

*Your guide to
writing an
effective CV and
covering letter.*



**Centre for Personal
& Career Development**

www.beds.ac.uk/careers

Sources:

The materials used in this guide have been adapted from the following resources:

Julia Plaski's CV and covering letter, examples of strong verbs and positive qualities (Effective CV Speak) - *University of Glasgow Careers Service, Fresh Talent Challenge Fund Project resource*

What to do and what to avoid when writing your CV, Lisa Cheung's CV and Effective CV Speak - *Cardiff University Careers Service, Resources for International students*

Victoria Price's covering letter - *University of Durham, Effective Applications Guide*

Information on working in the UK after your studies – *Brunel University Placement & Careers Centre*

Contents

A	Getting started	4
B	Skills Check Sheet	5 - 6
C	Application Tips - what to do and what to avoid when writing your CV	7
D	Advice from the Job Shop on styles of CV	8
E	Example CV – Michelle Rogers	9
F	Example of Job Advert taken from UoB Job Shop	10
G	Skills based CV – Daisy Cheung	11 - 12
H	Chronological CV – Julia Plaski	13 - 14
I	Skills-Based CV – Ali Khan	15 - 16
J	Layout for a covering letter/letter of application	17
K	Sample covering letter – Personnel Management	18
L	Sample covering letter – Graduate Analyst	19
M	Sample covering letter – Part Time Vacancy	20
N	Sample covering letter – Part Time Vacancy	21
O	Speculative letters	22
P	Example of speculative letter	23
Q	Effective CV Speak	24
R	Check your grammar and punctuation	25 - 26
S	Check your CV spelling mistakes	27 – 28
T	Checklist	32
U	Further information	33

A

Getting started

Before you start to write your CV it is very important to have a think about yourself and what you can offer an employer.

The mouse effect where aspects of your 'career profile' are represented by the acronym SQuEAK can help you to think about what you can offer in each of these areas:



- S** Skills
- Qu** Qualifications
- E** Experience
- A** Attributes
- K** Knowledge

i.e. Competencies!
(your ability to do the job)

This will enable you to market yourself more effectively in your CV. We have lots of examples and tips over the next few pages to help.



So...start to unlock your full potential.

Don't forget to put together a list of your skills and demonstrate them with examples – **use the Skills Check Sheet** on the next 2 pages to help you.



B

Skills Check Sheet

The following are some of the skills most often asked for by employers. Thinking of your education, activities and interests and work experience, write examples of evidence you have to show an employer you possess the skills highlighted below.

SKILLS	EDUCATION EVIDENCE	ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS EVIDENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE EVIDENCE
Communication Skills: Written & Oral			
Time/Project Management			
Organisation Administrative			
IT/specialist software			
Teamwork			

SKILLS	EDUCATION EVIDENCE	ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS EVIDENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE EVIDENCE
Problem Solving			
Drive and initiative			
Languages (include your level of fluency)			
Leadership			
Commercial Awareness			
Other			

C

Application Tips

✓ Do...

- ✓ Aim your CV at an identified target audience = check out the employer's website and the job description to help you
- ✓ Present your CV well. Make sure it is neat and clear. Check alignment of paragraphs
- ✓ Keep your CV to 1 or 2 sides of A4. No longer!
- ✓ Use short sentences -this stops you writing information that is not relevant
- ✓ Use words that make an impact and demonstrate your ability to achieve e.g. implemented, developed, etc. – for more ideas look at pages 18-21 in this guide and visit:
www.prospects.ac.uk → Jobs & Work
→ Applications, CVs and interviews
→ 'What makes an effective application'
- ✓ Think about how you use the space on your CV and allocate the most space to the information which is more relevant/important to the employer
- ✓ Show a Careers Adviser a draft
- ✓ Spell and grammar check your CV and covering letter and show it to a friend for proof-reading
- ✓ Focus your cover letter to the employer's needs and the job requirements

✗ Don't...

- ✗ **Don't** leave long gaps in employment and education. Employers will wonder what you have been up to
- ✗ **Don't** use phrases such as 'My duties include...' use action words e.g. organised, managed.
- ✗ **Don't** overuse 'I'
- ✗ **Don't** use fancy fonts and an unclear layout – make it easy for the employer to read
- ✗ **Don't** send out the same CV and covering letter to 100+ employers. You are unlikely to get a response – tailor it to the job and the company you are applying to
- ✗ **Don't** put Curriculum Vitae at the top, it's clear what it is. Put your name at the top

D

Advice from the Job Shop on styles of CV



Check this out before going through the following examples of CVs and Covering Letters!

Julia's CV

- is an example of a chronological (or biographical) CV. This is useful if you have:

- ✓ a lot of relevant experience in the sector you are applying to
- ✓ a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification
- ✓ logical career development
- ✓ no gaps in your work experience and education

Lisa's CV

- is an example of a skills-based (competency) CV. This is useful if:

- ✓ you have very little work experience or relevant work experience e.g. you are applying for your first full time job after your degree or postgraduate studies
- ✓ you are changing career – you have experience and qualifications in one area but are now wanting to work in a different sector
- ✓ you have gaps in your education or work experience

Work Permit

See International Office website www.beds.ac.uk/internationalsupport for information on permits and workshops on this topic.

