

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

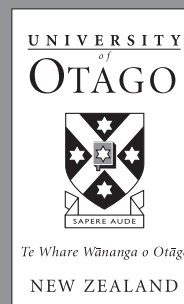
CV Information



Find graduate jobs on
OtagoCareerHub

www.otago.ac.nz/careers

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
ISB Building (NE corner – next to the Library)
Tel 03 479 8244 Email careers@otago.ac.nz



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Check out info on **OtagoCareerHub** for up-to-date career information
<http://otagocareerhub.ac.nz/careers>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This 2010 booklet is the product of handouts written by Careers Advisers over many years at the University of Otago. The current editors are Mark Cumisky, Manager, Robyn Bridges, Graduate Recruitment Co-ordinator, Yvonne Gaut, Careers Adviser and Rachel Foster, Reception/Administration. Grateful thanks to graphic artists Peter Scott, University of Otago, and Dominique O'Leary, Visual Eyes Creative.

CV PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM

GET TO GRIPS with the basics	Attend seminar – book on OtagoCareerHub View DVD in Career Development Centre View InfoSheets on OtagoCareerHub Read this CV guide
BRAINSTORM what you've got to offer	List achievements (academic & other) Work experience & skills gained Personal qualities Qualifications Interests
RESEARCH	Research the company Get job description from employer website or advertisement Check out KiwiCareers www.kiwicareers.govt.nz to get an idea of the skills required by the role
MATCH	Match your brainstorm with the employer requirements Give evidence to back your skills profile – check employer expectations in this guide Approach your referees
DRAFT	Draft CV & Cover Letter using this guide layout
REVIEW	Self Review using checklist in this guide
CHECK!	Get someone else to check your CV, spelling and layout CV checks at the Career Development Centre See details on Events section in OtagoCareerHub

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN MY CV – ESSENTIAL

CONTACT DETAILS

- Small font, discreet, avoid unnecessary details such as date of birth (unless asked for)

QUALIFICATIONS/EDUCATION

- List most recent first
- If requested attach an Academic Transcript
- If you want to type your Academic record, include it at the end of your CV
- Include your highest school qualification but no need to include school subjects and grade (unless asked for)

SKILLS SECTION

- Looks really good on the first page. Pick out the most relevant aspects of the job and give examples of the skills you possess which meet employer criteria
- Use action verbs
- Highlight your dissertation or thesis
- Include community or voluntary work as well as study and paid work for evidence

WORK EXPERIENCE/EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Indicate whether full or part-time, temporary or permanent positions
- Show position title, employer's name, location, dates you were employed
- Include details of relevant duties and responsibilities
- Think value-added outcomes

INTERESTS/ACTIVITIES

- Provide some details so the reader can find out a bit more about you as a person
- Limit interests/activities to recent/current ones

REFEREES

- See page 5

LENGTH OF CV

- For New Zealand and Australian graduate CVs – aim for 2-3 pages maximum 4 pages (this does not include your academic record or transcript)
- For holiday work and part time work in NZ – 1-2 pages are all that most busy employers want to read
- For USA employers generally one page only – check out resources in the Career Development Centre to help with American resumes

CLEAN TIDY PRESENTATION

- Avoid folders
- Use paper that can be photocopied
- Avoid binding

MY CV – OPTIONAL

CAREER OBJECTIVE

- Useful if your degree does not naturally indicate the job or field for which you are applying
- A sentence about where you see your future career-wise, your goals and objectives
- Should be at the beginning to focus the CV and capture attention

WRITING YOUR OWN ACADEMIC RECORD

- Start with the most recent year
- Name papers in full – leave off codes and semesters
- List by grades or alphabetically

PROFILE /HIGHLIGHTS/PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Provides a ‘snapshot’ of you before you follow with the skills sections to give evidence, see page 19

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Use quotes sparingly from written references to provide evidence of personal qualities

ACHIEVEMENTS/AWARDS

- Put on first page if they are relevant
- For organisations that prize academic excellence include your prizes, scholarships and awards

TRAINING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Include short courses and skills development

PUBLICATIONS/CONFERENCES

- Essential for academic positions, see page 18

PHOTO

- Some employers request a photo
- If you include one make sure it shows you as a professional
- Can remind the person who you are if you’ve met previously e.g. at employer presentations

hot tip

“Qualifications and academic results are important, but employers are also interested in other aspects of your experience and character. For example, at Kensington Swan, we look favourably on team work, community involvement, work experience and responsibilities, and extracurricular achievements.”

Catherine McCabe, HR Advisor, Kensington Swan, 2010

REFEREES

One of your referees needs to be someone who can comment on what you have done in the recent past. So if you are still at university, or have recently graduated, it is usual to name one of your professors, Head of Department, lecturers, demonstrators or tutors as a referee.

The other referee should be someone who knows you well, ideally in a work capacity; an alternative is someone who has known you for a long time. It is important to choose someone who will speak positively about you.

Employers usually follow up referees to back up the opinion they have formed from your cover letter, application form, CV and job interview. Referees can also corroborate details supplied by the applicant. Sometimes employers give referees a strict checklist of items to cover in their reference, but many simply ask them to provide 'a reference'.

Remember to ask permission of your referees before including their names in your CV. Then keep them well informed about you, your career aspirations, applications and activities. Always give them a copy of your CV, covering letters and, if possible, the job description. Referee details must be correct and should normally follow the layout of a business card.

