

University of Leeds Careers Centre

Guidelines for writing CVs and Covering Letters

These guidelines identify the principles of a good CV and covering letter. They are a starting point and **will need to be adapted for specific employers**. Your faculty may have also have additional CV resources.

Structure / Format

- Have a consistent format across the CV and Covering letter.
- Use Font size 11 (Arial and Calibri).
- Phone number – mobile recommended.
- Leeds email recommended whilst a student at Leeds.
- No boxes (apart from optional use for technical skills), no columns or borders (optional use for section headings) or no photographs. Avoid CV templates.
- Use **Bold** sparingly
- Bullet points (not dashes, stars etc.) Each bullet point should be 2-4 lines only. Start each bullet point with an action verb.
- Dates on the left hand side.
- Use either ALL full stops or NO full stops at the end of each statement. Be consistent.
- When using numbers in descriptions, express them as one to ten (in words) 11-10,000 (in numerals).
- Margins can be narrower for a one page CV.

Sections

Start with what you are currently doing and work backwards in each section, reverse chronological order.

- At the top – name, email, mobile phone number, LinkedIn and/or website link if appropriate. Don't include date of birth, nationality or gender.
- Education – Degree first, relevant modules, include all relevant qualifications. Year Abroad, Year in Industry. Include grades, actual and/or expected.
- Work history – This can include paid / unpaid work and volunteering.
- Interests and Achievements.
- References – one academic and one work, or 'Available on Request' if not enough space.
- Don't need a personal profile unless it is specifically asked for by the employer or the CV does not have a covering letter with it however adding a personal profile is entirely at your discretion.
- Optional sections :- Positions of responsibility, Awards, Relevant Experience, Voluntary Work, Additional Skills, Technical Skills, Project Work

Content

Use the CV and Covering letter to show how you meet the essential and desirable criteria for the job. The type of CV depends on the level of experience for the role. Broadly speaking, traditional CVs are easier to read. With little or no experience, a skills-based CV may be more suitable, but discuss this with your Careers /Faculty Staff. A one page CV is preferable for some areas of employment. If in doubt check with the employer.

- Clear and concise, an employer needs to access the relevant information quickly.
- Check spelling and grammar. Avoid using the same word multiple times and proofread that there are no missing words in sentences.
- Use plain English to express experience. Use technical terms where appropriate. Mirror the company terminology where appropriate.
- Always give the context not just a list of things you have done.
- Pick the most relevant information for the role, don't have to include everything you have ever done.

We can only check your CV after you have submitted through www.vmock.com/leeds and achieved a minimum of 60. If after this, you need additional application support for a specific opportunity, book an appointment at <http://mycareer.leeds.ac.uk> or attend drop-in, between 2-4pm Monday to Friday, term-time only. Please ensure you bring a printed copy of your CV and Covering Letter and the job description to your appointment.

Traditional or Chronological CV (2 pages Recommended)

NAME

Contact Details can include
Address, email, mobile phone number (***** *****),
LinkedIn and/or other relevant online presence

Education / Education and Qualifications

Dates from – to, University of Leeds, Title of Degree, Grade (actual or expected)

Include modules if they are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Year in Industry – Title of Degree (Industry)

Study abroad – Title of Degree (International) Details of relevant modules studied.

Dates from – to, Name of School / College

A Levels (or equivalent) – Subject (grade), Subject (grade), Subject (grade).

GCSEs (or equivalent) – e.g. 10 GCSEs grade A*-C (including Mathematics and English).

Technical Skills/Lab Skills (Optional)

Engineering / STEM degrees may find this section useful to highlight technical skills. Boxes are allowed for this section.

Relevant Experience (Optional)

If you have relevant experience for the position you are applying for and want to attract employer's attention to this, then you can separate this out and put it first.

Project Work (Optional)

Projects carried out as part of degree - research projects, group projects, group tasks and presentations may be relevant to some applications to demonstrate specific technical knowledge for example. Adapt the title of this section to be relevant to your sector e.g. if studying a Marketing degree and applying for a marketing role, this could be called 'Marketing Projects'.

