



ADVICE & TIPS – UK

The Application Letter

In general a letter of application should create enough interest to make the potential employer want to look at your application in more detail and hopefully invite you for an interview. Your application letter, however, should not provide too much information about experience and qualifications; this will be provided in your CV.

In the UK it is common to send a typed application letter and a CV of one to two pages maximum. In the letter you should explain who you are, why you are applying to that organisation, what relevant skills, qualification and experience you have and why you are the right candidate for this particular job. But do not overestimate your qualities, since this could offend the British sense of modesty. Use instead a straightforward, respectful tone and illustrate, wherever possible, particular skills with examples. If you mention for instance your team working skills, make sure you illustrate this with an example where you had to use these skills.

If you do not know to whom you are addressing the covering letter start with 'Dear sir/madam' and finish with 'Yours faithfully'. However, if you do know the name (which is of course a better starting point) it is customary to start with 'Dear Mr/Ms X' and close with 'Yours sincerely'. Some companies may ask for a photograph.

Many companies use application forms (98% uses them for at least some vacancies). Employers will use your application form as a first-stage filter, in order to draw up a shortlist of interviewees. Extra-curricular activities are considered of great importance. Make a copy of your form, so you can refresh your memory before the interview.

The Curriculum Vitae

A British CV is short, maximum two pages, but the tendency is even to shorten the CV to one page, as busy employers may not make it to the second page of a CV, certainly not when there is nothing attention grabbing on the first page. That is also the reasoning behind the reverse-chronological order of CVs. You start with your personal details, but omit your place of birth, your marital status and religion. Since UK companies generally attach less importance to the candidate's marital status than in most Continental European countries, this saves space for a list of hobbies and sporting pursuits. It is customary to give the contacting details of two references at the end of your CV. Do not just mention 'references available on request', but do provide at least people's name and job title, but preferably their entire contact details. You can also ask a professor of your university to be a reference for you, but you have to ensure that these people know you are putting them in your CV as referee, because most British employers will contact the given references.

What information should a CV include?

- Personal details - Normally these would be your name, address, date of birth (although with age discrimination laws now in force this isn't essential), telephone number and email.

- Education and qualifications - Your degree subject and university, plus A levels and GCSEs or equivalents. Mention grades unless poor!
- Work experience - Use action words such as developed, planned and organised. Even work in a shop, bar or restaurant will involve working in a team, providing a quality service to customers, and dealing tactfully with complaints. Don't mention the routine, non-people tasks (cleaning the tables) unless you are applying for a casual summer job in a restaurant or similar. Try to relate the skills to the job. A finance job will involve numeracy, analytical and problem solving skills so focus on these whereas for a marketing role you would place a bit more more emphasis on persuading and negotiating skills.
- Interests and achievements - Keep this section short and to the point. As you grow older, your employment record will take precedence and interests will typically diminish greatly in length and importance. Don't put many passive, solitary hobbies (reading, watching TV, stamp collecting) or you may be perceived as lacking people skills. Hobbies that are a little out of the ordinary can help you to stand out from the crowd: skydiving or mountaineering can show a sense of wanting to stretch yourself and an ability to rely on yourself in demanding situations. Any interests relevant to the job are worth mentioning: current affairs if you wish to be a journalist; a fantasy share portfolio such as Bullbearings if you want to work in finance. Any evidence of leadership is important to mention: captain or coach of a sports team, course representative, chair of a student society, scout leader. Anything showing evidence of employability skills such as teamworking, organising, planning, persuading, negotiating etc.
- Skills - The usual ones to mention are languages (good conversational French, basic Spanish), computing (e.g. "good working knowledge of MS Access and Excel, plus basic web page design skills" and driving ("full current clean driving licence"). If you are a **mature** candidate or have lots of relevant skills to offer, a skills-based CV may work for you
- Referees - Normally two referees are sufficient: one academic (perhaps your tutor or a project supervisor) and one from an employer (perhaps your last part-time or summer job).

