

A photograph of three students sitting at a desk, looking at documents. A man in a black shirt is on the left, a woman in a black top is in the center, and a woman in a blue top is on the right. They are all focused on the papers in front of them. The background is slightly blurred, showing a classroom or office environment.

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

CVs, APPLICATION FORMS,  
COVERING LETTERS

UNIVERSITY OF  
BRIGHTER  
FUTURES  
WESTMINSTER<sup>®</sup>

**18**

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This booklet is available in alternative formats upon request.  
 A web version is also available at [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers)

# WE OFFER HELP AND SUPPORT TO ALL STUDENTS AND GRADUATES, EVEN WHEN YOU HAVE LEFT UNIVERSITY.

## About Career Development Centre

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We can assist with:

- Sourcing vacancies
- Developing employability skills
- Identifying key skills and experience
- Planning your professional development
- Presenting a positive image: how to market yourself effectively.

We have a team of friendly career professionals who are in touch with employers on a daily basis to provide you with up-to-date labour market and current employment trend information, and job vacancies. We also provide guidance and information on further study and training opportunities.

## Services we offer students and recent graduates

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We offer the following services free to current students and graduates up to three years after graduating.

## Careers Education, Advice and Guidance

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- 45 minute pre-bookable confidential, guidance interviews, up to a maximum of four interviews per academic year.
- Individual, 20 minute "quick query" interviews with a Careers Consultant. There is no limit on the number of quick query sessions a student or recent graduate can have each year.

- A programme of workshops and presentations on career choice and job hunting skills.
- Tailored confidence-building and job search workshops.

To book a place for a quick query session or a place on one of our events go to [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers) to access our online vacancy and events system. To book a 45 minute guidance interview or for more information call us on 020 7911 5184.

## Careers Information and Resources

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- We hold a range of comprehensive materials in our information rooms relating to occupations, employers, voluntary work, enterprise, working and studying overseas, further study and training, and DVDs on job search skills.
- PCs for clients to use for job searching.
- A comprehensive website at [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers) covering topics such as events, job searching, CVs and applications. We also have a dedicated section on diversity and a 'Your Course, What Next?' area.
- MyCareer, an online careers package providing resources and information for career management and guidance.
- Online newsletters and other targeted information.
- 'My Potential' online psychometric tests.
- Dedicated Career Development Centre Facebook page.
- Careers blog with subject specific pages.
- Regular updates on Twitter.

## Finding Work and Employability support

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- Online vacancy and events service for students looking for part-time, placement, voluntary and graduate opportunities. This service is also available to recent graduates for up to 18 months after graduation. To access the system, go to our Prospects Net vacancy and events system, accessible through [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers)
- Talent Bank, a profile matching service that gives students the opportunity to apply for paid part-time and temporary vacancies across all campuses and various departments within the University of Westminster.
- Presentations and networking events with employers, professional bodies, alumni and other organisations.
- A targeted Mentoring Scheme for ethnic minority students and a general Mentoring Scheme for all students.
- Support for students and recent graduates to obtain volunteer placements.
- Improving your English: A guide for students [www.wmin.ac.uk/pdf/cdc\\_improving\\_english\\_guide.pdf](http://www.wmin.ac.uk/pdf/cdc_improving_english_guide.pdf)

## The Enterprise Academy

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The Enterprise Academy is aimed at students interested in working freelance, setting up a small business (entrepreneurs) or working in a role developing new areas of business for organisations (intrapreneurs).

- Through networking events and one to one career coaching individuals are offered advice and support to develop their business ideas.
- Workshops providing entrepreneurial skills training are run in collaboration with external business experts.
- A range of useful resources are available through the Career Development Centre website with access to DVDs and reference books in the Information Room.

## Services for part-time students

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In addition to the services above, we offer the following services to part-time students who may be unable to access our services during our advertised opening hours:

- e-advice service for quick queries, enquiries for careers information, CV/covering letter/application checks. We aim to respond to all e-advice requests, subject to staff availability, within three working days or sooner.
- Information, advice and guidance by pre-arranged telephone appointment or Skype.
- Guidance interviews and workshops outside office hours are negotiable.

CV IS SHORT FOR 'CURRICULUM VITAE', WHICH LITERALLY MEANS 'COURSE OF LIFE'. A MORE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION FOR A CV WOULD BE A MARKETING DOCUMENT SELLING YOU (A PRODUCT) TO AN EMPLOYER (A BUYER).

