

CVs and Covering Letters in Brief

The CV

These notes are meant to be read alongside the sample CV, which has been put together as an example of how to present a CV.

There are different styles of CV and at the Careers Service we find the one that tends to work best is the Reverse Chronological CV as it 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 relevant experience.

Format and Structure

- It is important to remember that the average length of time spent reading a CV is under a minute. A CV therefore has to be easy to read and well presented. A good test is the 'arm's length' one where you check to see what a CV looks like from afar. If it appears densely written, it probably needs revising.
- Most UK CVs should be two A4 sized pages, unless otherwise stated by the employer.
- To check the protocol for global CVs, *Going Global* is a useful resource:
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/findingwork/overseas/goingglobal/>
- 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 heading eg Legal Work Experience, Financial 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, and Extra-Curricular Activities.
- Be wary of putting lines between sections and using boxes or tables as these can clutter up the CV and make it difficult to read. Tables without borders can be useful for formatting neat columns.
- Use a standard font that is easy to read and looks professional. Use the same font style throughout.
- Save in a standard file format so when attached to an email the CV is easy to open.
- A career objective/personal profile (a few lines included under your name and address) is optional on this kind of CV. It may be useful to include one when preparing a CV that you will hand out or when applying for a job in the creative industries, as they tend to favour these. A career objective/personal profile should be written in the third person and tailored to each role applied for. Think carefully before including because although they are only a few lines long they can be difficult to write well.

Degree information

- Consider what information is of most interest to the person receiving your CV.

- You may want to include relevant modules, brief details of a dissertation, a summary of transferrable skills gained, language competency, your study abroad year and any awards.

Style

- Keep sentences short and concise.
- 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, particularly US ones.
- All skills claims must be backed up by evidence.

References

Unless otherwise stated provide 2 references. Who you provide depends 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. It is more personal and is 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 to each job. Although tempting to do, 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!

**For more detailed information, please refer to
www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/applicationsinterviews/**

Title: Assistant Psychologist

Within the Psychology Department and supporting the Drug & Alcohol Therapy Service

37.5 hours per week

We are seeking to appoint an Assistant Psychologist to provide psychological services to adults in a low secure hospital and “step down” unit. The role covers the work of both the psychology dept and the therapeutic work of the Drug & Alcohol Service.

We are a large outsourcing provider to the NHS of acute and intensive care psychiatry in the UK and operate 16 centres with more than 600 inpatient beds. Our hospital is a low secure hospital for adults with mental health problems. The hospital provides 57 beds over four separate wards (2 female wards and 2 male wards) and a 12-bedded male step down unit which will bridge the gap between hospital treatment and independent community living.

We require a highly motivated Assistant Psychologist who is eligible for the graduate basis for chartered membership of the British Psychological Society. As part of the multi-professional Therapy Department, your role will include actively facilitating the psychological therapies programme, which also incorporates drug and alcohol related assessments and interventions. You will also have a role in assisting with audit, research and service evaluation projects.

The client group presents with complex needs including severe and enduring mental health problems as well as challenging behaviours. This role provides excellent clinical experience as well as opportunities for audit, research and close supervision by a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and a specialist Drug & Alcohol Therapist.

Our benefits package includes contributory pension scheme, free life insurance, childcare vouchers and subsidised meals.

For further information please call xxxxxx, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, or xxxxx, Drug & Alcohol Therapist on xxxxxxxxxx

Sam Willis

Crawford House, Booth Street East, Manchester, M13 9QS

Tel: 0161 123 4567 Mobile: 0123 456 7891

Email: xxx.xxxxx@student.manchester.ac.uk, LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/xxxx

Education

2010 - 2013 The University of Manchester

BSc (Hons) Psychology: expected result 2(i)

Second year result: 65%

Gained a strong understanding of psychological principles and research techniques, and developed a range of skills including precision in lab reports and fluent essay writing.

- Achieved a first class grade for a comparative case study of local mental health services.
- Utilised both primary and secondary research sources, conducting 100 questionnaires and five focus groups to produce a 5,000 word report.
- Developed skills in both quantitative and qualitative research methods and proficiency in using SPSS.
- Managed a group project with fellow students and delivered a formal presentation on our findings which received a high 2:1 grade and excellent feedback.
- Relevant modules include: Mental Health; Social Psychology; Personality and Individual Differences; Statistics and Data Analysis; Group Working and Communication.

2003 - 2010 Park Royal High School, Stockport

A level: Psychology (A), English Language (A), Biology (B)

AS level: Art (B)

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

Relevant work experience

October 2011- Mentor

May 2012 Manchester MIND, Zion Community Centre, Hulme, Manchester

- Mentored two mentees through regular meetings to establish their needs and put appropriate support in place.
- Strengthened my interpersonal skills by learning and developing use of a person-centred approach.
- Managed unpredictable and often challenging behaviour with tact and sensitivity.
- Worked towards integrating mentees back into society by engaging them in activities they enjoyed.
- Used Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) effectively to ensure the safety of the mentees and others at all times.

Volunteering

February 2011- Workshop Assistant

June 2011 Venture Arts, Hulme, Manchester

- Participated in the planning and delivery of a series of workshops for people with learning disabilities.
- Successfully used my knowledge of batik techniques to generate new activities.

**Sep 2008-
August 2011** **Volunteer on in-patient ward
St. Ann's Hospice, Heald Green, Cheshire**

- Duties included providing patients with drinks, preparing meal trays and general tidying/hygiene awareness.
- Gave me experience and confidence in communicating with vulnerable people in stressful situations
- Greatly increased my awareness of the issues faced by patients in a clinical environment.

Additional Work Experience

**November 2010 –
present** **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

**September 2011-
Present** **Peer mentor, The University of Manchester**

- Assisted first year students in settling into university life, giving advice and finding solutions to problems.
- Refined my teamwork skills by working closely with other mentors in course review meetings and planning an end of term event for students.
- Improved presentation skills through regular delivery of talks to large groups.

Additional Skills

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

Driving Full clean driving licence.

Interests and Activities

Societies Member of the Psychology Society and enjoy participating in competitions and events.

Sport Completed the Race for Life in 2012 independently raising £150 for St. Ann's Hospice
Regularly participate in softball matches at Oak House, my former Hall of Residence.

Travel Travelled independently through South East Asia for 6 weeks in 2011, learning how to manage time and budgets efficiently.

References available on request