finance companies e.g. organised for 30 students to visit RBS via an academic contact.
- Increased membership by 35% through effective use of Facebook and innovative 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 MATLAB and R, and 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 and Activities

**Societies:** Member of the Debating Society and enjoy participating in competitions and events. I recently organised an evening of guest speakers from industry to present on persuasive public speaking.

**Sport:** Completed the Race for Life independently, raising £75 for cancer charities.