## Introduction

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This guide will help you to write effective job applications, using both CVs and application forms. Planning and preparation are key to your success in this first part of the recruitment process. This step-by-step guide is followed by examples of different CVs and a covering letter. You will find other examples of CVs and more materials on application forms on the Career Development Centre website in the section on CVs and Applications.

## Uses

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The sole purpose of a CV is to show the potential employer that you are suitable for a particular job, so that you will be invited for interview. It should inform and persuade. Unlike an application form you are in complete control of what you put in your CV and can therefore select and compose information in a way that emphasises your suitability for the job.

### **A CV can be used in the following situations:**

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- To respond to an advertised vacancy where a CV is requested.
- To make a speculative approach to a company, ie writing to an employer to enquire about vacancies in their organisation which have not been advertised.
- To take to recruitment fairs, events and other networking opportunities.
- To send to an employment agency who is acting on your behalf.

## Targeting your CV

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The CV which works is the one which shows that you have the qualities and skills the employer is looking for, which is also appropriate for the sector. So you need to find out what the job involves (from the job description, person profile and research); analyse yourself and show how you meet the requirements of the position and then tailor your CV accordingly. Remember, it is about what you can do for employers not about what they can do for you.

## Choosing the right CV format

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Generally speaking you are free to use any type or style of CV you would like. However, choosing how you present the information could greatly influence your chances of success.

You can use either a chronological or skills-based CV format, but in either case it is essential that you tailor it to the business sector you are applying to, especially for the creative industries.

- Skills-based
- Shorter CV for part-time work



## Chronological

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Here the information is presented in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience first. Chronological CVs are commonly used when the applicant has experience, skills and knowledge relevant to the job. If you are a student or graduate applying for a job (eg Marketing Assistant for a tour operator) directly related to your degree (eg BA Tourism with Business), this type of CV may well be most suited to you.

## Skills-based

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This type of CV could be used when: You do not have a lot of experience or education directly related to the job you are applying for; you have so much experience that there is not enough room on your CV; you are aiming for a career change. You will need to find evidence from your life experience (work, study, leisure activities) for the development of skills required by the job. These skills are usually called 'transferable skills'. Hence the CV becomes targeted and focused. Always relate your skills to evidence of how and where they were developed, and include any successful outcomes.

## Tailoring your CV to the sector

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Different business sectors may require you to adapt the chronological or skills-based template or content. The creative industries may expect more emphasis on design and use of visuals in your CV or indeed encourage

video or other non paper-based formats. Roles for which particular technical skills are critical should address this clearly at the start of your CV, whilst academic positions will require greater emphasis on research projects, publications and conferences.

Examples of CVs targeted at different sectors are available on the Career Development Centre website under different types of CVs.

## Shorter CV for part-time work

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This is mainly used for part-time non-graduate jobs where the employer primarily needs to know that the applicant has the necessary skills and experience for the specific role.

## Academic

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If you are applying for postgraduate study/ research or jobs in the field of academic research, you will probably find that the above types of CV are not appropriate. The academic institutions will be interested in finding out about any research you might have carried out and articles you might have had published. They will also need more details of university qualifications than employers require. Membership of professional bodies and details of awards received should also be mentioned.

ALTHOUGH A CV IS AN INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENT AND THERE IS NO ONE CORRECT TYPE OR STYLE, IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS SHOULD APPEAR; THE ORDER WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CV. YOU NORMALLY START WITH YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS.

## Heading

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Your first name and surname will usually be at the top as a heading in large bold letters. It is not necessary to write 'Curriculum Vitae'.

## Personal details

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Name, address (home and term-time), telephone (landline and mobile) and email. Under the updated Equal Opportunities legislation, it is no longer necessary to include your date of birth. For international students it is advisable to include nationality, plus work permit status.

## Profile statement/career aim

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A three to four line summary of your main selling points related to the job. Incorporates your main skills, knowledge and experience indicating where they have been gained. It is not a list of 'desirable' attributes unconnected to your own experience. This section is optional as it could be addressed in your covering letter.

## Education

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In reverse chronological order. Give some detail of your current course (list three to six relevant modules or assignments and mention your dissertation if applicable) to give a flavour of it and your final/predicted grade. Briefly include A level subjects and grades (or equivalent) and summarise GCSEs and grades (or equivalents).

