



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

CAREERS IN
BUSINESS



The Careers in Business guide to writing your CV and covering letter



CV checklist: use this to review your own CV: The basics

Two sides of A4 (unless applying for Investment Banking or Consulting)

Correct spelling and grammar

Name at the top (not Curriculum Vitae)

Education in reverse chronological order

No unexplained long gaps in Education or Experience

Professional email address

Formatting and presentation

All text neatly aligned according to set margins/tabs

Bullet points used rather than paragraphs of text

An internet friendly black font e.g. Arial or Calibri

Font size 11 or 12 and one style

Clear rather than crowded

If applying online, optimised for the system by removing tables, graphics, borders, boxes

UK CV norms

No photo

Date of birth, nationality and gender are not required unless you wish to include this

All other “personal information” including marital status is not required

Content

Personal Profile

- Optional in the UK – useful if you have lots of different experience and need to summarise
- Must be tailored to the role/career/sector
- Avoid using buzzwords and making generic statements
- Demonstrate how you can add value

Example:

Bi-lingual Strategic Marketing & Consulting student with experience of creating online communities around brands and using data to make digital marketing strategies more effective. Able to increase customer engagement by devising and managing social media campaigns. Strong analytical skills used to measure the success of campaigns and ensure ROMI during my time at ClockTower. Seeking to build my career in Digital Marketing and help clients to increase engagement with their customers.

Education

- Always in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- Pick out modules relevant to the job and create bullet points to show how you've applied the skills and knowledge from that module to completing assignments or group projects.
- If you're applying for graduate training schemes, UK employers will want to see your High School qualifications and grades.

Experience

- If applicable, group relevant experience together under headings e.g. HR Experience or Marketing Experience – put non relevant experience under Additional Experience
- Use bullet points to describe your experience
- Structure your bullet points using "Verb, Action, Result"
- Use numbers to quantify and qualify your experience; think about demonstrating how many data sets you analysed, how many people attended your presentation or event, how many sales you generated and so on.

Examples:

- Collaborated with five students on a research project and trained them to use data analytics software, providing more time to produce our report and increasing our predicted grade
- Analysed social media data and provided insight into customer preferences for the sales team, which increased sales by 15%

You can create these kinds of bullet points for your other sections including **Education** and optional sections like **Extracurricular Activities & Achievements** and **Voluntary Experience**.

Additional Skills & Qualifications

- Include information about languages you are fluent in or speak to “business” standard (i.e. you could conduct a conversation with clients, for example)
- You can also add information about I.T. software you use and short courses or certificates you’ve obtained but **only** if it’s relevant to the job you’re applying for.

Interests

- This will help the recruiter get a picture of who you are and what kinds of things motivate you when you’re not studying or working.
 - You don’t need to bullet point this section – you could write a few sentences about what you enjoy doing and how long you’ve been interested in that particular activity
 - Don’t include common activities like socialising with friends, watching TV or reading books as this won’t help distinguish you from other candidates.
-

Sample CVs

- The following pages contain sample CVs. These are to give you ideas about how you can format and present your CV.
- It’s important that you don’t copy the content of these CVs as they won’t match the job that you’re applying for.

Sample Covering Letter

At the back of the guide you’ll find information about how to write a good covering letter, and an example.

Getting your CV/Covering Letter reviewed

By email at careersinbusiness@contacts.bham.ac.uk after you have revised your CV using CV Checker **www.vmock.com/bham**

In person by booking an appointment at <https://bham.targetconnect.net/leap/getCareersAdvice.html>

****CV Checker is available to all current students. You must have a valid @student.bham.ac.uk email address. Verification via this email address is required****

CV Checker is available to alumni for up to 2 years after graduation. You must have a valid @alumni.bham.ac.uk email address. Verification via this email address is required. More information on how to access your alumni inbox is available at:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/careers/graduate-careers/services/alumni-email.aspx> **

****All students can receive e-guidance or book an appointment for a CV review****

CV Checker

How-to Guide

CV Checker is a unique CV platform which provides students with access to instant and personalised feedback online and customised suggestions for improvement. Using machine learning, predictive analytics and artificial intelligence, CV Checker identifies core competencies reflected in student profiles, and helps you optimise your skills. We encourage you to use CV Checker to improve your CV and then book an appointment with one of our Careers Consultants for more tailored support.

