

EQUATE Scotland

For Women in Science, Engineering & Technology

Cover letters & CVs

A Resource for Students and Graduates

Your CV is normally the first point of contact with an employer, yet many people don't put in the effort a CV deserves! They think instead they will sell themselves at interview but a good CV will help ensure you get to that stage.

You must tailor your CV and cover letter to the placement or job that you are applying for – generic applications stand out for all the wrong reasons and employers will ultimately put yours to the bottom of the pile.

Statistics show that students who make one or two tailored applications are more successful in securing an internship than those students who submit 10-15 generic applications.

COVER LETTER TIPS

Your cover letter should outline your motivation for applying for the role and why you want to work for the company. It should state why you want this particular job, why you are right for the role and why you want to work for the employer. In short, it should both capture you as a person – your experiences, strengths and abilities – and be **very specific** to the role.

Using the Job Description and Person Specification created by the employer, detail how you meet the criteria. This will include your relevant modules, projects and other activities relating to your course. You should also highlight any relevant work placements giving details about what your responsibilities were. If you do not have any relevant work experience you should describe how the transferable skills you have developed in your other non-relevant work experience can be applied to that particular role.

CV TIPS

- Do not title your CV 'Curriculum Vitae/CV' – your name should be at the top of the page to make it easy for employers to find you in a large pile of CVs.
- Do not name your electronic document as 'My CV' – name the document as per your full name e.g. Lesley Black CV_AECOM. This makes it easier for employers to file the electronic version in their system and avoids them having to rename the document.
- Include your personal contact details and a hyperlink to your LinkedIn profile. Ensure you use a professional email address and one that is titled appropriately e.g avoid ones like 'babe1014@gmail.com'.
- Do not include a photograph or your date of birth- these are not required in a UK CV
- Include a career objective/personal statement. This should briefly state the opportunities you are looking for, your key strengths and any relevant experience you have that would make your CV stand out.

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- State your degree, what year of study you are in and what grade you are on track for achieving.
- You can create a CV listing all your modules and the marks gained for each one. You can then tailor your CV each time to the specific role you are applying for, highlighting the modules relevant to the actual job requirements and deleting any irrelevant information.
- Highlight any awards gained during high school/university.
- Include any group work/activities/projects worked on during university and state **your** role, the skills you applied and the overall outcome.
- Highlight any paid or unpaid, part or full time work experience you have. You may wish to have two sections – Relevant Experience and Other Experience. Ensure the relevant experience is at the top of the experience section of the CV.
- You should also include any Voluntary Experience you may have such as being an active member of a society, a student ambassador, captain of a sports team etc.
- Pay particular attention to your ‘soft/transferrable skills’ – communication, organisation, planning, team working – ensure you highlight these skills in any sections relating to work experience or project work.
- Highlight any technical/practical skills you have – programming languages, systems, applications, techniques etc. Be realistic about your skill level – is it something you are familiar with, have used frequently or are expert at.
- Include a short sentence on your personal interests and hobbies if you have space.
- Keep your CV to two pages – if struggling for space, leave out your personal interest/hobbies.
- Ask someone to proof read your CV to ensure there are no spelling or grammar mistakes.
- Save your CV as a PDF and send/attach both a PDF and word version of your CV to the employer.

The key message is that you should always **tailor** your cover letter, CV and any applications made to the role you are applying for.

Ensure that you highlight all relevant skills and experience on your CV to the actual job requirements to give you the best chance of securing an interview.

We also recommend that you seek further advice from your university or college careers service.

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