## Employment history/work experience

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Begin with the most recent or create separate relevant work section to emphasise this. Include placements, part-time and voluntary work, as well as permanent and temporary jobs. Be concise and focus on your skills and achievements rather than on tasks, unless they are relevant to the job. Group similar jobs together if the list becomes too long.

## Skills

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You may list additional transferable skills with your own examples or you may use this section to highlight skills such as computer literacy and languages.

## Interests/Positions of Responsibility

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Use this section to show a more personal aspect of your life, demonstrating your level of motivation and participation in the activities mentioned, eg sports, artistic activities, community involvement and other achievements.

## References

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Indicate 'References available on request' at the end of your CV. You should have two referees who have given you their permission to be contacted for a reference by employers when appropriate. One should be an academic referee; this is usually a lecturer or course tutor who knows your work. The second referee should be a current or previous employer from paid or voluntary work or even an activity where you have participated eg local sports team captain. Do not use family or friends.

## Student name

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- Postal Address
- Email
- Phone number
- (If applicable) Nationality/Work permit status

Final year Property with Business student at the University of Westminster, seeking a career in commercial practice surveying. Strong commercial awareness, client facing and technical skills developed through previous employment, including experience at a property management company and in the planning and development department of a local council.

## Education

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**September 2009 – June 2012** BSc (Hons) Property with Business; Predicted 2:1, University of Westminster, London

- Achieved a 2:1 in first and second year assessments.
- Third year projects included a dissertation (title of the dissertation) and group presentation at the RICS in Jan 2012 in which a proposal for a development and investment opportunity was submitted. This assignment was the culmination of the property disciplines studied on the course, notably development and investment appraisal, valuation, property management, landlord and tenant law and planning.
- Business modules included Accounting and Finance, Economics, Marketing, Organisational Behaviour and Business Management.

**September 2006 – June 2008** Copleston & Holywells Sixth Form, Ipswich

- A levels: Business Studies (C), Geography (C), General Studies (C)
- AS levels: Media Studies (A), French (E)

**September 1997 – June 2002** Copleston High School, Ipswich

- Nine GCSEs (A-C), including Maths and English

## Relevant work experience

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**October – November 2011** Work placement, Property Initiatives, Mayfair, London

- Assisted the director and senior property manager with their day-to-day duties. Updated reports for clients, undertook research, interpreted legal documents and aided the valuations team with the proposed acquisition of a development site.
- Developed an understanding of commercial property management by visiting a number of buildings under company supervision and learnt specifically about facilities management, leases and tenancy schedules.

**June – September 2010** Clerical Assistant, Planning & Development Department, Ipswich Borough Council

- Acquired a practical understanding of the planning system through general clerical duties and exposure to the work of the local planning officers.
- Systematically transferred planning documents, such as tree preservation order information to the e-planning system.
- Observed a committee meeting in which a number of development proposals were granted or refused planning permission.

## Other employment

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**December 2009 – September 2011** Part-Time Bartender, JD Wetherspoon, The Crosse Keys, City of London & The Golden Lion, Ipswich

- Integrated well into a diverse workforce and was able to work quickly and under pressure within a team of six to provide excellent customer service and ensure that close-downs were completed on time.
- Promoted to a supervisory role in a smaller Ipswich pub, overseeing the duties of newer team members.

**August – September 2009** Data Entry Clerk, E.ON, Ipswich

- Logged customer details into a computer system utilising IT skills and attention to detail.

**May – June 2009** Telemarketer, CRU Promotions, Brisbane, Australia

- Improved my communication skills through business to customer marketing of mobile phones and health care memberships. Consistently achieved increased daily call targets under pressure.

**February – March 2009** Fruit Picker, Various Employers, Mildura, Australia

**September – December 2008** Warehouse Assistant, Notcutts Distribution, Ipswich

**October 2006 – October 2008** Part-Time Sales Assistant/Cashier, Homebase, Ipswich

- In charge of the garden furniture area during busy periods, ensuring excellent customer service, managing stock and two section staff.
- Promoted to the kitchen, bathroom and interior furniture team during the January sale; processed customer orders, arranged appointments and consistently met store credit card application targets.