GETTING STARTED

- Sign up on www.vmock.com/bham with your University email address
- Click on **Upload CV** and select a PDF version after the file explorer launches.
(Note: If you don't have a CV, go to See Template -> Download Template -> Update and save as .pdf)
- Once selected, the CV review process is initiated.



(Note: Each student can upload 10 CVs per year)

UNDERSTANDING CV CHECKER SCORING AND FEEDBACK

CV CHECKER CV SCORE

What is CV Checker CV Score?

Provided on a scale of 0-100, CV Checker CV Score is computed based on 3 core modules. It appears automatically in your Student Dashboard after completion of the review process.

What does the score mean for you?

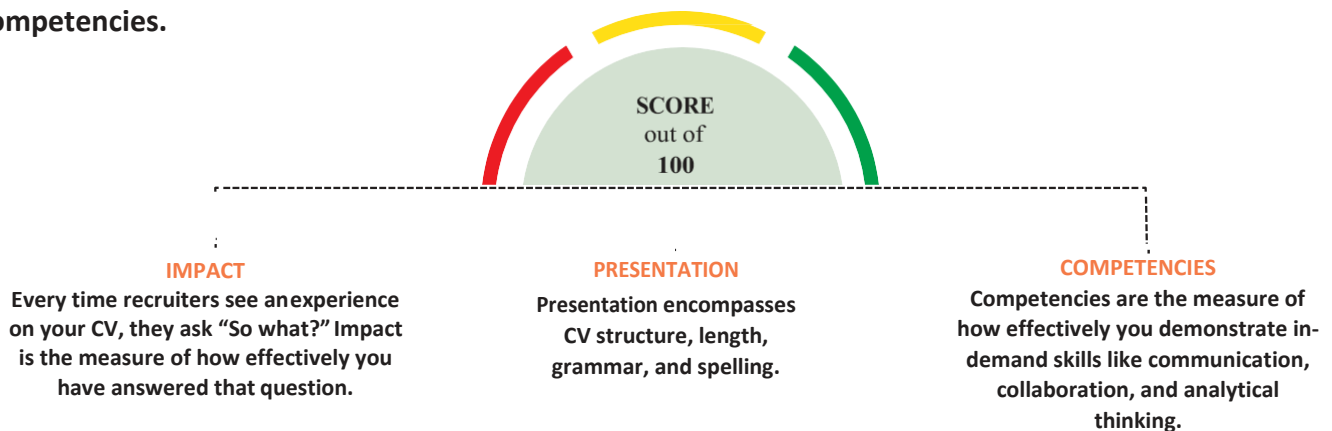
It indicates the current level your CV is at in the red, yellow or green zone and how to improve your CV using the feedback provided.



* Do not obsess about achieving a score of 100. As a fresh graduate, you may not be able to evidence 'all' of the competencies required by CV Checker at this stage in your career journey.

SYSTEM LEVEL FEEDBACK

System Feedback has three main modules: impact, presentation, and competencies.



- Click the blue View Feedback button to review the feedback.
- Next, click the blue See Detailed Feedback button to navigate to System Feedback.
- You may navigate between each module by clicking on its name, below Your CV Score.
- Each main module is comprised of core elements. Scroll down and click through each core element to view corresponding feedback highlighted in your CV.



Within each core element, click See Guidance to view key insights and suggestions for improvement.

CV CHECKER TARGETED FEEDBACK

Targeted Feedback

This is generated by benchmarking the content on your CV against high-scoring CVs of other University of Birmingham students. The core elements it is comprised of correspond to the sections in your CV.

(i.e. If your CV has three sections – Education, Work Experience and Languages – then Targeted Feedback will only have those three sections)



Click Targeted Feedback, located at the top of the browser.

Section Level Feedback

Feedback on content development and its placement on your CV.

(e.g. If you list programme and graduation year in the Education section of your CV, CV Checker may recommend that you also include modules.)

Click Categories you can include to view sample suggestions.

Bullet Level Feedback

Section Level Feedback also includes bullet level feedback. Bullet level feedback evaluates bullet points on six parameters which are action-oriented, active voice, specifics, over-usage, filler words and bullet length to provide suggestions for improvement.

