



TOR VERGATA
UNIVERSITY OF ROME

Master of Science in
Finance and Banking

How to write a professional CV and Cover Letter

GUIDELINES

2020/2021 a.y.

The CV is a document that presents a **concise summary** of your **education, employment, experiences** and skills that characterize you and that have shaped your level of preparation.

It is the **first source of information** according to which an employer or recruiter decides if he is interested to further examine a candidate.

It is of the utmost importance to **adapt your CV to the position** for which you are applying.

Make sure that all information on your CV is relevant to the reader.

Below you will find the essential elements.

1. Make sure your CV is **relevant** to the reader: add, remove or emphasize pertinent competencies and experiences.

2. Recruiters/employers typically take less than a minute to evaluate each CV.

Your CV must make a **positive impression immediately!**

3. Make sure your CV contains **straightforward information**.

4. **Be aware of spelling mistakes and sloppy formatting.**

Careless mistakes convey an impression that you do not pay attention to details.

5. **Avoid** the use of **falsehoods** and deception.

6. The recommended length of a CV is **no more than two pages**; exceptions are made only for those with numerous publications and post-doctoral research.

7. When it comes to saving it, make sure you use the **.PDF** file extension; so that any computer will be able to view the file, and all your formatting will be preserved.

8. Put your **Name and Surname** in the **subject of the document** (i.e. “Mario Rossi CV”).

Header

At the **top of the first page**, include your **name and surname**, as well as “Curriculum vitae” (optional).

Picture?

When you decide to include a picture on your CV, make sure to use a **picture that portrays a professional attitude**. Research has shown that bare arms and shoulders can come across as unprofessional. It is strongly advised that when using a picture on your CV, you use the **same picture on LinkedIn**.

Personal details

- **First and last name (in case these are not mentioned in the header)**
- **Address**
- **Telephone number**
- **Email (professional; email addresses like ninjawarrior95@hotmail.com will not make you look very professional!)**
- **Date of birth**
- **Nationality (if it is relevant for your application)**
- **Optional: LinkedIn profile (only when the profile is completed. Make sure to create a personal URL)**

Personal profile

This is your opportunity to show a recruiter something about yourself, your hopes, ambitions, life experiences, inspirations. We encourage you to take your time on this assignment.

Be open. Be reflective.

The length of this part should be a **maximum of 6 lines** or use **bullet points**. This section is **optional**. If you are not able to write a **catchy profile**, then leave this part out.

Education

As a graduate, it is recommended to mention your education **before work experience**.

Make sure to include the **length** of your education, the name of your **program**, the final grade (or GPA) and the educational facility you attended.

List these in an **anti-chronological order**. This means you include your most recent education first.

You may also include any **courses**, which illustrate your **suitability to the position** you are applying for.

Sep 2019 - ongoing

Bachelor Degree in Finance and Banking

University...

Relevant courses/Key-courses:

Thesis: '.....'

Final Grade/GPA: .../110 .../30

Sep 2016 - July 2019

Bachelor Degree in Mathematics

University...

Relevant courses/Key-courses:

Thesis: '.....'

Final Grade: .../110

Be aware that if your final grade was not very high and you choose not to insert it, then the reader may assume that your grade is even lower than what it really is. Therefore, it is always better to **write the final grade!**

Study projects or international experience

A section such as 'study projects' on your CV is optional in order for you to emphasize these projects. Think of **consultancy projects** or **internships**. If you want to emphasize something else, such as your **international experience**, create a section in your CV regarding your 'international experience'.

July 2018

University.....

Summer School in ...

Relevant courses/ Key-courses:

Sep 2020 - ongoing

Traineeship at **European Central Bank**

Trainee in the ... Unit

Feb 2018 - July 2018

Erasmus Exchange Programme

KU Leuven, Belgium (6 months)

Courses: ...

Work experience

Use the same layout as for education: dates, function, and company name. You may decide to mention your Internships in this section instead of 'study projects'. It is up to you.

Feb 2018 – Jun 2018

Traineeship at **European Central Bank**
Trainee in the Unit

Sep 2017 – Dec 2017

Research Fellow for **CONSOB**
*brief description

Jan 2016 – Mar 2017

Working scholarship at Tor Vergata University of Rome
Library assistant

Extracurricular activities

Use the same layout as for education: dates, function, and company name.

Especially if you do not have a lot of work experience, this is an important section in your CV.

Recruiters pay attention to extracurricular activities and often consider them as work experience.