## Interests and other skills

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- Keen interest in economics and current affairs, regular reader of Financial Times, Estates Gazette and Property Week.
- Student member of RICS.
- Enjoy making the most of opportunities to travel, including six months independent travel to India, Indonesia and temporary employment in Australia during my 2008/9 gap year.
- Proficient user of Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Project, some knowledge of Super Developer
- Full clean driving licence.
- Enjoy football, regularly visit the local leisure centre and have shown leadership and organisational skills whilst captain of a ten pin bowling team.

## References

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Available on request.

## Student name

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- Postal Address
- Email
- Phone number
- (If applicable) Nationality/Work permit status

Final year BSc Business Information Systems student, with knowledge of financial analysis and business strategy, plus proven technical IT expertise. Strong analytical and interpersonal skills developed through academic studies and previous customer service roles. Seeking a graduate traineeship within the banking sector.

## Skills

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### Analytical

- Analysed and modelled business requirements and developed information systems strategy for a start up hospitality company and the McDonalds global business, as part of my final year university project.
- Analysed business problems in order to understand and develop IT solutions as key element of academic assignments.

### Communication

- Established rapport and resolved queries within pressurised customer service and IT support environments.
- Delivered presentations at university, explaining complex business concepts to groups of five to thirty people and prepared written reports.

### Team Working

- Worked collaboratively with colleagues in a range of work settings, including as Assistant Manager at McDonalds, with responsibility for co-ordinating the work and motivating a team of four front line staff to meet sales targets.
- Experience of working in teams during academic projects involved planning, role allocation and co-ordination to ensure high quality work was submitted within deadlines. Interaction with peers helped develop the ability to work effectively with people from different cultures and work styles.

### Organisation

- Excellent organisational skills applied in IT support role to ensure full resolution of client issues and delivery of a programme to install and train fifty users in new computer software (Microsoft Outlook).
- Experience of organising and prioritising workload to meet tight deadlines, when faced with multiple university projects and work commitments.

### IT Skills

- Programming, query, web development and modelling languages: PHP, VB.NET, SQL, HTML, JavaScript, Unified Modelling Language
- Database management/ development tools: Oracle ROBMS V10+, MS SQL Server, MS Access
- Project management: Prince2, MS Project
- MS Excel, Word and Outlook

## Higher education

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**September 2009 – June 2012** BSc (Hons) Information Systems (2:1 predicted),  
University of Westminster

- Modules included: Business Strategy, Project Management, Information Systems Design and Development, IS Quality and Testing, Knowledge Management, Computer Systems Security

## Other relevant education

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**September 2007 – June 2009** BTEC Higher National Diploma Computing (Merit)  
Westminster Kingsway College, London

**April 2007 – July 2007** European Computer Driving Licence College of North London

## Employment

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**May 2011 – Present** Customer Service Assistant – London Underground

- Efficient resolution of customer queries. Development and implementation of enhanced procedures for assisting customers with specific needs.
- Responsible for completion of scheduled maintenance and ad hoc repairs of computer operated entrance/exit gates and ticket machines to meet performance targets.
- Carried out regular security checks and ensured all safety hazards were addressed.

**November 2007 – June 2011** Assistant Manager – McDonalds Restaurant

- Leadership of four person front line team to ensure efficient and effective customer service, consistently meeting daily sales and service delivery targets.
- Responsible for hiring, mentoring and supporting front line team, resulting in significant improvement in staff retention.
- Management of stock control and ensuring till reconciliation at the end of each shift.

**June 2007 – August 2007** IT helpdesk – Brotherhood of the Cross and Star

- Front line IT support for fifty employees and associates, ensuring successful resolution of IT queries, plus hardware and software installation.
- Design, and delivery of Microsoft Outlook training courses for groups of up to ten people.

## Interests

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- Strong interest in current affairs and business news. Regular reader of Financial Times.
- Play piano – regularly perform gospel music at community and church events.
- Enjoy travel – have travelled extensively through Western Europe, West Africa and USA.

## References

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Available on request.

**Student name**

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- Postal Address
- Email
- Phone number
- (If applicable) Nationality/Work permit status

A first year computing student with excellent communication and customer care skills, gained through employment in retail and office administration. Seeking a part-time position in a customer facing role.

**Previous employment**

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**Summer 2010 and Christmas 2009** Clerical and Customer Relations Assistant  
Housing Association, Manchester

Assisted the Deputy Manager with administrative and customer enquiry work:

- Efficiently resolved enquiries from the public both in person and on the phone.
- Organised a 5000 leaflet company mail shot working to a short deadline.
- Developed excellent keyboard and IT skills through data entry using Excel spreadsheets.

