



# DEVELOP

## Create your CV & Cover Letter





# Create your CV & Cover Letter

A CV is a marketing tool you can use to present your skills, qualifications and experiences to potential employers.

Your CV should be concise, well-structured, up-to-date and relevant to the organisation or role that you're applying to.

Your cover letter is the first impression an employer has of you – it should be an introduction that briefly covers your interest in the role and sells your suitability.

## In this guide:

- Writing your CV
- Writing your cover letter
- Word bank
- Further reading

# Writing your CV

## You need to tailor your CV

The most effective CVs are tailored to the specific role and organisation that you're applying to. This ensures that the recruiter or employer reading it can easily imagine you in that role. When it comes to CVs, one size does not fit all.

## Before you start

Find out as much as you can about the job role you are applying for and highlight key points to cover; the job description or person specification will usually detail these:

- Required qualifications
- Required or desired skills & knowledge
- Any experience requirements

If this is not possible (eg. you are making a speculative application) refer to the job profiles on the Prospects website ([www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles)) which give general requirements for various job roles.

Remember all experience counts. Many roles will give you skills that can transfer to many different roles. Use these to your advantage.

## Deciding on a CV style

### Reverse Chronological

A common CV style that goes through each section in reverse chronological order - your most recent qualifications and job roles are listed first to give them more focus and attention. This style of CV is useful to demonstrate a variety of experience and is the one you will most likely use.

### Skills Based

A specialised style of CV which focuses on the specific skills employers are looking for, using skills as headings to demonstrate your relevant experience. You will need to match skill headings to those the employer is looking for. The skills section fills at least your first page and the remainder of your CV can be used to briefly explain your education and employment dates and descriptions. This style of CV is useful when applying for positions not directly linked to previous job roles.

In most cases, a reverse chronological CV is preferable for a student or graduate.

# Writing your CV

## Format and layout

Unless instructed otherwise by the employer, your CV should be no more than two sides of A4 sized paper. Your CV should be concise, but not have too much empty space. Be creative with formatting.

Fonts should be clear and professional - think Arial or Calibri. For the font size use 12 for headings and 11 for text.

Avoid using colours on text other than headings, and unless appropriate for the job you are applying for (for example, Graphic Designer), avoid using images or tables. If you are applying for creative roles, however, you may want to use this space to display some of your skills.

Bullet points and headings are a useful way of presenting information clearly. If you decide to use any of these, they should be used consistently throughout your CV.

Ensure all text is lined up or in columns and that spelling and grammar is correct.

## References

You should not provide the details of referees until requested. Simply write 'References available on request' at the end of your CV.

You should have two referees arranged, one should ideally be your current or previous employer, and one can be an academic or personal reference such as a lecturer or a senior member of a club you are involved with. Ensure to ask for permission before providing their details.

## Make final checks

Check your CV against the job specifications and description.  
Have you met every requirement, providing evidence and examples?

Our CV  
Review Tool  
provides instant  
feedback.

Find it on our  
website.

Attend our  
CV and Cover  
Letter Workshop

Visit our Events  
Calendar: [www.  
uolcareers.co.uk/  
events](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk/events)

# Writing your CV

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## What to include

### Title

Have you included your email address and phone number at the start?  
Can you be easily contacted through these?  
How about including your LinkedIn profile?

### Personal Profile

Is your career objective/personal profile at the start, no more than 6 lines?  
Is it short, punchy, strategic, highlighting your current situation and your future career plans (career objective), or outlining key skills and experiences (personal profile)?

### Education

Have you listed your most recent/important qualifications first? Have you included expected degree classification?  
Have you listed any relevant modules/projects?  
Have you highlighted any software programmes you have been using?  
Is there an individual dissertation/ team project you could highlight?  
Have you won any awards, prizes, scholarships?

### Work Experience

Have you included more detail on more relevant/recent experience?  
Have you included a range of experience e.g which could include voluntary work, work for university societies, work placements?  
Have you highlighted your responsibilities and any achievements arising from this experience?  
Does it run reverse chronologically?

### Skills

Does your CV highlight your relevant skills and provide evidence of them?  
Does it stress your achievements?  
Can you speak different languages?

### Interests

Can you use this section to demonstrate the skills/competencies the employer is looking for?

### Referees

Have you asked your referees for permission, and explained the types of roles you are applying for?

# Rhiannon Eardley

Mobile: 07590 620 463 | Email: rhiannon.eardley@gmail.com

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-eardley](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-eardley)

## Profile

University of Lincoln final year BSc (Hons) Biology student demonstrating high performance in academic studies and practical laboratory skills. Keen to use strong organisation, analytical and research skills, including significant experience of electrophoresis and Western blotting in a scientific research role with a leading organisation.