TESTIMONIALS

Sometimes people attach a letter of reference which they have been given, perhaps by a previous employer. Strictly speaking this is not a reference but a testimonial. Usually a reference is confidential between the referee and the employer. There is no harm in including a testimonial, so long as it doesn't make your application look over long, but the employer is unlikely to pay a great deal of attention to it.

If you have included a quote from a testimonial in your skills section to provide evidence, you can put "Written references available on request" after you have set out your referees.

hot tips

Use action words (in the past tense when appropriate to show you have "done" it) to convey your examples (see our list provided p11). Having the theory is great but employers are interested in how you have applied the learning

Some employers like whole paragraphs but more prefer bullets and snappy action statements

Avoid too many "ability to" statements – instead show you have done it

Take out any negative sounding words or phrases – employers prefer positive statements

Avoid words which suggest doubt "I believe I have...." "I hope..."

Try to provide results of what you did – great to include percentages, or quantify in some way

Check, check and check again for spelling & grammar errors

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS: WHAT THEY WANT AND HOW TO DELIVER

Organisations recruiting at Otago have given feedback to the Career Development Centre. They say:

- know us** Research the company by attending their presentations, checking out their website, reading their company profiles and reports, talking to people working in the company, and reading thoroughly the graduate recruitment info provided by the job description/role.
- tailor your CV** One size does not fit all. Make your CV specific to the job you are applying for. Many employers comment that the CVs they receive are not relevant to their company. Watch the cut and paste - some employers commented on reading a letter obviously written for another company whose name appeared throughout! Easy to do when you are in a hurry but just as easy to put in the bin!
- follow instructions** Do what they ask you to do. If they ask for a photo, supply one (but one which shows you as a professional, not as a party animal). If there is an application form provided which asks you to repeat what you have already included in the CV you are sending, answer the question – don't write "See CV". If you can't supply the info say why. When answering behavioural questions (e.g. "Tell us about a time when you showed initiative") tell the employer about what you did individually, not what the group did.
- express yourself accurately** Check grammar, punctuation and spelling. Mistakes create a bad impression especially if you get the company name wrong! Many employers tell us while they don't want long CVs, too brief is just as bad. It must give a picture of you and your skills, not provide the reader with a "find the missing skills" puzzle. Most employers have a zone of tolerance of 2-3 pages.
- avoid folders** Presentation is important and employers expect a professional document. Most prefer the no frills approach. However, creative jobs demand a CV that demonstrates what you can do.
- explain all** Avoid missing years in your CV and give succinct explanations for gaps.
- write to a person** It can take time to find out to whom to address the letter, but it's worthwhile. It shows you are prepared to go that bit further in what you do. This is doubly important when the job involves building relationships with clients.
- tailor your cover letter** In your cover letter tell them how you match their requirements and the benefits you would bring to the company. This is your chance to highlight your qualifications and other work experience which has provided the skills and competencies for which the employer is looking. Remember to read the job advertisement and job description carefully. Usual rule of thumb – no more than one page.
- why us** In your cover letter say why you want this particular job and why you want to work for this particular company.
- be enthusiastic** Academic study is objective and analytical. You can get so used to writing for academic requirements you can forget how to enthuse - human beings respond to some warmth. The reader of your cover letter and CV is trying to get a picture of what kind of a person you are.
- email friendly** Send your CV by email in a common file type such as Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). See Electronic/Online applications, page 17.
- sign it** We are so used to word processing documents, it's easy to overlook the signature. Again, this is not a good look if you want to be an accountant or lawyer! If emailing your letter, use a different type font (maybe in colour) for the signature.

hot tip

Many students forget the CV is their first chance to show what they can do. If you want a job as a communicator or marketer, then this is your chance! Don't tell them you have an eye for detail while your CV is full of silly mistakes. If you want an IT or a design position, think about how you can utilize the very skills you want an employer to pay you for!

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS: WHAT SKILLS ARE VALUED IN A CV

Top 10 Skills/Attributes Sought After in University Graduates

Rank	2006*	2003
1	Strong Interpersonal Skills	Strong Verbal and Interpersonal Communication Skills
2	Strong Verbal Communication Skills	Self-Motivated / Self-Management / Self-Starter
3	Strong Written Communication Skills	Team Player
4	Flexible and Adaptable "Can Do" Attitude	Sound Academic Achievement
5	Sound Academic Achievement	Analytical and Conceptual Skills
6	Self-Motivated / Self-Starter	Strong Written Communication Skills
7	Team Player	Flexible and Adaptable "Can Do" Attitude
8	Energy and Enthusiasm	Problem Solving Skills
9	Problem Solving Skills	Energy and Enthusiasm
10	Analytical and Conceptual Skills	Professional Ethics

* 2006 Graduate Recruitment Survey of Employers at Vic Career Development and Employment

Additional skills and attributes identified by employers in 2006 included:

1. Well rounded individuals – a balance of study, work and other interests
2. Social employees that get on well with others
3. Organisational skills
4. Learning agility

hot tips

"As we have seen in recent times it is getting more competitive for students to secure jobs. Therefore it is more important than ever that your CV really captures your skills and experience and helps you to stand out from the crowd. With employers like KPMG you are competing with hundreds of students from all over the country so a badly written or poorly presented CV would certainly prevent you from being short-listed. My advice? Use all the careers services resources available to help you get it right."

Richard Westney, Senior HR Manager, People, Performance & Culture, KPMG, 2010

"I find that students quite often use university jargon in their CVs. This makes perfect sense to you, but often the employer doesn't understand what you are referring to."