There is no single "correct" way to write and present a CV but the following general rules apply:

- It is targeted on the specific job or career area for which you are applying and brings out the relevant skills you have to offer
- It is carefully and clearly laid out: logically ordered, easy to read and not cramped
- It is informative but concise
- It is accurate in content, spelling and grammar

In general, a new graduate's CV should cover no more than two sides of A4 paper.

If you can summarise your career history comfortably on a single side, this is fine and has advantages when you are making speculative applications and need to put yourself across concisely. However, you should not leave out important items, or crowd your text too closely together in order to fit it onto that single side. Academic and technical CVs may be much longer: up to 4 or 5 sides.

Tips on presentation

- Your CV should be carefully and clearly laid out - not too cramped but not with large empty spaces either. Use bold and italic typefaces for headings and important information
- Never back a CV - each page should be on a separate sheet of paper. It's a good idea to put your name in the footer area so that it appears on each sheet.
- Be concise - a CV is an appetiser and should not give the reader indigestion. Don't feel that you have to list every exam you have ever taken, or every activity you have ever been involved in - consider which are the most relevant and/or impressive.
- Be positive - put yourself over confidently and highlight your strong points. For example, when listing your A-levels, put your highest grade first.
- Be honest - although a CV does allow you to omit details (such as exam resits) which you would prefer the employer not to know about, you should never give inaccurate or misleading information.
- The sweet spot of a CV is the area selectors tend to pay most attention to: this is typically around the upper middle of the first page, so make sure that this area contains essential information.
- If you are posting your CV, don't fold it - put it in a full-size A4 envelope so that it doesn't arrive creased.

The Application Procedure

UK companies make extensive use of assessment centres. The tendency among some companies is to use aptitude tests at the beginning of the selection process before interviews take place. During an assessment centre - which can last up to three days - intelligence, social and communicative skills and management qualities are assessed. (Please note, that teams do not need leaders only!)

At the interview, a panel of three or more selectors often confronts a candidate. Rather than attempting to discern your personality, they will try to assess your technical competencies. If you have made it towards the interview stage, you have passed the first hurdles. The employer is seriously interested in you and during the interview they want to find out more about your qualifications, skills and personality.

Making career decisions can be challenging and sometimes graduates struggle to know where to begin. Looking at vacancies is a common starting point but many vacancies are never advertised, so looking at job adverts will only ever give you a biased and partial picture of the graduate labour market in the UK. If you are unsure which career will suit you, you would be better to spend some time thinking about yourself. Become better acquainted with yourself; be aware of your skills, interests and what motivates you. Think about the skills you wish to use at work, your feelings about further study, which working environments appeal to you, the sort of lifestyle you want and so on.

On-line applications are nowadays common. In fact, a lot of job agencies, but also employers who publish their vacancies on-line provide the opportunity to complete the job application form on-line.

Examples of good and bad CVs: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/cvexamples.htm>

Jennifer Brahms

2 Green Lane, Exeter, Devon, EX6 6SE,
Tel: 01342 875800, Mobile: 0794728562 Email: jenny.brahms@virgin.net
Nationality: British; Date of Birth: 12.03.84

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 2006-2008 **University of Birmingham**
MSc in Poverty Reduction and Development Management
Dissertation topic: The Implications of Rights Approaches for Development Practice: A Case Study of Rights Approaches to Children Working in Carpet Factories, in Domestic Work and on the Streets in Kathmandu. This was based upon 5 weeks of primary research in Kathmandu.
- 2002-2005 **Keble College, University of Oxford**
BA Hons. Geography 2:2
- 1995-2002 **Exeter School**
A-levels: Geography A, English A, French A
GCSEs: 8 at grade A*, 2 at grade A, including Maths and English

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- 2007 **Stagiaire in Directorate-General EuropeAid**, Coordinating Unit for the ACP countries:
 - Investigated and reported on the internal organisation and responsibilities of EuropeAid.
 - Organised the database for South Africa.
- 2006 European Commission, Brussels
Stagiaire in Directorate-General Development, Unit E4, South Africa Desk:
 - Reviewed financing agreements for aid to South Africa.
 - Analysed evaluation reports on development projects.
 - Attended meetings in the Council and Parliament.
 - Updated the South Africa website.
 - Responded to information requests regarding EU initiatives in South Africa.