**Summer 2009** Sales Assistant – Supermarket, East Didsbury, Manchester

- Developed excellent customer service skills through dealing with a wide range of customers in this busy town centre store.
- Demonstrated strong interpersonal skills by participating in sales promotions and worked well under pressure when the store was short staffed.

**Education**

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**September 2009 – June 2012** BSc (Hons) Computer Science, University of Westminster

**September 2002 – June 2009** St Joan of Arc Comprehensive School.

- 'A' Levels: Physics (B), Maths (B), General Studies (C)
- 8 GCSEs (grades A to C) including English and Maths

**Additional skills**

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**Computing**

- Experience in using Word and Excel
- Access database expertise through academic assignments

**Languages:**

- French (fluent written and spoken)
- Arabic (fluent spoken)
- Full, clean driving licence

**References**

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Available on request.

### **An effective CV:**

- Is tailored to highlight your relevant skills, experience and knowledge for different employers
- Emphasises clearly your key skills and achievements with your own examples
- Is full of action words describing what you do/did
- Has no spelling or grammatical errors
- Looks attractive, is well laid-out and is easy to read and understand
- Contains nothing negative about you and emphasises the positives

### **Remember:**

- Length: Ideally, your CV should be no longer than two sides of A4
- Font: use 10 -12 point with a clear typeface and adequate margins
- Print on good quality white or off-white paper (try not to use photocopies)
- Do not staple the pages together or use a header with your name on the second page
- Always spell check, grammar check and re-read your CV before sending it out - remember that a spell checker does not check words that are in capital letters
- Avoid waffle and jargon
- Avoid listing low level tasks from previous jobs eg 'filing' but describe the skills involved eg 'responsible for the organisation of correspondence, reports and press cuttings'
- Use positive and focused language with plenty of action words to create a more favourable impression
- Make use of bullet points, bold, italics etc. for emphasis being careful not to make the CV look cluttered
- Do not include your National Insurance number on your CV



AS WITH CVs, APPLICATION FORMS PROVIDE EMPLOYERS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, APTITUDES AND EXPERIENCE. THEY ARE FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT SELLING YOURSELF.

### Application forms versus CVs

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The main difference is that whilst in a CV you can select the format and information you include, in an application form you must answer all the questions set by the employer.

### Uses

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An application form is usually used in response to an advertised vacancy; it enables the employer to ask a series of questions in a standardised way, making comparison between candidates easier.

### Online and paper application forms

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You will find that there is a trend towards using online application forms, especially by large companies. It is essential that you take the same care when filling out electronic versions as you would on a paper version.

### Preparation

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- Plan a timetable to meet the closing date
- Read carefully through any information supplied by the employer
- Find out the main criteria before applying eg UCAS points required. If your grades are not adequate but there were exceptional circumstances which affected your results, you need to contact the recruiter directly to explain before proceeding with your application
- Research the company and the sector using the Internet, the Career Development Centre

website: 'Researching Employers' in the 'Hidden Jobs' section  
[westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers) and the Careers Information Library

- Talk to anyone you know who works for the company or does a similar job in another company
- Analyse the advertisement and make a list of the skills, qualifications and experience that the employer is looking for
- Think of examples which match the employer's requirements: Your up-to-date CV could help you here
- When preparing information, remember to provide examples from all areas of your life; academic, employment and voluntary activities. Make notes on all your positive achievements. Try to use recent examples which cover the last three to five years
- Make sure that you have photocopied or downloaded extra copies for your draft answers before you send the final version
- Always keep a copy for yourself to help prepare for the interview
- Read any instructions for completing the form supplied by the company eg online forms often specify the word count for each question, while paper forms may include instructions such as 'use black ink and block capitals'
- Refer to your up-to-date CV for factual information
- Consider how you can organise and word the information to fit into the space supplied. Do not exceed the suggested word count
- Focus on correct spelling and use of grammar: Poor English will result in instant rejection.

## Content

The questions on most application forms can be divided into the following categories:

### Personal history

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This normally includes full details of your education and any work experience you have had to date. When giving dates, the month and year are sufficient.

### Competency based questions

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Here, you are asked to supply examples to support claims that you have the required skills or 'competencies'. An alternative to this, particularly within the public sector, is to be asked to write a supporting statement.

