

Create your CV and Cover Letter



STEP 2


**Careers &
Employability**
University of Lincoln





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) 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 Verdana or Arial instead of Comic Sans. Font size 11 is ideal, anything smaller can be difficult to read.

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.

Horizontal rules, 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?

We recommend doing this before you visit us with your CV in the Careers and Employability Centre.

CV Builder
Follow the 'Career Planning' button on Blackboard's 'My Careers' tab to find our CV Builder tool

Book a CV Workshop
Find our CV workshops on our website:
www.uolcareers.co.uk

Writing your CV

What to include

Title

Have you included your address, 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

29 Dibinsdale Road, Liverpool, L63 9JX | Home Tel:0151 335 1768 | Mobile Tel: 07846 614322
Email: readley@mail.com | LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>

A University of Lincoln final year Biology student demonstrating high performance in both academic studies and practical laboratory skills. Keen to use excellent analytical and research skills, including significant experience of electrophoresis and Western blotting, in a leading scientific research firm.

Education

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN, 2017-2019

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

Vale Academy, 2010-2017

- A Levels: Biology (A), Chemistry (C), Mathematics (C)
- 9 GCSEs grade A*-B, including Maths and English

Employment History

Placement Student, Chemical and Biological Researcher Unilever June 2018- Sept 2018

- 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
- Effective project management skills developed through independent laboratory work

Woolworths PLC, Birkenhead- General Sales Assistant, July 2016- September 2016

- Assisted customers and re-stocked shelves; responsible for the toy section
- Developed people skills and teamwork through serving customers
- Working long shifts, often under pressure whilst accurately dealing with transactions

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

Work Experience

University of Lincoln Entertainment Officer, Sept 2018- June 2019

Member of an 8 person committee with responsibility for entertainment.

- Developed planning skills: organised fortnightly nights out, culminating in the summer ball
- Reached targets: managed a small entertainment budget increased event revenue by 12% on previous years

Volunteer English Teacher, Belgium, June-September 2017

Teaching English to children aged 8-13 at a summer camp

- Developed communication skills, with class sizes varying from 10 to 50
- Developed team work skills, part of a large multicultural team
- Researched and developed teaching material to suit the diverse needs of pupils

Key Skills

Laboratory Skills

- Preparation and identification of nucleic acids by gel filtration
- Molecular modelling and computer analysis of data
- Use of SPSS for data interpretation and statistical analysis
- Plasmid extraction; purification and DNA strand proliferation by PCR

Communication

- Excellent oral and written communication, presenting papers through academic study
- Presentations delivered to group seminars

IT

- Competent Microsoft Office user, experience with statistical packages

Teamwork

- Experience of working in different teams and in different team roles both academically at university and as part of the University's netball team
- Noted for enthusiasm and ability to encourage others and keep the team focused.

Full clean driving licence

Hobbies and interests

Enjoys playing the trombone as part of a local jazz band.

References available on request

Writing a Part-Time CV

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 below. Note that it still follows a chronological order.

Superquick CV Checklist

- Have you used appropriate headings and a logical structure?
- Does it fit onto two pages? (unless it is an academic or short part-time CV)
- 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?

Rachael Smith

123 Chesterfield Road, Lincoln LN8 AB | Home tel: 0114 123 4567 | Mobile tel: 079991234567|
Email: rachaelsmith@email.com | LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>

Self-motivated and hardworking individual with good organisational and IT skills. Reliable and punctual, seeking part-time work in an administration role.

IT Skills

- ECDL course passed in 2014
- Keyboard skills - touch typing 80wpm
- Experienced user of MS Word, including Excel, Access and PowerPoint

Employment History

2018 (ongoing) The Handbag and Parrot, Lincoln - Bar Person

- Served customers in busy city centre bar
- Maintained a friendly manner even when working under pressure at busy times
- Frequently responsible for cashing up which involved strong attention to detail

2018 Debenhams, Retail Assistant

- Summer job in busy city centre store
- Responsible for maintaining stock in section of produce department
- Handling customer queries and complaints, always dealt with in a calm and tactful manner
- Dealing with telephone enquiries regarding orders and enquiries

Additional Experience

2018 - 2019 Member of Staff Student Liaison Committee for Psychology

- Meeting with academic staff twice a term
- Emailing students to find out about academic concerns
- Tact, diplomacy, negotiating skills used in resolving problems between students and staff

2018 (ongoing) Social Secretary for the Dance Society

- Developed organisational skills, planning several successful events for a club of 100 members

Key Skills

- **Communication:** Developed through presentation delivery on my course and interaction with staff, students and customers in my employed and voluntary roles.
- **Time management:** I have balanced the needs of my studies, and have never missed a deadline and attained high marks, whilst holding down a regular part-time job.
- **Team work:** In my part-time job, it is essential that we work well together to ensure that customers are served quickly and correctly.

