

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
D.o.B.: 2 May 1996
Nationality: British

Martin Baker
23 Park Road,
Canterbury, Kent CT5 8MA
07712 345678
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
- **Liaised** 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

Accountancy and Finance Careers Information:

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

Professional Bodies:

- ACCA www.accaglobal.com
- Association of International Accountants www.aiaworldwide.com
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants 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; Chartered Accountants Ireland www.charteredaccountants.ie)
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy www.cipfa.org

Any questions?



Please email me:

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