



Virtual Higher Education Day: **Virtual Higher Education Day: Cover Letters and CVs**

We recognise that not all of you will be planning on applying to university next year, and that many of you will be interested in pursuing an apprenticeship instead. You may have intended to visit the Apprenticeship Hub during Higher Education Day. Please visit their website [here](#).

If this applies to you, now is a good time to ensure you have a strong CV and to get to grips with writing cover letters. Please read on for advice and guidance.

Writing a strong cover letter

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is the first thing your employer will read; think of it as an advert for your CV. Your cover letter tells an employer why you are applying for the role; your CV tells them why they should hire you, and gives specific detail on your skills and experience.

In your cover letter you need to express your genuine interest in the job and motivate the employer to want to interview.

Watch a basic [video guide here](#).

What should I include?

For an extensive guide on writing an effective cover letter, please see [here](#); below is a summary of the key points.

- Ensure your cover letter is tailored to the role you are applying for.
- Introduce yourself, and state the role you are applying for.
- Let the employer know why working for them appeals to you.
- Express why you are a good fit for the role- reading the "person specification" can help you do this. Avoid rewriting your CV here; this is more about your personality, values and attitude.
- Ensure you sign off politely, and thank the reader for taking the time to read your letter.
- Proofread your letter carefully. If you would like help with this, please send a copy to careers@ndonline.ac.uk. It can be helpful if you also send details of the role you are applying for.

Useful websites:

[Reed's](#) Cover letter guide.

Advice on submitting a ["cold contact" cover letter](#) from CV Library.

Advice on [proof reading your cover letter](#) effectively.

A guide on [writing a cover letter if you have no experience](#).



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Ensure you avoid common errors by reading [this guide](#).

A guide on [tailoring your cover letter](#) to the role you're applying for.

Writing a strong CV.

There are plenty of resources available on the **Moodle Careers page, under Topic 11.**

Watch this [useful and comprehensive video guide](#) on writing a CV with limited or no experience.

Below is a summary of the key things to keep in mind, along with useful websites.

- A CV must be honest; don't make anything up! You are promoting who you are, the experience you have and the skills you possess.
- A CV must be adapted for each role you apply for. Ensure you read the job description carefully and mention as many of the skills as possible the employer is looking for in your CV.
- Ensure your CV is no longer than two sides of A4; use a professional font and format your document well; do check for spelling and grammatical errors.

Submit your CV to careers@ndonline.ac.uk if you would like someone to proofread and check it for you.

The key content of a CV:

- **Contact details** (name, address, telephone number, email address)
- **Mini-profile** (4-5 lines summarising your personal strengths)
- **Education** (begin with the most recent; include the name of your college/ school and the dates attended. List each qualification, along with the grade you achieved, or your predicted grade)
- **Any work experience**, volunteering experience or employment you have undertaken (begin with the most recent; include the name of the company/ organisation, along with dates and a brief list of key duties and the skills these duties allowed you to develop)
- **Interests and achievements** (activities you undertake in your spare time; any achievements such as NCS, sporting awards, music grades etc; skills you have developed independently)
- **References** (simply state that "References are available on request". Make sure you ask permission from your referee before submitting their details to an employer! You will be asked to provide referees if invited to interview.)

Useful links:

Take a look at a [school-leaver CV template here](#).



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If you would like to read about how CVs are changing in 2020, [give this article a read](#)- you could be asked to submit your CV via YouTube or a personal blog.

[Read here](#) as to why you should be volunteering, and how it can enhance your CV.

Unsure what hobbies and interests to include? Here are some [good guidelines](#).

Lots of CVs will be scanned by robots; [read here about how to ensure yours is selected](#).

The mini profile section of your CV can be challenging- [read here for some advice on getting it right](#).

You may also wish to think about setting up a **LinkedIn Profile**. [Here is a good place to start exploring why you should do this, and what a LinkedIn profile should look like](#).

If you have any further questions, or would like support from the careers team, please email us using careers@notredamecoll.ac.uk