

# Writing a CV for for A&F/A&M students at KBS



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## Aims

- To explore different types of work experience
- To consider the advantages of relevant work experience
- To clarify the different purposes of the CV and the covering letter
- To review your current CV in context of finance/accountancy
- Consider improvements to increase the impact of your CV
- To provide help with any tricky aspects of your CV

## Your professional accountancy CV



## CV & covering letter

### CV

- List of achievements and qualifications
- Details (facts, dates, grades)
- Clear chronological order to show time scale [in reverse]
- Written communication: articulate succinctly
- Showing relevant information at a glance



### Covering letter

- Making links between your CV and the job
- Giving explanations, reasons, interpretations
- Drawing together experiences and achievements (from different areas of your CV)
- Written communication: articulate coherently
- Showing your interest in the organisation/the job



## What do Chartered Accountants do?

- Provide financial services - trustworthy information about financial records (financial reporting, taxation, auditing, forensic accounting, etc.)
- Play a strategic role by providing professional advice
- Aim to maximise profitability on behalf of their client or employer
- Work in many public practice firms, industry and commerce, as well as in the not-for-profit and public sectors
- Can also work in treasury management, procurement, financial management or in reporting roles

## What are accountancy employers looking for?

- **ICAEW:** three GCSEs, two A-levels and a 2:1 or first class honours degree (some accept a 2:2)
- General business awareness and interest in business
- Self-motivation and commitment (need to combine working with studying for professional qualification)
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Organisational and time management skills
- IT proficiency, especially Excel
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Numeric skills
- Leadership capability and team working skills
- Self-motivation and taking initiative
- Integrity and trustworthiness

## Key points for your CV

- Chronological format, starting with education
- Using reverse chronological order (starting with now, working backwards)
- **1 or 2 pages**, well-balanced for UK applications (different formats may apply for other countries)
- **KISS** (keep it short and simple) – clear font, concise statement, phrases only, avoiding 'I'
- **Headings** – need to stand out clearly by using bold & capital letter or underline or other format
- Display **dates consistently** (either on the right or on the left), include months and year for work experience

## Key points

- **Include 'soft' skills** throughout your CV where you have used them (e.g. team working, problem solving, commercial awareness, communication, taking initiative, leadership)
- **Avoid negative language**  
(only, had to..., was asked to..., was given the task to...)  
**Example:**
  - \* Was asked to take minutes during the meeting
  - Better:**
  - \* Took minutes during the meeting, typed these up and disseminated these to participants

## Main structure

- Name and contact details
- [Profile – optional]
- Education and Qualifications
- Work Experience
- Additional Skills
- Interests and Achievements
- References [optional]

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## Contact details - example

### **CURRICULUM VITAE**

**Name:** Martin Baker  
**Address:** 23 Park Road  
Canterbury  
CT5 8MA  
**Tel:** 01227 876210  
**Mob:** 07712 345678  
**Email:** [mazbaz@gmail.com](mailto:mazbaz@gmail.com)  
**D.o.B.:** 2 May 1996  
**Nationality:** British

**Martin Baker**  
23 Park Road,  
Canterbury, Kent CT5 8MA  
07712 345678  
[martin.baker@gmail.com](mailto:martin.baker@gmail.com)

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## Profile – an example

I am a highly motivated, hard-working and reliable individual who is looking for a graduate position to build on my skills and work experience. I am diligent and work well in a team and on my own initiative. I have good analytical and problem solving skills, and am looking for a challenging and interesting position that will enable me to develop my skills.

**Note: Example of how NOT to present yourself!**

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## Adapting your profile to the role

Final-year Accounting & Finance (Accounting & Management) student with year in industry finance experience and strong team working, communication and analytical skills. Highly motivated and committed to a career in accountancy.

(OR Seeking entry-level training position in accountancy.)

## Education

### **2010 – 2013 BA Accounting and Finance (expected 2:1) University of Kent**

- Modules include .... / OR short summary + relevant details
- Information about project work / skills gained

### **2004– 2009 Secondary school, place**

- A-Levels: Geography (B), Business Studies (B), Maths (A)
- 9 GCSE's: grades A-C, including Maths A and English B  
[state UK equivalent if your school qualification is from outside the UK – make this meaningful]

## Work Experience section

- Date (month/year), job title, employer, town/country
- State tasks, achievements, skills applied
- Be succinct; use bullet points; **make it relevant**, using action verbs and appropriate business language