Use bullet points:

- What was the project?
- Who did you work with & what was the aim?
- What did you do? (duties) – start with action verb (see Action Verbs List).

Skills developed: Identify skills which are relevant to the job description e.g. Communication, problem-solving.

Work History

This can be placements, internships, work experience, paid employment, voluntary work and extra-curricular experience. Start with examples which are directly related to the job for which you are applying.

Date from - to, Job Title, Company, Location

What did you do? Start with action verb (see Action Verbs List) and quantify your answers if applicable. What was the result? Did you receive positive feedback from colleagues / clients? What impact did you make?

Skills developed: give examples which illustrate the skills required for the job.

Voluntary Work (Optional)

If you have a relevant work experience section, you may want a separate voluntary work experience section rather than including it all under Work History.

Additional Skills

Language (level) e.g. French (Intermediate), German (basic).

IT skills – Outlook, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SPSS, Facebook, Twitter.

Full UK Clean Driving Licence (if requested in the job description).

Positions of Responsibility (Optional)

Positions within the last three years ideally.

Interests and Achievements

Add any activities you do in your spare time with some detail e.g.

Running – ran Race for Life (2017), raising £230 for Cancer charities.

Member of University of Leeds Symphony Orchestra, demonstrating commitment through weekly rehearsals and monthly concerts.

References Name, email address and telephone number of personal tutor and a work related referee or write “References available upon request” if you don’t have the space. Make sure you ask permission first.

Use the full two pages.

Example of a two page traditional CV

Jo Blogowski

19 East Avenue, Northtown, NT4 7PL
07700 000777 j.blogowski@leeds.ac.uk
Linkedin [jo blogowski](#)

Education and Qualifications

2015 - 2019 BA Geography, University of Leeds, Predicted 1st Class degree

Modules: Helsinki: urban growth and sustainability; The Making of the Modern City; Living within limits: natural resource management for sustainable development.

Represented the views of peers at staff student meetings as Course rep for two years.

2012 - 2014 Northtown High School, Northtown

A-levels: Geography (A*), Economics (A), Psychology (A)

GCSEs: 10 GCSEs at grades A*- B (including English and Mathematics)

Work History

January 2018 - July 2018 Project Assistant, Netherlands Floating Communities, Alkmaar

- Collaborated with Dutch Floating Communities to examine sustaining populations on water.
- Influenced stakeholders at community meetings and liaised with authorities.
- Interpreted complex data, producing monthly reports on findings for stakeholders.
- Presented results to 300 members of Floating Communities Parliamentary Task Force, gaining support for further expansion of the model.

September 2017 - December 2017 Project Assistant, Greening the City, Leeds City Council

- Analysed data on urban air quality and temperature hotspots in relation to providing green amenity space to improve climactic conditions in urban centres.
- Researched, gathered and collated data on vertical gardens to green the landscape and output from hydroponic methods for sustainable food production in urban spaces.
- Devised solutions to reducing air pollution in city centre using greening techniques.
- Presented findings to 150 members of Leeds City Council with the council voting in favour of adopting recommended measures.

September 2014 - July 2015 Project Assistant, Custom Build Homes, Northtown

- Coordinated internal and external projects including the sales and marketing processes for a number of custom build developments.
- Consulted on development to make custom building capable of being scaled.
- Recommended custom build development opportunities to the market.
- Focused on the delivery of the new Custom Build Developer Portal and Directory, generating increased traffic to the website and enabling over 100 new homes to be built.

Additional Work History

2012 - 2014 Barista, The Corner Coffee Shop, Northtown

- Delivered excellent customer service in fast-paced environment.
- Managed counters and café, working in a team of three to meet targets.
- Organised the replenishment of stock, staff rotas and training schedules.
- Reconciled the cash taken at the end of each shift which involved over £1000 a day.

Additional Skills

Language skills:

- English (fluent), Polish (fluent), German (fluent), Russian (basic).

