

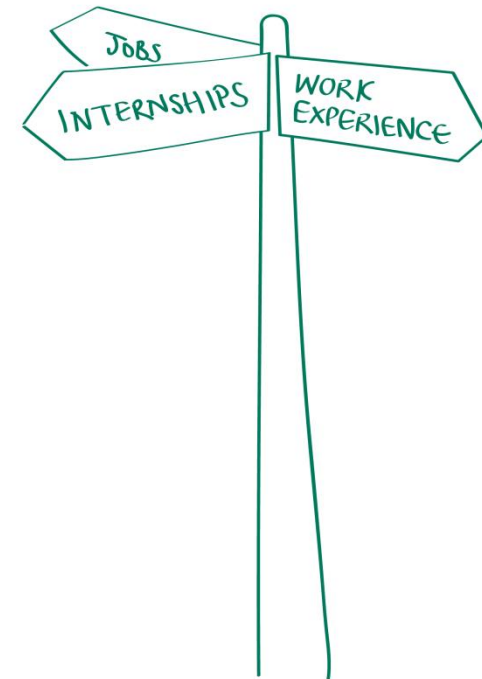
Write effective CVs & Covering letters

Stand out from the crowd!



Learning outcomes

- Understand the purpose of a CV & Covering Letter
- Know what to include in a CV and Covering letter
- Understand how to structure a CV and Covering letter in order to market yourself effectively
- Understand how to target your CV and Covering letter to specific opportunities
- Be aware of the support available via the Careers Service



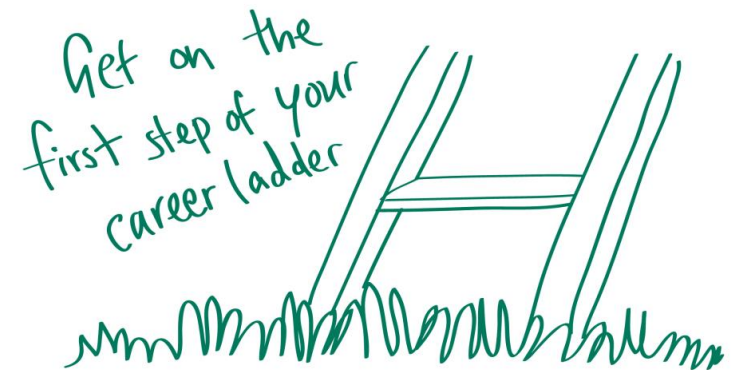
What is a CV?

- Your **marketing** document, **subjective** and **personal** to you
- An up to date portfolio of your skills and experience which are **relevant** to a particular post
- Informative but concise
- Designed to get you an interview, not a job
- “Persuasive sales document selling you (the product) to an employer (the customer)” – Employers’ definition



When to use/Why have a CV?

- Requested by an employer/recruitment agency
- Asked to apply in writing
- Making speculative applications – employment or work experience
- Making applications for PhD/Postgraduate courses – check requirements first
- For careers fairs
- As a reference document for application forms



Why do Employers Use CVs?

- To shortlist candidates for interview
- To see how you present yourself on paper
- May take just 15 seconds to skim a CV and make a decision
- May use software to scan for key words
- Your CV needs to match the employer's requirements as much as possible



Selecting information

An effective CV is:

Targeted to the job for which you're applying
Accurate, interesting and up to date
Accompanied by a Covering letter

To achieve this:

Identify the employer's criteria
(what are the key skills, experience required for post?)

Select appropriate evidence (from any aspect of your life) to show that you match their criteria

Take advice from others

Content may include the following

Skills

Personal details

Work experience

Career goal

References

Education/
qualifications

Achievements

Employment history

Voluntary work

Dates

Current studies

Positions of responsibility

Personal profile

Other activities

Disaster CV

It may seem obvious that this is not an acceptable CV ,but the process of identifying all the classic mistakes and discussions as to how to improve this CV should help you recognise how you should go about writing your CV.

