

SEO LONDON CAREERS PROGRAMME CV GUIDE

The aim of your CV

Your CV is an opportunity to sell yourself to a prospective employer in one page. It is the first contact employers will have with you and it is important you make a very good first impression. You can view your CV as a key to the first door of the valuable work experience / employment opportunities employers provide. If your CV is very good, you go through the door, if it isn't, the door remains shut and you lose out on a valuable opportunity. As such, your ultimate aim is to make sure your CV communicates that you are a strong and well-rounded candidate, bearing in mind that you are competing for limited spaces with many other strong candidates.

So how do you write a strong CV?

There isn't one perfect CV format, however all strong CVs have the same characteristics. Below you will find:

- Key elements of a strong CV
- Typical errors students make on their CV, which you must avoid
- Sample CVs that may be helpful when completing your own

Key elements of a strong CV

It is very important that the information you include in the sections below are true. Honesty is the best policy, as many firms will check your grades / achievements later. The ideal structure is outline below:

- 1) Education** – In this section, you give a summary of your current educational achievements, including GCSE's, AS Level and predicted A-level grades if applicable. You only need to include achieved grades, but you can include predicted grades, assuming they are high. This is also a good place to highlight any educational awards you have won e.g. best maths students, any scholarships, etc.

You can also include percentages of results if particularly high. For example if you got an A* and your result was 95%, indicating the result shows that although it was an A* it was very high. This isn't mandatory, but for particularly high grades, it can help give your CV an extra boost.

In the sample CVs below we show examples of how to include your grades in the education section.

You also need to include years of study at each college. Start with the most recent and work backwards (reverse chronological order).

- 2) Professional Experience or project work** – This is where you highlight any work experience you have and the relevant skills gained. This is your chance to showcase attributes, skills and experiences that make you stand out as a candidate. In addition to formal work experience (if applicable), you can also include other projects you have worked on and made a significant contribution e.g. charity endeavours like fund raising etc. Ensure the examples used are active rather than passive (e.g. "participated" sounds stronger than "attended")

The skills gained should be relevant for employers. In particular they are looking for examples which demonstrate some or all of the following:

1. Your sales and/or customer facing skills;
2. Your ability to work effectively in a team or leading one;
3. Your attention to detail, problem solving or research skills; and
4. Your impact (what you did that made a difference to the project or work)
5. Any technical skills (e.g. modelling, participation in trading games or stock pitches etc..) acquired through previous work experience / internships / insight days

You should highlight achievements you have received in relation to your work experience e.g. employee of the month or perhaps you exceeded your targets at work or in a project as mentioned above. Any competitions won during participation in insight days / internships

- 3) Interests and achievements** – Your CV isn't only about showing your professional work experience, it is also an opportunity to tell employers about your interests and achievement in and out of your academics. Examples of interests include, travelling, drama, sports, music (piano, drums), dance, charity volunteering etc. Achievements can include Young enterprise winner, Captain of sports team or other leadership roles, sports awards, Duke of Edinburgh Awards etc.

Please note that the list above isn't an exhaustive list, you may have other interests and awards which you can include. But remember, you always have to ask what the value in including any information is. Your aim is to include information that adds to your credibility as a strong candidate.

- 4) Skills** – Although you have highlighted some skills in the work experience section above, this section allows you to highlight skills that are unique to you. For example, languages, computer skills, music/instruments, sports etc. Remember only put down languages you are comfortable speaking in at the interview should this opportunity arise

In the sample CVs below, you will find examples of how you can show each section in your CV.

Typical errors students make on their CV, which you must avoid

There are three main errors to avoid when writing your CV; spelling errors, poor grammar (using the wrong tense) and inconsistent formatting.

- 1) Spelling errors** – it is quite simple, don't make any spelling errors. The recruiter's view is this – if you can't be bothered to make sure your CV is error free, they can't be bothered to process your application and give you a chance. Make sure you use spell check and ensure your CV contains no errors at all. Also, please do not write in short hand or text language. You are using your CV to communicate with a potential employer and not a friend.

In addition, it is important you read your CV carefully to make sure you haven't omitted any words. For example, I am good team player; as opposed to I am a good team player.

Also ensure your language is set to English (UK) not English (US) to avoid using 'z' where an 's' should be used i.e. personalise not personalize.

- 2) Grammar (tense)** – Ensure you use the correct tense when you write your CV and be consistent. Consistent tenses e.g. WRONG: "I am part of a team of five, providing assistance when needed" CORRECT: I am part of a team of five and provide assistance when needed." OR "My role involved being part of a team of five and providing assistance when needed."

Try to avoid writing CVs in the third person, but at the same time, you don't have to keep saying "I achieved, I undertook, I participated". You can cut it to saying "Achieved employee of the month award, Undertook various task involving..., Participated in a 5k team run, etc".

