

Covering letters

Your CV should be accompanied by a one-page covering letter. It should highlight your relevant skills/strengths, experience and explain your motivations for applying to the organisation. Create a good impression with content that is written and set out professionally.

For more information on writing covering letters, go to [application forms](#).

Name of person

Job title

Name of organisation

Full address

Postcode

Your full address and postcode

Date

Address it to the right person and ensure their name and job title are correct.

Dear... - use title and surname only. If the name isn't given, research and find out who this is. Use 'Dear Sir/Madam' if you're unable to find the name of the person.

Introduction - briefly explain what you're doing now and why you're writing. If the position was advertised, include where you saw it and mention that you've attached your CV. If you're applying speculatively, be specific about what you're looking for.

The order of these three paragraphs below is up to you:

Why you? - pull together the key selling points from your CV to show why the recruiter should consider you. What have you got to offer them? Include relevant experience, knowledge and skills that would benefit their organisation, using specific examples.

Why you? - Explain why you're interested in this role, demonstrating your motivation and understanding of what it involves.

Why them? - show that you've researched the organisation, don't just repeat what you've read on their website. Consider their values, services, culture, clients, projects and any contact you've had with people who work there.

Additional information (optional) - a covering letter is an opportunity to share further information that you'd like the organisation to consider, e.g. to explain international qualifications, circumstances for lower grades, or reasonable adjustments you need relating to a disability. Come and talk to us if you're unsure about whether or how to share personal information in your covering letter.

Sign off - end in a polite and friendly way, e.g. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely - use 'Yours faithfully' when writing 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

Your name

CV for graduate jobs, placements and internships

Your CV should be targeted to the opportunity you're applying for and should be one to two pages long.

Your name
Full address (include one address only)
Phone number (check that your voicemail is activated)
Email address (keep your email address professional)
LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

Personal profile or career objective (optional)

Only include a profile if it adds something to your CV. Give the employer a brief summary of who you are, your key skills and the role you're seeking, e.g. 'Fine art student with excellent organisational skills and experience of working in galleries and visual merchandising, seeks a graduate role as an exhibition designer'. Profiles are particularly useful if you can't provide a covering letter.

Education

Put your most relevant qualification first (usually the most recent), then work backwards.

2018 - 2021 Full title of your degree/Masters/PhD, state class obtained or predicted, name of university, location (if not apparent from name)

- List modules relevant to the role, but not more than five or six.
- Provide details of relevant projects/activities, e.g. dissertation, thesis. Include achievements and give specific examples to evidence your skills, e.g. 'Worked effectively in a team of five to deliver an assessed group presentation. As team leader, supported group members, allocated tasks fairly and ensured the project deadline was met'.
- If your subject of study is not relevant to the role, focus on relevant skills you've gained. Remember to provide examples as evidence.

2011 - 2018 Name of school/college, location (if not apparent from name)

A-levels (or equivalent): list subjects and grades across the page to save space.

GCSEs (or equivalent): state the number and grades obtained, e.g. 9 GCSEs, grades A*- C.

For international qualifications, write them as they are, you don't need to convert them.

Work experience (paid and voluntary)

Use the job advert/description (if available) to identify what the employer is looking for and give specific examples to demonstrate your relevant skills and experience.

How you market your work experience can really help your CV stand out. If you don't have any work experience, come in and talk to us about finding opportunities.

Dates worked, job title, organisation, location (no need for full address)

Write briefly about your duties to set the context, giving specific examples. Focus on **how** you carried out those duties, i.e. the skills you used.

- Mention particularly relevant experience first and emphasise with headings. For example, a marketing CV could have two sections, either 'Marketing experience' or 'Relevant experience', and then 'Additional experience' where you can highlight any other paid or voluntary work.
- Include all related experience; the setting may not seem relevant but the skills you gained could be. You could include part-time jobs, internships, placements or voluntary work.
- Be specific, don't just list skills. Compare 'Developed team working and communication skills working in a busy restaurant' to 'Worked in a team of six, with sole responsibility for 15 tables in a busy city centre environment. Worked quickly and efficiently over the lunchtime period to maintain turnover'.

Achievements or positions of responsibility (optional)

This is a chance to show your individuality and give different examples of relevant skills. Focus on more recent experiences, i.e. less than 5 years. Only include something older if it is outstanding.

Examples you could include are:

- membership of societies
- student rep
- sporting activities
- charity/fundraising

Think about what you do. Do you have any specific responsibilities? What do you gain from these?

