



# PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH HANDBOOK

*TIPS FOR CVS, COVER LETTERS  
AND MORE*



IP PARIS



# **PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH HANDBOOK**



***TIPS FOR CVS, COVER LETTERS AND MORE***



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# PART I: CV/RESUME

## Basic Rules

› **Target your CV!** Are you addressing a university, a traditional firm, a start-up or a high-tech company? Investigate the culture of the institution or company and adapt your style to it (see CV layouts).

› **Make it yours!** Your CV should reflect you and no one else in both content and form. For this reason, do not use templates or automatically generated CVs. Otherwise, it will be difficult to differentiate you from the thousands of other candidates using the same resources.

› **Make it machine friendly!** Most CVs today are 'read' by machines that couldn't care less about the aesthetics of your CV. So avoid fancy fonts and catchy layouts. Some addition of colour and text blocks should be acceptable. To enable your CV to be easily read by ATS (Applicant Tracking Systems):

- Format **dates** like this: 10/20 to 3/21 or Oct 2020 to March 2021. Just writing the year can confuse the system, as can terms like 'early June'
- Use **keywords** (but avoiding overload). Find appropriate keywords from the job advertisement, from the

company website or from similar job profiles. However, make the effort to paraphrase or use synonyms.

- Use standard section **headings** (e.g. Education, Professional Experience, etc.)
- Do not use footers and headers (Word doc)
- Do not use live links, as the ATS might block the document for fear of viruses (a LinkedIn or email or website address must be written without creating a link)
- Avoid complex tables and graphs; avoid logos.

If in doubt, you can check online if your CV is compatible.

<https://vidcruiter.com/applicant-tracking-system/ats-friendly-resume/>

› **Make it copy-friendly!** CVs that survive a first sorting will likely be copied and shared among recruiters and hiring staff. To ensure your CV remains legible, use black font and white paper. Respect margins. Do not use highlighting or shading. All of this will also make your CV more scanner friendly. If you have more than one page, DO

NOT use staples, as this will block the paper feed of a scanner and/or copier.

- › **Keep it clean!** Do not use any unnecessary punctuation, signs or symbols. Check that everything is properly aligned (*e.g.*, indentations, section titles, bullet points). Be consistent with font types and sizes.
- › **Use keywords!** Scanners are programmed to pick these out. Your keywords should be targeted to the position you are applying for. Do not, however, simply copy the exact same words in the want-ad.
- › **Explain everything relevant to the position for which you are applying!** You have to describe what you have learned and what skills you have acquired during your degree. What is it about your Master's Degree in Mechanics that makes you the ideal candidate for the job? Remember that a CV in English is telling a story: **USE VERBS** instead of nouns.
- › **Yet be concise!** When human recruiters do read a CV, they spend an average of 30 to 60 seconds on it. One page is best. If you need two pages, do not print on both sides; put your name and the page number on each page.
- › **Be result-oriented!** Provide quantitative examples that include **figures** when possible to portray a clear picture of your achievements (*e.g.*: *Collected €10k,*

*Managed a \$350,000 budget, Trained and supervised 18 staff members*).

- › **Be specific!** Vague statements have very little impact, while **specifics** strike a responsive chord (*e.g.*: Have practiced horse riding for 10 years; ranked 31st at the Paris Prix du Grand Palais international jumping competition in 2017)
- › **Work on the layout, fonts and styling!** The style of your CV speaks to who you are, just as your clothing and personal style can signal character traits to your would-be employers during an interview. It is also a clever way of demonstrating office **skills**. Find a font style that suits you, yet is easy to read, scan and copy (Calibri, Cambria instead of Times New Roman). Avoid multiple types of fonts: be sparing with boldface and all-capitals; use italics only for foreign words, book titles, etc. Use underlining only to differentiate rubrics. Above all, be consistent from one section to another.
- › **Weed out mistakes!** Typos and spelling mistakes will quickly make you seem careless and unsuitable for the job. Set your word processor to US or UK English. Use resources such as your computer spellchecker, then ask a trusted classmate or your teacher(s) to proofread your CV for you. Make sure you have done as much work as possible before asking for corrections: it will be easier to focus on the contents if you have already polished the form.