- 3) Formatting** – You need to ensure that your formatting is consistent. Similar to spelling errors, you come across as sloppy and not keen if your formatting is inconsistent. For example, you don't want to use ARIAL font in one part of your CV and TIMES NEW ROMAN in another section. Similarly, you don't want a size 12 font in one section and size 10 font in another section.

Regarding fonts, you want to use either Arial or Times New Roman or Calibri (body), although most people use Arial. Your font size should not be less than 10 and no bigger than 12.

If you choose to make headings bold, do this all the way through your CV. If you choose to use full stops at the end of every sentence, do this all the way through. Be consistent.

Also, make sure you use capital letters to start nouns. You'll be surprised how many students are happy to write 'yellow elementary school, Birmingham' as opposed to 'Yellow Elementary School, Birmingham'.

Emails – Make sure your email is professional if it isn't already. The best approach is firstname.lastname@xmail.com e.g. jason.jones@hotmail.com or firstname@xmail.com e.g. jason@hotmail.com. A playful email address like funkydude@hotmail.com will make you come across as unserious and won't be looked upon favourably.

Make sense test – Most of the mistakes students make is as a result of not reading through their CV once they have finished writing it. When you have finished with your CV, leave it for some time, print it off and then read over it again. As you read through it ask yourself:

- Does it make sense overall?
- Are there any spelling errors or omitted words?
- Is the formatting consistent (font and font size)?
- Does this give me the best ever representation I can have with employers?

SAMPLE CVs

The structure of your CV is very important, it needs to be simple, easy to read and concise. Below you will find 3 sample CVs to give you an idea of what your CV should look like. You can adopt any of these layouts if you wish.

Other general advice/reminder on your CVs is below, please ensure you read and reflect to the extent possible:

- No full stops after bullet points
- Under university education, please include ACHIEVED overall 1st year grades (and 2nd year if applicable) if 2.1 and above, otherwise, include predicted grades and examples of core modules where you have achieved particularly high grades
- Include as much information on your roles and responsibilities during your various work experiences. Try to use buzzwords like managed, led a team of [5, 10, 90, 200], learnt, efficiently, effectively, demonstrated, developed, generated, negotiated, presented, handled, executed etc. but only where appropriate. Also, expand on any positions of responsibility to showcase your particular role, involvement and value added to the team to date e.g. society committee members, voluntary work etc.
- If you do not have much financial experience, be sure to demonstrate your interest in finance in other ways such as reading, activities, societies etc particularly for students studying non-finance related degree subjects. **BE SURE TO JOIN A SOCIETY IN SEPTEMBER!**
- Ensure that any detail on your work experiences is clear, concise and sells you as a candidate. It should also be as relevant to the role that you are applying for so you should use key words to highlight the skills that you learnt from it and those that you think would be relevant to the business area that you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for Sales and worked at Boots, you may want to include a line that says something about “communicated with customers....”, “dealt with customers...” etc.
- If you have any scholarships, awards, or top marks from previous exams be sure to highlight this on your CV, if possible, in bold
- Finally, do not lie. You will typically get caught out even if you make it through to the interview stages!
- Remember, your CV is being screened alongside thousands of other CVs so the question you should ask yourself is “What have I done that is different?”, “what can make me stand out”. Particularly for candidates with limited experience in finance, any international languages, teaching abroad, travels, climbing Kilimanjaro, anything remotely out of the ordinary that requires a particular level or skill or tenacity is worth highlighting and emphasising on your CV.

Fayek Soor Nayim

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EDUCATION

University College London September 2011 – Present
MEng Mechanical Engineering
Achieved grade in first year: 68% (Upper Second)
Predicted grade: First

Titan Sixth Form College September 2009 – June 2011
A-levels: Biology (A), Physics (A), Mathematics (A)
AS-levels: History (A)

Ashcroft High School, Luton September 2004 – June 2009
GCSEs: 5 A*s, 5 As including Maths (A*), English Language (A)

Won award for 'Overall Best Maths Student in Year 10'

WORK EXPERIENCE

Royal Bank of Canada, Capital Markets - Summer Intern (12 weeks) June 2012 – September 2012

- Increased knowledge of fixed income and equity trading systems
- Learned basics of fundamental and technical share price analysis
- Produced morning market summaries for the trading teams on a daily basis and created system to automate report creation

Primark – Retail Assistant April 2010 – April 2012

- Enhanced my interpersonal and communication skills through dealing professionally with clients. Won award for 'Best Customer Service Assistant in X'
- Increased team working abilities as I worked a various teams and always sought to ensure team goals and targets were reached
- Took initiative to suggest a better method of stocking items and it was implemented in store
- Won 'Employee of the Month' in October 2011

