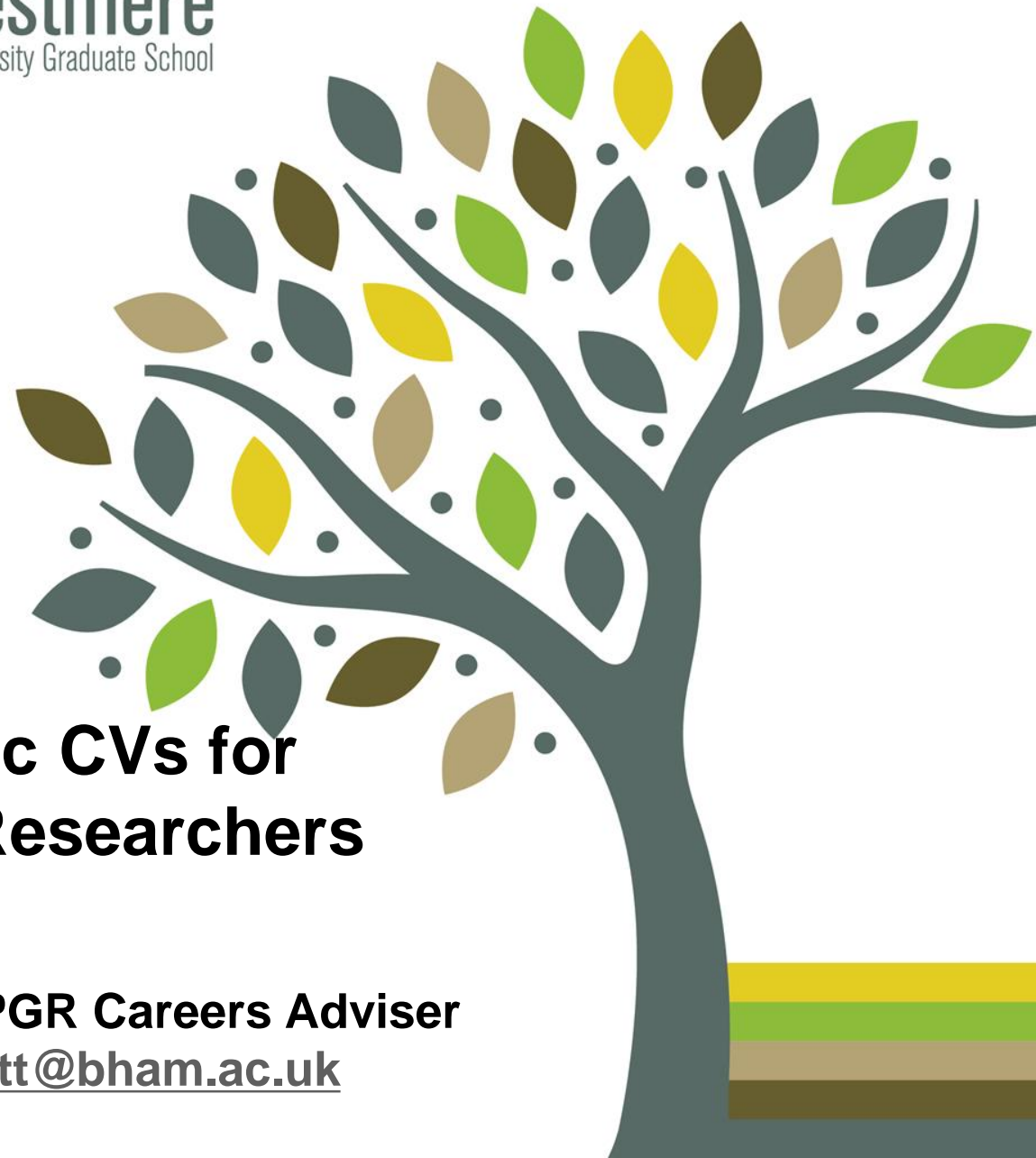


UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



In
association
with



Non-academic CVs for Postgraduate Researchers

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What we'll cover...