Curriculum Vitae

Personal details

Name; Di Saster

Date of birth; 29/02/1995

Address; 13 Hapless Road, London

Telephone; 0852 5428654

Sex; Female

Marital Status; Single

Nationality; British

Education

1983-1987 [Hapless Road Junior School](#)

1987-1994 Hapless Road Senior School: 10 GCSEs, [4 A levels - Economics, History, Maths, General Studies](#)

1994 - to date Any University, Anytown, studying for a [BA in](#) Educational Studies

Work History

1988-1989: [Paper Round for ABC Newsagents](#)

Delivered newspapers for 50 people

1994-1995: [Assistant Bar Manager](#) for the Pink Flamingo, Anytown

I became familiar with the full range of products supplied in the bar and enjoyed striking up a rapport with customers. (Left after disagreement with the manager)

Extracurricular Activities

[Entertainments Officer for the University Drinking Society](#)

[Captain of the University Women's Hockey Team](#)

General Skills

[Conversational Mandarin](#)

[Word Procesing Skills](#)

[Driving Licence \(7 points\)](#)

References

Dr Jones, Any University, Anytown

[Mr Derek Saster](#) 13 Hapless Road, London

Targeting your application

Use the **Job Description** and **Person specification** to target your application to the employer's criteria

Job description: information about the job (key responsibilities and duties). May include details of key skills, qualifications and personal qualities required

Person specification:

List of the key skills, personal qualities and qualifications required and whether they are essential or desirable (often presented in table format). May also state how criteria will be assessed (application, interview, skills test...)

Targeting Your CV: Skills and Qualities most Requested by Employers

Self management
Communication
Team working
Problem solving
Creativity & innovation
World of work/commercial
awareness

Social, cultural & global
awareness
Application of IT
Numeracy
Discipline specific



Think employability skills

From:

- Degree
- Work experience
- Voluntary work
- Leisure
- University life
- Previous life/lives!



CBI survey November 2008

78% of senior executives agreed that **employability skills** are the most important factor when hiring

Identifying skills from your experiences—think CAR

Context –situation and tasks

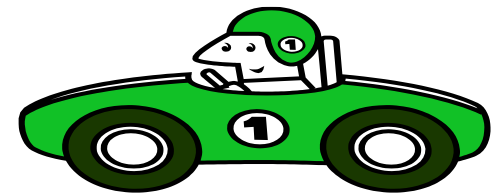
what/where/when/with whom?

Action

what did you do?

Result

what happened? what outcome?



Go to the **What am I good at?** section of **Employability tutorial** if you want help to identify the gaps in your skills.

<http://vle.york.ac.uk/>



HE Academy – skills from Economics

<http://studyingeconomics.ac.uk/employability-profile/>

- **Abstract and simplify** in order to identify and model the essence of a problem
- **Analyse and reason** – both deductively and inductively
- Marshal evidence and to assimilate, structure and **analyse qualitative and quantitative data**
- **Communicate concisely results** to a wide audience, including those with no training in Economics
- **Think critically** about the limits of one's analysis in a broader socio-economic context
- **Draw economic policy inferences** and to recognise the potential constraints in their implementation
- **Apply literary and information-processing skills**, as well as interpersonal skills

Compiling a CV: Personal Details

Essential:

Name and contact details (address, phone number, e-mail)

Optional:

Nationality (mention if work permit not required)

Not required (in UK):

Age

Marital Status/Number of dependants

Gender

Photograph



The above will vary between countries (see www.prospects.ac.uk for country specific information)

Career goal/personal statement (optional)

- Keep it focused to the job/career
- Be concise



NOT:

- A cheerful, hardworking person who gets satisfaction from working in a team and on my own. I am enthusiastic and set myself high standards.

Example personal profiles *Careers*

Developing your employability

- A PEP graduate with research skills developed through project work and an internship, looking for a career in a political consultancy.
- A highly motivated final year student with relevant experience gained at an independent production company and through wide ranging involvement with York university's award winning student media.
- A 3rd year Economics student with commercial awareness and good analytical and numerical skills developed through my degree and from internship experience with McKinsey, eager to make a career in Management Consultancy.

