

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!



**School of Social Sciences:
Sociology
Management Development
Programme**



Sample Job Advert and CV

Vacancy Title: Management Development Programme

Number of Positions Available: 30

Hours: Full Time
Salary: Competitive
Position Start Date: Autumn 2012

Vacancy Description: A worldwide consumer goods, marketing and manufacturing company. A leader in convenience foods and confectionary, we supply to over 100 countries and have 14 brands. We are privately owned and see ourselves as an organisation where people can make a difference both to the company and to the planet. Our graduate development programme includes access to a mentoring programme and an outstanding support structure to enable you to succeed.

Qualifications: Minimum 2.1 degree in any discipline

Skills:

Ability to work under pressure	Team work
Commercial awareness	Organisational skills
Leadership potential	Problem solving skills

Application Instructions: Upload your CV and answer a few questions on our website

Recruitment Website: www.xxxxxx.com

Joy Willis

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

tel: 0161 123 4567, mob: 0123 456 7891

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

Education

2010 - 2013 **The University of Manchester**

BA (Hons) Sociology & French Expected result 2:1

First year result: 58%

Second year result: 65%

- Achieved a first class grade for a comparative case study of two local businesses on sustainability and ethical business practices.
- Utilised both primary and secondary research sources, conducting 100 questionnaires and five focus groups to produce a paper.
- Developed skills in both quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Undertook a group project on behalf of Manchester Student Homes looking at improving waste management in student residential areas as part of a Career Management Skills module.

2003 - 2010 **Park Royal High School, Surrey**

A level: English (A), Economics (B), French (B)

AS level: Psychology (B)

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

Relevant work experience

June - Sept **Remtech Health Products Ltd, Nantes, France**

2012 **Internship in Sales Management**

- Set up four appointments with buyers through cold calling. Successfully persuaded a buyer who initially did not want to book a meeting to immediately place an order over the telephone, which has helped to improve my confidence in both my French language abilities and my negotiation skills.
- Promoted Remtech's presence at a national trade fair. Identified potential new clients and marketed the fair through Facebook, LinkedIn and by delivering a five minute presentation at a small business breakfast meeting. Three of the businesses went on to place orders.
- Assisted Sales Reps in two meetings with key clients, providing data and answering questions about the trade fair. Developed excellent knowledge of advanced sales techniques and the principles of good account management.
- Researched and investigated three 'pre-sale' competitor products. Produced a 10 page report and wrote and delivered a presentation of my findings to the Sales Director and Marketing Team, taking questions from the group.
- Living and working in France has broadened my appreciation of cultural differences and enabled me to sensitively adapt my approach to new environments.

Other work experience

Sept 2011 - June 2012 **Pearson Student Advisory Board
Student Advisor**

- Coordinated projects across campus, including market research surveys and facilitating focus groups, gathering student perspectives all of which enabled me to develop effective analytical and project management skills.
- Attended residential weekends for strategy and teambuilding.
- Presented regular updates of student concerns and needs to Pearson executives.
- Worked with editors and marketing managers to influence the direction of both existing and future publishing products and compiled reports utilised by the executive board.

Sept 2010 - Sept 2012 (term time) **Lorenzo's Tapas Bar, Chorlton, Manchester
Front of House Team Leader**

- 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

2010 - 2011 **Reachout
Mentor**

- Awarded Mentor of the Year 2012 and received Gold Award for 100 hours volunteering.
- Established a mentoring relationship with a high school student from an inner city school who was interested in applying to University to study social sciences. Met weekly throughout the school year to offer support and encouragement.
- Managed a summer programme of training junior mentees and supervised pupils involved in group activities.

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.

Languages Fluent French (degree level)
Basic conversational level 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 speak on persuasive public speaking.

Sport Completed the Race for Life in 2012 independently raising £75 for Cancer charities.
Regularly participate in softball matches at Oak House, my former Hall of Residence.

References available on request