

CVs and covering letters: a guide for international students

As an international student, you will need to adapt your CV for the UK employment market. Here are a few tips to help you do that.

This advice should be read alongside our 'CVs and Covering Letters' handout.

General advice

- 2 pages maximum, clearly laid out in sections with headings, accurate
- target your CV to each job you are applying for. This means aligning your skills, knowledge and experiences to those needed for the job / role within a particular organisation
- in the UK, employers are particularly looking for evidence of suitable skills for the job, as well as qualifications, so make sure the balance in your CV and letter reflects this.

Personal Details

- keep these just to contact information – your name, contact address in the UK, email and mobile number
- you do not need to include date of birth, gender, marital status, health or a photo
- you can include your nationality and work visa status: eg - no work visa required – EEA national.

Academic Qualifications

- with your international qualifications, you do not need to list every module. You can just list the modules & dissertation which have relevance to the job
- include the UK equivalent for your qualifications where possible, to help a UK employer make comparisons: eg – equivalent to UK A Level standard

Employment / Work Experience

- in a UK CV, you can demonstrate your skills for work through a wide range of experiences, but they must be relevant to the job and work sector you are applying for
- you can include experiences from volunteering, working for a family business, national service and jobs overseas /in your home country
- focus on what your work duties were, who you worked with both within the organisation and clients and your level of responsibility



- work experience is an important selection criteria for UK employers, so try to get some experience through volunteering and internships whilst you are at university

Additional Information / Skills and Achievements

- a separate skills section is not necessary if you have succeeded in demonstrating skills, such as team working and leadership, through your work duties and covering letter
- do not list personal skills, such as being a good learner and hardworking
- instead, focus on languages you can speak, what level of English language you have attained
- also include what computer software you can use competently, whether you can drive in the UK, what sports or music you participate in or have participated in within the past 3 years
- you can add in evidence of adapting to other cultures and working internationally with others

Referees

- in the UK, references & testimonials are not attached to your CV, they are requested directly from your referees - usually following a job offer
- provide direct contact details, such as an email address

Covering letter

- why are you applying for the job? Write about your skills, experiences and knowledge – not your family background
- why do you want to work for that employer, in that job? Show your knowledge of the scope of their work, their ethos and aims but do not try to flatter them.

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