Education/qualifications

- Consider how much detail? (reverse chronology)
- Subject knowledge? (modules, projects, dissertation)
- Transferable skills? (analytical, team work, problem solving etc)
- Pre –university qualifications – keep brief – consider their relevance
- Non-UK – describe qualification as achieved e.g. International Baccalaureate 67.5%



Work Experience – paid/voluntary

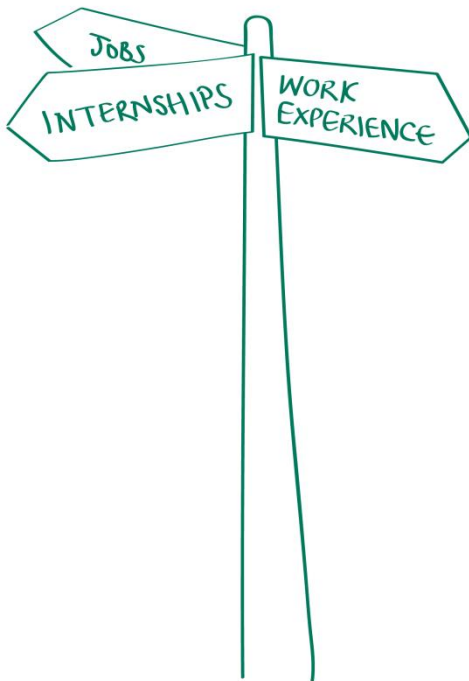
Reverse chronology

Consider relevance of jobs – do you need to include everything ?

Think tasks ,skills and achievements.

Consider themes: e.g. administrative; finance related; retail; relevant/other.

Group them as relevant to the job for which you are applying.



Skills from your experiences *Careers*

Developing your employability

Activity	Task	Skill
Working in a pub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dealing with public• Handling cash• Working long hours in a busy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer care• Communication• Conflict resolution• Numeracy• Accuracy• Time management,• Energy• Working under pressure

Additional Sections

- Achievements and Positions of Responsibility
- Voluntary work
- Additional skills (IT, languages)
- Interests/extra curricular activities
- References (names & contact details or available on request)



CV formats: chronological

Outlines your career history in date order, beginning with the most recent items (reverse chronology)

Includes details of skills within relevant sections

Conventional approach and easiest to prepare

Works well for students with a good all round mix of education and work experience



Alexander Thoday

11 West St
York YO103DD

Tel: 01904 777777 Mobile:7777777777

Email: at@hotmail.com

Education

2009-12 Economics and Economic History BA (Hons.) Predicted: 2:1 University of York

- Expanded and acquired analytical skills through applying the concepts and logic of mathematics
- Critically evaluated a range of economic and social data
- Considering the way ideas evolve over time has involved surveying a broad spectrum of resources and making independent inferences about their bearing.

2002-9 The School, The Town

A level: Economics A; Geography A; English A; General Studies B

GCSE: 10 subjects at A* -A

Work experience

2011 Intern KPMG

- Completed vacation scheme in tax department, giving an insight into the fundamental aspects of a large professional services firm
- Responsibilities included verifying financial data, preparing presentations, attending strategic meetings and working as part of a team assigned to a marketing project.
- Gained an understanding of technical issues, including the use of software packages.
- Socially responsible policies of the company presented the chance to support community projects, promoting a strong sense of reward.
- Interacting with colleagues from different levels within the business, demonstrated the importance of diligent written and oral communication.

2009 – present Student Ambassador, University of York

- Work with a team contacting graduates to update the alumni database; requires succinct and flexible communication
- Fundraising for the university's Annual Scholarship Fund requires a confident and articulate approach
- Awarded 'top student of the campaign' prize

2007 Data Analyst, Forest Hill Accountants

- A summer placement working with financial data; gave practical application of a range of numeracy skills
- Adhering to deadlines was essential, requiring excellent time management and resilience

Positions of Responsibility

2011 Vice Chair, University of York Economics Society (elected position)

- Working with a group to manage budgets, corporate relations and events organisation
- Organised programme of speakers from large financial organisations
- Required effective teamwork, leadership and proactive motivation of others

2008-9 Head of The School

- Required flexibility and the ability to take initiatives through to their conclusion
- Required public speaking, resourcefulness and diplomacy

2004 -9 Regimental Sergeant Major, CCF

- Membership of the Combined Cadet Force led to promotion to the highest possible rank
- Maintained excellent standards of dress, organisation and teaching throughout the ranks, requiring determination and the ability to delegate.

