



University
of Glasgow

CV/ application hints and tricks

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What we will cover today

- Principles of writing a CV and how to make your CV stand out
- How to write a good cover letter



**ALL YOU
NEED TO
KNOW!!!**

Why we have a CV

Personal marketing campaign during job search

Used as part of the application process, either:

- with a cover letter
- as part of an online application
- on its own

Called a 'resume' in north America

CV = is an abbreviation for **Curriculum Vitae**

Latin expression which can be loosely translated as 'the course of my life'

What is it NOT? Your life story. A list of all the things you've done.

Target your CV (one size does not fit all)



Your CV must be.... relevant to each job.

Talk their language – think of your reader

1. e.g. change complicated title of dissertation

‘Evaluation of indirect immunofluorescence methods & antipeptide antibodies in plasmodium berghei’

2. e.g. change job titles

Sales advisor – V – Brand representative- V- Cast members

Re-evaluate each part of your CV to determine which accomplishments showcase your ‘qualifications’ for the role

Good article - <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/resume-length/>



Don't be creative

Don't be creative

Don't be creative

Not the time to get fancy

Recruiters:

- need to get the most information from your CV as quickly as possible
- develop mental model that allows them to extract the most important bits

So follow a standard template

...also colour doesn't print well

(definitely no gold borders 😊)



Make it professional

Layout - uncluttered, looking good

'Cover letter' – same font, layout – should sit together and brand yourself

Consistent:

- font style & size
- margins
- headers, section dividers, bullets etc.

Spelling – check, check, check



Photos – do you need one on your CV?



Can distract...

....so remove any photos you have on your CV

Don't want people focused on your face and not your skills

If include, use professional, formal passport one –
top half of your body



Brevity is my top tip – less is more

No more than two pages unless academic

Include as much as you can without making your CV appear cluttered

If you uses 2 pages, then do not use a 2nd page if the content comes halfway down the 2nd – reformat margins, typeface, layout... edit it

Carefully curate the content for your goals



Positioning your text

CV are 'scanned' not properly read

Think when you quickly look at book/ newspaper/ web pages – where do you look on the page?

Left aligned

...take a look



Scanning your CV

Eye tracking study – 4 takeaways

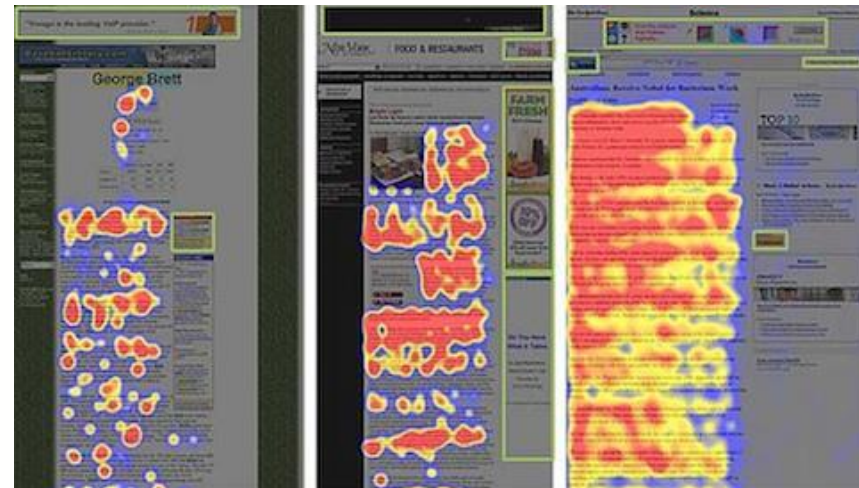


1. F shaped pattern (left hand side is important)

2. Need bold headlines (groups the information)

3. Bullets not paragraphs (can't absorb massive blocks of text)

4. Need as much white space as possible
(the more negative space encourages clean movement and better intake of the data – give the eyes a rest)



Your name

firstandlastname@hotmail.co.uk
07111 123456

EDUCATION

University of Glasgow

2012-2017

MSc (Hons) Mathematics:

