



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Careers Service

Marketing Yourself: Top tips for CVs and applications

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Q. What is a CV or application for?

A. To get you an interview!

- Must be targeted at the job and employer
- Must create a positive first impression
- Must make the selector's job easy



Before you start....what can you offer?

What have I done?

- academically
- work experience (paid/voluntary/relevant or not)
- interests/activities (inc societies/club membership)

What have I learnt?

- what skills/qualities have I developed?
- what insights have I gained?
- what is my level of expertise?
- what can I bring to the job?



The Basics

Personal Details

Education

Work Experience

Extra curricular
Skills

Interests

Traditional format

vs

Skills based?



Optional/Not Required

Personal Profile

Date of Birth

Reference details

'References are available on request'

Nationality

Gender

Marital Status

Photograph

Other countries may have different requirements – ask your Careers Service!



Some basic CV 'rules'

Maximum 2 sides A4

When emailing your CV, send as a PDF if you can

Think about the font size – minimum 10pt

Reverse chronological order

Keep the formatting consistent

Format neatly:

- Avoid large chunks of unbroken text
- Use bullet points or line spaces to break it up
- White space can be as important as text
- **Bold** and **large** characters are clearer than underlining and CAPITALS



Writing bullet points (an example)

Before:

Good teamwork skills
developed through working at
busy Edinburgh Fringe venue

After:

Member of an effective team of
5 providing a range of customer
services: booked festival
audiences and managed smooth
transition of audiences of up to
250 people at changeover time
between events.



Some errors we have seen...

I am a rabid typist'

'In my spare time I enjoy hiding my horse'

'I have a strong interest in a career in investment banking'

'I had sole responsibility for ruining a student society'

'Strong work ethic, attention to detail, team player, self-motivated, attention to detail'



Don't forget:

Geological skills

Relevant courses

Fieldwork

IT and other relevant skills

Academic awards

Professional memberships

Active involvement in student societies



Covering letters

“Ever applied for a job and found yourself writing that you’d *‘relish the opportunity to work for such a prestigious and vibrant company’* or that your *‘unique blend of talents makes you ideally suited to the position’*? That’s the point at which to take a break, make yourself a coffee and start again, before you disappear into one giant career cliché and your application disappears into the bin.

Good covering letters show recruiters that you know something about their company and the job in question. Great covering letters link these to your own skills, interests and previous experience.”

Editor’s Update (Engineering Target Jobs), 25/11/13



Some basic covering letter 'rules'

Standard Business Letter format

1 page A4

Clear font, appropriate size

Structure – beginning, middle & end

3-5 short, concise paragraphs

Presentation is important

If emailing – attach it as PDF



Tips for Application Forms

- Read instructions thoroughly
- Draft answers first
- Take your time
- Allow extra time for technical hitches
- References - academic and work related if possible
- Take a printout/photocopy
- Double check before you send
- **No** spelling mistakes



What are they looking for?

Application form is designed for a reason

Looking for your understanding of the job/course and company/organisation

Wants *evidence* of your suitability in terms of skills, qualities and experience

Can't see everyone - needs to select the "best" for interview



Recruiters say:

“Reading a paragraph about why you want to work here versus why you just want to work anywhere could very well be the difference between being passed over and being called for an interview.”

“Never copy and paste a generic answer. You can spot these straight away because there is no mention of the company or the industry”

*“**56%** of applications are rejected after pre-screen which involves looking at **spelling and grammar**. We allow **up to 3 spelling mistakes and this is more than most**. This high failure rate is down to spelling alone.”*

*“**20%** of applicants to our work experience schemes got the company name wrong”.*



Possible questions...

Describe a situation where you had to work as part of a team and motivate others. What was the situation and how did you manage this?

Describe a situation where you have had to use an innovative solution to solve a problem

Describe how your personal planning and organisation resulted in the successful achievement of a personal or group task