Other interests

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

- Completed Bronze and Silver awards requiring sustained commitment through charity work and expeditions

Piano playing

- Playing a range of contemporary and classical music led to working in The Horse and Groom Restaurant at weekends and special occasions. Met a diverse range of people and developed my interpersonal skills in a new context

Travel

- 2010 and 11 Trekking in Peru and other areas of S America gave me a range of unforgettable experiences and the chance to obtain a scuba diving qualification, as well as the chance to learn about and experience life in different cultures and environments

References: Available on request

CV formats: Skills based

Highly focused CV which relates your skills and abilities to a specific job or career area

Particularly good for career changers/mature graduates

Highlights skills and major achievements

Minimises impact of unrelated work experience

Saves repeating similar details in similar jobs



Daniel Jones
151 Any Road, York YO10 3AB
0789695949 abc123@ tiscali.co.uk

Personal Profile

A determined and enthusiastic Politics and Economics undergraduate, predicted to achieve 2:1, keen to use knowledge and skills developed in work experience and voluntary roles to progress within a public sector human resources role.

Skills

Communication and interpersonal

- Worked effectively in teams in both academic and work environments
- Experience in hospitality has developed effective listening skills to identify client's specific needs, in both luxury hotel and city centre bar
- Meeting and discussing student issues with academics as Board of Studies Representative required the ability to articulate clearly and to negotiate

Working to deadlines and under pressure

- Late nights and early mornings required for preparations for book launch in hotel. Needed appropriate power supplies, contingency plans and a professional approach to challenging clients.
- Joint responsibility for the organisation of large scale fundraising events. Prioritised activities effectively, especially during exam periods

Delivery of high quality work, taking responsibility for decisions

- Accountable to and representative for a large and diverse group of students as elected president of the Mature Student Association.
- Objectivity, accuracy and consistency required as a Mystery Shopper

Planning & organisation

- Planned, budgeted and organised extensive, independent overseas expeditions, most recently to China by train. Required adaptability and determination
- As an English teacher - designed lessons meticulously, ensuring appropriateness for all classes
- Effective time management and self discipline has brought academic achievement while working and holding positions of responsibility

Self awareness to improve own performance

- Realised limitations while working for a small school with limited resources in Inner Mongolia. Used on-line forums extensively to exchange ideas, advice and resources from overseas
- Developed Negotiation skills through pursuing additional course at university

Language skills

- Native English and Welsh speaker, also studying Mandarin.
- Basic knowledge of Greek and conversational level French

Computer skills

- Excel and Word used daily and Power point regularly
- Confident with publishing and photo-editing suites such as PhotoShop, Draw and Publisher
- Basic knowledge of HTML

Education

2009 -12

BA Politics and Economics University of York 2:1 expected grade

- Developed an excellent understanding of political systems and the ability to interpret political issues and events.
- Developed financial/business awareness from a global perspective

2004-8

Mayfield Comprehensive, Newtown

- A levels: Biology A; Physics A; Chemistry B
- GCSEs: 11 A* -B including English and Maths

Work Experience

10/2009 - present

Mystery shopper GRG Research

- Undertaking research into customer service in a variety of retail establishments

10/2009 – present (vacs) Grand Hotel, Newtown

- Waiter – developing further customer service experience
- Events organiser – planning and delivering book launch event

08/2009- 10/2009

Barman Queen's Head, Newtown

- Working in a team in a busy, pressurised environment

10/2008- 06/2009

Teacher of English, New World Language School, Mongolia

- Planning and delivering lessons to young learners, while adapting to a new culture and language

Positions of Responsibility

2010-11

Board of Studies Representative for academic department University of York

- Liaison between academic staff and students; seeking and understanding student issues and concerns; attending committee meetings; reporting back.

2010-11

President of Mature Students Association, University of York

- Chairing a committee working to further student interests, including planning and developing a social programme.

2009-present

Fund raiser for Cancer Research

- Being creative with ideas and planning and organising student events

Interests

Travel – independent travel in vacations to China, USA and within Europe. Expanding my awareness of different cultures

Judo – holder of Brown belt

Cooking - Keen on experimental cooking and trying new recipes from around the world.

References Available on request

CV Formats: 'Creative' CVs

Useful in certain sectors, e.g. media/creative arts
Stand out/be remembered/attract attention
Demonstrate design skills/creativity

Be aware of the **advantages and disadvantages** of this approach.

Making a more visual CV may help you to arrange your ideas, even if your final CV is more traditional.

Two examples follow

CV Formats: 'Creative' CVs Developing your employability

THE PRESS
My Work Experience Application
By Jonathan Frost

02.04.2011 jonathan.frost@nouse.co.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thankyou for considering my application, I've heard work experience is essential for a career in media, and can be the "make or break" for many job applicants.