# Contents

## 1. Heading

**DO NOT** use 'CV' or 'Curriculum Vitae' (or 'Resume') as a title. It is a waste of space. Similarly, eliminate all unnecessary titles ("name", "address", "telephone number", "email address", etc.) Your reader will recognize what each of these is, without being told.

**DO NOT** include personal details such as your age, nationality, gender, marital status or whether you have children. This information is of no use to a potential employer and could lead to discrimination (with the possible exception of 'nationality,' if your right to work in the country is an issue). Including such information is inappropriate in many English-speaking countries.

**DO NOT** include a photo. For the same reason as above, it is not the custom in English-speaking countries.

**GIVE YOUR MOBILE PHONE NUMBER ONLY.** If a recruiter is interested in contacting you, you will want him/her to do so as quickly as possible.

**ADAPT** your details for an international context:

*Phone numbers:* The international dialling code, '00', works in Europe but not in North America or Australia. Use a '+' instead: '+33 (0)1 88...'. For other countries, consult the internet.

*Address:* do not forget to add 'France' to the last line of your address

## 2. Profile or Highlight Section

This very brief, optional section at the very beginning of your CV can be a place to highlight, or summarise, who you are and what you offer to potential employers. Research norms in your particular field to see if this option is a good fit for you. You may:

**STATE** a relevant or significant accomplishment that sets you apart and link it to the position or a career motivation

**LIST** pertinent details or skills that make you an ideal candidate for this position/ internship

### Short examples:

- *Highly adaptable engineering student seeking a two-month summer internship in IT*
- *Trilingual gap-year student looking for a six-month experience in a consulting firm*

### Longer examples:

- *Looking for a challenging position in a high-quality engineering environment where my resourceful experience and academic skills will add value to practical projects.*
- *Seeking a first position in research and development leading to team and project management where my technical and interpersonal skills will be able to evolve and mature.*

## 3. Relevant Skills/Qualifications (optional)

This section can appear in the margins of your CV, or closer to the top, if you feel you have relevant skills, experience or training for this particular position.

Transferable skills you could include (just choose three or four!):

Problem-solving skills  
Analytical  
Attention to detail  
Time management  
Critical thinking  
Flexibility  
Adaptability  
Communication skills

Teamwork

Ability to work autonomously

Organisational skills

Creativity

Data analysis

Negotiation skills

Comfortable with new technology

Knowledge of remote communication tools

Project management experience

Administrative skills

*Please note that if you label such a section with the word “Skills” it is not necessary to repeat the word after Problem-solving (or Communication, Negotiation...)*

## 4. Education

Use reverse chronological sequence. For each institution, you should include:

- **dates** (2017 – present)
- the **degree** you were awarded/will be awarded (give the official name in the original language, but then either translate it or give an English equivalent  
*e.g.: Degree to be awarded in.../expected in...*)
- the **name** and **location** of the institution (including the country): one entry per institution
- a concise **description** (*e.g.: majoring in...../specialising in.....*)
- **Honours and awards** (Honour Roll, Fields medal, Fulbright scholarship, etc.)

## 5. Experience

*As with the 'Education' section, you need one entry per company (even if you've worked for that company more than once):*

- **dates** (including months for periods less than a year)
- **name** and **location** of the company (including the country)
- your **exact job title/position**
- a **description**: by far the most important part.

*Here again, you need to focus on your skills. Here are different strategies:*

- start a new line for each major skill or task that you describe
- use bullet points (not asterisks, hyphens, etc.) for each aspect of your job

*When it comes to writing the actual descriptions, here are some DOs and DON'Ts*

- **never use** personal pronouns (I) or possessives (my)
- **use** a dynamic 'action verb' in the simple past tense (e.g., demonstrated) See list of action verbs below
- **do not** make lists with nouns
- only mention jobs and tasks that are **relevant** to the position. However, at the beginning of your career you should probably include everything you've done. It is not so much what you choose to include, but how you include it that matters. Always emphasise the skills you can bring to the job.