- Current 5th year modules - include advanced numerical methods, applied mathematical methods
Independent project on multigrid methods - involves coding various algorithms in MATLAB
- Specific 4th year modules included financial statistics, probability
Independently researched project on stable matching problems - involved maximising matches between two sets of people

University of Toronto, Canada

Sept 2014 - April 2015

Study Abroad, International Exchange Programme

- Completed third year of MSci (Hons) Mathematics (awarded a merit scholarship - based on academic result)
- Carried out group tasks, including a programming project on quantum mechanics with team of 3 other exchange students from around the world, resulting in a successful grade A report and presentation
- Each project was a valuable intercultural learning experience on ways of working

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sainsburys PLC, Glasgow

July 2012 - Aug 2014, May 2015 - Present

Stock control assistant

- Interact with diverse customers, delivering excellent service and building a rapport with regular customers
- Collaborate with 8 other colleagues, consistently achieving above 95% accuracy in date scanning routines
- Responsible for monitoring stock levels by implementing counting procedures and regularly surpass targets to keep error related losses under £10 for each department
- Adapted to the fast paced environment by working efficiently to ensure all routines are completed on time
- Support other departments, guaranteeing fresh products on shelves and minimising waste

Shelter, Glasgow

July 2011 - Aug 2014

Volunteer

- Led a team of 5 volunteers at fundraising events, e.g. Race for Life, promoting Shelter to raise awareness of the charity and sold merchandise to help reach fundraising goals for homelessness
- Engaged with customers, communicated goals of the charity which encouraged sales and donations
- Promoted and processed gift aid signups and consistently surpassed weekly targets of 30 signups as a team
- Accurately sorted and priced stock, moving items to the shop floor within a day of donations to increase sales

KPMG, London

Oct 2011 - Oct 2011

One-week work experience

- Shadowed employees to gain an insight into funds, global treasury money markets and a few trading desks
- Met and networked with senior leaders across divisions via organised meetings gaining knowledge into key economics which inspired me to continue to follow current economic trends and potential challenges

High School

Aug 2011 - June 2012

- Sports captain of the school, senior prefect and a fully trained mentor to first year pupils
- Elected as financial director of the Young Enterprise Scotland division, responsible for keeping an accurate record of all transactions together with monthly statements to brief the team
- Higher leadership award and 200 hour Millennium Volunteer Award received through volunteering at regular local youth sporting events and as a member of the justice and peace group, also soup kitchens

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages: Native English, fluent Hindi, basic Japanese

Interests:

Basketball - competed Scottish national basketball leagues for 6 years and currently in the university team

Current affairs - actively invest in the Wall Street virtual portfolio whilst keeping up with the financial markets



Fingers crossed for passing the 10 second CV check

Top of your CV

Fiona Stubbs

Telephone number

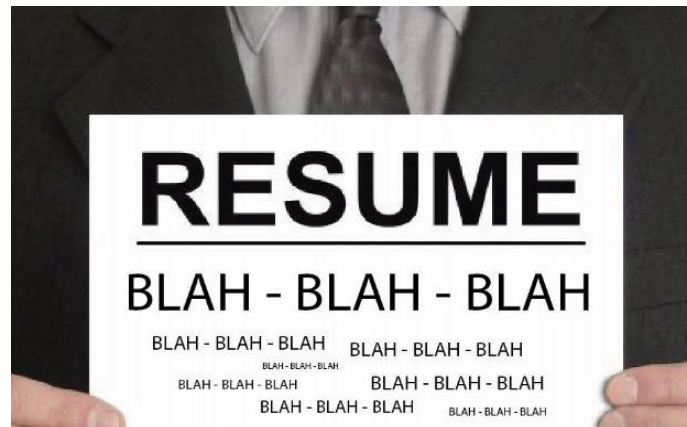
Email

LinkedIn

Profile

E.g. Enthusiastic, hard-working young scientist. Seeking a role that offers opportunity for professional growth and progression of clinical skills as part of a committed team.