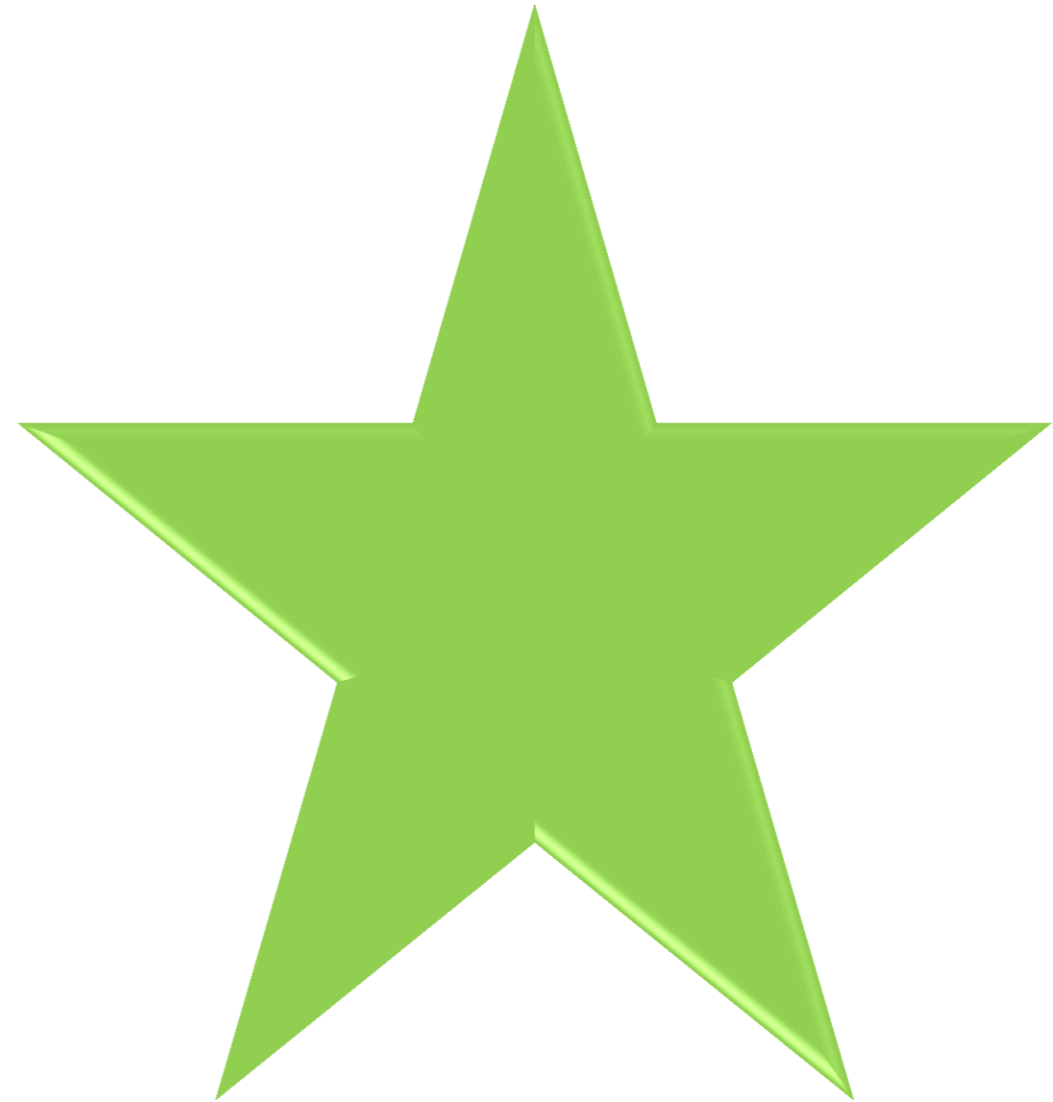
STAR

Situation

Task

Action

Result



Describe a situation where you have had to use an innovative solution to solve a problem

As a camp counsellor I was responsible for a hut housing a group of ten children, helping the children settle in to the camp and encouraging them to join in activities.

The hardest part was getting the children to keep the hut tidy and join in the daily 'household chores' session: a problem which I found was shared by other counsellors.

I decided to motivate the children by turning this session into an inter-hut competition with a progress chart and prizes and arranged for the camp director to carry out daily inspections. I produced a wall chart to show the points awarded to each hut and explained to the children how the points would be won and lost.

The competitive spirit transformed the children's attitude to tidying up as each hut worked as a team to keep their surroundings clean and tidy. There were no more problems with children 'disappearing' at clear-up time and parents were amazed to hear how involved their children had become in this activity.



Summary

Know the position and company you are applying for

Consider what about you is most relevant

Provide evidence

Be specific

Use STAR



APPLY



What next?

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/> > Careers Advice

Use your university Careers Service and their website

Have a great day and all the best for your future.

Thanks to Naomi and Team!



Inspiring futures

