

Employment and Career Matters - Neelam Thapar

In this article, we will look at devising CV and cover letters when applying for vacancies. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any particular questions you have. .

MAKING APPLICATIONS

Applications are used for many different purposes; for example full time employment, temporary work, voluntary work and training courses. However, all written applications will have some similarities whether you are asked to use a CV, letter or application form.

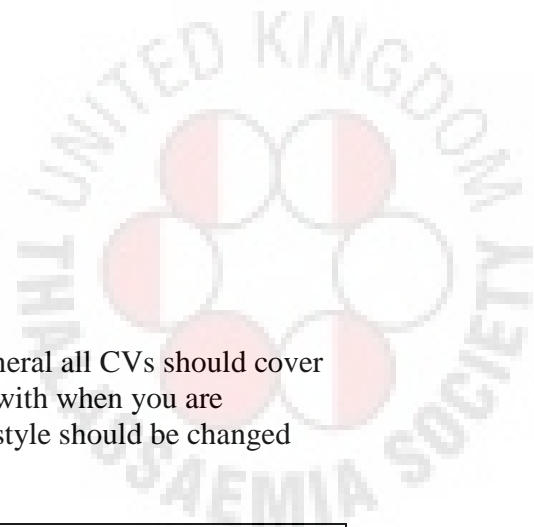
You need to spend time preparing your applications. The employer will have to select people to interview based on what you have written. When faced with numerous applications to look at, the employer will be looking to see that you have done your research about the position and company. By doing this you will be able to relate your skills and experience to the employer's needs. This is known as targeting your applications. If the employer has mentioned that they are looking for particular skills, make sure that you address this by changing your CV and letter accordingly for each position you apply to.

CURRICULUM VITAE

A CV can be used to apply for advertised or speculative vacancies. To help you draft a CV, think back and make a list of **all** your accomplishments and experience. When you are applying to a particular vacancy, you can see at a glance what you will need to include in your CV

Writing Your CV

- Your CV should not be more than 2 sides of A4 paper and should be word processed.
- It is an organised summary of all your personal details and experience and should be targeted to the position or company you are apply. Be concise and do not use long complicated sentences.
- CVs can be done in chronological or reverse chronological order (most recent date first) but remember whichever style you choose, follow it through for the whole CV.
- Use good quality A4 paper
- Keep a copy of the CV you send
- Always remember to include a cover letter



CV HEADINGS

There are many different formats and designs of CVs but in general all CVs should cover the following basic sections. This will give you a basis to start with when you are considering the sections to include but the contents and layout/style should be changed according to the job that you are applying for.

Personal Details

Name
Address
Telephone numbers/email address
Nationality if appropriate.
If the job is away from your hometown, it may be useful to put that relocation is possible.

Education

This will include dates and places such as University if appropriate and school career with your qualifications.
Add your grades as far as possible. (If your grades are not very good, it would probably be better to just mention the subjects)
GCSEs only need a brief listing e.g. 8 GCSEs including 2 at Grade A

Employment Experience

All past experience should include dates of employment, name of the organisation, job title and responsibilities.
Think about all your vacation and part time employment. Even if you have done unpaid work e.g. voluntary work, this may be relevant. Employers want to know.

Recognise what you have gained from these e.g. leadership skills, management skills,
Target your duties and responsibilities according to the job you are applying to.

Achievements

This would include any positions of responsibility, awards etc.

Activities/Interests

Think about what you put down -you may be asked at an interview. Try and not use words such as socialising.

Additional Information

This will covers things such as:

Computer skills - list the packages that you can use.

Language skills -If you can speak another language, add this.
You may want to mention that you have a driving licence

Referees

Check that you can put their names down from them. You should use two referees. If you know someone who works in the sector you are applying to, ask him or her.

Alternatively, you can put that references are available on request.

COVER LETTERS

A covering letter is essential whenever you are enclosing Curriculum Vitae to an employer whether in response to an advertisement or applying speculatively. It is also advisable to use a covering letter when forwarding an application form to an employer.

Guidelines for Cover letters

- It should only be on one side of A4 and should be written as a business letter
- The letter can be typed or hand written. Some employers will ask for a hand written cover letter
- It should preferably be to a named person and therefore end with “Yours sincerely”. If it is to Dear Sir/Madam, it should end with “Yours faithfully”
- Print your name under the signature
- Do not forget to enclose your CV

What a good covering letter should include

- Make clear the job for which you are applying
- Mention where you saw the advertisement or learnt of the vacancy
- Emphasise points of special relevance to the job e.g. previous work experience, skills, interests or any other reasons why the employer should consider you
- Add any relevant information that was not included in your CV or the application form
- Target the letter to the employer – provide him/her with information about why you are interested in their organisation.
- Mention when you are available for interview.
- Try drafting your letter using action verbs e.g. achieved, initiated, planned, advised, implemented, established, supported etc.

Always check and double check your applications.