E

Example CV – Michelle Rogers

The objective (optional) is short and relevant, introducing the reader to what the applicant is looking for

This person has no paid work experience. They have used their studies and other experiences to show their skills.

Miss Michelle Rogers
34 Tavistock Road, Luton
Bedfordshire
LU16RZ

Tel: 01582 456456
Mobile 09978 20000
rogerm@hotmail.com

Objective A motivated first year undergraduate with strong interpersonal skills looking for a part time customer service role.

Education BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance 2009 - present
University of Bedfordshire Relevant skills and attributes:

- Work well as part of a team on group tasks
- Able to meet deadlines for coursework
- 100% attendance record

Evidence is provided to back up the students claims

School A-levels: Maths A, Business Studies B, English B 2007 - 2009
GCSES: 6 As & 3Bs including Maths and English

Key Skills

Interpersonal

- Successfully negotiated with team on a group project who were in disagreement about our task.
- My ability to be friendly and approachable is evident in my ability to quickly adapt to university life and make new friends.
- Listening skills demonstrated when helping a housemate who was not adapting well to university.

Communication

- Able to clearly and articulately contribute to group discussions during tutorials at university.
- Strong written skills are shown in my coursework and written reports
- Communicated effectively and assertively with younger pupils at my school in my role as prefect.

IT

- Proficient IT user. Competent with Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Learn new skills quickly, for example, a new database system used in my degree course.

Numeracy

- Highly numerate with strong attention to detail, achieving strong grades in my school exams and continuing to use maths in my degree course.

Organisation & Adaptability

- Arranged my own travel itinerary for the summer before I started university, visiting several European countries on an Inter Rail trip.
- Successfully manage my degree workload.
- Able to adapt to changes in priorities and ensure that my work is completed to a high standard. Able to show flexibility in timetable changes.

References – Available upon request (adapted from www.bath.ac.uk/careers)

F Example of Job Advert taken from the UoB Job Shop

Vacancy Details

Employer	SSP Air Luton Airport
Job title	Customer Service Assistants
Closing date	20/5/2010
Number of posts	10
Job categories	Retail Customer Service
Paid/ unpaid	Paid
Salary/Hourly rate	£6.00 p/h plus shift meal
Job description	SSP Air require a number of full and part time summer workers to cover the busy summer season.

Employer is looking for people with team working skills, customer service skills, and business awareness

Customer service/sales assistants will have the opportunity to work in a number of branded catering and retail outlets such as Burger King, Yam Yam, and Marks & Spencer, Real Food Company.

The hours and days of work are flexible to suit the individual, we require new team members from 1st June to the 30th September 2010. Ideally suited university students during the summer break.

Person requirements

Employer will expect you to provide evidence in your CV or application form of English language ability and numeracy (maths) skills.

We are looking for customer focused, hardworking individuals with lots of personality to join a sales focused winning team managing the catering and retail contract at Luton airport.

Previous experience is not necessary as full training will be given, all we ask is that you are confident when talking to customers and enjoy working as part of a team. Applicants must be aged 18 years or over.

Degree requirements

- * 5 GCSEs or Equivalent
- * A good level of spoken English and basic numeracy skills if handling cash.
- * Must have the necessary work permit to work in the UK if on a student visa

How to apply

Please email your CV to Dan Simpson (Operations Manager) and we will contact you to arrange an interview.

Email: dan.simpson@ssp.uk.com

Employer will expect you to mention your visa status in your CV or covering letter

Location (s)

Luton area

Full- time/part-time

Full-time, part-time

Permanent/Temporary

Temporary

Additional timing Information:

Team members required from 1st June to 30th September 2010

G

Skills based CV - Daisy Cheung

Student uses profile to highlight relevant information for the job. They use similar language found in the job advert e.g. customer focussed. A career objective is not needed as the student has a specific job to apply to.

Miss Daisy Cheung

Term time address:

18a Cowper Street

Luton

LU1 3BQ

Tel: 0876266894

Email: daisychung@hotmail.com

Personal Profile

As a Business Management undergraduate I am aware of the importance of good customer service. I am able to make a positive first impression and project a professional image of myself and my employer. In addition I have retail experience in a customer focussed environment.

Key Skills

Communication:

- Through my retail work in China and my voluntary work as a Charity Retail Assistant in the U.K. I have developed excellent listening and speaking skills.
- Able to advise, problem solve and communicate effectively with a wide range of people from different nationalities and cultures including those whose first language is not English. My retail work in China was near to the International airport where I served international commuters on a daily basis.
- Good level of spoken English

Team Working:

- Experience of co-ordinating team and project meetings.
- Able to carry out different roles within a team including those that require a practical task focussed approach.

Numeracy:

- Advanced numeracy skills developed through my A level equivalent maths qualification.
- Pricing, cash handling and till reconciliation experience.

Student has correctly identified skills from the job advert and has given evidence of how she has developed them. She has used sub headings to help the reader.

Languages:

- Fluent in both written and spoken English and Mandarin, and I have a working knowledge of Cantonese and basic spoken Japanese.

Student has identified skills from voluntary work to strengthen her CV.

Work History

Oxfam Charity Retail Assistant (voluntary)

2008- present

- Duties include sorting goods, pricing, cleaning articles for sale, working on the till, serving customers, stocking shelves and keeping the work area clean and tidy.