To review bullet level feedback, click any bullet point highlighted in blue.

UPDATE YOUR CV

When you have finished reviewing CV Checker's feedback, it's time to revise your CV by incorporating the suggestions. Then re-upload your edited CV to view your increased score and new suggestions until you reach the green zone.

Visual presentation & layout

Ensure your text is neatly aligned and starts from the same point

In your Education section put dates as Month Year – Month Year e.g. Sep 2018 – Sep 2019

Name

Email address | Phone number | Address

Education

University of Birmingham	MSc or MBA + programme title	Date - Date
Name of University	Degree title	Date – Date
Name of School/College	Senior High School Education (e.g. A Levels and GCSEs if asked for)	Date – Date

Experience

Name of company/organisation	Job title or internship	Date – Date
•		
•		
•		
Name of company/organisation	Job title or internship	Date – Date
•		
•		
•		

In your Experience section put dates as Month + Year – Month + Year e.g. Sep 2017 – Aug 2018

Always use bullet points and not paragraphs of text

You can then add other sections appropriate to what you have to offer such as: Extra-Curricular Activities & Achievements, Voluntary Experience, Awards, Additional Skills & Qualifications (for languages, I.T. and any short courses or certifications), Interests. Finish with “References available on request.”

Jing Lei

Flat 91 St Oswald's Rd Birmingham | 04687954324 | jyhlei@bham.ac.uk

Example CV tailored
towards Investment
Management

EDUCATION

University of Birmingham **MSc Mathematical Finance (Distinction)** **Sep 2017 - Sep 2018**

- Key modules: Econometrics with Financial Applications | Exotic options, bonds and further quantitative finance Security Analysis and Portfolio Theory | Risk Analytics
- Strong analytical skills used to apply Stochastic Programming to Asset and Liability Management for research project; awarded 82%

Nankai University (China) **BSc Applied Mathematics (GPA 8.7)** **Sep 2016 - Sep 2017**

- Awarded top prize out of 500 students for leading a team during a regional business challenge sponsored by HSBC

**Remember that for graduate jobs in the UK you will need to insert your A Levels and summary of GCSE results or international equivalent qualifications (so your High School/Senior High School/College grades)*

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

CFA Level II (passed) **Jun 2018**

WORK EXPERIENCE

Schroders (China) **Investment Intern** **Jun 2016 - Aug 2016**

- Constructed dynamic portfolios with Matlab and analysed risks and returns helping team to control investment risks and achieve higher returns
- Produced reports on derivative products including futures, options and swaps, and analysed underlying assets and valuation methods
- Presented reports to Investment Managers on risk management strategies including bullish and bearish strategies and received good feedback for analysis

HSBC (China) **Corporate Banking Intern** **Jan 2015 - Feb 2015**

- Managed a portfolio of clients and trade requirements; provided advice and assistance on each trade to ensure smooth transition flows
- Executed clients' trades accurately and within tight deadlines, including opening trade letters of credit and undertakings and checking sales receipts and trades
- Implemented financial information analysis in order to improve customer credit

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACHIEVEMENTS

Student Union Team Leader for Campus Music Competition **Feb 2015**

- Led a team of four students to obtain sponsorship for event from a beverage company; persuaded the firm to donate 5,000 rmb and free drinks

SKILLS

Languages: Fluent in English and Mandarin | **Technical Skills:** R, Matlab, C++ for Finance, Excel (VBA, Pivot Tables)

MARK RANDEL

+44 907 327 6517 M.randel@mail.com

EDUCATION

University of Birmingham

MSc Marketing Management

Sep 2017 – Sep 2018

- Collaborated with five students on a company project and persuaded team members to focus research on emerging markets; received positive feedback on analysis and awarded 81%
- Analysed quantitative and qualitative data using SPSS and NVivo investigating whether demographic profile could influence consumers' attitude towards online shopping

University of Wales Swansea

BA Business Management with Year in Industry

Grade 2:1

Sep 2013 – Jun 2017

***Remember that for graduate jobs in the UK you will need to insert your A Levels and summary of GCSE results or international equivalent qualifications (so your High School/Senior High School/College grades)**

MARKETING EXPERIENCE

Clock Tower Products

Marketing Assistant (Year Placement)