- Necessary?
- It takes up valuable space



Three parts to your CV – (bold headlines)

1. Education

2. Work experience and/ or

- Hospital/ lab/ research experience
- Consumer facing – café, retail, call centre
- Voluntary experience - outreach

3. Additional information

Education

- As a graduate - your degree is your best selling point. Put at the top!
- What are your best results / achievements (translate for the reader)
- Projects/ dissertations or reports
- No real need for school qualifications



Education

University of xxx
Xxxxx (Hons)

2020 – 2024

Relevant courses: human disease & pathology, drug development

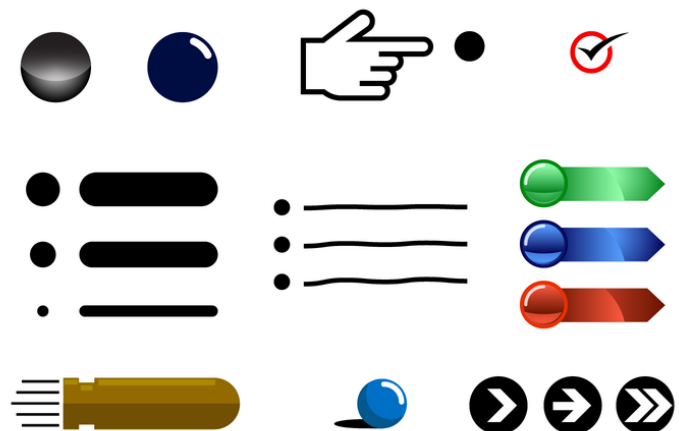
Practical lab sessions:

Dissertation/project: - add title plus easy to understand description

- Plus, any other relevant courses...some could be added under 'Additional Information'
- Not necessary to add school qualifications

Work experience

- Present day experience is first
- Bullets within each experience are listed in order of impact and importance
- Avoid jargon, acronyms - write out in full unless well known, e.g. BSc, BBC, RSPCA, etc.
- Write in simple bullets
 - not bulky, hard to read texts
 - Don't use first person – 'I worked in a café'



Bullets.....

3 parts to each bullet

1. action orientated powerful verb
2. what you did
3. result/ success factor/ proof what you did was successful

Examples of results:

- increase in sales/ profit
- team still working 3 months later
- recommendations by manager
- research used in reports

Examples:

Trained 4 bar staff on selling skills over a 3 month; all 4 staff were still in the job after 6 months

Be specific-
numbers, names

Led the promotion of university's debating society's new workshop series and through eye catching poster/ flier design and strategic distribution, doubled attendees and raised £750 for charity

Action orientated verbs

Accelerated	Eliminated	Instructed	Presented	Sorted
Achieved	Employed	Integrated	Prevented	Specified
Acquired	Enlarged	Interpreted	Processed	Started
Advised	Ensured	Introduced	Produced	Started up
Analysed	Established	Invented	Programmed	Steered
Approved	Estimated	Justified	Projected	Streamlined
Arranged	Evaluated	Launched	Proposed	Strengthened
Brokered	Examined	Led	Provided	Structured
Budgeted	Exceeded	Made	Purchased	Supervised
Built	Expanded	Maintained	Quantified	Tailored
Calculated	Experimented	Managed	Rebuilt	Taught
Centralised	Extended	Marketed	Rationalised	Tested
Coached	Facilitated	Met	Recommended	Tracked
Collaborated	Finalised	Modelled	Recruited	Traded
Communicated	Formulated	Modified	Reduced	Trained
Completed	Founded	Motivated	Reorganised	Transformed
Conducted	Gathered	Negotiated	Researched	Translated
Constructed	Generated	Opened	Resolved	Tripled
Controlled	Grew	Operated	Restructured	Turned
Corrected	Guided	Optimised	Reviewed	Turned around
Created	Handled	Ordered	Revised	Uncovered
Decided	Headed	Organised	Saved	Undertook
Defined	Hired	Originated	Scheduled	Unified
Delivered	Identified	Participated	Secured	Upgraded
Demonstrated	Implemented	Performed	Selected	Utilised
Designed	Improved	Persuaded	Serviced	Verified
Devised	Increased	Piloted	Set up	Widened
Diagnosed	Influenced	Pioneered	Shaped	Won
Directed	Initiated	Planned	Simplified	Won over
Documented	Installed	Predicted	Sold	Worked
Doubled	Instigated	Prepared	Solved	Wrote