## Education

### **University of Lincoln, Sept 2019 - Current** **BSc (Hons) Biology – 2:1 honours expected grade**

Relevant modules & grades:

- Biology of Disease (72%)
- Pathology (74%)
- Clinical Biochemistry (67%)

Final project topic "The electrophoretic analysis of urinary proteins"

- Awarded departmental prize for best dissertation
- Used SDS PAGE to identify unique cancer markers in human urine
- Assessed levels of protein using a variety of immunological methods
- Planned and organised laboratory activities and overcame problems by researching new identification strategies
- Helped integrate the results into a larger research project

### **Hampton Bays Secondary School, Leeds, Sept 2012 - June 2019**

- 3 A Levels: Biology (B), Maths (C), History (C)
- 9 GCSEs grade A\*-C, including Maths and English

## Relevant Experience

### **Chemical and Biological Researcher Placement, June 2021 - Sept 2021** **Unilever R&D, Colworth**

- Analysed survival rates of bacteria in a range of environmental conditions using microscopic sample analysis techniques
- Developed aseptic techniques and an understanding of health and safety procedures through careful handling of cultures
- Gained effective project management skills developed through independent laboratory work

## Other Experience

### **Student Union Events Officer, Nov 2019 - May 2021** **University of Lincoln**

- Planned and organised three successful events for charity, raising over £1500 and exceeding expected targets
- Managed an entertainment budget, increasing event revenue by 12% on previous year
- Allocated specific roles to event teams of up to eight members, set individual responsibilities and held weekly meetings to track progress

### **Sales Assistant, July 2017 - May 2019**

#### **Smyths Toys Superstores, Leeds**

- Provided excellent customer service by assisting customers with item choices and finding stock in a fast-paced retail environment
- Collaborated with co-workers to complete teamwork tasks on time during busy shifts
- Processed daily sales transactions of up to £1000 accurately and efficiently
- Trained new staff on Point-Of-Sale systems and other shop floor activities adhering to store training manuals

### **Awards**

#### **Lincoln Award, Oct 2020 - Sept 2021**

##### **University of Lincoln**

- Completed work experience placement, learning to manage time, work independently and within a team
- Attended multiple industry and skills focused workshops and events, networked with employers and developed strong commercial awareness
- Applied resilience passing written and group activities and a telephone interview as part of an Assessment Centre experience leading to the completion of the award
- Reflected on skills gained and developed strategies for continued skill development

#### **Duke of Edinburgh Award (Gold), June 2018 - May 2019**

##### **Hampton School, Leeds**

- Volunteered for one year with Leeds City Council delivering meals and interacting with a range of people
- Developed resilience to overcome individual challenges through adventurous activities
- Attended 5-day cultural heritage residential workshop in Italy building relationships and stepping out of comfort zone

### **Interests**

- **Sports:** Netball player and committee member supporting events and fund-raising at Rustons Netball Club
- **Environmental Science:** Take an active interest in local and global environmental news. Subscribe to various science magazines to boost industry knowledge
- **Travel:** Enthusiastic explorer of different countries and cultures. Particularly enjoy off-the-beaten-track travel

**References available on request**

Your CV  
will usually be  
1-2 pages long  
depending on  
experience





# Writing a Part-Time CV

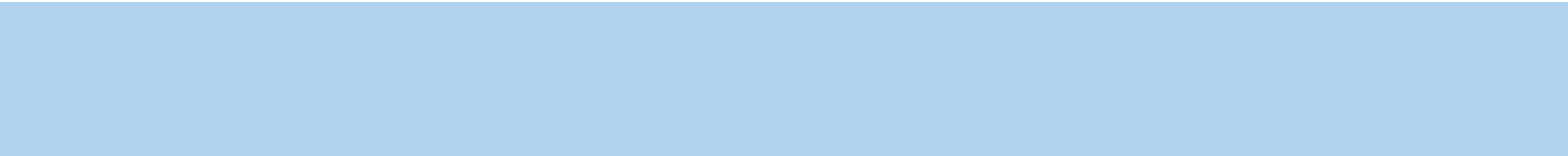
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For a part-time job you can often use a CV that is only one side of A4.

You may also want to stress your work experience and transferable skills first as these may be more relevant to the post than your current Degree.

See the example on the next page. Note that it still follows a chronological order.