I've also heard that **relevant and useful experience** can be notoriously difficult to obtain, and that for your application to avoid being lovingly filed with the majority of others, you **need to stand out**.



In order to achieve this, and display my talents and passions to you, I have created what I hope to be a unique application, that combines my strengths of **writing** and **designing**.

I hope you **enjoy** it, and look forward to hearing

Creative CV ([full version](#))
by Jonathan Frost (York)

[Guardian careers blog article](#)

CV Formats: 'Creative' CVs

Retro interactive online CV

The screenshot shows a retro-style web browser interface. At the top, it displays 'P002 <PREV NEXT> PLAY' on the left and 'ZEEFAX Tue 6 Sep 15:42/07' on the right. The main header features the logo 'ZEF' in large, white, pixelated letters on a black background, followed by the title 'ABOUT ME' in yellow pixelated letters on a black background. The main content area has a black background with yellow text. It starts with a greeting: 'Hello, I am a recent design graduate from University College Falmouth.' This is followed by a paragraph: 'While I have undertaken countless freelance projects throughout my university career, I am now seeking a full time position at an exciting design agency. I am looking for a post that will allow me the opportunity to use my wide skillset right away, whilst nurturing my talents and giving me the opportunity to continue learning.' The next paragraph says: 'Please take the time to look through the rest of my CV, and do contact me if you would like to know more.' Below this is the email address 'hello@zef.so'. To the right of the text is a pixelated portrait of a man with black hair and a white shirt, set against a cyan background. Below the portrait is the text 'LIVE WEBCAM >'. At the bottom of the page, there is a cyan bar with 'MUSIC: M > M' on the left and '(C) 2011 ZEF NARKIEWICZ' on the right. Below this bar is a yellow bar with the text 'Playing: Great Ocean Road'. At the very bottom, there are three colored tabs: 'Achievements' in red, 'Skills' in blue, and 'Education' in purple.

Tips for content



Do:

- Use headings which are appropriate to you and to the job
- Give some detail of what you have gained from your course
- Keep the content concise and focussed
- Focus on positive achievements
- Use positive words
- Provide evidence for any skills you claim to have

Don't:

- Give long lists of duties without reference to skills acquired
- Start sentences with 'I'

Tips for layout



Do:

Two A4 pages-print 11 or 12

Leave some white space but not too much!

Consider bullet format to avoid large blocks of text

Separate the sections clearly – using appropriate headings

Double-check spelling, punctuation and grammar

Don't:

oUse the heading CV or Curriculum Vitae

oAllocate space inappropriately to unimportant facts

oCram the pages with detailed facts

Remember!

Employers may:

- **Skim** CV (15 seconds?) to make a decision
- Take into account **general presentation**
- Look for **key words**
- Use **software** to scan for key points or spelling/grammar errors



Covering Letters: The Basics

- Your chance to show interest, motivation and enthusiasm for the job
- Tailor/personalise your letter to fit the job/company
- Usually 1 side of A4 and occasionally:
 - A handwritten letter of application
 - A longer letter of application
- Layout: Your address in top right of page, employer's in top left
 - Include the date
 - Include reference to vacancy
- Write to a named person if possible
- Correct valediction: 'Yours sincerely' or 'Yours faithfully'
- Check for spelling, grammar, typos & keep a copy

Covering Letters: Content

Introduction

- Who you are and why you are writing

Why you are interested in this job and this employer

- Show interest and knowledge of the company and post (targeted, well researched application)

Why you are suited to this job

- Highlight your strengths, skills and experience relevant to the job
- Refer to sections of your CV – don't repeat verbatim

Conclusion

- End on a positive note



Keep a record of what you have done on your **Employability Plan** (accessed through the **Employability Tutorial** <http://vle.york.ac.uk/>)

This will help your **supervisor** know more about you and help him/her write your **reference**.



Support from the Careers Service

www.york.ac.uk/careers

Talk to a Careers adviser or CV assistant – short appointments daily at Careers Service – book online
Talk to our Information Staff – no appointment needed
Information online and at the Careers Service
Programme of **careers events**, fairs, courses & workshops



www.facebook.com/yorkcareers

Location: behind the Berrick Saul Building, near Market Square shops



Tell us what you want...

If you have feedback on this session, any of our services, or ideas for future activities, please email: careers@york.ac.uk