IT skills:

- Proficient in MS Office packages, including Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Facebook, Twitter.
- Familiar with SPSS, GIS, ArcGIS, Promap.

Full UK Clean Driving Licence held for three years.

Interests and Achievements

- Led a team of four on a five day expedition using map-reading and compass skills to gain Duke of Edinburgh Gold award.
- Running – ran three half-marathons raising over £2000 supporting three different cancer charities.
- Volunteered twice weekly for two years in the Sustainable Gardening Group at the University of Leeds.

References Available on Request

One Page CV

NAME

Contact Details can include
Address, email, mobile phone number (***** *****),
LinkedIn and/or other relevant online presence

Education

Dates from – to, University of Leeds, Title of Degree, Grade (actual or expected)

Include modules if they are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Year in Industry – Title of Degree (Industry)

Study abroad – Title of Degree (International) Details of relevant modules studied.

Dates from – to, Name of School / College

A Levels (or equivalent) – Subject (grade), Subject (grade), Subject (grade).

GCSEs (or equivalent) – e.g. 10 GCSEs grade A*-C (including Mathematics and English).

Relevant Skills / Relevant Work History (Optional)

You may want to highlight relevant experiences above your work history so that it is easy for the employer to immediately see what you have you to offer.

Work History

This can be placements, internships, work experience, paid employment, voluntary work, university projects and extra-curricular experience. Start with examples which are directly related to the job for which you are applying.

Date – Date, Job Title, Company, Location

What did you do? Start with action verb (see Action Verbs List) and use metrics if applicable.

What was the result? Did you receive positive feedback from colleagues / clients? What impact did you make?

Skills developed: give examples which illustrate the skills required for the job.

Interests and Achievements

Add any activities you do in your spare time with context e.g.

Running – ran Race for Life, raising £230 for Cancer charities.

Member of University of Leeds Symphony Orchestra, demonstrating commitment through weekly rehearsals and monthly concerts.

References

Name, email address and telephone number of personal tutor and a work related referee or write “References available upon request” if you don’t have the space. Make sure you ask permission first.

Tyler Jackson

07312 345215 t.jackson@leeds.ac.uk

123 Gold Street, Liverpool, L43 2AB

Education

2017 – Present, University of Leeds, BA (Hons) Management, 2:1 (expected grade)

Placement Year: Finished a Placement Year at IBM.

2015 – 2017, Circle Lane Sixth Form, Liverpool

A-Levels: Business Studies (AA), Politics (A)

2010 – 2015, Circle Lane High School, Liverpool

GCSE's: 9 GCSEs grade A*-C (including Mathematics and English).

Relevant Work History

2019 – Present, Treasurer of the LUU Badminton Society, Leeds, Leeds University Union (LUU)

- Organising weekly and monthly fixtures both internally between members and externally with other university badminton teams
- Recruiting new members through social media drives, ensuring social media content is kept up to date in order to attract new members
- Compiling any budget requests and finalising paperwork for events/trips in order to compete in competitions

Skills Developed: Working under pressure, handling data, utilising social media, Microsoft Excel skills

2018 – Present, Volunteer Support Worker, Leeds, Age UK

- Undertake visits to service user homes to help with daily tasks
- Carried out food shopping trips for service users
- Developed an ability to support service users with completing relevant application forms for transport and finances
- Collaborated with other Support Workers in training programmes and undertaking further qualifications to up-skill knowledge and experience in the workplace

Skills Developed: Communication skills, resilience, time-management, handling multiple tasks

Interests and Achievements

- Member of the University of Leeds Tennis and Squash Societies, competing in regular local, national and international tournaments. Selected to play for the University team in a recent International event in Barcelona for the University Squash team. As a team, achieved a silver medal position
- Active member of University RAG society
- Active member of the University Psychology Society as well as an active member of the British Society of Psychologists, where I read up to date news and journal articles related to the latest research in the Psychology field

References – Available on request

Sept 2019

Skills-based CV

NAME

Contact Details can include

Address, email, mobile phone number (***** ***),
LinkedIn and/or other relevant online presence

Education

Dates from – to, University of Leeds, Title of Degree, Grade (actual or expected)

Include modules if they are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Year in Industry – Title of Degree (Industry)

Study abroad – Title of Degree (International) Details of relevant modules studied.