Debi Fitzpatrick, Human Resources, Mainfreight Ltd, 2010

"We look for a cover letter that gives a brief overview of skills and why you want this position and/or to work for this company. We are looking for a clearly set out CV that includes your academic transcript. Most importantly, remember to run a spell check and check the company name is spelt correctly."

Kelly Macknight, HR/Administration Manager, AD Instruments Ltd, 2010

IDEAS FOR RESPONDING TO SKILLS CRITERIA

1 STRONG INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal, social or soft skills determine the style of interaction you have with others as well as how you typically behave within given situations. Employers like to know that you are able to effectively interact and build relationships and networks by sharing information, demonstrating empathy, negotiating or influencing others appropriately.

evidence

Relationships with peers, co-workers, supervisors, managers, clients, patients or customers, also handle difficult customers or working relationships successfully

2 STRONG VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication includes listening, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, cooperating as a team member, solving problems, contributing in meetings and resolving conflict by communicating effectively with others.

evidence

Effective presentations to groups; interactions with customers; explaining complex ideas in a simple way; awards in public speaking; debating experience; student radio

3 STRONG WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Employers value clear writing, good grammar and correct spelling. It is especially desirable in jobs which demand an eye for detail.

evidence

Report writing; well constructed essays; ability to write a good business letter; presenting and communicating scientific results; publications; club newsletters; articles for student newspapers; conference posters

4 FLEXIBLE & ADAPTABLE – “CAN DO” ATTITUDE

Employers want people who are prepared to ‘give it a go’, who are willing to go the extra mile and are not confined by ‘it’s not in my job description’ attitude.

evidence

Times when you’ve learnt new systems; studying or working overseas particularly in very different cultures; summer jobs which required a range of skills; shift work; taking on extra responsibility; range of subjects taken (double degree can illustrate this); overcoming a personal obstacle you are prepared to mention; include your work history of holiday and part-time jobs, even though not directly relevant they show you have a work ethic

5 SOUND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Many employers ask for your academic transcript so while they are interested in your performance, they are also often looking for qualities that show a well rounded person. So don’t despair if you are not a straight A student.

evidence

Grade average; consistent performance across subjects and years; recovering from a poor year; coherent choice of papers; include your NCEA results in your qualifications section; dissertation or thesis; conference papers and posters; publications; highlight a project you or the team received a good mark for; tutoring experience; awards, scholarships and academic prizes

6 SELF-MOTIVATED, SELF-MANAGEMENT

Employers are often impressed by students who work as well as study. This means you understand the world of work and can balance university deadlines with work responsibilities.

evidence

List your work experience and highlight skills relevant to the position you are applying for; provide an example of promotion (i.e. responsibility for organizing others, or teaching newcomers in your casual job the role requirements); sole responsibility positions (i.e. being left in charge of the store in weekends); managing finances to support yourself while at university

7 TEAM PLAYER / TEAM WORK

Ability to be a co-operative, supportive, reliable and a committed team member.

evidence

Group projects with successful outcomes; customer service teams; sports; leisure activities; use words like “committed” “cooperative”; times when you took initiative to get the team back on track; voluntary work; holiday jobs

8 ENERGY & ENTHUSIASM

You can have an academic record to die for, but if you sound boring in your letter and your CV shows very few outside activities, employers may think you lack people skills and would not fit well into their team.

evidence

Convey enthusiasm for the company and the role by using positive language in your cover letter; in your skills profile section of your CV include a quote which mentions these qualities (restrict school testimonials to one quote); evidence might include your contribution to increasing sales; customers seeking you out specifically; public speaking; tort experience; extracurricular activities; peer support; residential assistant experience; club and sport activities

9 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Thinking differently to produce new solutions.

evidence

Lateral thinking i.e. looking at a problem from differing perspectives; conflict resolution in group work; case study recommendations; initiatives adopted by employer in holiday jobs; successful application of experimental method; experimental design; testing and proving hypotheses; systems design or redesign; improvements to existing methods or structures

10 ANALYTICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND RESEARCH SKILLS

Understanding, analysing, reasoning, interpreting & presenting information, & the ability to think critically.

evidence

Provide the range of research methodologies you have used; include projects, case-studies; mention the dissertation or thesis you are writing; recommendations you have made as part of course work; interpreting figures, charts, graphs, tables; critical thinking, manipulation of data and results; reporting and writing up of experiments; literature searches and reviews

Other skill areas that are often mentioned

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

A situation where the opportunity to be unethical exists but sticking to professional standards which you considered ethical.

evidence

Times when you were responsible for handling cash or cashing up; responsible tenant, trained staff, confidentiality with personal or sensitive information, resisted pressure or temptation, treasurer or other committee member, involvement with Ethical Behaviour Contact Network or standing up for others in difficult situations, residential assistance activities or involvement as a class representative

CREATIVE/INNOVATIVE

New ways of looking at things and coming up with new ideas, theories, concepts, methods and designs.

evidence

Design and innovation of new products or processes for a project or as part of your course work; creative visualising; conflict resolution in interpersonal activities; products designed; solutions to problems; case study recommendations; prizes or acknowledgement for bright ideas; school enterprise scheme

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

This is the depth or “grunt” you bring from your degree and/or experience directly related to the job requirements. In some jobs this may be IT, dentistry, marketing, accounting, genetics, chemistry, languages.

evidence

If your degree does not have a vocational focus, your technical expertise will be critical thinking, data manipulation techniques, reliable field work and data recording, writing skills, database/software skills; Provide examples of the specifics of what you have done in your course work; methodologies, tools and techniques used, software and equipment involved; practical projects especially if done for a real business

hot tip

“Your CV needs to convince an employer that your skills, experience, and personal style are relevant to the position you’re applying for.”