Arkis Department Store (China) Customer Relations Adviser 2005 - 2007

- Advised customers on the selection of store cards.
- Achieved individual sales targets and contributed to 25% increase in customer store cards issued.
- Managed customer satisfaction survey and delivered presentation of findings to employer.

Education

BA Business Management University of Bedfordshire

2007- present

Areas of study include:

- Retail Management
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing
- E Business Management
- Accounting and Financial Management
- Entrepreneurship

Student uses degree modules to show employer relevant knowledge and potential. Modules written with capital letters e.g. Retail Management not retail management or Retail management

Lao Ning International School Shanghai

2005 – 2007

International Baccalaureate 67.5% equivalent to A level standard including maths and English.

Interests

Committee member for International Students Association where I helped organise and publicise the annual International Day.

I enjoy keeping up with current affairs especially issues concerning international business through watching television, reading business newspapers and researching on the internet.

Other Information

Nationality (optional)

Date of birth (optional)

Work permit – yes (optional)

This student has correctly put optional information like date of birth near the end of the CV. She has also paid attention to detail by mentioning her work permit which was mentioned in the job advert

References

Available upon request



Chronological CV - Julia Plaski

Julia Plaski

Flat 4, 330 Foster Hill Road
Bedford
MK40 3DE
Tel: 07839 729922
Email: Julia.plaski@student.beds.ac.uk

Education

2007- 2010 University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom

B.A (Hons) Accountancy with Finance (Grade 2:1)

Modules included: Financial Accounting, Taxation, Audit, Business Statistics, Finance, Financial Markets, Business Law and Management.

Skills Developed: Strong numeracy and analytical skills, business/commercial awareness, project management and group work skills. Helping to lead a team in the inter-university Flux Business Plan Game which improved my leadership and team working skills.

2005 - 2007 University of the Basque Country, Alava, Spain

Diploma in Spanish and English Languages and English Literature

Financial Experience

Summer 2009 Financial Services Authority, London

Internship (Business Growth Potential Project)

Worked in the FSA's Small Firms Division on a project which analysed SMEs, in the manufacturing sector to investigate business and investment growth potential.

Achievements:

- Analysed growth potential across wide range of markets, ran project on day-to-day basis, presented findings on time to senior management.
- Acquired understanding of the FSA's wider role through work shadowing and discussion.

Summer 2008 Morgan Stanley, London (Business Internship)

A member of the business support team, I provided effective administrative support for a range of business areas in the London office. Assisted in collecting and analyzing data which management could use to assess areas of inefficiency.

Achievements:

- Developed awareness of several online software packages, MS Excel and Visio.
- Participated in several large projects such as the improvement of business processes through Six Sigma methodology.
- Proved myself as a hard working, resourceful member of the team. Gained real life insight into the financial sector.

Additional Commercial Experience

2007 – 2008 Tinderbox Coffee Emporium, Bedford Barrista/ Supervisor

- Experience of team supervision and training of new staff in this popular coffee bar
- Creating and serving coffees to a high creative standard
- Working responsively and flexibly in the team to manage tasks at busy times
- Stock maintenance, multi-tasking in a very fast –paced environment

Achievements & Awards

Academic – 2009 Co-Winner of Project Prize for best team performance in Credit Crunch Challenge Week competition- as part of assessment centre simulation.

Societies – Launched a new society at the University of Bedfordshire. Following a presentation at the university from a representative of ACCA. I and friends set up an ACCA student group and recruited 30 students in five months. I also organised employer talks, employer visits, and work shadowing opportunities with local ACCA members in association with the Centre for Personal and Career Development.

Community Involvement – Worked with Read Campus Book Drive as project leader. Involved team training, budgetary and communication skills to coordinate student involvement and fundraising activities on campus. Raised £500 for children in Tanzania.

Sport – Member of the university rowing club, participating frequently in team racing events. I managed this alongside study and part-time working. This activity has taught me a lot about health & safety, motivation and encouraging others. It has enhanced my resilience and my determination to succeed.

Skills

IT- Advanced capability in all MS Office packages such as Excel, PowerPoint and Word. Working knowledge of Sage.

Languages- Polish – Native language, English –fluent, Spanish & Czech – intermediate reading, writing and spoken

References – Available upon request

I

Skills-Based CV – Ali Khan

Mr Ali Kahn

14 Green Street

Luton

Bedfordshire

LU2 3FY

Tel: 01582 564789

Email: kahna@yahoo.com

Profile

An experienced computer scientist with a successful track record of applying theory to provide practical solutions to business problems.

Education

MSc in Computer Science University of Bedfordshire (give grade) 2009 - 2010

Modules included:

*Structured Programming 66%

*Information Systems and Database Technology 71%

*Networks and Communication Systems 63%

*HCI and Computer Graphics 65%

*Operating Systems 67%

* Embedded Systems 52%

BSc Hons Computer Science (2:1) University of Bedfordshire

2006 – 2009

Technical Skills:

Programming Languages: C++, Java, Prolog, SQL, HTML

Applications: Microsoft Office Suite, Internet Explorer, Paint Shop Pro, Dreamweaver and several email packages.

