



A Guide for CVs & Cover Letters in the UK

First page of a typical two-page CV

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Clear headings

Dates all in the same place

Sections clearly differentiated

Plenty of white space creates uncluttered design

Good use of bullet points and space to emphasise key skills and responsibilities

EDUCATION

BSc. Government and Economics
London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Expected Grade: First Class (Honours) 10/2013

Dissertation researched the changes to economic public policy and the extent to which the changes were affected by outside influences/institutions from a political science perspective

Singapore GCE 'A' Levels 01/2011 - 12/2012 National Junior College, Singapore

- 9 As including further mathematics, physics and chemistry
- Three distinctions for special papers in mathematics, physics and chemistry
- Highest grades in Singapore

Indian Class 10th 02/1998 - 12/2010
Delhi Public School, R.K.Puram, New Delhi, India

93.2% overall including mathematics, English, science and social sciences Results in top 2% of year (out of 300 students)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Intern, National Policy on SMEs department
Ministry for Trade and Industry, Singapore 07/2014 - 09/2014

- Developed a revised long-term strategy as part of a team, including deciding on which industry sectors and functional areas to focus development efforts
- Researched and presented results to the team on establishing comparative international benchmarks for Singaporean agencies in the SME sector

Spring Intern, International Team on European Equities
Goldman Sachs, London 04/2014 - 04/2014

- Presented research findings (compiled as part of a team) regarding the equities of a European client, to the client and senior bosses

Customer Assistant 04/2013 - 06/2013
Paris Gourmand, Singapore

- Supervised café and team of assistants in day to day running of the business
- Managed time to ensure efficient but good customer service

Volunteer Mentor 02/2013 - 04/2013
Singapore Indian Development Association

- Managed the programme which coordinates volunteers and mentees and recruits more mentors, as part of a team
- Mentored three children from disadvantaged households, encouraging them to stay in education
- Organised mentor programme through administrative duties

Example of a single page CV (sometimes called a “résumé”)

Smaller margins than two-page

Clearly defined

Combines sections which might be separate on a two-page CV

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EDUCATION

MSc European Political Economy, London School of Economics [Redacted]
• Analysis of the European process of political and economic integration.
• Focus on European models of capitalism, Spain and the philosophical rationale of Europe.

BSc (Hons) International Business, 2:1, Warwick Business School 2011-2015
• Focused on: International Marketing and Strategy, Latin-American Economies, Service Operations Management and European Political Economy.
• Third year spent as Erasmus in Barcelona at ESADE Business School.

European Baccalaureate, 80.84%, ESADE Business & Law School, Luxembourg 1999-2011
• French-speaking section, AAB.
• Focused on: economics, history, English, Spanish and mathematics.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Voluntary Work Internship at ADA (Luxembourg) 3 June 2016 - August 2016
• Analysed the tracking information of the evolution of micro-finance Institutions via a rating fund commissioned by the World Bank.
• Translated various work including the annual report.
• Edited the online bibliography database.

Student Work Placement at DuPont de Nemours (Luxembourg) July 2014 — August 2014
• Created access databases for the Energy department.
• Liaised with colleagues to determine important information and data to be included in databases.

Administrator at the European Court of Auditors (Luxembourg) August 2011
• Organised diverse documents in all EU languages.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cashier and Steward at the University of Warwick Cinema Sept 2012 — Sept 2013
• Communicated with customers to ensure good customer service.

Student Employment at the European Investment Bank (Luxembourg) August 2011
• Organised and distributed internal and external mail in two divisions of the bank.

LANGUAGES & IT KNOWLEDGE

French and Spanish: Native speaker.
English: Fluent.
Catalan: Intermediate.
Greek: Basic, simple comprehension, reading and speaking.
Very good knowledge of MS Word, Excel, Access and Outlook.

AWARDS & INTERESTS

“Diploma Superior de Español” awarded by the Cervantes Institute, 2003.
Tennis: Member of the Warwick team 2011-2012, captain of my hometown team in 2008.
Basketball: Player since the age of 12, member of my hometown team 2004-2007. Hometown council award for basketball achievement, 2004.
Took part in the Close-up Foundation two weeks study tour of the political and social institutions in New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC, 2003.

Very concise

Single page CVs are more compact

CV checklist



Content

Personal

Have you included your contact details?
Does your email address sound professional?
Have you included an up-to-date LinkedIn profile?