Catherine McCabe, HR Advisor, Kensington Swan, 2010

LEADERSHIP/INITIATIVE

Employers are looking for people who have foresight and can be proactive. Work is frequently carried out in autonomous self-directed teams so employers need people who don't require constant supervision.

evidence

Team leadership including sports; being chosen to represent a group; promotion in holiday jobs; delivering to targets; goal setting; possibly include a career objective which shows you are heading towards responsibility; include in your skills section the results of what you have achieved.

ORGANIZING/PLANNING

Employers are expecting more from fewer staff and limited resources. Being able to organise and prioritise your time is essential. Today's workplace requires multitasking.

evidence

Any projects you have taken from beginning to successful conclusion; membership of club committees; events organised; time management of study work and outside activities

COMPUTER LITERACY

Most CVs need to include this section as most work requires computer competency. If you are an IT/Computer major this section should be visible as your technical expertise. For once, you are encouraged to use jargon – to show exactly what you can do.

evidence

Highlight software and programs you have used during your studies, in holiday jobs or placements; list programs you have used (Word, Excel) and any specialist software e.g. Toniq, MYOB; include internet research; building and manipulating databases; desktop publishing, scanning and layout work; web development and maintenance

BUSINESS ACUMEN/COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

Often employers like to know you are not a novice when it comes to understanding customer service, competition, managing tight resources and have experienced (or at least understand) the pressures of running a business.

evidence

Working to sales targets; cash handling experience; reading a balance sheet; starting up or running own small business; applied project work; holiday jobs where you worked in an office; enterprise scheme at school; participation in stock market; attending business or industry specific network meetings; including a referee who is a business person; being raised in a family of entrepreneurs or small business; treasurer for clubs and societies

TREATY OF WAITANGI

Public sector, Iwi enterprises and educational organizations are very keen to find out what you know about biculturalism and Treaty obligations.

evidence

Mention papers which have covered resource implications of the Treaty; Māori language and culture papers studied; participation in bicultural awareness seminars or workshops; include *whakapapa* and/or *iwi* affiliations when appropriate

hot tips

“Double check – no, triple check your CV and Covering Letter before sending it. Make sure you don't forget to change the details in your covering letter each time you apply for a different job. You would be surprised at how many applications I receive where the applicant doesn't even get our company name or the role correct. Needless to say, these go straight into the “NO” pile.

Don't ever use text language in your CV or Covering Letter. These two documents should be some of the best documents you have ever produced. If spelling and grammar isn't your forté, get someone to proof it for you.”

Debi Fitzpatrick, Human Resources, Mainfreight Ltd, 2010

LIST OF ACTION VERBS

Achievement Skills	reduced reported retrieved revamped screened sorted specialised specified streamlined systematised tabulated transcribed typed updated utilised validated	solicited spoke supplied translated transmitted wrote	instituted integrated introduced invented learnt mapped mastered modelled operated originated performed photographed planned presented published revitalised sang styled taped wrote	cared clarified coached contributed conveyed counselled demonstrated diagnosed educated empathised engaged escorted expedited facilitated familiarised guided liaised listened mediated motivated nursed participated provided raised referred rehabilitated related represented restored restored served serviced sympathised trained understood utilised volunteered
	Communication Skills	Thinking & Cognitive Skills	Financial Skills	Leadership Skills
	addressed advertised answered arbitrated arranged authored communicated composed conducted contacted corresponded developed directed discussed disseminated drafted edited encouraged explained expressed formulated influenced interpreted lectured mediated moderated motivated narrated negotiated persuaded presented promoted proposed published recommended recruited reported	adapted applied balanced conceived conceptualised created derived developed discriminated generated improvised integrated memorised perceived recognised researched synthesized theorised updated visualised	administered allocated analysed appraised audited balanced calculated computed costed developed doubled estimated evaluated forecast managed marketed planned prepared priced programmed projected purchased reduced researched reviewed revised	arbitrated chaired confronted directed guided initiated inspired led managed mediated motivated negotiated organised recruited
Clerical or Detail Skills		Creative Skills		Helping Skills
approved arranged catalogued checked classified collated collected compiled corrected detailed dispatched distributed documented enforced executed expanded filed generated implemented inspected located managed monitored operated ordered organised placed prepared processed purchased reconciled recorded		acted composed conceived conceptualised conducted created danced designed developed devised directed drafted drew edited entertained established expressed fashioned filmed founded illustrated imagined initiated	advised appointed assessed assisted	