## Superquick CV Checklist

- Have you used appropriate headings and a logical structure?
  - Is the most relevant/important information given priority?
  - Does it emphasise what you have to offer an employer?
  - Is it relevant to the particular job and company?
  - Has your CV been thoroughly checked for spelling, grammar, and correct use of language?
  - Is it easy to read the information?
- 

# Rhiannon Eardley

Mobile: 07950 620 463 Email: rhiannon.eardley@gmail.com

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-eardley](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-eardley)

Self-motivated, hard-working, and reliable university student. Strong organisation, communication, and team-work skills developed through work experience and extra-curricular activities. Seeking part-time work in a customer service role in the hospitality or retail sector.

## Relevant Work Experience

### **July 2017 - May 2019, Sales Assistant, Smyths Toys Superstore, Leeds**

- Provided excellent customer service by assisting customers with item choices and finding stock in a fast-paced retail environment
- Worked closely with co-workers to complete teamwork tasks on time during busy shifts
- Processed daily sales transactions of up to £1000 accurately and efficiently
- Trained new staff on Point-of-Sale systems and other shop floor activities, adhering to the store training manual

### **November 2018 - January 2019, Meals Delivery Volunteer, Leeds City Council**

Volunteer role as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award

- Delivered meals in a timely, friendly, and organised manner
- Built strong communication skills by interacting with a wide range of people
- Worked with driver to solve meal delivery problems and decide the most efficient time routes

## Additional Experience

### **June 2021 - September 2021, Researcher Placement, Unilever R&D, Colworth**

- Developed strong teamworking skills working with a group of researchers in a laboratory
- Maintained a clean, safe, and organised work environment at all times

### **November 2019 - May 2021, Student Union Events Officer, University of Lincoln**

- Planned three successful events for charity, raising over £1500 and demonstrating strong organisational skills

## Key Skills

- **Communication:** Developed through interacting with customers and clients from diverse backgrounds in retail and volunteer roles, from sporting activities, and course presentations
- **Time management:** Successfully managed study, part time work, and extra-curricular activities, whilst always meeting deadlines and maintaining high grades.
- **Teamwork:** Extensive experience of working closely with other team members to achieve tasks in award programmes and provide efficient customer service in paid and volunteer roles

## Education

- September 2019 - Current, University of Lincoln, BSC (Hons) Biology
- September 2012 - June 2019, Hampton Bays Secondary School, Leeds  
A levels: Biology (B), Maths (C), History (C)    GCSES: 9 A-C including Maths & English

## Additional Information

Clean current driving licence

References available on request

# Writing your Cover Letter

## First impressions matter

This is your chance to show an employer:

- 1 Your main selling points
- 2 How relevant your skills are to the position
- 3 How interested you are in the position
- 4 How much you know about the company

The more you target and tailor your letter to a role and employer, the more likely it is to stand out – just like your CV, you will need to make a new one for each role you apply for. Unlike a CV, however, a cover letter has more room to show your personality and tell the story of your career journey.

# Writing your Cover Letter

## Addressing your letter

Address your letter to a named individual within the company to ensure that it is read by the correct person. If you do not have a named individual, research the website to find a contact or get in touch the HR department.

If you are given someone's full name, e.g. Joe Bloggs, do not address the letter 'Dear Joe' unless you are very familiar with the person. Rather begin 'Dear Mr Bloggs'.

If you find it impossible to get the name of an individual within the company, use one of the following titles: 'Recruitment manager', 'HR Manager' or 'Recruitment team'.

If you have a named contact – you should conclude 'Yours sincerely'."

## Other tips: style, formatting and more

- If you are submitting your letter on paper, ensure the paper you use is good quality. Your letter should come close to filling one A4 page. Keep fonts and text styling consistent with your CV.
- Email will give you less control over fonts and layout, but treat the body of your email carefully nonetheless – use the subject line to give your name and the job role you are applying for, and remain formal. Don't forget to attach your CV, make sure you double check that it has loaded into the email. It is advisable to also make note that your CV is attached, so the employer is alerted that something has gone wrong if it is not present.
- Use positive, active language in the first person ('I did this' as opposed to 'Joe did this'). While you can let your personality through in a cover letter, remain formal and professional. This is not a place for slang or acronyms unless they are relevant to the role or company culture.
- Your cover letter is a summary of highlights which an employer can read more about within your CV. Mentions of your experience and skills should be represented in both your CV and cover letter.
- Ensure that you have included a title - for example the job reference number. The company could have several roles available at any one time and you need to make it clear which role you are applying for.
- Have someone check your spelling and grammar before you submit, or read through it out loud as this will allow you to catch mistakes with greater ease. Keep a copy once you are done so you can refer to it before your interview.