Jun 2015 – Sep 2016

- Led social media marketing activities and improved customer engagement by working with technical team to create more video based content; increased traffic to website by 15%
- Completed online training in onsite and offsite SEO through circusstreet.com
- Analysed web data using Google analytics and presented 5 ways to optimise content to management team; received excellent feedback
- Organised meeting schedules and diaries for marketing team helping office improve efficiency

University Volleyball Team

Marketing & Events Coordinator

Sep 2014 – Jun 2015

- Developed a new marketing strategy changing focus from print based content to social media helping increase student membership by 20%
- Organised ten social events during year and created promotional materials generating online content ensuring maximum attendance
- Awarded Student Society Member of the Year in recognition of event success
- Attracted over 100 students to Welcome and Induction event by creating a campaign using Facebook and Twitter

Red Bull
Campus Brand Ambassador (part-time)

Sep 2013 – Jun 2015

- Built experiential marketing techniques to promote brand
- Hired a snowboard simulator and projected a jump image on student union wall
- Attracted and converted over 400 students

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Evening show host for University Radio Station

Jan 2013 – Sep 2014

- Awarded prize for best on campus broadcast in 2014
- Improved student brand awareness on campus by introducing live performances
- Increased audience size by 25% in one term by inviting guests to show

VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCE

Fundraiser for British Red Cross

Jul 2014

- Raised £500 for charity by organising and running an auction in village hall

ADDITIONAL SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

IT Proficient in use of Microsoft Office, SPSS & NVivo to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. Experienced in using Google Analytics

Social Media Experienced in producing content across platforms including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube

Certificates European Computer Driving Licence

INTERESTS

Keen amateur photographer with particular interest in sport; during time at University. I photographed several sports tournaments for student newspaper and over 5000 followers on Instagram account "brumunisports."

EDUCATION

MBA International Business (Distinction)

Jul 2017 - Sep 2018

Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, UK

Business Incubator Projects:

- Oversaw business process consultancy for a start-up technology business
- Prepared Preliminary Business Plan in collaboration with entrepreneur after thorough market analysis including Competitor Analysis, Investment Sources, Marketing Mix model, Financial Modelling

Business Simulation Competition

- Awarded first prize in business simulation exercise, managing a declining business venture through improving market share price

Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science (1st Class)

Jul 2006 - Sep 2008

Academy of Technical Education (Technical University), India

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TATA Consultancy Services (Bangalore, India)

May 2012 - Sep 2015

Senior Software Engineer/Team Leader Client: Tata Tele Services Limited

- Led a team based at client location for in-house project for sister company Tata Tele Services Ltd
- Managed new client queries and acted as first point of contact for IT department
- Suggested strategic solutions for detecting greater number of frauds and creating new business rules for complex cases
- Planned enhancements in Fraud Management System (FMS) with changing business rules and distributing team tasks
- Achieved increase in monetary gains and developed efficiency of system
- Prepared timelines and distributed tasks for on-time deliveries
- Facilitated problem solving, team collaboration and healthy group dynamics

TT DATA Americas (UK and India)

Aug 2010 - Apr 2012

Team Lead, Pre-sales Consulting (Sept 2009 - Apr 2012)

Internal clients: Global SBU heads within TT Data

- Delivered consultancy services in areas including sales strategy planning, market research and bid management
- Led dynamic project teams of solution architects, technical writers and sales staff brought together for a particular bid. Team size varied from three for small proposals to nearly ten for large strategic proposals
- Co-ordinated proposal development for providing IT solutions best fitting client needs
- Implemented project planning, estimation and pricing in liaison with delivery and sales managers
- Evaluated responses to RFPs worth over \$30 million and won about \$12 million worth of business for organization
- Liaised with key client relationship managers across organization to record and analyse business issues, identify opportunities and develop solutions. Regularly interacted with account owners, relationship managers and sales personnel, building a knowledge repository for sales support

- Pioneered Proposal Intelligence initiative leveraging background research to demonstrate competitive advantage; improved proportion of deals secured by nearly 5%
- Revamped the Management Information System for IT pre-sales organization improving productivity and increasing transparency in transfer pricing system; received excellent feedback from internal clients