Learning Skills	improved increased initiated issued maintained managed ordered organised oversaw planned prioritised produced programmed projected recommended reviewed scheduled selected strengthened supervised	furnished grasped handled identified implemented initiated modified proposed pursued rectified refrained repaired replaced resolved restored reviewed revised saved streamlined studied subcontracted submitted supplied	studied summarised surveyed systematised	machined made maintained manufactured modified operated overhauled programmed rebuilt remodelled repaired replaced solved tested trained upgraded wired
acquired appreciated attained assessed combined commenced committed discovered estimated evaluated expanded experienced exposed familiarised gained graduated grasped learnt observed obtained perceived progressed recognised scanned sized	People Skills appointed assessed assigned built conducted counselled employed engaged enlisted formed graded guided liaised managed mediated motivated negotiated provided recruited related selected screened stimulated	Research Skills analysed assessed clarified classified collated collected compiled critiqued diagnosed dissected enquired evaluated examined extracted hypothesized identified inspected interpreted interviewed investigated learned observed organised prepared recognised re-evaluated researched resourced reviewed revised	Teaching Skills adapted administered advised briefed clarified coached communicated coordinated counselled designed developed empowered enabled encouraged evaluated explained facilitated guided helped informed initiated instructed lectured listened organised persuaded planned prepared set goals stimulated taught trained tutored utilised	
Management Skills administered analysed appointed approved assigned attained authorised built chaired commissioned consolidated contracted controlled coordinated dealt delegated designated designed developed directed employed enforced evaluated executed fired hired	Problem-solving Skills advised applied arranged changed converted determined eliminated		Technical Skills applied assembled built calculated coded computed constructed designed devised engineered fabricated installed	

COVER LETTER SUGGESTED LAYOUT

Line Spacing

24 Ross St
Smithtown

2 spaces

9 May 2010

2 spaces

First name, Surname
Human Resources Officer
ABC Company
101 Sunset Drive
Auckland Postcode

2 spaces

Dear first name & surname (if you know Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss use this with the last name)

1 space

Job title and Reference Number

1 space

1) Details of the Job

Nominate the job for which you are applying. Be enthusiastic for the company and the position. Indicate the source and date of the job information. Provide details of contact you have had with the organisation. If you have been referred by a friend or colleague of the employer give details.

1 space

2) What you have to offer the organisation

Highlight the extent to which you match the requirements of the job, e.g. qualifications, experience, qualities, capabilities, transferable skills. Outline any further points in your favour related to the job. Be enthusiastic. Research the company!

1 space

3) Why you want to work in this position for this organisation

Outline your interest in the particular job and/or the position and the organisation. Make realistically positive comments about the reputation and performance of the company. Be enthusiastic.

1 space

4) Conclusion

Keep it short, reiterate your enthusiasm and refer to your attached curriculum vitae and other requested material.

2 spaces

Yours sincerely

5 spaces

(Signature here)

First name, Surname

CV SUGGESTED LAYOUT

Name Here

Contact Details

Education

Bachelor of XXXX

Major in YYYY (Finalist)	University of Otago	2010
NCEA/ Cambridge (Highest Level) Bursary	Ye Olde High School	2006

Relevant Skills

[Use this space to highlight the skills relevant to the position advertised and/or the organisation. See the job advertisement, job description, and/or www.kiwicareers.govt.nz for more details on relevant skills]

In this section you should show how your experience gives you the skills required. If you are applying for a role which involves significant client interaction and working to tight deadlines you could use evidence from previous roles, for example:

Customer Service – Feedback from customers and managers in several roles is that I have excellent client handling skills and maintain a friendly and professional manner at all times.

Time Management – At university I balance study, work and extracurricular activities and always fulfil my commitments before the deadline. At work my managers comment that I “get the job done”, and I’ve never asked for an assignment extension.

These examples show the reviewer that the applicant has thought about this specific role, about the skills required, and about how her/his experience has prepared her/him for this. The subtext is that this is not a generic CV, but one that is tailored for this application.

Achievements

[Optional: use this space to highlight your achievements. Achievements are wider than academic awards; refer to personal achievements in extra-curricular and work contexts. Focus strongly on this area for scholarship applications]

Awarded the “Best team leader” Social Activity Group 2009

Participated in...

Gained ...

Scholarship...

[Other headings that could be used here are listed in the optional section see page 4]

Employment History

[Discuss your tasks and duties in bullet point format and try to start with a verb e.g. planned, prepared, organised.]

Waitress (<i>part time</i>)	Last Minute Productions, Dunedin	2008 - 2010
Job Title	Company Name, Place	Nov 2005 - Feb 2008
•	Tasks and duties and outcomes ie, successfully completed	
Job Title	Company Name, Place	Summer 2005
•	Tasks and duties	
Job Title	Company Name, Place	Nov 2003 - Feb 2004
•	Tasks and duties	

CV SUGGESTED LAYOUT cont

Referees

[List your referees and contact details. Make them appropriate to the position that you are applying for. Use an invisible table to lay out neatly]

Name	Name
Job Title	Job Title
Department / Company	Department / Company
Physical Address	Physical Address
Phone number	Phone number
Email contact	Email contact

Professional Affiliations

[*Optional*: use this space to highlight professional organisations you may be a member of. Another heading for this section might be Community Activities.

Profile/Highlights/Career Objective

[*Optional*: can be at the beginning of CV or at end to provide a summary. This section should be concise and unique to each opportunity and create a context for the application. A generic statement suggests that the candidate has made little or no effort to understand the opportunity or the organisation.