INTEREST AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Kings College Finance Society – Treasurer 2011 - Present
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award 2009
Captain Football Team – Year 11 2008
Enjoying travelling and have visited 5 of the 7 continents
School first team representation for Football, Basketball and Hockey

SKILLS

Languages English (fluent) and French (native)
Music Piano Grade 5
Technology Java (proficiency: Advanced/Intermediate); Python (Intermediate); C++ (Basic)
Sports Member of university football team, currently competing in national tournaments.
Voluntary work Teach Year 6 children Maths and English 1 day per week
Other Avid cook (completed two cookery courses)

References

Available on request

Maydup Nayim

4 Alias Drive, Bling Road, London NW2 3HD | +44 (0) 777 777 7777 | nayim.maydup@hotmail.com

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

King's College London

BSc Mathematics

Sep 2011 – Present

Predicted degree class: Upper Second

Achieved grade in Year 2: Upper Second

The Latymer School, London

A-levels: English [A], History [A], English Literature [A], Geography [A]

GCSEs: 10 grades A*-C including Maths [B], English Language [A]

Sep 2004 – Jun 2011

Awarded the T Scholarship for outstanding achievement through school

WORK EXPERIENCE

UBS Investment Bank, London – Spring Insight – Sales & Trading division

Apr 2012

- Experienced and developed a passion for the financial markets and how they operate
- Work shadowed the inflation linked bond desk and learnt how products are structured and traded
- Actively participated in trading games and networked with traders of the bank

Fundraiser for Cancer Research UK

Jun 2011 – Sep 2011

- Part of a team of 5 engaged in a door-to-door fund raising campaign. As a team we exceeded our weekly target consistently and by up to 25% in one week
- Increased my confidence in dealing with people and enhanced my communication skills.
- Constantly looked for better ways to connect with the public and made suggestions after each round of house visits
- Was invited to be part of a focus group to research ways to enhance fund raising methods

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Head Girl, The Latymer School, London

2010 – 2011

Latymer School Netball Team (Captain)

2009 – 2010

- Responsible for organising team building activities and maintaining motivation in the team

INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

School representative at Regional Interschool Debating Competition

2010

Weekly Volunteer at the AVE award

2009

- Youth Action Volunteer Award for achievements in the community). Volunteered for an organisation called 'Kith and Kids' which designs and facilitates a play scheme for children with learning disabilities

Annual Theatrical Production, Ticket Sales Representative

2008

- Over 800 attendees

SKILLS AND OTHER INTERESTS

English (native), German (business fluent), French (basic)

Languages

Represented school in regional netball competitions, winning the cup in 2010 and 2011

Sport

Appeared in a popular soap with Colin Firth

Drama

- By being involved in productions, had the opportunity to meet new people and enhance self-confidence

Familiar with Microsoft Office suite of applications

IT

Trained and completed a 5km charity run, raising £1000 for charity SEO London

Voluntary

REFERENCES

Available on request

Faye-K Nayim

123 Made Up Street, London W0 123 | nayim.faye-k@gmail.com | +44 (0) 098 654 3210

EDUCATION

University of Oxford, St Catherine's College
BA Politics, Philosophy & Economics

Oxford, United Kingdom
Sep 2011 - Present

First year results: Upper Second (66%)
Predicted overall result: First

Knights Sixth Form College
A-Levels: Economics [A], Politics [A], Maths [A*]
AS-Levels Geography [A]
Awarded Knights A-Level Scholarship for 2 years

London, United Kingdom
Sep 2009 – Jun 2011

Forest Secondary School
GCSE Grades – 10 A*s including Maths [A*], English Language [A*]
'Best Overall Student' in Economics Year 10

London, United Kingdom
Sep 2004 – Jun 2009

WORK EXPERIENCE

SEO First Year Fast Track
Insight into Professional Services Firms

London, United Kingdom
Dec 2011

- Attended presentations, lectures, Q&A sessions and networking sessions organised by Deloitte, E&Y, PWC and KPMG, to acquire an understanding of different divisions and roles within a professional service firm
- Worked in a team to analyse financial accounts and business plans
- Networked with industry professionals

Young Enterprise Program
Co-founder and Elected Managing Director, Yellow Star Inc

London, United Kingdom
Sep 2010 – May 2011

- Set up company specialising in personalised corporate gifts and marketing products through events
- Responsible for negotiating with suppliers, increasing my negotiating and communication skills
- Made a profit of £2,000, the most in the young enterprise programme in Greenwich
- Awarded Best Company (Greenwich) East London

HSBC Retail Bank
Work Experience

London, United Kingdom
Jul 2010 - Aug 2010

- Gained valuable insight into financial services and how a retail bank operates
- Increased attention to detail through working on spreadsheets and creating reports

INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2012 Appointed Year 12 Student representative

2011 Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award

2010 House of Commons visit - One of ten youth from school chosen to visit the House of Commons

SKILLS

Languages: Arabic (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate)

Technology: Advanced Proficiency: Java, Python, C++

Sports: Represented Forest rugby team in interschool competitions, winning the cup in 2009 and 2010

Voluntary work: Raised money for Cancer Awareness in mini marathon 2010

Music: Violin Grade 8

REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

John Doe

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EDUCATION

Sep 2009 – Jun 2013 **BSc International Business and Spanish**, XYZ University
Sep 2008 – Jun 2009 **A-Levels: Business Studies (A), Mathematics (A), Spanish (B) [340 UCAS Points]** XYZ College
Sep 2000 – Jun 2008 **GCSEs: 10 A-C including Spanish (A) Mathematics (B), English Language (B)**, XYZ School

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sep 2013 – Present **INVESTMENT BANKING PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR**

at **SPONSORS FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY (SEO) - LONDON, UK**

- Manage applicant databases for SEO's banking programme
- Responsible for screening of candidates, interview scheduling and event hosting
- Regularly attend recruitment events

Jun 2013 – Aug 2013 **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & PROPOSAL WRITING - SUMMER ANALYST**

at **EITIMAAD - LONDON, UK**

- Prepared detailed business proposals, including detailed commercial and technical proposals
- Updated company data, responded to RFPs, reviewed joint venture and/or subcontract agreements
- Helped with financial budgeting, project planning and implementation
- Prepared client and internal presentations

Nov 2011 – Sep 2012 **ORGANISATION, MENTORING, COMPENSATION & BENEFITS (HR) – INTERN**

at **AMADEUS IT GROUP - MADRID, SPAIN**

- Maintained job description databases and prepared job offers, promotions, and internal transfers
- Planned, implemented, and followed-up an annual salary review for 500 employees in Madrid Head Office
- Collated data from SAP and compiled this into monthly Headcount, Salary and FTE reports
- Monitored key performance indicators for local HR department and updated organisational changes on SAP
- Supported internal coaching and mentoring scheme in the planning, implementation and evaluation phases
- Developed communication, time management and interpersonal skills

Jul 2011 – Oct 2011 **HUMAN RESOURCES INTERNAL BUSINESS PARTNER – INTERN**

at **IBM - MADRID, SPAIN**

- Provided support to internal HR business partners and regions covered include Spain, Portugal, Greece and Israel
- Managed employee databases, differentiated between high and low performers as part of the human capital redeployment strategy
- Prepared and delivered core competencies training for a group of 20 employees
- Supported the Marketing & Communications team with an internal audit (produced a handbook summarising the various stages of an audit and recommended process improvements)

Dec 2010 – Jun 2011 **DEBT COLLECTION ADVISOR**

at **HSBC - BIRMINGHAM, UK**

- Responsible for recovering bank debts by engaging with customers over telephone
- Dealt with various HSBC products in the retail market including debit cards, credit cards, and personal loans
- Developed rapport with customers, discussed repayment options and delivered solutions with an aim of customer retention
- Consistently met individual and departmental monthly targets, whilst ensuring adherence to compliance procedures
- Developed customer service, negotiation and problem solving skills

VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCE

Nov 2011 – May 2011 Associate Mentor, *Aimhigher, Birmingham*

Nov 2010 – May 2011 Student Marketer, *Graduate Promotions, Birmingham*

Feb 2010 – May 2010 Student Tutor, *XYZ School, Birmingham*

Oct 2009 – May 2010 International Business and Modern Languages Student Representative, *Birmingham*

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Aug 2011 Completed e-learning courses in HR Management, Change Management and Leadership at IBM, *Madrid*

Jul 2010 Completed TOPSIM General Management II in European Business Masters Cup, *Birmingham*

Jul 2009 – Aug 2009 Advanced Summer Spanish Course, Malaga University, *Malaga*

ACHIEVEMENTS

Aug 2013 Came 1st in a 5km charity run to raise money for disabled Afghan orphans (raised £3k), *London*

Mar 2010 / Oct 2010 Completed Half-Marathons: Adidas Silverstone (2h 9m) & EDF Energy (1h 45m), *Towcester/Birmingham*

Dec 2009 Captained 5-a-side football team, scored winning goal and promoted to First Division, *Birmingham*

SKILLS & INTERESTS

Technology Python (Business proficient) | Java (Advanced) | C++ (Intermediate)

Languages Dari/Farsi (*native*) | English (*native*) | Spanish (*fluent*)

Interests Football | Neuro Linguistic Programming | Half-Marathons | Language Exchange | TED

REFERENCES – Available on request