## 6. Additional Skills (optional)

**Languages:** you should start with your native language, then English, then your other languages in descending order of mastery. To indicate your level: in the UK and Europe, use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; outside of Europe use adjectives such as:

- native speaker
- fluent ('fluent' implies you are virtually bilingual – do not use this word unless you're sure!)
- proficient
- advanced
- intermediate
- working knowledge
- basic knowledge
- beginner

### Certification scores

*If you have taken the LINGUASKILL, TOEIC, TOEFL, or another internationally recognized test, give your score in parentheses after the language, including the month and year you took it. Don't forget to include the score denominator (e.g.: LINGUASKILL Listening and Reading 180+/180).*

*Where appropriate, distinguish levels between speaking, writing, comprehension.*

### Computer skills

Include software that other candidates may not be able to offer, especially technical software such as Chemcad, or more unusual office stuff such as HTML or Photoshop.

You may add an indication of your level of proficiency and/or a context in which you have used this particular skill.

Unless you have advanced skills in, say, using Excel spreadsheets, do not include Office.

Separate computer from language skills.

### 7. Interests and ACTIVITIES

This section can draw attention to your personality and **soft skills** (*i.e.* the transverse skills that can be transferred to any context: organisational skills, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.). Here again, for each activity you choose to mention, make a clear link with the skills you have developed (leadership, team spirit, organisation skills). It's the latest trend! (see templates).

## Power Verbs

Source: [www.studentaffairs.stanford.edu](http://www.studentaffairs.stanford.edu)

COMMUNICATION	CREATIVE	ORGANIZING	INVESTIGATION
Aided	Abstracted	Achieved	Calculated
Advised	Acted	Assigned	Catalogued
Arbitrated	Adapted	Consulted	Collected
Clarified	Composed	Contracted	Computed
Co-authored	Conceptualized	Controlled	Conducted
Collaborated	Created	Coordinated	Correlated
Consulted	Designed	Decided	Critiqued
Coordinated	Developed	Delegated	Diagnosed
Counselled	Directed	Developed	Discovered
Defined	Drew	Established	Examined
Enlisted	Fashioned	Evaluated	Experimented
Formulated	Generated	Negotiated	Extrapolated
Influenced	Illustrated	Organized	Evaluated
Inspired	Imagined	Planned	Gathered
Interpreted	Improvised	Prepared	Identified
Interviewed	Integrated	Prioritized	Inspected
Mediated	Innovated	Produced	Investigated
Merged	Painted	Recommended	Monitored
Negotiated	Performed	Reported	Proved
Promoted	Planned		Reviewed
Publicized	Problem solved		Surveyed
Recommended	Shaped		Tested
Represented	Synthesized		
Resolved	Visualized		
Suggested	Wrote		

## FINANCIAL

Administered

Allocated

Analyzed

Appraised

Audited

Budgeted

Calculated

Computed

Developed

Evaluated

Figured

Maintained

Managed

Performed

Planned

Projected

## LEADERSHIP

Administered

Chaired

Convinced

Directed

Examined

Executed

Expanded

Facilitated

Improved

Initiated

Managed

Oversaw

Produced

Recommended

Reviewed

Supervised

## MANUAL SKILLS

Arranged

Assembled

Bound

Built

Checked

Classified

Constructed

Controlled

Cut

Designed

Developed

Drove

Handled

Installed

Invented

Maintained

Monitored

Operated

## DETAIL

Approved

Arranged

Classified

Collated

Compared

Compiled

Documented

Enforced

Followed through

Met deadlines

Prepared

Processed

Recorded




Retrieved

Set priorities

Systemized

Tabulated

# Degree Equivalents

Degrees		
		
Baccalauréat	High School Diploma	A-levels*, final exam
Classes préparatoires	See the glossary below	See the glossary below
Licence (Three-year undergraduate degree)	BA [Bachelor of Arts] BS [Bachelor of Science] (Four-year degree)	Bachelor's Degree BA or BSc (Four-year degree)
Master (2-year Graduate degree)	Master of Arts (MA) Master of Sciences (MS)	Master's Degree MA [Master of Arts] MSc [Master of Sciences]
Diplôme d'ingénieur (Postgraduate engineering degree)	Master of Sciences (MS)	Master's Degree in Engineering MSc [Master of Science]
Diplôme d'école de commerce (Postgraduate business degree)	Master's Degree in Business	Master's Degree in Business
Doctorat/Thèse (Postgraduate research)	Ph.D.	PhD, Doctorate

\* Note on A-levels: In the UK you get 1 A-level per subject. Most people take 3 or 4. That means that the baccalaureate [sing.] is equivalent to A-levels [plural]. Also: don't use quotation marks with A-levels, just a hyphen. (Not «A» levels, but A-levels.)