Interests

[Give a brief list and description of any hobbies, interests or other activities that you would like to mention – do not be too boring show some enthusiasm or passion for what you do – give a feel to who you are and what you are like]

Optional Sections to be Added as Appropriate

NOW YOU HAVE YOUR DRAFT.....
 TIME FOR SELF-REVIEW

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hold out the CV at arm's length.
Is the structure obvious? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Page numbers included? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Qualifications on the front page?
Is an academic transcript/academic record included?
If so, is mention made on front page of CV? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does my name stand out? Is it included in the footer of the other pages? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contact details available but discreet? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clearly labelled sections? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | NCEA level stated. Outstanding grades identified? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Academic Awards (if on the front page) concise and clear i.e. acronyms explained? |
| skills profile | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do the headings match the job description or advertisement? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is back-up/ data / evidence provided? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have I provided evidence of "technical expertise" and experience from my degree or work? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Could this section be improved by removing overdone words such as "I", able to, responsible, ability to? |
| work history | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it clearly laid out with title, name of employer business, location, dates? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there repetition of wording used on the front page? |
| interests | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can the reader get a picture of me as a whole person? |
| referees | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it appropriate to use headings e.g. Academic, Employer, Character/Mentor |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all the contact details provided? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it appropriate to include "Written References Available on Request" |
| cover letter | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the letter addressed to a person by name and includes their title? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the first paragraph convey what appeals to me about the company? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are my qualifications stated, if appropriate? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do the second and third paragraphs link my expertise and skills to the position? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have I used work experience as well as academic experience to illustrate my skills? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the final paragraph convey enthusiasm for the role and /or the company? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have I signed my name? |

ELECTRONIC/ONLINE APPLICATIONS

The guide and best practice for writing Cover Letters and CVs applies equally to completing online applications. It is worth considering the following points when dealing with electronic applications.

- instructions Read these very carefully.
- time It is likely to take longer to complete than you think and you need time to navigate your way round the website. Many people assume because it is an online form, it is going to be easy and won't take long to fill in. Wrong!
- keep a copy Many online applications ask you to register before you can access the form. Make a note of your registration details (it is not a good to look to be talking about 'eye for detail' or 'your good organisational skills', and then have to send an email because you've forgotten your password).
- familiarise yourself If you cannot look at the whole form (you may have to work through it) then note the questions as you come to them. Many on line forms allow for the applicant to complete the application across several sessions.
- query If you have a query or a problem with the form or website, or are unsure of some instruction, use the help contact which will be on the webpage. It is perfectly acceptable to ring up as well.
- check numbers Each answer usually has a word (or even a character) limit. A good strategy is to write your answers in a Word document and when you are happy with what you have written, cut and paste your answers into the form.
Keep a copy of your answers for your own reference.
- answer Make sure you have addressed what is being asked of you in the question. You may feel the question is already covered in your CV or Cover Letter. Resist any temptation to say, 'Refer to my CV' or 'See my Cover Letter', as your answer. Many questions are often behaviour-based for example: "Tell us about a time when...". Refer to answering behavioural interviewing pg 29 in the Interview guide.
- pdf option This will protect the layout of the document.
- final check Proof reading is as essential for online applications as it is for hard copy applications! Have another pair of eyes to read your application for any mistakes or answers not answered properly. Avoid giving the reader an excuse for consigning your application to the 'No' pile.

hot tip

"Equally a CV does not stand alone. You need a strong, compelling and personalised cover letter to go with your CV and the element of motivation to the skills and knowledge your CV demonstrates."

Jeff Lewis, HR Manager, L'Oréal New Zealand Ltd, 2010

EMAILING APPLICATIONS:

- email** Generally when emailing attachments you will need to include a short professional note in the body of the email telling the recipient why you are sending the email. While you don't have to lay the email out as a formal business letter, you do want your email to look professional. Therefore do not write in 'emailese', use txt spelling, or write your message in upper case letters. Remember all the rules of good grammar and punctuation apply to emails!
- clearly name** It helps the reader process your application more efficiently if the attachment is named appropriately. You don't want your precious documents being lost or overlooked because they are unnamed and 'got mislaid in the system'!
- how many** Sometimes the request is for one document. If in doubt, check. Always find out what is wanted.
- subject line** The receiver can then see what the email is about before they open it. Remember people receive large quantities of email. Clearly identified email is less likely to get lost in someone's 'In box'!
- general** Use a salutation. As with a letter, use a greeting, e.g. Greetings first name, surname.
Write in whole sentences. E.g. 'Please find attached my CV and cover letter for the position of ...'
When finishing off, 'Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely, and 'Kind regards' are acceptable. On another line, write your name.

ACADEMIC CVs

- general** Academic styled CVs differ from general CVs as they focus on academic and research skills and are used when applying for academic or research positions. Apart from the usual headings (such as education, work experience, awards and achievements), other headings could include: research activities, teaching experience, publications, conference presentations/attendance, university/community service, professional activities, positions of responsibility, memberships, awards and research grants. Include specific funding figures for research grants.
- principles** An academic CV has similar principles to all CVs. It needs to demonstrate your strengths, it needs to be free of errors and presented in an easily read format, and to be presented in a style that is relevant and recognised by those to whom you are applying. Always send a letter as an introduction.
- focus** To effectively target your application, research the university to which you are applying; any suggested CV formats, identifying a fit with the current department, carefully read the advertisement to get an idea of the specific competencies or requirements over and above the usual academic qualifications. You may need to adapt your research to the particular audience or department.
- feedback** Seek feedback about the impression your CV gives a reader who does not particularly know you. Make sure you check with your supervisor for any ideas or tips, feedback and suggestions for structuring your academic CV. Some academic staff have on-line CVs or an E-portfolio and could provide ideas for developing a style of CV that suits you, your discipline and your particular strengths.
- achievements** Ensure when discussing your research that you identify the aims, outcomes and techniques or research methodologies used. Think about what has made you successful to date and ensure that this is identified or highlighted in your CV. Some departments may require written statements.