Dates from – to, Name of School / College

A Levels (or equivalent) – Subject (grade), Subject (grade), Subject (grade).

GCSEs (or equivalent) – e.g. 10 GCSEs grade A*-C (including Mathematics and English).

Relevant Skills

Use this section to highlight how you meet the essential criteria for the job. Use skills from the essential criteria as headings with specific examples to demonstrate this skill. Draw examples from your degree, projects & presentations, paid work, placements, internships, extra-curricular activity, voluntary work. Start each example with an action verb (see Action Verb list). No more than 2/3 lines per bullet point.

E.g. Communication

- Presented to 150 delegates at House of Commons as a representative of Asthma UK, proposing solutions to poor air quality in UK.
- Led talks and tours to groups of 10 students around campus on open days, answering enquiries and promoting university courses and services.

Organisation & Time Management

- Liaised with venue to organise 'Strictly Come Dancing' event as Vice-President of the Latin & Ballroom society, attracting 100 students to try dancing for the first time.
- Updated records of students and employers in Campus Internship, adhering to GDPR regulations when inputting data into spreadsheets and databases.

Additional Skills

Language (level) e.g. French (Intermediate), German (basic).

IT skills – Outlook, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SPSS, Facebook, Twitter.

Full UK Clean Driving Licence (if requested in the job description).

Work History

A summary of experience including job title and brief duties if relevant.

July 2017 – June 2018 University of Leeds, Student Ambassador

Oct 2016 - June 2017 Asthma UK, Leeds, Volunteer Outreach Assistant

May 2015 – June 2018 Laura's Café, Harrogate, Retail Assistant

Interests and Achievements

Add any activities you do in your spare time with some detail e.g.

Running – ran Race for Life, raising £230 for Cancer charities.

Member of University of Leeds Symphony Orchestra, demonstrating commitment through weekly rehearsals and monthly concerts.

References

Name, email address and telephone number of personal tutor and a work related referee or write

"References available upon request" if you don't have the space. Make sure you ask permission first.

Davinaia Tobias
123 Red Street, Leeds
LS99 1AB
07865 457890
dtobias@leeds.ac.uk

Education

2018 – Present, University of Leeds, Social Work, expected: 2:1

Relevant Modules: Child and Family Studies (71%), Introduction to Psychology (63%). Adult Social Work Practices (67%)

2016 – 2018, Red Lane College

A-Levels: Psychology (A), Health and Social Care (BB), Media Studies (B)

2011 – 2016, Low Street High School

GCSEs: 10 GCSEs at A-C including English Literature, English Language and Mathematics

Relevant Skills

Communication

- Developed my ability to verbally engage with a wide variety of customers during my employment at Marks and Spencer's. In this role, I would often help customers to locate products when working on the shop-floor, interacting with customers on the till point, as well as checking stock levels with the deliveries team.
- Displayed tact and diplomacy when dealing with customer queries regarding refunds and returns which often meant I would verbally convey clearly and concisely with customers to allow a satisfactory outcome was reached.
- Display excellent verbal communication skills when dealing with internal and external stakeholders.

Teamwork

- Liaised with my other team members to make sure food orders were sent out to guests on time during my Food and Beverage Assistant role at Leeds United.
- Supervised various shifts, delegated tasks, supported other team members to carry out table orders and also collaborated with other team members when dealing with incoming customer requests.

Leadership Skills

- Trained four new member of staff when working at Marks and Spencer, ensuring they completed a full induction programme and organised work-shadowing in order to meet the team and share best practise.
- Led a team of four peers to complete the three peak challenge. Motivated and coached when faced with adverse weather conditions and fatigue.