## Honours/Mentions



*Baccalauréat*  
*Mention Très Bien*  
*Mention Bien*  
*Mention Assez Bien*

*Université :*  
*Mention Très Bien*  
*Mention Bien*  
*Mention Assez Bien*



With (High) Honors  
With Honors  
(Don't even mention it)

Summa Cum Laude  
(3.9 – 4.0)

Magna Cum Laude  
(3.7 – 3.8)

Cum Laude  
(3.5 – 3.6)



With High Honours  
With Honours  
(Don't even mention it)

First Class honours  
(70+/100)

Second Class honours  
(2.1: 60 to 70;  
or 2.2: 50 to 60)



# Main Differences in British/American English

Listed below are some of the common spelling and vocab differences between American and British English on CVs.



CV

*Lettre de motivation*

*Téléphone portable*

*Stage*

*Stagiaire*

Permis de conduire



Resume\*  
CV: academic

Cover letter

Cell phone

Internship

Intern

Driver's License\*  
(\*This information is mostly  
granted in the U.S. and should  
not appear on a U.S. resume)



CV

Cover(ing) letter  
(covering is less and less  
used)

Mobile phone

Work placement  
Training period

Trainee

Driving licence

**Note the differences in spelling:** to analyse (GB)/to analyze (US)  
: honours (GB)/honors (US)

**Note the difference in the format for dates:**

- US: Month Day, Year when you write it out (or) Month-Day-Year when you use numbers (ex: May 2nd, 2011 or 05-02-11)
- UK: Day Month, Year (ex: 2nd May, 2011 or 2 May, 2011 or 02-05-11)

## X Glossary

### Your Education

- **L'École Polytechnique** – one of France's top-ranking engineering schools/one of the leading French universities for science and engineering (currently in my second year, working towards a... Masters in Engineering)
- **Classes préparatoires** – two-year intensive studies to prepare the competitive entrance exams for top French universities (or engineering schools)
- **Concours** – competitive entrance exams for top French universities
- **Grandes Écoles** – top French universities
- **Baccalauréat** – equivalent to 'A'-levels (British); equivalent to high school leaving exams (US) avec mention – awarded with honours/highest honours (US: honors)
- **Licence/Master/Doctorat** – Bachelor's degree/Master's degree/PhD  
*Please note: Majors and Minors are only associated with a Bachelor's degree, never with a Master's*
- **Notation** – grade: GPA = grade point average (4.0 GPA = all A grades)

### Your First Year

- **Étudiant en 1<sup>re</sup> année** – freshman, fresher, first-year student
- **Formation humaine et militaire** – personal development and military training
- **Stage militaire ou civil** – internship in a military or civilian organisation (US: organization)

- **Brevet de parachutisme/pilote** – skydiving licence/pilot's licence (US: license)
- **DGA** – French armament procurement agency
- **Armée** – the armed forces; Armée de terre – the army/land forces; Armée de l'air – the air force; Marine – the navy; Gendarmerie – police (or « gendarmerie »); pompier – firefighter
- **Lycée REP** – secondary school in a high-priority education area, disadvantaged area
- **Stage intensif de langue** – intensive language courses

### Other Experience

- **Stage** – internship or work experience (less 'formal')
- **KES** – Students' Union
- **Binets** – student clubs and societies
- **Forum** – job fair
- **Brevet de secourisme** – First aid certificate
- **Brevet d'Aptitude aux Fonctions d'Animateur (BAFA)** – qualified/registered/certified youth camp leader
- **Moniteur** – (camp) counselor; sports instructor
- **Tuteur en maths** – gave private maths lessons to high school students.