PERSONAL STATEMENT / STATEMENT OF INTENT / STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

formats For some positions a personal statement is requested. Some organisations make it clear what they want from this exercise (Please tell us a little about you. Why do you want this position? What strengths do you bring to the role? How does it fit in to your 5 year career plan? Use no more than 350 words). Other organisations give no indication whatsoever. In the latter case it is recommended that you contact the organisation and ask them for guidelines, however, some may deflect the query saying “Just put whatever you think is appropriate...” or something similar.

why There are many reasons for asking for a statement like this. It makes the applicant stop and think, and discourages those who are just sending out generic applications; most application reviewers believe that the fewer generic applications, the better. It forces the applicant to address her/his own motivation and suitability for the position. It provides a sample of the applicant’s written communication skills (spelling, format, structure, coherent argument, grammar, relevance, readability, flow, appropriate length). It provides material to be probed at more depth at interview. It is a test of consistency in the applicant’s message, i.e. does the applicant contradict themselves between the cover letter, CV, and statement or do the documents form a cohesive message?

with guidelines It is a good idea to break the statement into the suggested segments (e.g. ...tell us a little about you. Why do you want this position? What strengths do you bring to the role? How does it fit in to your 5 year career plan?...), to answer each fully, separately and concisely, and then to merge the answers to fit the statement. This will take several drafts of each part of the answer. Beware of over-emphasising or omitting any one part of the answer – this is a classic error in these statements and tells the reviewer that either you didn’t realise that each part had to be answered equally or that your written communication skills just aren’t up to the standard required. In either case your application is edging towards the “No” pile.

without guidelines In this case it is useful to create some for yourself. Typically organisations are interested in your motivation for the profession, organisation and position concerned, they are also interested in what strengths you have that would enable you to adapt and excel in this environment, they typically would like some sense of your personal values in the context of the position, and in how you see your career developing over the short to medium term, say 2 -5 years.

research Use the organisation’s website, the relevant professional association (e.g. the Publishers Association of New Zealand for those interested in publishing), the kiwicareers website and other resources, (for example, talking to them at one of the University of Otago’s Career Fairs or other employer events, or using your personal network to meet people from the organisation – New Zealand only has 2 degrees of separation, remember!). From this research you can get a sense of what the organisation thinks is important in people, for example it might place a strong emphasis on client satisfaction, personal integrity, self-motivation, among others. You can then use this insight to write a statement which addresses their issues.

hot tips

Remember that the statement is about you in the context of this specific application – your greatest strength may be your saxophone playing, but it’s unlikely to be relevant here. Only include relevant material.

Get someone to read it over to see how it flows and/or if you have addressed the key points, you could make an appointment with a CV Consultant at the Career Development Centre to do this.

Less is more. Reviewers have to read lots of these things, the concise and succinct ones will make an impression, the rambling and incoherent ones will too!

Does it convey a sense of you? The exercise is trying to get a sense of you as an individual and your motivation for the field / organisation / position. Tell them, honestly, why you want it, what your driving force is.

SHARP CV FIRST STEP TO GETTING A JOB

Kathleen Hennessy – The Observer

There is no such thing as the perfect CV. But there are several ways of writing the CV that are likely to achieve the document's *raison d'être*: securing an interview.

CVs are marketing material, not autobiographies. They should sell you as the best person for the job, or at least one worth considering. Follow these universal ground rules:

- Keep it short – nobody is going to plough through more than two pages.
- Make it easy to read – don't cram all the information into one page if it really needs two.
- Try to grab the reader's attention quickly, by starting with a summary or profile (see below).
- Always use a chronological format (see below).
- Never use the words *curriculum vitae* or its abbreviation – the first item to appear on your CV should be your name.

This last point is important. According to Stuart Lindenfield of DBM, when employers receive CVs with the words *curriculum vitae* at the top, they are expecting a poor application, and not least because most people misspell *curriculum vitae*.

"It's like writing 'brochure' on the front of a sales brochure," he says, when what should be there is what is being marketed – and in the case of a CV, that is you."

Format

About 95% of CVs have a chronological layout starting with the most recent job or experience, and working backwards. This is what employers expect, and you should give them that unless:

- Your work history is patchy and you are trying not to draw attention to it.
- You are having, or previously had, a major career change.
- You have very little experience or you are returning to the job market after a significant gap.
- You want to work in an area where specialist skills are essential.
- You want to sell personal skills which are not reflected in your employment history

If you fall into one of these categories, substitute a "key skills" section for the employment history, but list achievements to support your skills in the same way that achievements are used to illustrate the "added value" you brought to previous employers (see below).

Personal content

Start with your name, address, telephone number mobile number and e-mail address.

"If you don't have an e-mail address, get one," says Mr Lindenfield. "It's essential – employers expect it."

He suggests you keep your mobile phone switched off, to force anyone who rings to leave a message. "This will give you time to prepare your response," he says.

Next, include a summary or personal profile. This has to be strong because you need to get the reader's attention within 20 seconds. Otherwise, says Mr Lindenfield, you could be heading for the bin.

Profiles are the most difficult to write. They should be between 30 and 44 words long, and should describe you, your strengths and what you can bring to the company. For example: Successful senior executive with more than 10 years' experience in team building and management. Self-starter capable of delivering results within budget and on schedule.

These profiles should reflect at least some of the qualities the job ad used to describe the ideal candidate, so do not be afraid to use the same language, even if it sounds a bit pompous.

Employment content

This is where a lot of people go terribly wrong, especially if they use the phrases "responsible for" or "duties included".

"These terms don't tell an employer anything about what you achieved at your previous jobs," says Mr Lindenfield. 'All they say is what you were supposed to do, with no indication of whether you managed to fulfil your responsibilities, never mind exceeded them.'

