

Careers resources

Writing a UK CV vs an American Resume

Overview

To apply for jobs in the USA you will usually need a resume – a short 1-page document. In the UK you will need a CV, this is short for Curriculum Vitae and is usually two pages long. If you are applying for academic / scientific / very senior positions in America, you may be asked for a CV which is a much longer and more detailed version of the resume. You will also need a cover letter to accompany your CV/resume and there are some differences here too.

Below you can see some of the main differences to keep in mind when writing for an American or UK audience. You may also want to use other resources on writing good CVs and Cover Letters in conjunction with this information.

American Resume

Formatting

Usually about 1 page long, sometimes longer for mid management or senior executive positions.

Personal Details

Name, address and contact details. Absolutely no personal information due to discrimination laws.

Photo

It is important NOT to include a photo as many employers will immediately disregard the resume. There are exceptions such as the acting and real estate professions.

Summary

This is a key part of any American resume which is essentially a short sales pitch of your key skills and experience about 3 lines long.

Education

As a graduate this will come first and you only write your university and degree. No further content is usually added unless you need to add a section for 'Honors/Activities' that lists positions you have held while at university such as class representative or volunteer.

Experience

Listed in reverse chronological order, with a few bullet points listing your achievements in each role. It is expected that you will only list

UK CV

Formatting

2 pages for most positions. Exceptions are banking or the bigger management consulting companies (1 page) and academia or clinical (can be more pages).

Use A4 page layout

Personal Details

Name and contact details, no other personal information is necessary (due to discrimination laws). You might include your LinkedIn URL.

Photo

Photos are not included (apart from particular professions such as acting where they form part of the hiring decision).

Summary

You can include a 'summary' or 'profile' although you don't have to. It can be useful if you are changing your career direction.

Education

Assuming you are using your current studies as the springboard for your next step it is good to put this first, even if previously you put experience first. You can include substantial content about your degree, particularly if it is relevant to the position you are applying for.

Experience

Listed in reverse chronological order with a few bullet points or a paragraph outlining the skills and experience gained from each job. Aim to

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the jobs that are most relevant to the application in order to keep it to a page.

Skills

Most resumes include a very short skills section at the end.

Other sections

If there is space the resume could include relevant certifications/professional affiliations or outstanding achievements

Reference List

For a recent graduate with limited work experience you would be expected to have 2-3 references and these would be laid out on a separate document called a Reference List. You only send this when requested, often at a later stage in the recruitment process.

American Cover Letter/Email

Salutation

Try to find their name and write to Mr. X or Ms. X. If you don't have their name leave out the salutation altogether.

Format

Cover Letters are 1 page long.

Content

Beyond the usual cover letter contents, it can be appropriate to include quotes as professional recommendations from satisfied customers and colleagues.

Ending the letter/email

It is common to request an interview and offer to contact them to discuss any questions the recruiter may have about your application, and to follow this up with a phone call a few days later BUT some will state that they have a 'no contact' policy and this should be respected. Sign the letter with 'Sincerely' or 'Best Regards'

cover the last ten years (if you have a lot of experience) and explain any gaps. You could split your work experience into 'Relevant Experience' and 'Other Experience'. You can include voluntary experience.

Skills

In the UK, skills are generally included in the relevant Education or Work sections – focus your bullet points in these sections on skills. It works well to include a short 'Additional skills' or 'Technical Skills' section at the end to cover languages and computer skills.

Other sections

A section including other positions of responsibility or interests is optional. You might also include professional certifications/affiliations.

References

It is usual to indicate 'references on request' rather than including the contact details of referees.

UK Cover Letter/Email

Salutation

Try to find their name and write to Mr. X or Ms. X. If this is not possible, you can address it to Dear Sir/Madam.

Format

Cover Letters are 1 page long unless the application process specifies longer.

Content

Focus on why you want the role, why you want to work for the organisation and why they should pick you. You don't usually add any quotes or recommendations.

Ending the letter/email

You do not have to mention the interview, although some applicants like to say when they are available for interview.