Sept 2019

Initiative

- Managed my time working at the University of Leeds Library where I would often have to work in the different libraries on a part-time basis. Remained organised when balancing my different shifts at different libraries.
- Devised a new system for shelving to ensure books are placed into the correct places and when assisting students with finding the books they require. Written feedback was received from students praising the new approach.

Additional Skills

Languages: Spanish (Intermediate), Portuguese (Intermediate), French (Basic)

First Aid at Work (2018) – Valid for 3 Years

Work History

October 2018 – Present,	University of Leeds, Library Assistant
June 2017 – August 2018,	Marks and Spencer's, Leeds, Customer Service Assistant
October 2016 – June 2017,	Elland Road, Leeds United Football Club, Leeds, Food and Beverage Assistant
June 2016 – September 2016,	Age UK, Leeds, Volunteer in local charity shop

Interests and Achievements

- Running - achieved a personal best time in my second half marathon in Leeds.
- Table Tennis - Attained 1st in the West Yorkshire Regional Tournament in December 2018. Currently play for the University of Leeds first team.
- Charity fund raising - Accomplished three peaks challenge in 2018, raising £2400 for Teenage Cancer Trust.

References

Sohni Abass
Gym Instructor
Exercise Easy Gym
s.abass@leeds.ac.uk

Ny Yang
University Lecturer
University of Leeds
n.yang@leeds.ac.uk

Cover Letters

Your Address
Postcode
Date

Employer Name
Employer Address
Employer Postcode

Dear (named individual or Sir/Madam)

Title of job, as advertised

Paragraph 1

Introduce yourself and why you are writing. Make it clear which position you are applying for and where you saw the advertisement.

Paragraph 2

This paragraph is a summary of why you are a suitable candidate for the role and why are you interested in the job. Pick highlights from your CV which illustrate the relevant skills and experience you have for the role, refer to the job specification's essential and desirable criteria. Emphasise what you can do for the company, rather than what they can do for you.

Paragraph 3

Why do you want to work for this specific company?

Show your research – what are the company values and how do you fit in with them?

What projects / developments are they doing which interest you? Have you met / talked to anyone from the company? E.g. at a fair or otherwise? Worth mentioning this and use it to support/ explain your interest in the organisation

Paragraph 4

This is a positive conclusion to your cover letter. This could be - I am available for interview at your convenience and look forward to discussing my application with you at interview.

Yours sincerely or faithfully,
(sincerely if you addressed a named individual, faithfully if used Sir/Madam)

Your name

58 Green Street
Leeds
LS36 9LP
3rd August 2019

Ms H Holger (Head of Admissions)
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT

Dear Ms Holger,

I am writing to apply for the position of Contextual Admissions Administrator at the University of Leeds as advertised on www.jobs.ac.uk. I have recently completed a BA in Modern History, graduating with a 2:1. Throughout my studies I worked part-time as a Student Ambassador for the university, which confirmed my desire to find a permanent role in the higher education sector.

My Student Ambassador role enabled me to develop strong interpersonal skills through interacting with prospective students and their families on a regular basis. For many of these students, I was their first point of contact with the university, which highlighted to me the importance of appearing professional, but also friendly and approachable. One of my strengths is being able to develop an easy rapport with a diverse range of people, a skill I also demonstrated when previously employed at a busy restaurant chain in Manchester, where I frequently dealt with customers of varying nationalities. My communication skills were further enhanced through developing and delivering presentations as part of my degree course, ensuring that both the content and style of delivery were appropriate to the audience.

I also possess excellent organisational and time management skills. My degree course required me to work on a number of assignments simultaneously whilst also working part-time. In order to ensure that all deadlines were met I produced a timetable, allocating time to each assignment and prioritising those with earlier due dates. Whilst on my placement year in a busy office environment at Leeds City Council I also used my Outlook calendar to manage my time effectively by setting up task lists and reminders, as well as creating sub-folders in my inbox to file my emails, making messages requiring follow-up easier to access.