2019 - ongoing

Economics Student Association

Tor Vergata University of Rome, Italy

- Managing five board members
- Organising Career Event (150 participants)
- Training of new board members

Languages or language skills

You may choose to use the CEFR level (ranging from A1 to C2), such as advanced/basic knowledge/...

Italian: Mother tongue

English: Advanced (IELTS 7.0)

French: Basic knowledge

IT or computer skills

Consider using a long description or a short description. You may also consider to specify the level of knowledge (advanced/basic/...).

Windows Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access (ECDL certification)

Programming and Scripting Languages: MATLAB, STATA, LaTeX, Python

Other technical skills: Thomson Reuters Eikon and Datastream for Office Certifications

Interests/Additional information

Critically assess which qualities or traits you would like to illustrate with the interests you have selected to include on your CV.

Which qualities would you like to highlight?

Are you, for instance, a team player?

Or are you considering a function that requires leadership skills and would like to highlight your ability to motivate others?

Technology, Open-source, Programming

Volunteering, Music (Cellist in Tor Vergata Student Orchestra), Football (captain and referee), Travelling

The main goal of a cover letter is to **expand upon your CV, not re-write it** – make sure your cover letter supports your CV and emphasizes relevant information about your competencies and experience.

Key strengths can be **internships, other work experience, essay and research** (e.g. dissertation, project work, summer school, international experiences, dataset analysis) **on topics of interest to the company.**

To do this, **analyze the vacancy.** Try to understand the company, who they are, what they do. **LinkedIn** can be of help.

1. An excellent cover letter **takes time** to write. Give yourself that time. It is important.
2. Use **short sentences and active language**; be concise and to the point.
3. Avoid abbreviations and specialized language.
4. Let your letter **connect to your CV**, but avoid literal overlap. In your CV, you can identify things that you then explain in your letter.

5. Each cover letter should be **detailed and tailored specifically to the company and role** for which you are writing it. If you know the name of the hiring manager or whoever will be reading your letter, **address the letter** to them. This way you can make the letter even more personalized, and it will prove you are a determined candidate who wants the job.
6. **Avoid clichés!** Do not just say, “I am a team player”. Instead, choose an example of when you worked in a team and explain what happened and what you achieved.
7. **Be convincing, but never intrusive.** Do not put conclusions in your text, but express your arguments so that the recipient can draw a (positive) conclusion.

8. **Avoid vague and generic phrases.** Do not focus on what the company and / or the function can do for you, but on how your competencies can be useful for the company.
9. No more than **one or one and half pages.**
10. Send your cover letter as a **.PDF** file and put your **Name and Surname** in the **subject of the document.**
11. Once you have written your letter, check it over for mistakes and get someone else to **proofread your letter** before you send it. Recruiters are not going to take you seriously if you have made silly spelling or grammar mistakes.

Structure of the letter

Your name and address

Company's address and name of the contact person

Location and date

Relating to (including vacancy number)

Dear Madam/Sir X, (make sure you know the name and position of the contact person and do not just send a letter to 'Dear Sir/Madam' or 'To whom this may concern')

Paragraph 1: Grab their attention

Draw attention to your letter by showing that you have conducted **research on the company** beforehand.

You can for instance refer to a pleasant **phone conversation** you have had with someone from within the organization, or indicate any other already **existing connections** you have established.

Paragraph(s) regarding your motivation

These paragraphs should include your **main reasons** for wanting to work for organization X.

Try to be original instead of naming all the obvious reasons.

Have you been an intern at a similar organization? To strengthen your motivation you can use this internship as an example to **illustrate your experience** in this field.

Paragraph(s) regarding your motivation

You should **convince the reader** that you are the perfect candidate for the job. Do not literally write down why you think you are the perfect candidate, but you convey these points by referring to your experience.

For your **academic experience** refer to: academic courses, Erasmus experience, summer schools, software packages you know, your dissertation, project work that is related to the job and so on.

For your **professional experience**, consider how past and present work has helped you build your qualities and your skills.

Link these aspects to your desired position, so that the reader will be convinced as to how you will be the solution to any issues an organization may have.

As stated above, talk about **key facts, competencies and experience** (e.g. dissertation, project work, summer school, international experiences, dataset analysis) on topics of interest to the company.

Conclusion

Make sure that the language of the final paragraph matches the content of the letter and your personality.

Example

I welcome the opportunity to further elaborate on my CV and motivation during a personal interview. I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,
XX

Attachment: Curriculum Vitae