VOLUNTARY WORK

- Nov 2006-March 2007 **Central Charity**, Brussels
Committee Member: Assessed requests for funding from NGOs.
- June 2003 **Salvation Army**, Paraguay, Asuncion
Carer: Looked after children living in a hostel.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Travelling: I have travelled extensively in Central America and the Far East.

OTHER SKILLS

Languages: French, good written and spoken; German, basic knowledge.
IT Skills: Good knowledge of word processing and spread-sheet packages.

INTERESTS

Regularly play tennis and enjoy socialising and going to the theatre. As an undergraduate I rowed and played tennis for my college. Flute, Grade 6; Group Drama, Grade 8.

REFEREES

Dr Kate Brown, Department of International Dev., Birmingham University, B15 2TT, Tel: 0121 4147591
Dr Paul Sullivan, Tutor, Keble College, Oxford, OX1 3PG, Tel. 01865 274629

Jennifer Brahms

2 Green Lane, Exeter, Devon, EX6 6SE,
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BA Hons. Geography 2:2
- 1995-2002 **Exeter School**
A-levels: Geography A, English A, French A
GCSEs: 8 at grade A*, 2 at grade A, including Maths and English

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Stagiaires Directorate-General EuropeAid, Unit C1, Coordinating Unit for the ACP countries
European Commission, Brussels, in Directorate-General Development, South Africa Desk
- Voluntary work Committee Member, Central Charity, Brussels
Carer, Salvation Army, Paraguay, Asuncion

SKILLS/PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Organisation As President of the Directorate-General Development Stagiaire Party Committee, I organised the annual Christmas party for the Directorate. I assisted with open days and social events at Keble College. Through my recent project work I have demonstrated my ability to plan a timetable and stick to it, to meet deadlines and to store information effectively.
- Communication Discussed sensitive issues with government officials, members of NGOs and child workers in Kathmandu as part of my research for my MSc dissertation.
- Initiative Gave presentations as a teaching assistant at Birmingham University. During my stagiaires I was given responsibility for a number of projects where I had to work independently. In my other interests I have taken an active role. I initiated and planned a number of expeditions to Central America and the Far East. The Oxford system allowed me to be self-directing and to work independently to meet deadlines.
- Team-working In my course projects and while travelling with a number of people, I found that working as a team is the most efficient way to achieve the best result. I was a member of Keble College Netball Team, and I enjoyed the social interaction inherent in the sport.
- Commitment I had to have considerable motivation and commitment to successfully realise my travel plans and to gain the opportunity to complete two stagiaires.
- Languages French, good written and spoken; German, basic knowledge.
- Computer Skills Good knowledge of word-processing and spread-sheet packages.

REFEREES

Dr Kate Brown, Department of International Dev., Birmingham University, B15 2TT, Tel: 0121 4147591
Dr Paul Sullivan, Tutor, Keble College, Oxford, OX1 3PG, Tel. 01865 274629

ALLAN SMITHEY

Date of Birth: 13 November 1969 Nationality: British as@dmu.ac.uk
Address: 6 Barton Close, Narborough, Leicestershire, LE9 5ID, UK Tel. 0116 2764983

Education

- 1992–1995 University of Oxford
DPhil Theoretical Physics: Foundations of non-equilibrium statistical dynamics
- 1991–1992 University of Minnesota
MS Physics
- 1988–1991 University of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam College
BA (Hons) Natural Sciences, First Class
- 1981–1988 Harlow School
A levels: Maths (A), Chemistry (A), Physics (A), Further Maths (A)
O levels: 5 at grade A, 3 at grade B, 1 at grade C

Employment History

- 1999-present Consultant for Learning Tree International
- 1997-present Senior Lecturer, Department of Mathematical Sciences, De Montfort University

Teaching:

- Supervision of post-graduate students.
- Master's modules in Optics and Research Methods.
- Programming in C and C++.
- Differential equations and non-linear dynamics.