**7/2012 – 9/2012 Bar Assistant**

**The Red Lion, Canterbury**

- Responsible for taking customers' orders and delivering prompt service
- Took cash and card payments, developing strong mental arithmetic when checking sums and change
- Communicated with wide range of customers, worked in small team and developed good interpersonal skills
- Worked well under pressure during peak opening times

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## Accounting Experience

**7/2013 – 8/2013 Accounts Assistant**

**Carter & Co., Ramsgate, Kent**

- Responsible for processing clients' sales and purchase invoices, also petty cash transactions and credit card reconciliations
- Prepared spreadsheets with up-to-date information for quarterly HMRC Sales returns, using Excel
- Worked in small team of four and learnt to work well under pressure; developed good attention to detail and time management skills
- Dealt effectively with telephone enquiries from clients, developing strong communication skills

## Describing tasks using action verbs

### Use short phrases, beginning with an action verb, e.g

analysed customer data ... and make good use of the whole line space

- **Communicated** with customers over the telephone, provided information about products and prices and dealt effectively with additional enquiries
- **Designed and implemented** new system for recording customer data, using MS Access
- **Researched** market share of main competitors online and produced written report for senior management prior to sales meeting
- **Liased** with other departments to ensure smooth transition of process
- **Monitored** customer comments and feedback questionnaires
- **Negotiated** hire fees for locations for exhibitions and other events
- **Organised** work schedule for team of four to ensure smooth transition
- **Presented** new system for logging customer data to team, using PowerPoint
- **Trained** and supervised two new members of staff
- **Worked in a team** of five, making telephone calls to selected customers

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## Being concise

### Avoid introductions:

- *Whilst working for this company, I was asked to cash up at the end of the day and calculate the takings.*
- Better: Responsible for reconciling till on daily basis
  
- *During this experience, I had to check stock and was asked to look after the replenishing of goods as needed*
- Better: Established stock availability and replenished goods

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## Being concise

### **Avoid interpretations:**

- I had the chance to work with many different customers *which allowed me* to improve my customer services and communication skills.
- Better: Worked with wide range of customers and developed strong customer service and communication skills

## Additional Skills

- **IT skills:** advanced knowledge of Microsoft Excel, including macros; knowledge of SAGE bookkeeping package; highly competent in using databases, PowerPoint and Word; achieved ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence)
- **Languages:** indicate level; include IELTS score if English is not your native language or any other test results
- **Other:** Driving licence

[include any other relevant training courses, e.g.  
*Excel for Business* training course in November 2013]

## Make your CV work for you

- Make the most of the relevant work experience you may have already by using effective headings:
  - ACCOUNTING / FINANCE EXPERIENCE
  - BUSINESS EXPERIENCE
- Then use OTHER EXPERIENCE e.g. could include supermarket work or retail work, for example – as appropriate

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## Interests and Achievements

- Organise into **subject areas**, using sub-headings
- Emphasise **team or group activities** (sports, music, student societies, interest groups etc.); include responsibilities and contributions
- Travel - cultural insights; flexibility/adaptability; planning; improvement of language skills
- **Avoid** one word interests: music, football, tennis, travel [make it meaningful]
- **Avoid** reading, socialising, meeting new people
- **Alternative headings:** Additional Information, Interests and Responsibilities (as you wish)

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## References

- Taken up towards the end of the recruitment process
- Normally two references (your tutor and someone from your last work experience or previous work experience)
- Keep full contact details (as often taken up in writing)
- Make this space work for you:
  - use simple statement to fill up space, e.g. *References available on request.* (but not essential)
  - If ¼ page left, insert referees (name and job title) and their full contact details (address, email and telephone)

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## Resources

CES: [www.kent.ac.uk/ces](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces)

### Accountancy and Finance Careers Information:

- [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) > types of jobs for detailed information about finance and accounting careers
- [www.insidecareers.co.uk](http://www.insidecareers.co.uk) (incl. Chartered Accountancy, Tax, Banking & Investments)
- [www.targetjobs.co.uk/finance](http://www.targetjobs.co.uk/finance)

### Professional Bodies:

- ACCA [www.accaglobal.com](http://www.accaglobal.com)
- Association of International Accountants [www.aiaworldwide.com](http://www.aiaworldwide.com)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants [www.cimaglobal.com](http://www.cimaglobal.com)
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (**ACA qualification**)
- <http://careers.icaew.com/> (Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland [www.icas.org.uk](http://www.icas.org.uk); Chartered Accountants Ireland [www.charteredaccountants.ie](http://www.charteredaccountants.ie))
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy [www.cipfa.org](http://www.cipfa.org)

Any questions?



Please email me:

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