### Motivation

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Include information explaining why you want to work in this particular role and for this specific organisation/sector, linking this to your own experiences.

### Supporting statements

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If not already covered, there are two messages which are vital to communicate:

- Why you want the position
- How you feel you match the requirements for the post.

Both statements should demonstrate your understanding of the job and the company, and will require research. It is an opportunity to add extra information not included in other parts of the form.

## Referees

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You will also normally be asked to name referees – follow their instructions as to the level of detail required.

### Administrative questions

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This might include information on your medical history, any criminal convictions and, quite often, a monitoring form which may include questions about gender, age and ethnic origin. By law, the monitoring form can never be used as part of the shortlisting process.

### Writing competency based responses

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You may have to write a series of paragraphs relating to certain competencies when completing graduate application forms. The task is made easier because the employer is identifying which competencies they are trying to measure, and giving you a template guide on how to respond to the questions. The following is a typical example:

**Q.** Describe a situation which you think demonstrates your ability to work well as part of a team. What role did you take? What did you do? Why? Was the outcome a success? What did you learn from it?

### Analyse the question:

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The employer is trying to measure several competencies here: Teamwork, negotiation, compromising, leadership, analytical ability. To respond effectively you need to think of an example from your personal, academic or work life, which allows you to answer this question fully. When you have thought of an example, answer the question directly, ie there are six parts to it and each needs to be addressed. Within a short amount of space this can be difficult, so use short punchy sentences to address each point succinctly.

### An aid to writing competency based questions

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Most questions on application forms are encouraging you to provide specific evidence of competencies. It is not enough simply to mention what skills you have but to provide evidence, using a range of examples, of when and how you put them into practice.

### Try using the CAR model:

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- C – Context (briefly outline the scenario, problem/task, date, place)
- A – Action (what did you do to overcome the difficulty?)
- R – Results (what were the concrete results and what did you learn?).

### Before submitting the form

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- Read through carefully before sending it off and get someone else to check it.
- Make your answers interesting and easy to read.
- Keep content relevant.
- If you have used additional sheets make sure you put your name on each one and number them appropriately.
- Keep a photocopy of your completed form.

You can find examples of answers to competency based questions by going to [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers), then clicking on CVs and Applications – then scroll and click on ‘Example questions and answers’.

THE AIM OF A COVERING LETTER IS TO DRAW THE READER'S ATTENTION TO THE MOST RELEVANT ASPECTS OF YOUR EXPERIENCE AND TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS PARTICULAR ROLE.

### Your covering letter should include:

- Why you are writing to the employer. This is usually in response to an advertised vacancy but may be a speculative approach. If responding to an advertisement state where you saw it, using any reference numbers if requested. If the application is speculative, be specific about what sort of work you are interested in.
- What you are offering the employer, ie refer to relevant aspects of your skills, knowledge and experience, giving more detail if appropriate. If the advertisement you are responding to has highlighted certain essential requirements, then ensure that you draw attention to how you meet these.
- Why you want to do this sort of work and why you are interested in working for this employer. These can be covered in the same paragraph and is your chance to show your motivation and interest in the job. You can link this to your studies, employment and other activities.
- When you are available for interview.
- Optional - You may want to let the organisation know that you will be calling at some specific point in the near future to confirm receipt of your application. This way, if you do not hear from them, you can be sure that it is because your application has not been successful and not because they did not receive your application!
- End on a positive note saying that you are looking forward to hearing from them.

### General guidelines

- Use no more than one side of A4 and no more than three to four paragraphs.
- Print on good quality paper – preferably matching the CV in typeface.
- Ensure your letter is clearly laid-out and check spelling and grammar.
- Your covering letter should be targeted to each application.
- Address the letter to a named person, if possible.



Student Name  
28 Broadwick St  
London NW4 4HP  
Tel: 020 8679 4571  
name@provider.com

Mrs A. Winter  
Personnel Manager  
LBI Publishing Ltd  
45 Brook Street  
London W1B 2AA

July 25, 2011

Dear Mrs Winter

Re: 23/01 Marketing Assistant Vacancy

I would like to apply for the above position as advertised recently in Campaign Weekly and on your company website.