Research:

- surface physics - including the dynamics of thin films of fullerenes.
- nonlinear dynamics and image and signal processing.
- the physics of traffic accident investigation.
- 3-D imaging and laser holography (work which is part-funded by Honeywell).

- 1995-1997 Research Fellow, Department of Mathematical Sciences, De Montfort University

Research:

- sonoluminescence, fractals and chaos

- 1991-1992 Research/Teaching Assistant, Physics Department, University of Minnesota

Membership of Professional Bodies

- Member of the Institute of Physics, Chartered Physicist
- Member of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Awards

Hevene Award - Funded my Master's study at the University of Minnesota
1912 Scholarship - Awarded for outstanding examination performance at Cambridge.

IT skills

- Proficient in use of Microsoft Office Applications, UNIX operating systems
- Able to program in C++, Java, fortran and html.
- Extensive experience of various mathematical modelling packages (eg MatLab)

Other Skills

Languages: Fluent French, self-taught basic German.

Interests

Sports: Running and playing squash and tennis.

Travel: I enjoy hill-walking with friends and family in the UK and abroad for recreation.

Work and vacations have given me the opportunity to travel widely to the US, Far East and in Europe.

Referees

Prof. Jon Newton, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH, 0116 739275

Dr Anne Knight, Department of Physics, Oxford University, OX1 7PD, 01865 274903

Publications of Allan Smithey

Structural phase transitions

1. Crossover between displacive and order-disorder behaviour in the Phi-4 model.

S. Padlewski, A. Smithey, C. Ayling and V. Heine. *Journal of Physics C: Condensed Matter* 4, 4895-4908 (1992).

2. Landau theory revisited.

V. Heine, X. Chen, S. Dattagupta, M.T. Dove, A. Smithey, A.P. Giddy, S. Marais, S.

Padlewski, E. Salje and F.S. Tautz. *Proceedings of the 7th European Meeting on*

Ferroelectricity: Dijon, July 1991.

Single-electron devices

3. Coulomb blockade in the quantum Hall-effect state.

A. Smithey, L.I. Glazman and B.I. Shklovskii. *Physical Review B* 48, 11120-27 (1993).

Dynamical systems theory and non-equilibrium statistical mechanics

4. On exponential long-time evolution in statistical mechanics.

A. Smithey and P.V. Coveney. *Proc. of the Royal Society (Series A)* 448, 293-319 (1995).

5. On the long-time behaviour of ensembles in a model of deterministic diffusion.

A. Smithey and P.V. Coveney. *Journal of Physics A* 31, 5887-5909 (1998).

6. Long-time behaviour of correlation functions in the finite ideal gas.

A. Smithey. *Physical Review E* 51, 5462-68 (1995).

Quantum-to-classical asymptotics

7. Thermodynamic and semiclassical limits in an interacting spin system.

A. Smithey. *Journal of Physics A*. 29, 3143-66 (1996).

Sonoluminescence

8. Instability of converging shock waves and sonoluminescence.

A. Smithey. *Physical Review E* 54, 5004 (1996).

9. The stability of microbubbles and sonoluminescence

U.H. Augsdorfer, A. Smithey and D.P. Oxley. Accepted for publication in *Physical Review E* (2000).