I am particularly excited by the prospect of working at the University of Leeds due to its focus on widening participation through the Access to Leeds and Raising Opportunities schemes. Helping students from all backgrounds to gain access to higher education is a strong motivation for me; I was the first member of my family to go to university and am very keen to encourage and assist others in a similar situation. I would greatly appreciate the chance to join the Admissions Team and be involved in delivering this important service.

I am available for interview at your convenience and would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss my application further.

Yours sincerely,
Nial Ireli

Sept 2019

Action Verbs List

Management/ Leadership Skills

administered
analysed
appointed
approved
assigned
attained
authorised
chaired
considered
consolidated
contracted
controlled
converted
coordinated
decided
delegated
developed
directed
eliminated
emphasised
enforced
enhanced
established
executed
generated
handled
headed
hired
hosted
improved
incorporated
increased
initiated
inspected
instituted
led
managed
merged
motivated
organised
originated
overhauled
oversaw
planned
presided
prioritised
produced
recommended
reorganised
replaced
restored
reviewed
scheduled streamlined
strengthened

supervised
terminated

Communication/ People Skills

addressed
advertised
arbitrated
arranged
articulated
authored
clarified
collaborated
communicated
composed
condensed
conferred
consulted
contacted
conveyed
convinced
corresponded
debated
defined
described
developed
directed
discussed
drafted
edited
elicited
enlisted
explained
expressed
formulated
furnished
incorporated
influenced
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
involved
joined
judged
lectured
listened
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
outlined
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted

proposed
publicised
reconciled
recruited
referred
reinforced
reported
resolved
responded
solicited
specified
spoke
suggested
summarised
synthesised
translated
wrote

Research Skills

analysed
clarified
collected compared
conducted
critiqued
detected
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
explored
extracted
formulated
gathered
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
invented
investigated
located
measured
organised
researched
searched
solved
summarised
surveyed
systematised
tested

Technical Skills

adapted
assembled
built
calculated

computed
conserved
constructed
converted
debugged
designed
determined
developed
engineered
fabricated
fortified
installed
maintained
operated
overhauled
printed
programmed
rectified
regulated
remodelled
repaired
replaced
restored
solved
specialised
standardised
studied
upgraded
utilised

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
conducted
coordinated
critiqued
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
focused
guided
individualised
informed
instilled
instructed
motivated
persuaded
set goals
simulated
stimulated

Action Verbs List

taught
tested
trained
transmitted
tutored

Financial/ Data Skills

administered
adjusted
allocated
analysed
appraised
assessed
audited
balanced
calculated
computed
conserved
corrected
determined
developed
estimated
forecasted
managed
marketed
measured
planned
programmed
projected
reconciled
reduced
researched
retrieved

Creative skills

acted
adapted
began
combined
conceptualised
condensed
created
customised
designed

developed
directed
displayed
drew
entertained
established
fashioned
formulated
founded
illustrated
initiated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
modelled
modified
originated
performed
photographd
planned
revised
revitalised
shaped
solved

Helping skills

adapted
advocated
aided
answered
arranged
assessed
assisted
cared for
clarified
coached
collaborated
contributed
cooperated
counselled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
encouraged

ensured
expedited
facilitated
familiarize
furthered
guided
helped
insured
intervened
motivated
provided
referred
rehabilitated
presented
resolved
simplified
supplied
supported
volunteered

Organisation/ Detail Skills

approved
arranged
catalogued
categorized
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled
corresponded
distributed
executed
filed
generated
implemented
incorporated
inspected
logged
maintained
monitored
obtained
operated
ordered

organised
prepared
processed
provided
purchased
recorded
registered
reserved
responded
reviewed
routed
scheduled
screened
set up
submitted
supplied
standardised
systematised
updated
validated
verified

More verbs for Accomplishments

achieved
completed
expanded
exceeded
improved
pioneered
reduced (losses)
resolved (issues)
restored
spearheaded
succeeded
surpassed
transformed
won