Education

2018-Present University of Lincoln, BA (Hons) Psychology

2011-2018 St Andrew's High School, Chester

A levels: Maths (B), Chemistry (B), Physics (B)

GCSEs: 9 subjects (all A*-B) inc. English and Maths

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.

Cover Letter Builder

Follow the 'Career Planning'
button on Blackboard's 'My
Careers' tab to find our
Cover Letter Builder tool

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 have a named contact, you are able to follow-up with a telephone call or email to exactly the right person. Research the company in order to gain a contact, whether it be on the company website, telephoning their switchboard or asking their 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 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

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

If you use 'Dear Sir/Madam' – you should conclude 'Yours faithfully'.

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 (including the one you will find on the Cover Letter Builder on Blackboard) 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:
www.prospects.ac.uk/links/disability
- 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 2018

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

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 recently spoke with one of your employees at the University of Lincoln careers fair.

2 I am extremely enthusiastic about working for 123AccountingFinance. I would love to work within such a fast paced organisation that works on a global level such as your company. I also want to make a difference to people's lives, an ethos at the core of 123AccountingFinance's mission. Being able to work in a financial company which assists its clients to be efficient with their finances and achieve sustainable outcomes are my guiding principles for choosing an employer.

3 I am looking to gain my first steps in accounting and receive the highest standard of training to complete my accounting qualifications. The varied nature of the role is what interests me, the opportunity to work within the different areas of Tax, Consulting and Transactions so I can fully understand the opportunities available to me upon completion of my accounting training.

4 The foundation of knowledge I have gained from studying Business and Finance will help me greatly. From my work with the Banking, Investment and Trading society at the University of Lincoln I have developed the analytical ability, methodical approach and problem-solving skills that would be essential for this graduate scheme. My previous experience in a retail environment providing excellent service to customers will be transferrable when working with different types of clients from global companies to individuals. This is also confirmed through my work with Dejuner Accounting where I maintained a client base demonstrating I have the interpersonal skills to work with clients.

5 As I have now graduated from the University of Lincoln I am available to start with 123AccountingFinance in September on the three year contract that is being offered. Thank you very much for your time and consideration - I look forward to discussing my application further with you.

6 Yours sincerely,
Johnathan Patch

Try 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/equality-and-diversity>
- University of Lincoln Careers and 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

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- <https://lincolnsu.com/advice/welfare>
- Citizens Advice- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)- <https://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

CV Resources

www.prospects.ac.uk/links/examplecv

www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-cvs

Cover Letter Resources

www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters

www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-cvs/271393-covering-letter-essentials-for-graduate-vacancies

You can also use the CV and Cover Letter Builder tools, found in the Careers Tools in the My Careers tab of your Blackboard.

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 1-4 pm and is a drop-in session.
- **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
- **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
- **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. Full details can be found here; <https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/onlinelearning/> . We also provide many other online Career Tools. More information can be seen here; <https://uolcareers.co.uk/students-graduates/career-tools/>

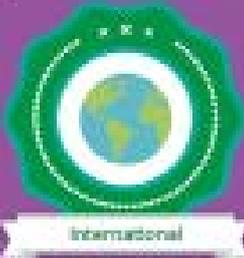


Careers & Employability Centre
Ground Floor, Library
Mon-Fri: 09:00-16:30
T: +44 (0) 1522 83 7828
E: careers@lincoln.ac.uk

www.uolcareers.co.uk
www.facebook.com/UOLCareers
www.twitter.com/UOLCareers



WHAT WE OFFER



International



Careers Information



CareerLink



Careers Clinic



Careers Jobs



The Lincoln Award



Graduate Jobs



Group Advice Sessions



Careers Guidance

The Careers & Employability Centre is open

09:00 - 16:30, Mon - Fri

Telephone: 01522 837828

Email: careers@lincoln.ac.uk

Web: www.uolcareers.co.uk