# Writing your Cover Letter

Following a cover letter template could mean your letter will not read naturally to employers. While there are some structures you can follow, you will need to adapt them to suit your unique abilities and how they suit the role. Here are some basic points that you may want to cover. You may choose to order them differently:

1

## An introduction

A brief and clear paragraph stating who you are, the role you are applying for and perhaps the reason you are applying for it. You can say where you saw the role advertised, establish any links you have with the company (worked for them previously, spoken to a team member at a careers fair) or make it clear that you are making a speculative enquiry about something such as work experience.

2

## Your interest in the employer

Do your research and show your enthusiasm for working for them. Have they had any recent successes, do they work with particular clients or have any particular values that attract you?

3

## Your interest in the role

Show your awareness of what the work will involve and establish your suitability for it.

4

## Your key strengths

Without re-writing your CV, highlight your most relevant skills, qualifications, knowledge and experience that you believe will be of particular importance or interest to the employer or the role.

5

## Other important information

Make sure you include responses to any specific things asked by the employer to cover in the job advert such as hours of availability or if you have special needs that will need to be catered to in an interview. If you wish to disclose a disability, be sure to read Prospect's advice on doing so: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters/example-of-how-to-disclose-a-disability-in-a-cover-letter>

6

## A positive conclusion

You can thank the employer for their time and express how you look forward to hearing from them. This is also a good time to reiterate your preferred methods of contact and availability for an interview.

Winston Briggs  
Graduate HR Director  
123AccountingFinance  
Sparkhouse, University of Lincoln  
Brayford Pool  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS

23 October 2021

Dear Mr Briggs,

1 I am writing to apply for the position of trainee accountant with 123AccountingFinance. I am a BA (Hons) Business and Finance graduate from the University of Lincoln. I became very interested in this position after recently speaking with one of your employees at the University of Lincoln Careers Fair.

2 There are several things that excite me about working for 123AccountingFinance. I am interested in working with a diverse range of clients and your expansion into Asia across various industries appeals to me. Additionally, being able to work for a company that assists its clients to be efficient with business practices and achieve sustainable outcomes are my key principles when choosing an employer.

3 I am looking to begin my accounting career with a company where I will be exposed to high standards of professional practice and training to complete my accounting qualifications. The varied nature of the role with the opportunity to work within the different areas of tax, consulting and transactions is very appealing. This will allow me to understand the role of an accountant on a broader scale and potential opportunities for specialisation upon completion of my training.

4 The foundation of theory, knowledge and practice I have gained from my degree course will greatly help me in this role. From my role with the Banking, Investment and Trading Society at the University of Lincoln I have developed strong analytical, organisation and problem-solving skills. Previous work experience in retail has strengthened my customer service and relationship building skills, which will be very valuable when working with clients from different industries and cultures. This is also confirmed through my work with Dejuner Accounting where I maintained a strong client base, demonstrating I have the interpersonal skills to work with clients. Collectively these skills, experiences, and knowledge will give me a strong foundation to build on in this accounting role.

5 I have now graduated from the University of Lincoln and am available to start with 123AccountingFinance from July onwards.

6 Thank you very much for your time and consideration.  
I look forward to discussing my application further with you.

Yours sincerely,  
Johnathan Patch

Johnathan Patch  
11 Fake St  
Lincoln  
LN6 7TS  
j.patch@email.com  
0711 111 1111  
linkedin.com/in/johnpatch

Try to refer to a role description if you have one and use similar words that the employer uses.

# Word Bank

While you should avoid jargon and buzzwords, having a good bank of positive, powerful verbs in your vocabulary will help make your CVs and cover letters sound professional and put your achievements in an active context.

## Leadership

Allocated  
Co-ordinated  
Delegated  
Directed  
Encouraged  
Facilitated  
Initiated  
Lead  
Managed  
Organised  
Planned  
Produced

## Project Involvement

Built  
Delivered  
Designed  
Developed  
Devised  
Fashioned  
Finalised  
Generated  
Incorporated  
Implemented  
Launched  
Prepared

## Teamwork & Communicating

Balanced  
Collaborated  
Co-operated  
Conveyed  
Influenced  
Liaised  
Moderated  
Motivated  
Negotiated  
Persuaded  
Recommended  
Volunteered

## Research and Strategy

Advised  
Analysed  
Assessed  
Concluded  
Conducted  
Diagnosed  
Evaluated  
Identified  
Interpreted  
Measured  
Researched  
Solved