Systems Analyst

Aug 2008 - Sep 2009

External client: large US financial services firm

- Liaised with client to capture business requirements and model business processes using BPMN and UML. Developed Java / J2EE web services and web applications
- Championed software quality assurance, completely eliminated customer defects and reduced internal defects to less than 10%

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Project Management

ITIL/AGILE

Programming Languages

PL/SQL, Triggers, JAVA/J2EE and UNIX shell scripting

Oracle 8i,9i,10g, MS SQL Server 2003

Database Systems

Clear Case, Test Director, Toad, SQL Developer MS Excel

Tools

PowerPoint and Word, Visio, HCL-PM Smart

TRAINING/CERTIFICATION

20010: Oracle Certified Associate (OCA), ITIL, NRF, CMMI 1.2.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages:

English, Hindi, Tamil

Driving licence:

Full UK licence held

Interests:

Travel (having lived, worked and studied in a number of countries).
 Entrepreneurship (actively involved in the Entrepreneurship & Innovation centre at the University of Birmingham to facilitate growth by providing young businesses access to management knowledge and financial support).

Covering letters

Your letter needs to show that you've researched the company and have thought about how you fit with their culture, values, approach and what aspects of their business you particularly admire such as their approach to client service, their reputation, recent innovations and so on.

It also needs to show an interest in the tasks/projects/challenges associated with the role, a commitment to developing your career and provide evidence that you have the skills, motivation and experience to succeed and add value.

Summary:

- One side of A4
- Provide evidence that you are a good candidate for the role
- Demonstrate career motivation and commitment
- Explain how you fit with the company

If you can replace the name of the company with a competitor and your letter makes sense for both companies then you have not written a good letter; each letter should be unique and recruiters can tell if you have merely copied and pasted from one letter to another.

Format:

Your address

Company name

Company address (not required for online applications)

Date

Dear Hiring Manager or the recruiter's name (if you know it) e.g. Dear Mr. Martin Re:

Application to [job title and number]

Opening statement (a few lines) to grab the recruiter's attention

Paragraph 1 – why you want the job and what you have to offer that is going to add value

Paragraph 2 – why you want to work at that company and build your career there

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely (if you know the recruiter's name)

Your name

Example

25 Anyplace Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Recruitment Manager
Anyfirm Limited
147 – 151 Every Street
Birmingham
B1 1ZZ

14th July 2018

Dear Mr Jones

Re: Application to Digital Marketing Graduate ref: 123458439

I've been following Anyfirm on LinkedIn for the past 12 months, hoping that one of your updates would be about needing someone like me to create the kind of online content and strategies that builds and retains relationships with customers rather than ignoring your great product offers. I like the fact that Anyfirm encourage graduates to stay curious and learn; I decided to take a risk and write my dissertation on CRM marketing despite the lack of data, which has pushed me to develop expertise in CRM techniques. I would love the opportunity to apply this knowledge and help Anyfirm continue its growth in the competitive food and drink industry.

I know you're looking for a graduate who can work flexibly across different aspects of marketing and the business. I have a range of experience in marketing and customer service settings. In my role at MC Fashion, I took responsibility for merchandising, developing an interest in how products could be presented effectively to customers in a store setting. I changed the store layout and introduced a loyalty card for regular customers, which led to a 10% increase in sales. I also took on a marketing role for the ice skating society at University, devising a new marketing recruitment strategy which increased society membership by 25% in one year. I enjoy looking for ways to make improvements to processes and teams; this has motivated me to apply for the role at Anyfirm which requires a graduate who can generate ideas to challenge existing marketing strategies.

I reached out to alumni working at Anyfirm through LinkedIn and talked to two graduates working in Marketing and Product Management. The variety of projects recent graduates have tackled, including the social media campaign for your new eco packaging, really interested me. I enjoy working in collaborative environments where I'm given the opportunity to take responsibility for challenging projects and I'm attracted by the early responsibility your graduates have been given. The chance to be mentored by experienced marketing professionals appeals to me and I see this as a great way of helping me to achieve my goal to be a successful future Digital Marketing Manager and contribute to Anyfirm's ambition to be market leader in the sector within five years.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Yours sincerely

Jose Merigan

How to contact Careers in Business



0121 4158012



<https://bham.targetconnect.net/leap/getCareersAdvice.html>



careersinbusiness@contacts.bham.ac.uk



We are in room G07 Alan Walters Building