Tips with bullets

Create a story in the readers eyes

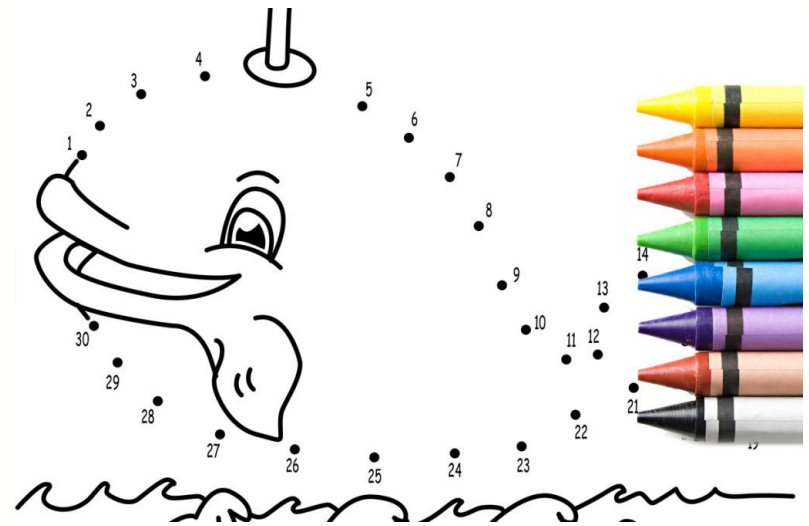
Need to add detail –

NO/YES

- various experiments – experiments including....
- range of customers – served customers mainly from business sector
-

Be specific with numbers - people you trained, data you gathered

Add names – ‘worked in collaboration with GSK’, ‘raised £340 money for World AIDS Day’



Add context to place of work



Add a mini description in italics in smaller font underneath
Gives context to work experience

Examples:

Bread Meets Bread, A City, UK

Sept 2022- present

A growing Scottish business of family run burger restaurants, recently awarded as one of the best places to eat in xxx

Line Chef

Baumarkt direkt, Hamburg, Germany

June - Aug 2023

Largest online retailer for home improvement products in Germany

Intern - Accountancy

People heard of Sainsbury's, Oxfam, Cineworld – don't need description

Third and last part - Additional experience

Language skills

Self select and indicate your level of proficiency

- Native, fluent, advance, intermediate, beginners
- e.g. Native Hindi, fluent English and Bengali, beginners Mandarin

Computer skills

Student club activities

Interests



Anything else that makes your CV stand out – ‘what is your USP?’

Interest examples ■ ■ ■ that are interesting



- Mountaineer with climbs in Scotland and Africa
- Run as part of local xxx running group and training for the London Marathon
- Bee-keeper aiming to sell the honey in local market this year
- Avid reader of historical fiction, currently reading ‘ Wolf Hall’ by Hilary Mantel

Do NOT list a selection of hobbies – e.g. ‘reading, cycling, football, cinema, travel’

References

Willing to give you a good one

Always seek their permission

Ahead of time

Provide full name, address, email & phone

Keep individual informed of the jobs you are applying for

Q. on professional CV or not?

They are your biggest champions -
be respectful of their time and be courteous

A hand with the index finger pointing upwards towards a blue rectangular button with rounded corners and a white border. The button contains the word 'RECOMMENDED' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The background is a dark blue gradient.

RECOMMENDED

Few more
hints and tips

...more other stuff



- Use all UK or all US spellings, do not mix e.g. program-v-programme, S-v-Z in words
- Read out loud. This will help you catch any spelling or grammar errors, it will also help you notice any sentences that sound awkward or hard to understand.
- Show to some friends and students – ask them how easy it is to read and what information stands out for them.
- Save as a PDF. That way, the formatting won't get messed up when it is opened on a different computer. However, more of that later when we look at ATS.....*
- Change the file name from “CV” to “(First Name) (Last Name) CV”—it makes things easier for hiring managers and ensures your CV doesn't get lost in the crowd

...spend time on it



See your CV as a 'living document' that you amend or rewrite as appropriate

Cover letters

Do recruiters read cover letters?

