



Curriculum Vitae Advice

By Stephan Schmitt

Increase your employability

Amongst other things, students come to University to improve their job prospects, or their employability, a term widely used to describe the combination of skills and personal attributes that make people more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations. Employability combines three main attributes:

Employment related skills: including oral and written communication, numeracy, team working, IT, problem solving, planning & organisation, adaptability & flexibility and leadership.

Career management skills: including self-awareness, decision making, ability to exploit opportunities, presentation skills on paper and in person and commercial awareness.

Experience of a work environment: this can be gained through paid work, voluntary work, work placements or projects.

Some employability skills will be developed throughout your course of academic study, whilst others can be developed through your social and leisure interests and part time employment. The Careers Centre can help you develop your Career management skills, including how to write an effective CV.

What is a CV and when to use it?

A CV is your marketing document and opportunity to market yourself to an employer who may know nothing else about you. A CV is a summary of your experience and skills to-date that highlights your strengths and suitability for a particular job or employer. You can use it to respond to job adverts or to write speculatively to an employer you are interested in working for. It should be sent in conjunction with a covering letter, which is usually the first document the employer reads when they receive your application. Its purpose is to make a positive first impression by highlighting the most relevant parts of your experience and capabilities as included on your CV.

CV Builder

A good place to start is by looking at CV Builder on the Careers Service website

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/careers/applications> or from the Academic Tab of your Portal pages. All current undergraduate and taught postgraduate students should be enrolled and you can use it throughout your time at UEA.

CV Builder provides space to chronicle your activities and skills developed from academic work, employment and leisure time. It can act as a personal inventory of your progress at UEA and helps to translate it into the language used in CVs and applications. There are also examples of CVs and covering letters.

We recommend that you use CV Builder and then get feedback from Careers & Employability staff before you apply for a job or opportunity. You will then be giving yourself the best chance of success.



CV Essentials

Here are some points to remember when writing your CV:

- **Your unique document** A CV is your personal document and will reflect your unique combination of experience, interests and abilities. It is best to avoid CV templates for this reason, but they can be a useful starting point.
- **Targeting** Target your CV to the opportunity or organisation you are applying to – a simple list of your qualifications and work experience is not enough. Illustrate your relevant skills, experience and achievements that will interest the employer, based on the job description and your research into the organisation.
- **Prioritise** Ensure that the most relevant information is given priority. Think about what to include on the front page that will make the employer want to read on. Arrange all sections in reverse chronological order.
- **Accessibility** Recruiters rarely have sufficient time to review applications. As a rule, assume that the person reading your covering letter and CV will have no more than one minute to make decisions about the quality of your application. Keep it to 2 pages in length for a graduate CV.
- **Be positive** Avoid drawing attention to your negative points (low grades for example) or lack of experience but be prepared to talk about these at a later stage
- **Attention to detail** Avoid spelling mistakes. Get someone to check it over before sending and do not rely on computer spellcheckers alone.
- **It takes time** Allow plenty of time to put your CV together. Writing an effective CV is rarely accomplished first time; it is likely to evolve as you make more applications

Careers Advisers are available at the Careers Service to give CV feedback during 15 minute Quick Query appointments which are available daily from 11am until 4pm during term time (closed for lunch 1-2pm during vacation.) Appointments can be made on the day by phone or in person. The Careers Service can advise graduates too.

Thank you to the Careers Service who provided much of the information contained in this article.
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