Operating Systems: Unix, Windows NT, Windows XP

Technical Experience

MSc Individual Project: "A Security Analyser for the While Language"

Objective: design and implement a parser application for the While Language that determines whether any input program is secure.

Implemented a parser application for the While Language. Created GUI front end and used grammars and AST Tree and the Visitor Design Pattern. It recursively produces results, storing information in data structures. Technologies used were Java, JavaCC and Swing.

MSc Group Project: " Course Registration Programme"

Objective: develop a web-based application working from a relational database. Responsible for creation of database, forms created in Dreamweaver Ultradev 4 to allow administration of information to the database through a bean. This was completed for changes to, adding and deleting tuples. Also created login pages and used sessions under Tomcat. Technologies used were Java, JSP, JDBC and SQL.

BSc Group Project: " A Supermarket Simulator"

Involved in the development cycle/implementation in creating a management system. Identified classes required and developed this storing information in data structures. Technology used was C++

Work Experience

Jan 2009 to present, Company UK Ltd – London Graduate Support Engineer

- Providing second line support (on site/off site) in a busy trading environment to both stock borrow loan and collateral management systems. I support internal and external feeds from Bloomberg, Swift, and Gloss. I speak to users and developers at all levels and routinely use Unix, Java, FTP, SQL and Sybase.
- Created a partial funding prototype system working from a Sybase database using MVC Swing- this project included gathering user requirements.
- Created multiple batch programs.
- Programmed a J2EE compliant testing parser application which simulated JUnit and produced Ant like reports. Running on JBoss serve, finance files were then saved to a relational database which I created in PowerDesigner (Sybase). Working from a test plan I created tests for each finance file, overrode certain JUnit methods and used Stylesheets (XML/XSL) to produce Ant like reports on each test.

August 2006 to March 2007, XYZ Consultancy- London Graduate Consultant

- Change Management Consultant- co-ordinated risks/issues/changes, collated findings and reported to the client's Steering Committee.
- Junior Programmer- designed an interface to the client's insurance system with Swing using Jbuilder. Was also responsible for creating login pages using Java.
- Junior Programmer – Involved in the creation of a web shopping management system. I coded Java servlets/Classes and created XML/XSL file for web pages, retrieved data from a database and populated pages from this using Tomcat.

June 2005 to September 2005, ABC Firm- London- Summer Work Experience

Desk Project Co-ordinator

- Responsible for the daily running of project (received promotion shortly after arrival).
- Translated technical information into database format.
- Co-ordinated the activities of team of 10 engineers and 12 departments.
- Reported weekly targets/figures and drew up project schedules.
- Provided front-line contact for 1,000 + staff for technical queries and advice.

Activities/ Interests

Sport: I have been a committed member of the badminton team throughout university including acting as club treasurer.

Travel: I enjoy experiencing new cultures and have travelled to various parts of Europe and America.

References – Available upon request

J

Layout for a Covering Letter/Letter of Application

This is as important as the CV itself, indeed it is usually the first part of your application that an employer will look at. Usually no more than one page of A4, it has to convince the reader, in a very few words, that your CV is worth reading. A typical structure would include the following:

Your contact address
(Right justified)

The company address
(Left justified)

Date

Dear [NAME] Mr Smith (**don't include the person's first name just the surname**)
***Dear Sir/Madam**

The opening - introduce yourself briefly and, if appropriate, tell them which job you are applying for and where you saw the advert.

Why the job? - Try to show some of your decision making process. Target the letter and try to say something original.

Why the employer? - Why you are interested in them? Don't repeat recruitment literature but do show you have researched the company and know a bit about them.

Why you? - Usually this is a mixture of knowledge, skills and experience. Don't duplicate what is on your CV but hint and emphasise key points or strengths.

The ending - You can include the standard "look forward to hearing from you" but don't forget to sign the letter as well!

Yours sincerely,
***Yours faithfully**

[YOUR NAME]

*** Use 'Yours faithfully' when you don't know the name of the person and write 'Dear Sir/Madam'**



Sample Covering Letter – Personnel Management

47 Birkbank Road,
Crossgates
Leeds
LS15 2GJ

Mrs Helen Smith
Recruitment Manager
XYZ Stores
120-132 City Avenue
Bristol
BS4 9JT

6th December 2010

Dear Mrs Smith

I am in the final year of a modern languages degree at the University of Durham, and wish to apply for the Personnel Management Training Scheme advertised on the careers service website vacancy pages.

I have considered a range of options in management during my time at University. I visited several careers fairs and undertook research in the careers service and finally decided that personnel was the management function I wished to enter as it offered the chance to become professionally qualified, to contribute to all areas of the business and to become involved in staff training.

After investigating personnel work in the public, private and commercial sectors, I attended the presentation by XYZ store on 23rd November. I was impressed by the range of opportunities, the experiences of recent graduate recruits and the overall approachability of the managers. As a major retailer XYZ's focus on high quality goods, customer service and investment in staff development offer a desirable work environment with good opportunities for career progression.

The range of work experience that I have in retailing and the positions of responsibility that I have held abroad have given me a solid skills base. I have strong evidence to show that my communication and organisational skills are also well developed. I enjoy retail work and it has given me a valuable insight into the commercial environment at ground level. I believe that the retail sector is where I would be best able to use and develop my skills.