Complements and adds focus to your CV

Same look and feel as your CV

Opportunity:

- to create a great first impression to someone you don't know
- to distinguish yourself:
 - how you meet the skills the employer is asking for
 - showing your motivation for working at the organisation
 - tells your story and career strategy

Tailored for each role

However, many people do not spend enough time and energy on it...



ABOUT THEM not YOU

KEY to the letter

100% about them and what you can offer them...at this early stage of the interview process

Need to create the bridge between them and you

Demonstrate that there is a strong connection between you and the company and that you understand them

1. Strong hook
2. Meat of the letter
3. Strong close

Avoid being pushy and clichéd

Three paragraphs in a cover letter

1. Why you want to work for the company/ research group (THEM)

- shows your research
- shows commitment and not a 'scatter gun' approach

2. Why you (ME)

- look at the requirements in the job description/ generic PhD
- pick 3-4 skills
- bullet & bold each skill – then a dash – then write an account about when you have experience of that skill

3. Sign off

- Including personal profiles, e.g. LinkedIn, websites, blogs if they warrant highlighting, reports...maybe!



Re: Application for a position as intern on the graduate programme at GSC in Glasgow.

I am interested in working for GSC as your mission and vision to "improve the quality of human life" is something that resonates with me and I believe that being the first healthcare company to promote clinical trial transparency is a perfect example of this. Additionally, the focus of educational and health programmes, such as the Help for Heroes Phoenix Wellness Centre, illustrate the high levels of corporate social responsibility that I admire and resonates with my values as a member of the Green society at university. Working for GSC would be rewarding because each job profile provides clear targets and a culture of cross departmental working, as I found on the case studies online and by speaking to Jane Smith, an alum who works as a science researcher at GSC.

I have the following skills and experience which I feel will be valuable to GSC and the intern role:

- **Analytical ability:** One of the main aspects of my degree was to perform qualitative analyses. A group project I was involved in looked at a microbial source tracking approach using qPCR to identify sources of contamination in bathing waters in Scotland and I led on the identification of the specific microbes and the presentation of the data to my class. I excelled at this aspect of my role and my peers regularly sought my assistance based on these skills.
- **Speed of delivery:** I have shown the ability to run and complete projects under time pressure and to present conclusions in a clear and concise manner. The pressure of being part of the team that worked on the STEM school competition at the Glasgow Science Centre working both independently and collaboratively under tight deadlines was something that I thrived on, resulting in an award from the executives from the museum.
- **People management:** I regularly train new serving staff, acting in the role of supervisor at Starbucks, where I have worked for the past 18 months. Staff feedback for these training sessions are always excellent and I averaged 4.6/ 5. I motivated other team members by taking a personal interest in the individual's and the team's development, helping others to understand the tasks or issues, being driven and finally having belief that we were a great team.
- **Organisation:** I have a commitment to innovation and quality, a strong work ethic, thrive in team environments and am confident taking the lead. I am result oriented and approach my work with high-energy and a customer focus. In addition, I can contribute strong project management and organisational skills as demonstrated when I led on the 3rd STEM 2019 conference at my university. This resulted in 6 workshops each attended by a minimum of 20 delegates and overall, 200 students; this was 10% up on the previous year's attendance and the team received an average of 'very good' for delegate feedback.

I firmly believe that my interest in the industry, coupled with the skill base developed during my part time jobs and my wider science knowledge and understanding instilled during my degree, has put me in a strong position to develop a career in the healthcare sector.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you. Please look at my LinkedIn profile ([hyperlink](#)) for *(whatever you want to highlight further)*

1st paragraph - Why you want to work for the company/ organisation (THEM)

Show your research about the organisation on things like:

- New research/ new products/ new papers?
- Competitors?
- Corporate social responsibility/ environmental/ other agendas?
- What is 'disrupting' their businesses – processes/ IT/ funding?
- Staff development/ benefits?
- Recent news

Research beyond home page of their website for information:

- annual reports/ social media/ sector press/ research portfolio (e.g. PubMed)
- link to your opinion/ experience (if possible)
- attend any presentation, meet with alumnus - learnt something new?

DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM THE OFFSET AND GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

2nd paragraph - Why you?...your strengths

Draw direct connections between your background and the job description

KEY JOB REQUIREMENTS (e.g. Skills, Personal Strengths, Market Knowledge, Industry Background, Experience, Qualifications, Motivation)	DO I MATCH?	MY RESPONSE (Demonstrate by outlining your Achievements, Qualifications, Experience, Knowledge, Motivation etc.)
1. Analytical ability		
2. People management		
3. Creative thinking		
4. Knowledge of		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Why you want to work for the company #1

Analytical ability: One of the main aspects of my degree studies and previous internship in a fish farm on Loch Lomond was to perform qualitative analyses on the various lab tests on fish infections. I excelled at this aspect of my course and on my internship and colleagues regularly sought my assistance.

People management: I have worked for retail and hospitality roles since I was 18 years. Whilst at Starbucks, I trained seasonal staff on selling skills. I motivated other team members by taking a personal interest in the individual's and the team's development, understanding and helping others to understand the tasks or issues whilst being driven by our business targets.

Creative thinking: My enthusiasm for mentally stimulating challenges led me to join the debating society at university. I have taken part in 2 team competitions, coming first in the Scottish universities event on independence. These experiences led me to identify how to create interest and balance discussion from many points of view.

Why you want to work for the company #2

Highly numerate. My main strength is dexterity with numbers and the ability to analyse large amounts of data. As part of two teams taking part in different presentations at the University of Glasgow I have successfully led the quantitative aspect of the project ahead.

Strong mentor. Both at work and in my leisure time I enjoy helping others succeed. As a skydiving instructor I have trained and coached dozens of people from complete novices to experienced parachutists.

Teamwork and leadership - in '*name of a course*' organised with J&J, I led a team of 5 students defining a proposal for a healthcare app. In this 3 month long simulation of a real project, I showed my teamwork experience by managing the direction of the work and ensuring cooperation of all members. As a result, the final recommendation of my team received the highest grades.

3rd paragraph

Strong close

Can be tricky to write

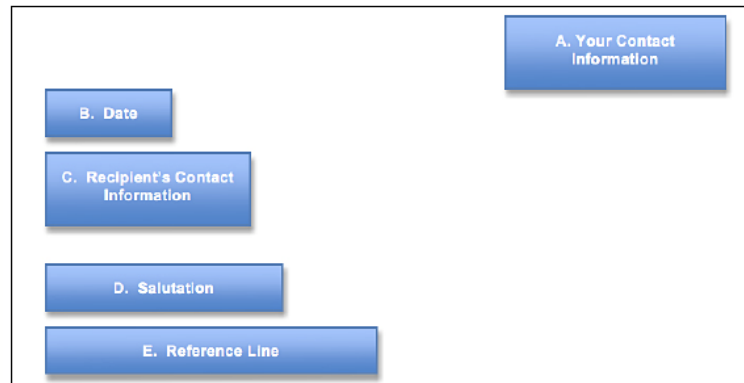
Creates something that ties everything together

Not pushy or cliched

Structure of the letter

Use the following elements:

- A. Your contact information** - same as the header in your CV
- B. Date** - remember to update the date!
- C. Recipient's contact information** - include recipient's full name, title and/or department, name of organisation and address (if appropriate).
- D. Salutation** – always address your letter to a specific individual. Never make assumptions about a person's gender. If there is any doubt, avoid using “Mr” or “Ms”.
- E. Reference line** - indicates the purpose of the letter. For an advertised job, include any reference number



Reference line

Example:

Re: Application for the Research and Development role at GSK in London

- Position – under salutation (Dear)
- Font size – same as letter
- Other – bold or underline (what ever you prefer?)

Re - means regarding

Similar to its use in an email 'subject' box – see it automatically generated in an email subject line when reply is selected.

Advantage – direct messages and prevent the waffle and loosing the reader from the start



Closing and signature

- Use “Yours sincerely” if you used a name
- Use “Yours faithfully” if you used “Sir/Madam” (avoid where possible)
- Never use “Best regards”, “Regards”, “Best Wishes”, “Best” etc.
- Leave 2-3 lines of space and sign your full name at the bottom.
- If your letter is in hard copy, sign neatly within the blank space with a blue or black pen





That's all Folks!