Fractals and chaos

10. Fourier dimension and fractal dimension.

A. Smithey. *Chaos, Solitons and Fractals* 9, 1977-1982.(1998).

11. The effects of continuously varying the fractional differentiation order of chaotic nonlinear systems.

S. Nimmo and A. Smithey. *Chaos, Solitons and Fractals* 10, 1111-1118 (1999).

12. Bispectra and phase correlations for chaotic dynamical systems

A. Smithey, S.J. Nimmo and M.D. London. To appear in the proceedings of 'Fractal 2000' conference, Singapore 2000.

Surface physics

13. Kinetics of Langmuir films of fullerene C60.

A. Smithey. Journal of Physical Chemistry B 102, 7016-7022 (1998).

Traffic accident investigation

14. Calculation of vehicle speed from pedestrian throw distance

A. Smithey and R. Smith. Proc. I. Mech. E 213, 441-7 (1999).

15. Pedestrian throw calculations

R. Smith and A. Smithey. Submitted to Impact (Journal of the Institute of Traffic Accident Investigators) Feb 2000.

Image processing

16. Genetic algorithms and iterated function systems.

A. Smithey and M.J. Turner. To appear in Proceedings of 2nd IMA Conference on Mathematical Methods for Image Processing (Leicester 1999).

17. Convergence and stagnation in the phase retrieval algorithm.

D. Topiwala, A. Smithey and M.J. Turner. Submitted to Inverse Problems (2000).

Joanne Miller

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tel: 01865 474653 email: jmiller@hotmail.com
Nationality: British DOB: 20/9/86

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS:

Brasenose College, Oxford University
2005-2008 BA (Hons) Mathematics - First Class

St Anne's School, Reading
1998-2005 A-levels: Mathematics (A), Physics (A), Chemistry (A)
GCSEs: 9 GCSEs, 3 grade A*, 6 grade A

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Summer 2007 Schroder Salomon Smith Barney

Intern

- Supported analysts in mergers and acquisitions.
- Conducted research for client presentations as part of a small team.
- Modelled the future financial performance of companies.
- Developed understanding of different industry sectors.
- Organised sixth-form visits to the company.

Summer 2006 Arthur Andersen, London

Trainee Chartered Accountant in the Business Advisory service line

- Analysed client financial information, working as part of the audit team.
- Analysed the robustness of spreadsheets and databases, gathered information from senior client staff, contributed to audit reports.

Summer 2005 Boots The Chemist Ltd, Oxford

Retail Assistant (checkout operator)

- Coached and oversaw the work of other temporary summer staff and undertook other supervisory duties.
- Liaised with the public to resolve minor queries and complaints.
- Responsible for banking cash and cheques at the end of the shift.

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

2007 Marketing & Publicity Officer, College Ball Committee

- Planned and implemented publicity for the Ball.

2005-2007 Captain of College Netball Team

- Publicised team. Selected players.
- Organised matches with other colleges in Oxford and at Cambridge.

2006-2007 Member of Jacari Committee – responsibility for publicity/newsletter.

IT SKILLS: Familiar with C and C++. Regular user of email, Internet, Word, Excel.

LANGUAGES: Fluent in French.

INTERESTS:

Travelled to South Africa, USA, South America and Europe. Play netball, tennis, badminton. Volunteer on National Trust and English Heritage conservation weeks.

REFEREES:

Dr S Smithson. Oxford University, Mathematical Institute, 24-29 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LB
Mr P Cole. Senior Manager, Arthur Andersen, 1 Surry Street, London WC2R 2PS

Joanne Miller

119 Beasley Road, Oxford, OX2 6BD
tel: 01865 474653 email: jmiller@hotmail.com
Nationality: British DOB: 20/9/86

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS:

Brasenose College, Oxford University

2005-2008 BA (Hons) Mathematics - First Class

St Anne's School, Reading

1998-2005 A-levels: Mathematics (A), Physics (A), Chemistry (A)
GCSEs: 9 GCSEs, 3 grade A*, 6 grade A

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

2007

Marketing & Publicity Officer, College Ball Committee

- Planned and implemented publicity for the Ball – including posters, flyers, web page and presentations.
- Raised sponsorship from companies via marketing pack and canvassing.