I enclose my CV outlining my experience to date and key skill areas which I believe are relevant to this post. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

V Price

Victoria Price

L

Sample Covering Letter – Graduate Analyst

**Flat 4/2
330 Sauchiehall Street
Glasgow G2 5RP**

14th February 2010

Mr Stephen Reagan
Graduate Recruitment Manager
Goldman Sachs
Fleet Street
London

Dear Mr Regan

Graduate Analyst Programme

I am writing to apply for your Graduate Analyst Programme advertised in the Prospects Directory 2010 and enclose my CV for your consideration.

I have been interested in investment banking for some years and this was confirmed during my work experience at both the FSA and Morgan Stanley. I feel that investment banking would offer an ideal opportunity to combine my skills and interests in finance, project management, team working, leadership and interest in business. I am particularly interested in financial modelling and working with clients towards solutions to their financial needs but also very interested in the range of asset management and capital markets services.

Goldman Sachs in London attracts me because it offers so many opportunities at your regional European headquarters. Through my project supervisor's contact at Goldman Sachs, I was also able to meet her recent graduate analyst colleagues last month. They all spoke highly of the early responsibility and the opportunities they had experienced. Also your business principles, commitment to client service and focus on employee learning and development all greatly attract me.

I have excellent numerical and analytical skills combined with strong team-working skills including leadership and motivating others as well as myself to succeed. The range of projects I worked on at university, at the FSA and at Morgan Stanley greatly enhanced my project management skills as well as my awareness of financial services. My additional experience commercially and in societies also demonstrates that I excel in leadership in demanding situations. I have a strong commercial focus and have developed services as well as fundraising opportunities and made an impact.

My secondary school education was in Poland so I am unsure about the equivalent UCAS points. However, I achieved an overall grade average of A+. I was within the top 5% of students in my final school year.

I hope that when you consider my CV, you will realise that I have the skills, experience and evidence of potential to excel as a trainee graduate analyst at Goldman Sachs. I am extremely interested in your organisation and am available for interview at any time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Julia Plaski

Julia Plaski



Sample Covering Letter - Part Time Vacancy

Priya Parmar
12 Park Street
Luton
Beds
LU1 3JU

20th July, 2010

Mr James Smith
The Manager
Galaxy Centre
Cineworld UK
Bridge Road
Luton, LU1 2PP

Dear Mr Smith

Re: Application for the position of Multi-functional Assistant

I would like to apply for the position of Multi-functional Assistant as advertised on the University of Bedfordshire's Careers Service website. I am currently studying for a MSc in Finance and Business Management at the university.

I would like to work at Cineworld UK because it provides a wide range of movie entertainment for customers e.g. it is now the largest exhibitor of Bollywood movies in the UK and works closely with directors in Mumbai. Also, in the last ten years Cineworld has become the fastest growing multiplex cinema chain in the country.

As you can see from my CV I have had a range of experience in customer service roles which have been developed whilst working with ICIC Bank and the Taj Hotels Group. I have further enhanced these skills through my studies and extra-curricular activities. I have organised several charity shows, including a fashion show, as well as fundraising for an organisation who assist underprivileged children.

I believe I am suitable for the above-mentioned position as I have substantial experience of customer service roles. Combining my studies with part time work has made it necessary for me to learn very quickly how to prioritise tasks and remain calm and flexible in a busy environment. I have had to be highly organised in order to meet tight deadlines both at work and study.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application together with the enclosed CV. I am available for interview at any time and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

P Parmar

Priya Parmar (Miss)

N

Sample Covering Letter - Part Time Vacancy

Fung Ling Nie
24 Park Square
Luton
LU1 3JT

2nd June, 2010

Sarah James
Head of Corporate Academic Advice & Counselling Service
University of Bedfordshire
Vicarage Street
Luton, LU1 3JU

You can use 'Ms' to address a letter to a woman if you don't know if she is married e.g. Mrs or Miss.

Dear Ms James

Re: Vacancy for a Filing Clerk

With reference to your advertisement for a Filing Clerk, I would like to confirm my interest in the position. I am currently in the second year of a Computer Science degree at the University of Bedfordshire which will be completed in 2010.

As you can see from my enclosed CV, I have developed various skills through my work experience and education. Whilst working as a Customer Supervisor at the One Net Café and as a Mandarin Teacher at St Paul's School I gained considerable experience and developed the following skills:

- **Communication** – at the One Net Café I was constantly interacting with customers on the phone and face-to-face with regards to their computer problems. These skills were further developed whilst providing Mandarin language and computer training for staff at St Paul's. My communication skills have been further enhanced through presentations at university.
- **Team-working** – my work experience at the One Net Café often involved setting up computers and working with other colleagues such as network support staff. Communication between staff was essential to ensure the computers were set up correctly for customers. At University, I have further developed this skill through group assignments and presentations where I have been responsible for putting together the ideas of my group on PowerPoint presentations.
- **Working under pressure** – as a supervisor at the One Net Café I was constantly under pressure dealing with several customers at once. Also, there were several occasions where customers would not pay for their time in the café and this would involve challenging them calmly.
- **Problem solving** – this skill has been demonstrated on a daily basis whilst being a teacher/trainer and a supervisor. This skill has also further developed whilst studying modules such as Web Design, team-building and project management.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Fung Ling Nie

Fung Ling Nie (Miss)

O

Speculative letters

Why use speculative letters?