Sign the letter with 'Yours Sincerely' if you know their name and 'Yours Faithfully' if you are writing to Sir/Madam.



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Use of Language: although the following is a generalisation, it is a good idea to consider the tone of your language. Applications for a UK market need to be enthusiastic and confident but without use of hyperbole and those that are for an American audience need to feel a bit more like an enthusiastic sales pitch. There are also differences in spelling / grammar, particularly with the endings ize/ise. It's worth finding someone to check over the final version for consistency.

Example with detailed notes of an American resume for someone with a few years of experience.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/why-this-is-an-excellent-resume-2013-11?r=US&IR=T#10-accomplishments-are-formatted-as-result-and-then-cause-10>

Further examples can be found at <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resume-samples?from=careeradvice-US>

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14 No photo

15 No header or footer

3 One e-mail and number **JOAN E. JOBSEEKER** 12 No crazy fonts or colors

E: joane@jobseeker.com • M: 555-555-5555 • New York, NY 10128

2 Consistent branding [linkedin.com/in/joanejobseeker](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joanejobseeker) 1 Online profile URL

4 Executive summary **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & REPORTING**

Meticulous **Financial Analyst** who undertakes complex assignments, meets tight deadlines and delivers superior performance. Possesses practical knowledge in corporate finance and financial markets. Applies strong financial planning and analytical skills to inform senior management of key trends and reduce company expenditures by more than \$255,000. Operates with a strong sense of urgency and thrives in a fast-paced setting. **Fluent in Spanish. Core competencies include:**

Financial Reporting • Project Management • Financial Analysis • Financial Statements • Statistical Analysis 6 **Keywords**
Corporate Finance & Financial Services • Market Analysis • Client Relations • **Strategic Planning** • **Forecasting**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

COMPANY ABC • New York, NY • 2010 – Present 5 **Reverse chronological order**

One of the largest global pharmaceutical companies, producing a portfolio of products and medicines that support wellness and prevention, as well as treatment and cures for diseases across a broad range of therapeutic areas.

Financial Analyst 7 **Company description**

Prepares financial presentations for senior management by incorporating new and existing reports along with analysis of business trends for Company ABC's \$2.1 billion Nutrition segment. Supports the development of executive reports, presentations and ad-hoc reporting capabilities. Formulates annual operating budgets and monthly forecasts, and tracks team spending for budget exceeding \$1.3 million.

- Generated approximately \$452,000 in annual savings by employing a new procedure which streamlined the business's vendor relationships 9 **Quantifies achievements**
- Improved spending reports to enhance clarity of expenses and increase efficiency for ten different groups
- Conducted financial analysis to support senior leadership with developing the business segment's long-range financial plan of more than \$30 billion over the next five years 10 **Result and cause format**

8 **Bullet points**

ORGANIZATION ZYX • New York, NY • 2008 – 2010

Leading provider of investment advisory services with a core focus institutional investors such as Pension Funds, Endowment Funds, and Foundations, and high net worth individuals.

Performance Analyst

Responsible for conducting quantitative analysis of index statistics and market data, performing benchmark analysis, and compiling performance data for more than ten Pension Fund clients ranging in value from \$15 million to \$1.2 billion. Utilizes in-house financial software systems to provide analytical, financial and presentation support for the account management activities surrounding quarterly earnings meetings and ad hoc monthly reports.

- Within first three weeks in the organization, **took on and organized** one of the company's largest clients, valued at \$1.2 billion with more than 100 money managers. 13 **No pronouns**
- Increased data mining 62% by creating a more efficient process to collect information from money managers.
- Reorganized and streamlined database of global indices to provide intra-quarterly returns.

EDUCATION 16 **Education listed at bottom**

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (cum laude)
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY • Syracuse, NY • 2008

11 **White space**

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite: advanced Excel • Word • Power Point • Outlook • Access
QuickBooks software • In-house proprietary financial software • SAP

17 **No "references upon request" line**