Discuss the purpose of a CV & cover letter

Understand these documents from a recruiters' point-of-view

Apply this to examples of 'what to include' in CVs and cover letters



CV/ application mind-set...

From: What should I include?



To: What does this recruiter want to know about me?

Life story



Marketing documents for a particular target audience



CV and supporting statement – what's the purpose?

- Demonstrate your interest in this particular role/ organisation
- Show that you have **relevant** skills (and experience)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role and your 'fit'
- Get an interview



What you need to know before you start...

- What essential/desirable criteria is the employer is seeking?
- What examples from your own experience best demonstrate these?
- What is the company like? What are their key aims/ activities/ values?
- What is involved in the day-to-day activity of the job?
- What goals will you be helping the company achieve by doing this job?



Use these as your guide on what to include

CV sections...

- Personal details
- Personal profile
- Education
- Work/ other experience
- Skills
- Interests



Personal details

Holly Prescott

XXX, Niall Close, Birmingham B15 3RX |07XXX XXXXX| h.prescott@bham.ac.uk

Linked In: <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/holly-prescott>



Personal details

- Use your name as the 'title'
- Address – phone number – email address (a sensible one...!)
- Link to your LinkedIn profile, academia.edu profile or other relevant site
- Due to UK discrimination law, no need to state gender, marital status, date of birth etc.
- For what to include for applications to other countries, consult relevant country profile in [Passport Career](#)



Personal profile

Two examples of who someone has tailored their personal profile for different roles:

Health Economics PhD researcher with event organisation and budget management experience gained as a PhD Careers Day events assistant. Now seeking formal experience in supporting postgraduate researchers

Health Economics PhD researcher with practical experience of selling and generating leads within a healthcare business. Now seeking a sales role in the pharmaceutical sector



‘Personal profile’

- Not essential – can help introduce goals (especially if moving outside academia/ changing careers)
- 2-3 sentences:
 - What you are currently doing
 - Key **relevant** skills/ attributes
 - Brief **relevant** evidence (experience)
 - What you are seeking (should be **relevant** to the opportunity)
- Avoid:
 - Being really general (‘I am enthusiastic and hard working’)
 - Overusing ‘buzz words’ (e.g. ‘dynamic, creative and innovative’)



Education

- Think about **relevance** to the role you are going for
 - Subject matter
 - Any relevant modules/ projects?
- Consider also adding your PhD under 'research experience', 'relevant experience' or something else depending on **relevance**



Education

University of Birmingham **PhD in Physics** **2015 – present**

Thesis title: Non-equilibrium strongly-correlated dynamics

Supervisors: Prof Dieter Junger; Prof Vlatko Horvat

- Elected member of departmental staff/student committee, developing sound awareness of the issues and challenges faced by PGRs at Birmingham

Durham University **Master of Physics** **2011-2015**

First class honours

Masters project (if relevant)?

Consett Comprehensive School **2003 – 2010**

A Levels: French (B), Further Mathematics (A), Mathematics (A) and Physics (A)



Work/ other experience

- Separate in to ‘**Relevant** experience’ and ‘Other experience’; or use other relevant headings depending on the job, e.g. ‘Research experience’ ; ‘Consultancy experience’
- Voluntary experience counts (especially if it’s **relevant**)!
- Use reverse chronological order
- **Remember:** *your PhD could go in here too!*
- Reflect the same vocabulary used in the job advert
- Use bullet points to emphasise key skills, actions and achievements...



- **Verb -> Action -> Result...**

Work experience

Relevant experience

Bikebuild

Social Media Assistant

June- August 2016

Bikebuild is a charity that encourages young people to develop engineering skills by building their own bikes

- Created and managed a Facebook page which helped to increase traffic to the charity's website by 30%



Presenting your PhD on your CV

1) Your PhD subject is relevant to the job

- Give details of your PhD research
- Include research achievements/ outcomes
- Include details of relevant publications, conferences and poster presentations etc.