Many vacancies are not advertised. The aim of a speculative letter is to get you an interview with the person you are writing to. This might be an informal interview for you to get more information about the company and their requirements, or it may be an interview for a specific job. Because there is likely to be no job description you need to do some research about the company.

As well as knowing about a particular company you need to know about the sector you want to work in. What you need to know might cover:

- What's changed in that field recently;
- What's happening in your field of work;
- Who are the companies that do the type of work you are interested in;
- what is their background, what is their reputation, what are their values;
- Is your sector dominated by small, large or medium sized businesses or a combination;
- Who's moving into the area you live in;
- Who's expanding or tendering for contracts;
- Who are the key people to contact in these organisations.

This information is likely to come from a variety of sources including your degree, business directories, local and national news papers, general and specialist journals and magazines, company news letters, annual reports, company websites, professional membership organisations, university careers dept, your network of contacts e.g. friends, key people you have met at careers fairs or events, family etc.

Two things increase your chances of being successful in using a speculative letter.

- Always send the letter to a named person in the organisation you are writing to.
- Follow up your letter by phone or email to ensure it has arrived and to make a personal contact

Basic format:

The Opening

Say why you are writing this might be in response to a news paper article, an article in a journal or on the Internet, as a follow up to a contact you have made at an event etc. Do not be too narrow about the type of work you are looking for.

The Persuasive Section

This is your chance to sell yourself. It is an opportunity to show your most relevant skills, knowledge and experience. Remember to show how your degree is appropriate to the company. This might be a special I.T programme you are familiar with it might be a current topic you have researched in your dissertation. This section can be two or three short paragraphs, instead of one long one for easier reading.

Closing Paragraph

A short paragraph is required to mention that your CV is enclosed, emphasise your interest in the company, and mention that you will follow up your letter and that you look forward to hearing from them.

P

Example of speculative letter

22 Broome Lane
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK40 4RD
Tel 01234 000000
Date

Mr Paul Smart
Personnel Director
Border Line Ltd
Key Business Park
Bedford
MK42 4BP

Dear Mr Smart

After reading about your recent head office move to the area in an article in the Luton Star Newspaper. I looked at your website and noticed that you are an expanding company, and are opening an office in Eastern Europe. I am writing to see if you have any current vacancies or are likely to have any in the near future. I am seeking to develop my career in administration and office management.

As you will see from my enclosed CV, I have relevant knowledge of the field, including two years as an office supervisor, and four years in general administration. My current part time position is with Hyper Retail, where I am responsible for a team of six staff dealing with the collation and administration of all documentation and records for the company.

I am a good communicator, who enjoys the challenge of a busy, demanding work environment. The skills and experience that I have which might be of particular interest to you include:

- Good staff management skills;
- Proficiency at prioritising workloads;
- The ability to implement standard procedures correctly and efficiently;
- Excellent I.T skills including Microsoft Access, PowerPoint and Excel.

My recent achievements include organising and supervising training for staff to integrate Microsoft applications. This resulted in a significant increase in departmental efficiency. I have also recently successfully completed a BA Hons degree in Business Administration at the University of Bedfordshire. My dissertation was on managing multicultural teams in the workplace.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Miss Angela Taylor

Q

Effective CV Speak

How you say something can be just as important as what you say. The same is true when writing a CV.

You need to use language that is **positive, professional** and **enthusiastic**.

General Tips for good “CV Speak”

- Choose words with an impact that will convey your ability to achieve. The best words to use are ACTION words. Examples are:

Achieved	Developed	Negotiated	Produced
Analysed	Implemented	Organised	Researched
Conducted	Initiated	Persuaded	
Created	Managed	Presented	

Start your sentences with action words. See the fuller list of helpful words to include in CVs on page 20.

- Keep your sentences short. This has the effect of making your CV sound punchy and concise. It will have more impact.
- Incorporate the “language” of your profession when describing your experience and skills. This language or jargon becomes “keywords” on your CV which increase your credibility. Many companies will scan your CV / application for these “key words” in order to decide whether or not to select you for interview. For ideas on professional language visit: www.prospects.ac.uk
→ **Jobs & Work** → **Explore Job Types** → Select an **Occupational Profile**
(either for a previous job to describe your responsibilities and duties or the job profile for the role you are applying for)
→ **Typical Work Activities** – refer to the action words used here to describe the job
- Tailor your CV to the demands of the employer. Make sure you give evidence for possessing the required skills and use appropriate linking structures e.g. “my communication skills are **demonstrated by** the two assessed presentations I delivered in my second year...” or “My leadership style is consultative and negotiative as **evidenced in** my role as Student representative for my course...”
- Avoid “Lead In” phrases like “My duties included ... ” or “I was involved in ... ”. Go straight to the point e.g. “Organised a charity event ... ” or “Co-ordinated the social activities of the Asian Society ... ”
- Always use positive language. Sell yourself – if you don’t, no one else will do it for you.

R

Check your grammar and punctuation

Use title Mr, Miss or Mrs to avoid any potential embarrassment for you or the employer.