As you will see from my enclosed CV, I have recently graduated with a degree in Business Studies from the University of Westminster. I gained a detailed understanding of marketing and business analysis from my degree and practical knowledge of the publishing industry through a three month work placement at New Age Publishing. During my placement, I developed a clear understanding of the different aspects of the work of a marketing department, as well as an awareness of likely future developments in this field. I participated in the design of an advertising campaign for the company's "Finance for Beginners" series. This gave me practical experience of producing creative ideas within a strict deadline and demonstrated my ability to prioritise tasks. The concept for the campaign was then adopted by other departments.

I have always organised my time efficiently, having combined full-time academic work to a high standard with paid part-time employment. Whilst working as part of a target-driven sales team for an insurance company, I built strong customer relationships by assessing client needs and providing relevant product knowledge. In addition to improving my interpersonal, communication and customer care skills, this experience also enhanced my commercial awareness and I believe that these qualities make me suitable for the above role.

Throughout my degree, I selected modules related to marketing as part of my preparation for a career in this sector. I am particularly interested in working for LBI Publishing as I have a keen interest in educational publications, which was developed through a number of voluntary experiences supporting pupils in inner city schools. While these experiences exposed me to LBI Publishing's quality educational publications, I am also very attracted to working for an organisation with an expanding publishing portfolio such as yours, as I thrive on the entrepreneurial aspects of researching and setting up new customer-focused projects.

I am available for interview during the month of August and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application at interview. It is also my intention to follow up with a phone call next week to confirm receipt of my application.

I thank you for considering my application and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Student Name

## Speculative letters

You may want to approach companies in which you are interested but who have no advertised vacancies. To do this, you can use a similar format of covering letter to the previous example, but with a different opening sentence, such as:

'I am writing to ask whether you have vacancies within your ..... Department.  
As you will see from my CV, I have ...'

Another strategy for finding out about vacancies which have not been advertised is to arrange for an informational interview with a company in a sector which interests you. The following outline letter would be appropriate:

I am very interested in a career in ..... and would like to know if I could arrange to visit your ..... to find out more about the work and obtain your advice on starting a career in this field. Your details were given to me by ..... who suggested that you might be willing to give me some general information about careers in this area.

I have recently graduated with a degree in ..... and am currently working for ..... as an ..... As you will see from my CV, I was given a variety of interesting tasks to complete and demonstrated my skills in ..... This experience has given me an insight into ..... and increased the sector's appeal.

Please find attached my CV for your consideration and I hope you will be able to spare me half an hour of your time, along with the opportunity to meet other members of your team for a brief discussion about their roles. I thank you for taking the time to read my letter and, if it is okay with you, will call you next week with a view to arranging a suitable appointment.

Yours sincerely

A.B. Nonimus.

To find out more about speculative applications, go to [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers) and follow the links from the Careers Pages for Students to Hidden Jobs.

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS ARE NOW ADOPTING AN ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS. THE SAME RULES APPLY TO ONLINE APPLICATIONS AS FOR PAPER BASED APPLICATION FORMS. ONLINE APPLICATIONS CAN TAKE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FORMS.

### Online Application form

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Online application processes will typically require you to register with the employer as a candidate before allowing you to access the application process. The purpose of this is to allow you to revisit your application online rather than having to complete it in a single sitting. Once complete, you can submit your application to be considered. Once you have registered with an employer you can use the same login to apply for other roles within the same organisation and in some cases review the progress of your application.

### Online application tips:

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This kind of application is common in public sector organisations, where you will have the option of completing either a paper-based or downloadable online application form.

It is generally better to opt for the electronic option as you can then edit it easily before submitting. The process for completing this kind of application is the same as for a paper-based one (see p20).

### Online and Upload/ Email Application form tips:

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- Type a draft of each response in a word processor before copying and pasting it into the online form. Online forms are unlikely to have a spell check facility and spelling errors are a key reason for an application being unsuccessful.
- If a word count is provided for a question, stick to it. Online applications may well cut off any additional words beyond the limit
- Be sure to print out your completed application or a copy of your responses so that you have something to refer to if called for interview.
- Read through your completed application thoroughly before you submit it for consideration. In most cases, once you submit the application you will be unable to make further edits to it.





## Upload/Email CV

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Another option for electronic submission of applications is to upload or email a CV. As with online application forms, the same rules apply for the submission of CVs electronically as for their paper-based equivalent (see p6). Typically accepted formats for a CV file will be either Microsoft Word document format (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat portable document format (.pdf). As the majority of organisations will not yet be using the most up-to-date versions of Word or Acrobat, you should use the most commonly used versions.