## Efficiency & Money

Accelerated  
Budgeted  
Expedited  
Improved  
Marketed  
Reduced  
Refined  
Refocused  
Saved  
Strengthened  
Sustained  
Yielded

## General Achievement

Attained  
Completed  
Demonstrated  
Displayed  
Exceeded  
Fulfilled  
Learned  
Performed  
Presented  
Solved  
Succeeded  
Taught

# Equality, Diversity and Job Seeking

The Equality Act 2010 states that the following nine characteristics are protected within the law: age, disability, gender reassignment/identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex or sexual orientation. This means jobseekers and employees who belong to one or more of the protected characteristics should not be discriminated against.

To find out more information about disclosure and your rights visit-

- TARGET jobs equality and diversity - <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/finding-a-job/equality-and-diversity-issues-and-your-graduate-job-hunt>
- University of Lincoln Careers & Employability - <https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/equality-diversity/>

## Equal Opportunities monitoring forms

When you apply for a job, you may be asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form, which is separate to the rest of your application. This is not seen by the recruitment panel and will not have an impact on the rest of your application. Once an appointment has been made, the data will be used solely by HR to make appropriate changes to the recruitment process to try to ensure more applications from underrepresented groups are received in the future.

## Disclosure and Discrimination in the application process

The Equality Act 2010 provides the right to not be directly or indirectly discriminated against. You are not legally required to disclose your protected characteristics to an employer.

If you feel you have been discriminated against during the recruitment process the following websites might be of help:

- University of Lincoln Students Union- [www.lincolnsu.com/advice/welfare](http://www.lincolnsu.com/advice/welfare)
- Citizens Advice- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)- [www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461)

## Careers Support

The Careers and Employability service aims to support individual queries regarding equality and diversity. Whilst this page gives general advice it may not answer your specific concerns. If you have any concerns or questions about the impact your protected characteristics may have on your job applications or employment then please book a careers guidance appointment.





# Further Reading

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## CV Resources

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/example-cvs>

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/cvs-applications-and-tests>

## Cover Letter Resources

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters>

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/cvs-applications-and-tests/covering-letter-essentials-graduate-vacancies>

## You can also use the following resources:

Our CV Review Tool providing instant feedback on your CV using AI technology.  
Visit our website at [www.uolcareers.co.uk](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk).

Attend our CV and Cover Letter Workshop, bookable via our events calendar:  
[www.uolcareers.co.uk/events/](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk/events/)



# Get support from your Careers & Employability Service

## What we offer

- **Careers Clinic**  
Our Skills Advisers are available to support you with all aspects of job search or the recruitment process for any role; part-time, placement, work experience or graduate. Careers Clinic runs Monday-Friday 1pm - 4pm.
- **Careers Guidance**  
Our Careers & Employability Advisers offer 1:1 appointments to support you exploring your Career options and planning.
- **Career Events**  
We have daily events running to provide information and support your development; some are run by our expert Adviser team and others by employers. All events are advertised here; [www.uolcareers.co.uk/events](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk/events)
- **Lincoln Award**  
Our employability award is designed to support you in developing and learning how to demonstrate your employability skills. At the end of the award you get the chance to put your learning to the test in our Assessment Centre Experience! Each one is partnered with an employer and students find the opportunity to practise and the feedback they receive invaluable. Full details can be seen here; [www.uolcareers.co.uk/lincolnaward](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk/lincolnaward)
- **Vacancies**  
CareerLinc is our online portal where all vacancies are advertised; part-time, placement, work experience and graduate roles. All students are already set up on the system so simply use your University log-in to get started! <https://careers.lincoln.ac.uk>
- **Campus Jobs**  
Our Student Employment Agency which advertises all jobs for the University on campus; from admin to retail, one off roles to ongoing part-time jobs, find out more here; <https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/jobs-employment-options/campus-jobs/>
- **Online Resources**  
We have our own Careers & Employability online learning pathways on LinkedIn Learning. We also provide many other online Career Resources. More information can be seen here; <https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/online-resources-learning/>



# WHAT WE OFFER



The Lincoln Award



Careers Clinic



Careers + Employability Workshops



Careers Guidance



International



Campus Jobs



Graduate Jobs



CareerLinc



Careers Information

**The Careers Centre is open  
09:00 - 16:30, Monday - Friday**

**Telephone: 01522 837828  
Email: [careers@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:careers@lincoln.ac.uk)  
[www.uolcareers.co.uk](http://www.uolcareers.co.uk)**