Miss Jane Smith
106 farley Hill road
luton
Lu1 5eq
Tel: 8979695549
Email: smith.j@gmail.com

Use capitals for Farley Hill Road and postcode LU1 5EQ plus Luton as we use capital letters for proper nouns including the name of a person or place

Personal Profile

A current MSc Human Resource Management student in the University of Bedfordshire.
Seeking work experience in HR environment.

Wrong word correct version at the University of Bedfordshire not in the University of Bedfordshire

Key Skills

IT Skills
Expert in Word, Excel and PowerPoint

The key skills section of the CV is a flexible part of a CV. You can use sub headings. Before writing it identify the key skills from the job description you are applying to and use **appropriate** sub headings. Choose your words carefully the word Expert implies an exceptionally high level of skill. It would be better to use words like proficient, competent, experienced. Give examples to back up any claims

(Correct way of presenting skills. You can use bullet points but only use one style through out your CV)

- Proficient IT user. Competent with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Learn new skills quickly, for example , a new database system used in my degree course

Education

MSC Human Resource Management - university of Bedford

Use correct abbreviation MSc, MA, BSc, BA, PhD, MBA Correct name of institution University of Bedfordshire Note use of upper case U for University

BA Hons Business Administration and Marketing University of Bedfordshire 2006 – 2009
Modules included: marketing theory, accounting Principles ,Organisational environment

Use capital letters when listing modules
E.g. Marketing Theory, Accounting Principles, Organisational Development

Achievements

Awarded Top Student at the University of Bedfordshire 2009
Increased monthly sales turnover by 10,000 INR as Team Leader at IMB computers.

When describing achievements give some context. E.g. Awarded Top HR Student at the University of Bedfordshire 2009 for producing consistently high quality work.

Don't usually use foreign currency or abbreviations like INR use £ or percentages to quantify achievements

S

Check your CV spelling mistakes

Incorrect spellings are highlighted correct spelling in brackets

Mr Raj Singh

8, Castle Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 1GF
Mobile: 07555599993 Email: singh.t@yahoo.com

Personal Profile

I am a student at the University of Bedfordshire and have **experiance** (experience) in administration, sales and customer service. I have good ICT skills and can work in any computer based environment. I also have good **interpersonnel** (interpersonal) skills and am able to project a professional image of myself and my employer. Methodical and **practicle** (practical) approach to problem solving.

Key Skills

Communication Skills:

From several of my job **rolls** (roles) I have developed excellent communication skills. I can communicate with people at all levels including verbally, in writing and via presentations. I am confident using the telephone and in face to face situations.

Team Working:

I am a flexible and experienced team player who works hard and excels in any environment and can work with others or on own initiative. Responsible for **liasing** (liaising) with head steward at Luton Town football club.

Ability to Work Under Pressure:

I have good planning skills and can prioritise my daily workload efficiently and effectively and also am able to work under pressure.

Customer Service:

From my role with Luton Football Club and Little Bengal I have increased my knowledge, skills and experience of dealing with customers' enquiries and understanding of the importance of **customers** (customer) service.

Organisation Skills:

I have excellent organisational skills and am able to organise people, data, meetings and events effectively. These skills have been developed through my paid work and study **experiance** (experience).

Education

Bachelor of Science with Honours in Computing 2009 – 2012
University of Bedfordshire

Higher Secondary School Certificate (Equivalent to A Levels) 2007
Roper Public **Skool** (School) and College Subjects studied: Mathematics,
English, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

Secondary School Certificate (Equivalent to GCSE)
Roper Public School and College subjects studied: Mathematics, English and Social Science

Employment (Employment) History

04/09 to 06/09 Crew Member Little Bengal
Duties included taking orders from customers, handling cash, using the till, serving customers in a polite and friendly manner.

10/08 to 03/09 Steward Luton Town Football Club
Responsibilities included covering different sports events, listening , questioning and giving directions, working in a team to **acheve** (achieve) work targets.

03/08 to 07/08 Waiting Staff Nandos
Duties included taking customer orders and serving them in a professional manner. Handling cash and supporting the manager as directed. Awareness of health and safety issues in the workplace.

02/07 to 10/07 Sales **Assistance** (Assistant) Pizza – Hut
Responsibilities included serving customers, making customers aware of promotions, taking orders and working in a team.

Hobbies and **Intrests** (Interests):

Surfing the Internet, reading, playing cricket and football. I enjoy **traveling** (travelling) to other countries and learning about different cultures.

Comittee (committee) member of university computer society.

Trainings (Training)

Achieved food handling certificate level 2 (2009)

Referees (References) available upon request

Tips: Remember to use your spell check

You can use websites like www.yourdictionary.com/library/misspelled.html for a list of 100 most misspelled words in English.