Additional skills

Give details of other relevant skills you might have, such as:

- IT skills - list software and any programming languages you can use. Include any qualifications you've gained.
- Language skills - list the different languages you can speak and your level of fluency.
- Driving licence - remember to check the spelling of 'licence'

Interests (optional)

Mention any interests you have that are related to the position you're applying for, or which allow you to demonstrate useful skills. Don't just list the different activities you enjoy, give more detail.

References

You don't have to include them, but if you have space, you can include the contact details of two referees - always ask their permission first. One should be a university academic, the other could be a current or recent employer, or someone who has worked with you professionally, e.g. through volunteering.

Name
Job title/relationship to you
University and department
Full address, including postcode
Telephone number
Email address

Name
Job title/relationship to you
University and department
Full address, including postcode
Telephone number
Email address

CV for part-time jobs

CVs for part-time/casual work are slightly different from graduate level CVs. However, they should still be targeted and relevant to the post. Your CV should be one to two pages long.

Your name

Full address

Phone number (check that your voicemail is activated)

Email address (keep your email address professional)

Personal profile (optional)

Only include a profile if it adds something to your CV. Give the employer a brief summary of who you are, your key skills and the role you are seeking, e.g. 'History student at Newcastle University with 12 months' hospitality experience, seeks a part-time position in retail to further develop customer service skills'. Keep it brief and specific - one or two sentences only. Profiles are particularly useful if you don't have the opportunity to provide a covering letter.

Work experience (paid and voluntary)

If you have previous work experience, add this section before Education. Practical skills are usually more important to the employer than your degree.

Dates worked, job title, employer, location (no need for full address)

- Use the job advert/description (if available) to identify what the employer is looking for and give specific examples to demonstrate your relevant skills and experience.
- Focus on your achievements, rather than giving a detailed job description, e.g. 'Dealt with demanding customers when the shop was very busy, remaining calm under pressure.'

Education

If the job isn't related to your course, the employer is less likely to be interested in your studies. Only include modules or projects if the skills you've gained are relevant.

2018 - 2021 - Course title, university, location

2011 - 2018 - Name of school/college, location

Include the location if it's not apparent.

A-levels (or equivalent): list subjects and grades across the page to save space.

GCSEs (or equivalent): state the number and grades obtained, e.g. 9 GCSEs, grades A*-C. Only include specific subjects if relevant, e.g. maths, to demonstrate numeracy.

Additional skills

Give details of other relevant skills that you have, such as IT skills (e.g. software), driving licence, language skills or certificates, e.g. first aid, food hygiene or sports coaching. You could add this section before Education if these skills are particularly relevant to the position you're applying for.

Interests (optional)

Mention any interests you have that are related to the role you're applying for, or which allow you to demonstrate relevant skills. Don't just list the different activities you enjoy, give more detail.

References

You don't have to include them, but if you have space, you can include the contact details of two referees - always ask their permission first.

Action words

'Action words' help you to create a strong impression of achievement, ability and activity and demonstrate that you have the skills and qualities an employer is seeking. Avoid passive terms such as 'I had to...', 'I was required to...', 'I was involved in...'. Use active, positive verbs instead to describe your role and the impact you made, such as:

achieved
analysed
budgeted
completed
conducted
coordinated
created
delivered
demonstrated
designed

developed
edited
evaluated
improved
increased
initiated
led
liaised
managed
negotiated

organised
planned
prepared
presented
prioritised
produced
researched
solved
supervised
trained

Checklist

Key things to consider:

- Are your CV and covering letter tailored to the opportunity you have applied for?
- Are they clear and easy to read?
- Do they demonstrate that you meet the recruiter's criteria?
- Has every piece of information earned its place?
- Have you checked spelling, punctuation and grammar?
- Have you explained your contribution to activities and included evidence to support your skills?
- Is the font and format consistent and professional?

CVs

- Is the most relevant information first?
- Have you used subheadings, bullet points and white space and avoided long paragraphs?
- Have you used a professional sounding email address?
- Is it no more than two pages in length?

Covering letters:

- Have you addressed the letter to a named contact? If not, use 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
- Have you highlighted your relevant skills/strengths and explained why you're interested in the organisation and the role?
- Have you kept it to one side of A4?

Need more help?

- [Visit us](#) and get feedback on your CV and covering letter.
- The Careers Service [website](#) includes example CVs and covering letters and advice on CVs for different countries and sectors.
- Attend [workshops](#) on writing CVs and covering letters.
- If you have a disability and would like advice on sharing information or come in and speak to us.
- Postgraduate researchers can find advice on promoting your PhD on [Vitae](#).