### Upload/Email CV tips:

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- Do not include your National Insurance (NI) number on your CV as this can be used for identity theft.
- You cannot be sure whether it will be viewed on-screen or printed out so make sure that it looks as you intend it to, both on-screen and on paper.
- Do not use non-standard fonts as this may cause the CV to display differently to the employer. Stick to Arial or Times New Roman to be sure.
- As with all applications, keep a copy for yourself so you can refer to it at an interview.
- Use a formal tone in your accompanying email with a proper introduction and sign off, explaining the purpose of your communication. Do not use abbreviations or text language.

## Use of Social Media:

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Increasingly, graduates are using social media tools to engage in the job market. However projecting an appropriate professional image to potential employers requires the right form of digital marketing.

- Clean up profiles on all social media websites. Delete inappropriate images or comments. A growing number of employers use the internet to find further information about prospective candidates.
- Keep your personal/social on-line network separate from your professional contacts.
- Use key industry words to describe the type of job you are looking for or the type of employers you have worked for previously. Employers are more likely to come across your CV or profile.
- Sign up to Twitter and RSS feeds to find out the latest opportunities or information about specific employers.
- Remember social media is a public forum. Never post anything that could have a negative impact on your career. Respect yourself and others as you would off-line.



## Positive Action and Descriptive Words

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Consider the following examples of positive action and descriptive words when preparing your CV or application form.

- achieved
- administered
- analysed
- built
- capable
- competent
- communicated
- consistent
- controlled
- co-ordinated
- created
- designed
- developed
- directed
- economical
- efficient
- engineered
- established
- expanded
- experienced
- guided
- implemented
- improved
- initiated
- led
- managed

- monitored
- organised
- participated
- positive
- processed
- proficient
- profitable
- qualified
- repaired
- resourceful
- sold
- specialised
- stable
- successful
- supervised
- trained
- versatile
- wide experience

## Examples of Transferable and Personal Skills

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- advising individuals
- arranging social events
- checking for accuracy
- calculating numerical data
- classifying individuals
- commercial awareness
- communication skills
- compiling events
- co-ordinating events
- corresponding with customers
- counselling people
- customer care skills
- delegating responsibility
- drafting reports
- editing documents
- gathering information
- interpersonal skills
- IT skills
- multitasking
- operating equipment
- organising people
- persuading other
- planning agendas
- preparing charts and diagrams
- prioritising tasks
- promoting events
- protecting property
- raising funds
- recording data
- repairing equipment
- reviewing documents
- running meetings
- selling products
- serving the public
- supervising staff
- team working
- time management
- working under pressure
- working to deadlines

Visit [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers) and follow the link to CVs and Applications



### Cavendish House

#### FULL-TIME SERVICE

1st Floor, Cavendish House  
101 New Cavendish Street  
London, W1W 6XH  
T 020 7911 5184

E [careers@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:careers@westminster.ac.uk)

Tube: Goodge St, Oxford Circus, Great Portland Street  
or Warren Street

#### OPENING TIMES

Term-time

Monday - Friday: 9.30am - 5pm  
except Tuesday: 12.30 - 5pm

Quick Query

Monday - Thursday 12 - 4pm

Vacation

As above except Friday 9.30am - 12.30pm



Situated on the corner of New Cavendish Street and Great Titchfield Street



## Harrow

### PART-TIME SERVICE

Room E.16,  
Watford Road, Northwick Park  
Middlesex, HA1 3TP  
Tube: Northwick Park

### OPENING TIMES

Term-time  
Monday and Thursday, 9.30am – 4.30pm  
Quick Query  
Monday and Thursday, 12.30 – 2.30pm  
Vacation  
Closed

TEMPORARY CLOSURES MAY OCCUR DURING THE SUMMER VACATION – PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE OR TELEPHONE BEFORE YOU VISIT US.

Career Development Centre offers impartial, client focused, confidential, collaborative and accessible services in accordance with the University's Equal Opportunities policy and the National Information, Advice and Guidance Code of Principles. For a full Statement of Service go to our website [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers)

We constantly strive to improve our services to all our users and welcome any feedback or comments. Please feel free to make any suggestions on areas you feel could be improved. Any comments on what you feel is working well, would also be welcome. To submit these comments, please email us at [careers@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:careers@westminster.ac.uk) or complete a feedback form on our website [westminster.ac.uk/careers](http://westminster.ac.uk/careers)