You can also use a search engine and type something like common spelling mistakes in CVs

Grammar Tips for good “CV Speak”

- Use the active voice when describing your experience. Avoid the passive voice e.g. say *“Increased profits by 10%”* rather than *“Profits were increased by 10%”*.
- Avoid over-using the personal pronoun “I”. When you use the active voice, the reader assumes you are the one performing the action so there is no need to use “I” in this instance e.g. instead of saying *“I expanded production by 25%”*, say *“Expanded production by 25%”*. The use of “I” is awkward when outlining accomplishments. Worst of all, it tends to make you and your CV appear self-centred rather than employer-centred.
- All education or employment that has been completed should be reported in the past simple, in the active voice e.g. *“I studied Accounting and Economics”*, *“arranged sporting and social activities”*.
- To emphasise your achievements, consider using the present perfect e.g. *“This research has now been published in...”*, *“This system I established has now been introduced throughout the company”*.
- Use the present continuous to report your current study or to emphasise an ongoing activity e.g. *“For my final year project, I am carrying out research into...”*
- If you are reporting your current employment use the present simple to give details of your job title and responsibilities e.g. *“I work as the systems analyst in a large department and my responsibilities include...”*
- Use the past simple for past positions of responsibility e.g. *“Held the position of head prefect at school..”* or *“Served as Steward in Music Festival...”*
- Use the present perfect to emphasise the length of time you have held a position of responsibility e.g. *“I have been on the committee for the past two years...”*
- Use the present simple to talk about current positions of responsibility and current hobbies and make sure you state what this shows about you e.g. *“I enjoy playing a variety of sports and am a member of a small team in my hall where I have responsibility for publicity...”*

List of Helpful Words to use in your Profile and throughout the CV:

Able	Enthusiasm	Negotiated
Accomplished	Established	Notable
Achieved	Examined	Operated
Adaptable	Exceeded	Organised
Administered	Excelled	Oversaw
Advised	Experienced	Participated
Analysed	Expertise	Persuaded
Articulate	Explained	Planned
Assessed	Expressed	Problem Solving
Audited	Extended	Processed
Benefited	Flexible	Professional
Budgeted	Forecasted	Profitability
Capable	Founded	Projecting
Challenging	Fulfilled	Promoted
Channelled	Gained	Provided
Commitment	Gathered	Qualified
Communicated	Geared	Represented
Compiled	Guiding	Researched
Completed	Handled	Resolved
Conducted	Headed	Resourceful
Conscientious	Helped	Responsible
Consistent	Illustrated	Satisfied
Constructive	Implemented	Selected
Contribution	Improved	Setting goals
Conversant	Improvised	Significant
Co-ordinated	Incentive	Skilful
Creative/Created	Increased	Specialised
Cultivated	Influenced	Stimulated
Decisive	Inform	Studied
Defining	Initiative/Initiated	Succeeded
Delivered	Inspected	Successfully
Designed	Inspired	Tact
Detected	Instructed	Team player
Determined	Interpreted	Tested
Developed	Interviewed	Trained
Devised	Judgement	Trouble shooting
Diagnosed	Led	Tutored
Diplomatic	Lectured	Uncovered
Directed	Liaised	Understood
Displayed	Listening	Undertook
Driving	Learning	Upgraded
Edited	Maintained	Utilised
Effective	Managed	Versatile
Empathy	Manipulated	
Empowering	Mediated	
Enhance	Memorised	
Ensure	Monitored	
Enterprising	Motivated	

Action phrases...work history/work experience

- ...to boost productivity
- ...to increase efficiency
- Carried out extensive research in ...
- Chosen to ...
- Co-ordinated ...
- Dealt with ... customers on a daily / weekly basis
- Delivered high standards of ...
- Developed and implemented processes and procedures to ...
- Developed relationships with ...
- Established ...
- Gained in-depth knowledge and experience of ...
- Improved ...
- Managed and motivated ...
- Prepared ... presentations and reports for ...
- Reported to ...
- Responsible for ...
- Successfully implemented ...
- Successfully increased ...
- Successfully introduced ...
- Successfully led ...
- Successfully negotiated with ...

Other examples:

Strong verbs you can use in your CV:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|
| ▪ Achieve | ▪ Raise money | ▪ Devise |
| ▪ Enjoy | ▪ Implement | ▪ Improve |
| ▪ Prepare | ▪ Set up | ▪ Organise |
| ▪ Analyse | ▪ Co-ordinate | ▪ Research |
| ▪ Evaluate | ▪ Investigate | ▪ Manage |
| ▪ Budget | ▪ Demonstrate | ▪ Negotiate |
| ▪ Lead | ▪ Develop | |

Examples of positive qualities are:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Accurate | ▪ Responsible |
| ▪ Impartial | ▪ Self-reliant |
| ▪ Resilient | ▪ Persuasive |
| ▪ Adaptable | ▪ Conscientious |
| ▪ Logical | ▪ Determined |
| ▪ Resourceful | ▪ Tactful |
| ▪ Methodical | ▪ Commercial aware |

Make sure you understand what it means and use it accurately!
Be ready to explain it further in interviews.

T

Checklist

- Does your CV and covering letter look professional (no spelling or grammar errors)?
- Have you targeted/tailored your CV and covering letter to the job description?
- Have you kept your CV honest and credible? Make sure that you can back up/support any claims you make at an interview.
- Are you showing the employer through your CV and covering letter a real interest and enthusiasm for the vacancy?
- Have you made yourself stand out?

U

Further information



Log on to BREO → Careers Tab



Visit our website at

www.beds.ac.uk/careers/application-resources



Book an appointment for a 'Quick Query' interview

with a careers adviser through our website



Use E-Guidance through our website

to submit your career related query / CV

**...and remember, we are here to help you
for up to 3 years after you graduate**