

CVs / Cover Letters



First impressions:

What's that old saying? *"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."* Most likely your cover letter and your CV or portfolio are the first impressions a prospective employer gets of you. It's important to work out how to make a strong one so that you are memorable.

Writing a CV is not just about chucking a lot of information on a page about you. It's about tailoring that document to best describe you for that particular job being advertised.

Process

Steps	Actions
Understand C.V. basics	Read this guide (or the Otago uni guide see external resources). Look in some of the external resources. Make a draft CV. Get feedback from previous applications. Know the difference between a Skills focused CV and a Work focused CV (see important note).
Research	Research the company. Review the job description and highlight key points.
Brainstorm you	List what you have to offer this company. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Achievements- Experience- Personal qualities- Qualifications- Interests
Match	Match your brainstorm with the job description the company and any other requirements listed. Link evidence to support your skills. Contact your referees, check their contact details and confirm they are happy to be on your CV
Draft	Write your draft CV and cover letter. (use the external resources if you want)
Review	Check, check, check <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Spelling- Grammar- Formatting- Readability- Any links within documents can be opened without the need to ask for permission- Size, length Get feedback from someone. Finalise it.

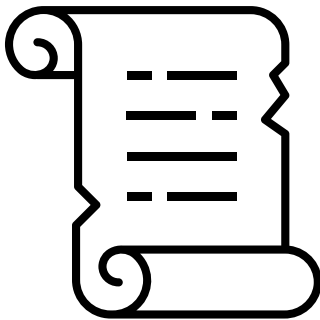
Important note on c.v. types

- Skills focused – changing career, perhaps not much experience or a gap between jobs.
- Work focused – changing to a similar job, or a higher one within the same industry, or if you want to highlight your experience and development.

Some great examples here [LINK](#)

What to include and what not to include

Use **Key words**: AI will mostly likely be processing all the CVs. It will hunt out words specific to the job.



Name	The name you would like them to address you by. No need for a middle name if you don't want.
Contact Details	A professional email – keep <i>creative.carrot@gmail</i> for your friends. Any professional accounts; LinkedIn. Link to a portfolio (if required).
Qualifications / Education	Most recent first. Emphasis the qualification more than the provider i.e. <u>Diploma in Creative Marketing (2023)</u> Yoobee College of Creative Innovation No need to add anything that is not relevant i.e. high school if that was ages ago.
Experience / Work history	Include community and/or voluntary work. List most recent first. Indicate if it was full-time, part-time, temporary, permanent, voluntary. Write position, employer name, location, dates employed. Add details of skills and achievements. Evidence of skills: job skills and 21 st century skills. Use action verbs and past tense. You <i>did</i> these, not <i>are doing</i> these.
Interests / activities	This adds the humanness to the document. Just a few recent ones. Perhaps add business or research interests if needed.
Other details	Perhaps the advertisement requested extra information. Driver's license and specific class. Language ability/level. First aid certification.
Referees	Keep it to two. Have people who know you differently i.e. a work capacity and a social capacity. Current contact details.

Important notes

- New Zealand CVs are different from other CV formats and expectations around the world. [LINK](#)
- Length –2 pages max 3.
- Not 1 CV and cover letter for all jobs – adapt both for each application

Design / Layout / format

Funk it up to stand out once it gets to HR eyes.

But don't let design overshadow the information.

Boxes

Colours

Interesting bullet points

Layout



Cover letters

The cover letter complements and is supported by the c.v. It should reflect your research on the company and the job through the links to specific skills, experience and why you think you are a perfect fit for the job and the company. Most importantly connects with the reader to show the humanness of you. Do not substitute within a template, adjust it to represent you well.

Important notes

- Cover letters are one page.
- Use a business letter format.
- Check, check, check for spelling and grammar and have it proofread by someone.
- Sandwich the contents –short opening, a bit meaty middle bit on two or three valuable insights into you and your skillset, confident short ending offering to meet or answer questions.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

If you feel you would like to look at some resources before you start, click on the links below to get your thinking going.

Really useful guide from Otago University. 26 pages!	LINK
C.V builder from careers.govt	LINK
Templates for c.v. and cover letters from careers.govt Skill-focused, work-focused, school leavers, specialist	LINK
CVs for Graphic Designers	LINK