

# STUDENT LIFE

## TIPS

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# The Cover Letter

Your cover letter is your opportunity to introduce yourself and your CV. It is **not** a mini CV... The aim of a cover letter is to make the employer interested enough to read your application thoroughly and convince them to give you an interview.

Never mass produce a cover letter, even if you have many applications to fill out. An effective cover letter will highlight and market your skills, abilities and relevant experiences and link these to the employer's needs. It will demonstrate to the employer that you are interested in their industry, their company and the job.

## Structure of a cover letter

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Your details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name, address and contact details</li></ul>
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The date you <i>send</i> the letter</li></ul>
Employer's details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name and title of the person and company's address</li></ul>
Opening paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give the job title and any job reference number</li><li>• Explain why you are writing this letter</li><li>• Name the source where you found the job advertised</li></ul>
Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain why you want the job and how your skills and experience qualify you for it</li><li>• Demonstrate that you can do the job</li><li>• Show why you want the job</li></ul>
Closing paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This paragraph needs to be positive. Request an opportunity to discuss your application in an interview and state your willingness to provide further details.</li></ul>

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## The cover letter checklist

- be clear, concise and on a single page
- have a strong, positive and interesting opening paragraph
- be easy to read and look professional
- provide the key information required by the employer
- demonstrate interest in the job and knowledge about the company
- end in a positive and pro-active manner
- contain details on how and when you can be contacted
- be free of spelling or grammar mistakes
- be signed.

# The CV

Curriculum Vitae (CV) is Latin for 'Course of Life'. It's your life story with a focus on experience, skills and qualifications for the job market.

Your CV is a 'sales' document, to get you to the interview phase. It is **not** designed to get you the job. It should highlight you as an individual, with unique skills, personality and experiences.

Your CV should 'match' the job you have applied for. It's important, for example, that you don't talk about your excellent project management skills if the job ad does not mention or allude to this as being a requirement.

## Top ten tips for CVs

- Check, check and re-check all spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Re-arrange your CV for each role you are applying for. Put the most **relevant** information for that particular role, at the top.
- Make the CV easy to read and understand, with good formatting, headers and use of white space, and 2-3 pages if possible (you have about 30 seconds to make an impression).
- Have your name and contact details on every page (you can use headers/footers for this).
- Make it positive - if there is anything that does not positively sell you, leave it out.
- Ensure it's in a logical, easy to follow format.
- Don't include too much personal information - no need to add date of birth etc.
- Always include a job-specific cover letter.
- When including your qualifications and educational papers, only include the ones you have passed. Marks are not necessary.
- Check, check and re-check all spelling, grammar and punctuation....again.

## The CV checklist

- Name, full address, telephone numbers and email address
- A snappy career statement
- Believable competency (skills) statements backed up with evidence
- Emphasis on achievements and results
- Full educational qualifications
- Full details of all paid jobs held
- Details of any voluntary work done
- Interests and hobbies
- Two referees (who you have approached) including full contact details

# The Interview

The interview is your opportunity to showcase yourself, your personality and your skills and experience. It is normal to be slightly nervous, most employers will be expecting that and make allowances for it.

To help with your nerves, remember this interview will be mainly about you...you know yourself better than anyone so your product knowledge will not be an issue. Researching the company beforehand is a vital part of interview preparation. Having an understanding of the organisation, their goals, values and customers will benefit you.

## Top ten tips for interviews

- Prepare, prepare, prepare
- Be on time and smile
- Remember what first impression you want to create
- Watch your body language and eye contact
- Pause - it's OK to pause and think about your answer
- It's OK to ask them to re-phrase a question if you are unsure
- Don't be too modest, you are here to sell yourself
- Speak from experience; ensure the interviewer knows what you have done
- Be open and honest
- Use the interviewer's name at least once during the interview

## Do's and Don'ts

- Do smile and make regular eye contact
- Do show enthusiasm, it is contagious and it shows you are keen
- Do ask what the timeframe for the recruitment process is
- Do check if you have answered the question correctly
- Do confirm jargon if it's used
- Do thank the interviewer for their time when finished
  
- Don't ask about pay, holidays and social clubs (at the initial interview)
- Don't check your watch during the interview
- Don't take your cell phone in with you
- Don't bad mouth previous employers
- Don't have a cigarette beforehand, chew gum, or take a coffee