2006-2007

Committee Member, Jacari (a voluntary organisation providing English teaching in the home for ethnic minority children)

- Responsibility for publicity/newsletter.

Summer 2007 Intern, Schroder Salomon Smith Barney

- Led group of internees in organising a visit for sixth-formers to the company.
- Liaised with schools and prepared publicity materials.

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Summer 2006 Arthur Andersen, London

- Trainee Chartered Accountant in the Business Advisory service line.
- Analysed client financial information and the robustness of spreadsheets and databases, gathered information from senior clients, contributed to audit reports.

Summer 2005 Boots The Chemist Ltd, Oxford

- Undertook supervisory duties, coaching and overseeing the work of other temporary summer staff. Considerable interaction with the public.
- Responsible for banking cash and cheques at the end of the shift.

OTHER VOLUNTARY WORK

Sept 2007 Volunteer on National Trust conservation week – footpath building in Snowdonia.

Easter 2006 Volunteer on English Heritage conservation week – Harlech Castle visitor access.

IT SKILLS: Familiar with C and C++. Regular user of email, Internet, Word, Excel.

LANGUAGES: Fluent in French.

INTERESTS:

Travelled to South Africa, USA, South America and Europe. Play netball, tennis, badminton. Volunteer on National Trust and English Heritage conservation weeks.

REFEREES:

Dr S Smithson. Oxford University, Mathematical Institute, 24-29 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LB
Mr P Cole. Senior Manager, Arthur Andersen, 1 Surry Street, London WC2R 2PS

Maria Tungsten

Term: Smith College, Poppleton, POP 3BJ Vacation: 27 Adams Way, Milton Keynes, MK6 7YH
Tel. 07785 314529 Email: maria.tungsten@gmail.com Nationality: British

Education & Qualifications

- 2004 – 2008 **Smith College, University of Poppleton**
MChem Chemistry (expected result 2:1)
Key modules: Analytical chemistry, Synthetic Organic Chemistry, Medicinal Chemistry, Industrial Chemistry
Final Year project: Spending my final year working in a University laboratory as part of a group researching fluorine chemistry. Planning and executing experiments, developing laboratory skills. Will result in a 10,000 word report.
- 1997 – 2004 **St John's School, Milton Keynes**
A levels: Chemistry (A), Mathematics (A), Physics (B), Italian (B)
GCSEs: 5 (A*); 2 (A); 2 (B)

Technical Experience

- 2006 **Laboratory Assistant, Jones Brewery (8 weeks)**
- Worked in busy laboratory, learning new laboratory techniques for quality control
 - Followed procedures accurately, and kept detailed records on database
 - Developed good time management and organisational skills.

Additional Work Experience

- 2007 **Fruit Cropping Operative, Haute Vienne, France (2 months)**
- Operated fruit picking machinery, supervised packing of fruit and negotiated improved working conditions with local farmers.
- 2005 **General Assistant, Pies R Us (part-time, Summer vacation)**
- Developed excellent communication skills from working closely with the general public and other staff.
- 2004 **Data Entry Clerk, Milton Keynes Hospital (6 weeks, Summer vacation)**
- Checked for accuracy, classified records and compiled figures in response to requests from Hospital departments.

Interests & Activities

- Events and Publicity Officer for Poppleton University Chemistry Society (2006/07). Arranged and publicised weekly talks in Chemistry Department for up to 80 members of the Society.
- Affiliate member of the Royal Society of Chemistry
- Active member of Poppleton University Latin Dance Society

Additional Skills

- Proficient in use of Microsoft Office applications
- Conversational French and Italian

Referees

Dr P Woods, Tutor, Smith College, Poppleton, POP 3BJ, Tel. 01112 7628392
Mrs S Greenhouse, Principal, St John's School, Milton Keynes, MK3 5TH, Tel. 01867 652781