He suggests that you list achievements. For example, let's say you used your contacts to get extra publicity for your company's new product you present the information as: "Achieved widespread media coverage of major product launch, resulting in a 25% increase in initial sales inquiries."

This marks you out as someone who adds value to companies, rather than someone who just fulfils his or her duties.

You don't have to include interests and hobbies but they provide an opportunity to sell yourself as someone interesting, and to allude to skills not obvious from your work experience. But make sure they are tailored to the job. Participation in sports can indicate that you work well in teams, while involvement in your local PTA or Neighbourhood Watch can show you are not afraid to take on responsibility.

Finally

Use bullet points throughout as they highlight information for the reader, and proof-read your CV thoroughly. Get someone else to do this if you don't trust your own editing skills.

Don't include a photograph, references or any salary requirements – and don't expect to get it right the first time. A good CV needs several drafts.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

The Career Development Centre has a range of resources to help with CV preparation. Check the university and public libraries for CV resources as well.

An important first step is to attend a seminar. Check out OtagoCareerHub for details on regular seminars on 'Writing a winning CV and Cover Letter'. The website is <https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz>

BOOKS ON CVS, COVER LETTERS & APPLICATIONS

(These titles are a sample of the information available at the Career Development Centre library)

Preparing the Perfect CV. Corfield, Rebecca, Kogan Page, 2010

Resumes – College Students and Recent Graduates – 3rd Edition. VGM, 2004

The job winners guide to Resumes. French Rupert, Maygog, 2006

The Damn Good Resume Guide. Parker Yana, Fourth Edition, Ten Speed Press, 2002

Ultimate CV – 2nd Edition. Yate Martin, Kogan Page, 2008

Resume for Dummies – 5th Edition. Kennedy Joyce, Wiley, 2007

Write Your Own CV – A New Zealand Guide. Stenberg, Paula, Random House, 2006

Killer CVs and Hidden Approaches – 3rd Edition. Perkins, Graham, Pearson, 2007

Pitch Yourself. Faust, Bill and Michael, Pearson, 2006

How to write a great CV. McGee, Paul, How to books, 2007

E- Resumes – a guide to successful online job hunting. Criscito, Pat, Barrons, 2005

CAREER AND JOB WEB-SITES

Remember to check out CareerHub <https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz> for Graduate Job opportunities. Your number one site for Graduate Jobs and Internships.

The websites below are a sample only of what is available to help you in your job search.

General Employment Sites

- OtagoCareerHub: <https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz>
- TrademeJobs: www.trademe.co.nz/jobs
- Career Opportunities New Zealand: www.career.co.nz
- OtagoDailyTimes: www.odt.co.nz
- New Kiwis: www.newkiwis.co.nz (supports international people)
- NZ Jobs: www.job.co.nz
- Seek: www.seek.co.nz
- Student Job Search: www.sjs.co.nz

Overseas Work Opportunities

- Action Jobs: www.actionjobs.com (Adventure & Action)
- Experience: www.experience.com (US Vacation Work)
- World wide jobs: www.anyworkanywhere.com

General Careers Advice

- OtagoCareerHub: <https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz>
- Kiwi Careers: www.kiwicareers.govt.nz
- Enterprises Consulting Group: www.enterprise.co.nz
- TMP World wide: www.tmp.com (IT & Executive Vacancies)
- Australia Careers: www.myfuture.com.au
- GraduatecareersAustralia: www.graduatecareers.com.au
- Overseas Information: www.wetfeet.com, www.vault.com, www.prospects.ac.uk, www.insidecareers.co.uk, targetjobs.co.uk, www.goinglobal.com

Specialised Employment Sites

IT Vacancies

- Candle New Zealand: www.candle.co.nz

NZ Government Sector

- NZ Government Jobs Online: www.jobs.govt.nz

Legal Recruitment Specialists

- Lawstaff: www.lawstaff.co.nz

Recruitment – Science

- Biology Jobs: www.biologyjobs.com
- Professional and Technical Human Resources: www.roblaw.co.nz
- Scientific & Technical Recruitment: www.scitechrecruit.co.nz
- Synergy Consulting: www.synergyconsult.co.nz
- LifeScience Jobs specializes in the Pharmaceutical and Biotech industries: www.pharmajobs.com

Teaching English Overseas

- Dave's ESL Cafe: www.eslcafe.com/jobs
- Footprints: www.footprintsrecruiting.com
- World English Service: worldenglishservice.com
- English Language Matters: www.englishmatters.co.nz
- The Jet programme: www.mofa.go.jp/jet

Teaching

- Education Gazette: www.edgazette.govt.nz
- TimePlan: www.timeplan.com
- Smart teachers: www.smartteachers.co.nz
- Teaching Personnel: www.teachingintheuk.com
- OasisEducation: www.oasiseducation.co.nz
- Red Teachers: www.redteachers.com

Psychometric Testing

- SHL Group Direct: www.shldirect.com
- Psychometric test info: www.markparkinson.co.uk/psychometric_links.htm

Career Self Assessment

- Aabe's Career Builder: www.kiwicity.com/job/jobbuilder.htm
- Advisor Team.com: www.advisorteam.com
- Australia Career Information service: www.myfuture.edu.au
- Job Hunters Bible: www.jobhuntersbible.com
- MonsterBoard Career Test: <http://career-advice.monster.com>
- New Zealand Career Services: www.kiwicareers.govt.nz

Links are available on OtagoCareerHub: <https://careerhub.otago.ac.nz>

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