Education

Have you given most space to your most recent or relevant education?
Have you mentioned relevant modules, projects, dissertations, and awards?
Have you highlighted key or relevant transferable skills?
Is your education section easy to follow and consistent in approach?
Is there anything else you need to explain (eg, "A" grade is equivalent to the top 1.5 per cent)?

Work experience

Have you included job title, dates, organisation name, type of business and location?
Have you used proactive words to highlight your skills, impact, and the significance of your achievements?
Have you ordered this section and identified skills that are tailored towards your chosen future role?
Is this a comprehensive overview of all the jobs you have had?

Achievements/positions of responsibility

Have you displayed specific evidence for your skills?
Have you demonstrated the significance of your achievements?
Can you quantify them?
Have you highlighted the most relevant roles or skills for the job you are applying for?
Can you include any of these positions (eg, volunteering) to highlight suitability for a particular job?

Skills

Have you included your IT skills and evidenced these? How competent are you?
Do you speak any languages? Is the proficiency level of each expressed?
Is there any other information to include eg, driving licence, professional training courses?

Other interests

If there is space on your CV, do you go beyond listing lots of one-word examples?
Have you given a variety of interests highlighting different skillsets?
Can your interests be used to demonstrate responsibility, commitment, and achievement?

References

Has the employer asked for references to be included?
Unless requested to it isn't necessary to include them on your CV. See page 9 for more information.

Cover letters



A cover letter is a one-page document, read in conjunction with your CV, that highlights relevant skills, experiences, and achievements.

Employers recognise and reject generic cover letters, so each one you write should be tailored to a specific role and organisation, referencing them by name in your letter.

The cover letter is often the first thing the employer sees and it sets their expectations for what follows. A good cover letter highlights your key strengths and motivations for wanting to work for an organisation while the CV goes into more detail about your achievements.

Convey your interest and demonstrate your knowledge of the organisation and why you want to work there.

When focusing on the employer and why you are applying for the job, include some interesting and relevant facts about the organisation that align with your experience or work philosophy.



Top Tips:

Keep the language personal but formal. Think about how you would speak to an employer at interview. Start each cover letter by researching the organisation and referring to the job description and specification.

Be positive. Use action words but don't lose sight of your own style or achievements.

Avoid repeating key words or phrases. Always end on a positive note. You can end by reaffirming your enthusiasm, and suitability.

Check your letter over and ask someone you know with advanced literacy skills to proof read it too.

Example speculative cover letter



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Liverpool, L100 ABC

Email: v.meldrew@90stv.com
Mobile: 07443 824 291

09/01/2023

The Hiring / Recruiting Manager
Great IT Group
Burton Street, The Village
Wirral, CH99 5TT

RE: Speculative Application

Dear Sir / Madam,

I understand your company will soon to be recruiting for account managers, and with relevant skills and credentials, I submit my speculative application and CV for your perusal.

As defined in my C.V., my working profile encompasses operations & account management in the industrial / aviation sector. As an individual, I am conscientious, positive-minded and dependable.

I have noted the sectors your company covers and believe my career experience lends itself to areas that match. I would be happy to talk on the phone or attend any form of interview process if that would benefit your team's assessment. Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Victor Meldrew

Recruiter's title and company's address

Applicant's name and address

States clearly what the letter is for

Summarises succinctly, demonstrating initiative and enthusiasm to progress to an interview

States the reason for the letter, and continues to refer to relevant experience and worthiness of consideration

Signs off
Yours faithfully due to not knowing name of Recruiter.
Leaves space for signature

Cover letter checklist



Have you tailored your cover letter to the position and organisation using the job description & specification?

Is your motivation for the specific area, job, and organisation clear?

Have you researched the organisation and made a link between yourself and them and how you can meet their needs?

Do you use relevant examples to highlight qualifications, experience, strengths, competencies, and achievements? Is the language positive and enthusiastic?

If you are changing career direction, have you demonstrated transferable skills and recognised and addressed any skills gaps?

Have you checked for vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors?

Have you followed business letter protocol if there is one?

Have you addressed your cover letter to a specific person (where possible) and signed off appropriately?

Dear Ms Smith...Yours sincerely

Dear Sir/Madam...Yours faithfully

Does your cover letter follow a clear and logical structure; is it easy to scan read?

Have you written concise sentences and paragraphs with no more than 400 words/one page of A4 overall?

Is your text left aligned or justified and cleanly formatted?

Have you used a professional font which is legible (11pt is ideal) and the same style as your CV?