2) Your PhD subject isn't immediately relevant, but your research skills are

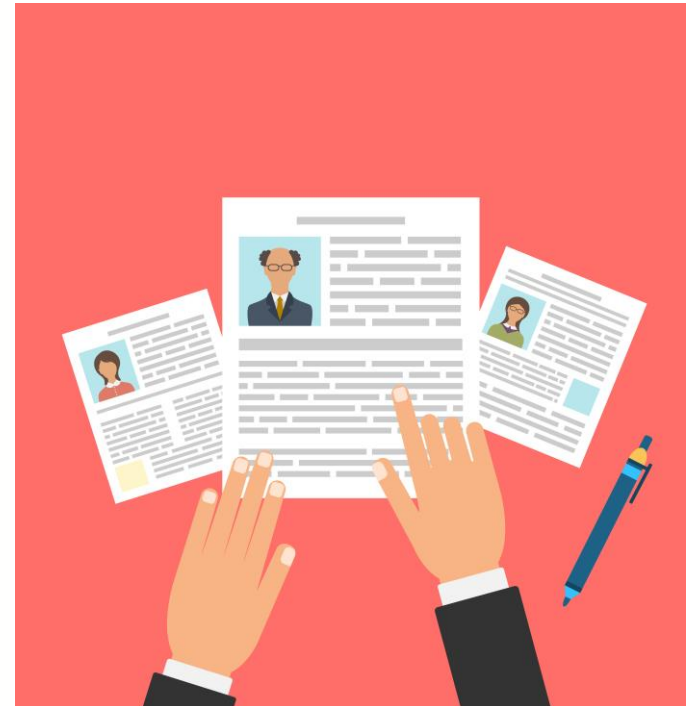
- Outline your research in lay terms
- Include research achievements/ outcomes
- Summarise publications and presentations (no detailed lists)
- Emphasise relevant research-related skills, e.g. analysis of complex data and presentation of findings; research/experiment design; experience in qualitative and/or quantitative methods etc...



Presenting your PhD on your CV

3) Your PhD subject isn't relevant to the job, but your transferable skills are

- Give title of your PhD
- Beneath your PhD, pick out transferable skills important to that employer, e.g. project management, working independently, problem-solving, dealing with challenging situations, managing working relationships...



Skills

- Additional quantifiable skills e.g. Languages, IT skills.
Name the skills and level:
 - Competent in all areas of Microsoft Office
 - Intermediate user of statistical programme SPSS
 - First Aid Certificate (expires 2018)
 - Intermediate German



Interests

- Avoid clichés e.g. ‘socialising with friends’
- Show a range of interests, especially anything unusual
- An opportunity to demonstrate **leadership**
- Show interests that are **relevant** to the role and pick out **relevant** skills ...



Interests

'Travelling'



Organised a four-week trip to Malaysia for myself and 3 friends to a tight budget. Sourced and compared best value accommodation and successfully negotiated group discount with tour company



Possible other sections...

- 'Highlights'/ 'Achievements'
- Relevant training
- Professional memberships
- Relevant publications: if your PhD is relevant to the job



A strong cover letter...

- ❑ Is **tailored** to that role
- ❑ Uses the shortlisting criteria as a **tick-list**
- ❑ Does not just describe skills but gives **evidence / examples**
- ❑ A very strong application:
 - ❑ **relates** these skills and examples **directly back to the role**
 - ❑ Gives a **result** as part of each example
- ❑ Shows you've done your **research** about the position/ organisation
- ❑ Says why you are interested in this particular role/ organisation
- ❑ Shows an understanding of the role
- ❑ Indicates how the role fits into your career/ other plans



Keep in touch...

- **Website:** www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/pgr
- **PGR non-academic careers Canvas resource - enrol for regular 'digest'** <https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/enroll/LXBH7H>



PG Careers Twitter Feed: @CareersPG

Graduate School Twitter Feed: @UoBGradSchool



PGR LinkedIn group: bit.ly/uob-pgr

Get in touch: h.prescott@bham.ac.uk