## Samples

Source: Stanford University

### Janette Powell

P.O. Box 2738, Stanford, CA 94309

(650) 555-1234

jan@stanford.edu

linkedin.com/in/janettepowell

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#### Education:

**9/XX-present** *Stanford University, Stanford, CA*

- Pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations, to be conferred 6/XX
- Course work includes economics, organizational behavior, computer science, and statistics
- GPA - 3.8/4.0

**6/XX-9/XX** *Oxford University, Stanford-in-Oxford, Oxford, England*

- Studied Comparative Anglo-American Judicial Systems

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#### Experience:

**9/XX-present** *Resident Assistant, Madera House, Stanford University, Stanford, CA*

- Working with a staff of four resident assistants in an 88-student, freshman dormitory
- Creating and implement academic, cultural and social activities for students
- Encouraging and facilitate discussion of social, political and ethical questions
- Building community spirit and guide residents in assuming responsibility
- Coordinating "Madera Makes Music," a weekly educational program
- Scheduling performances, organize the budget and create publicity

**10/XX-6/XX** *Visual Display Artist/Salesperson, The Gap, Palo Alto, CA*

- Designed and assembled window and floor displays
- Assisted customers with selection and purchase of merchandise

**1/XX-1/XX** *Vice President, Delta Gamma Sorority, Stanford University, Stanford, CA*

- Directed planning and implementation of activities for 95 chapter members
- Supervised and approved officer budgets

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#### Additional Information:

- Division I Varsity Athlete, Women's Water Polo, Stanford University
- Familiar with Mac and PC software applications including Excel and PowerPoint
- Proficient in Spanish, basic skills in French
- Have travelled extensively throughout Europe

## Emma Colbert

emma.colbert@polytechnique.edu • +33 6 XX XX XXXX • XX boulevard des Maréchaux 91120 Palaiseau, France

### Education

#### M.S. in Engineering

2020-present

École Polytechnique, IP-Paris, France

- France's flagship university in science and engineering
- Anticipated graduation: June 2023
- Additional courses in mathematics, machine learning, and IT (algorithms, network programming)

#### B.S. in Applied Mathematics

2016-2019

University of Paris-Saclay, France

- One of France's leading universities in sciences and mathematics
- Courses in probabilities and computer programming
- GPA: 3.7

### Military Service

2019-2020

#### Officer Cadet

Adapted Overseas Military Service, Mayotte Island, French Territory

- Served as a platoon leader in the French Army
- Organized and directed a 2-week military training program for 15 young adults
- Prepared interns for an equivalent to the Junior High School Certificate with courses in French, math, history and geography

#### Military Officer Trainee

2019

Écoles de Saint-Cyr, Coëtquidan, France

- Trained as an officer candidate for three-months at the French Officer Training School
- Learned how to be a platoon leader in both tactical situations and strategic planning
- Took classes in management and leadership
- Played in multiple sports events and practiced shooting at daily sessions
- Managed the drama club and performed as a principal actor in *El Cid*

### Professional and Other Experiences

#### Summer Intern in Machine Learning

2021

SNCF Réseau - DGEX Solutions, Paris, France

- Solved a vehicle rescheduling problem using machine learning reinforcement
- Analyzed state-of-the-art algorithms to foster innovation in the R&D department

#### Summer Intern in Computer Programming

2020

Softbank Robotics, Tokyo, Japan

- Conducted surveys, analyzed data and reported conclusions to company executives
- Researched recent articles in mathematics for the IT department
- Coded a new C++ algorithm for layered surface representations

#### Math Tutor

2017-2018

Parkours, Paris, France

- Helped middle school students with their math homework
- Monitored the progress of 9 students over the course of a year
- Interfaced with parents and teachers

### Skills

Computer programming: Java, C, C++, Python, and R; database management SQL; LaTeX  
Languages: French (native); English (advanced speaking and writing); Japanese (basic oral and written comprehension)

### Sports

Soccer: played 10 years on local teams, 3 years at university. Currently captain of the women's varsity soccer team  
Boxing: trained and competed in local clubs for 6 years

Soccer: played 10 years on local teams, 3 years at university. Currently captain of the women's varsity soccer team.

Boxing: trained and competed in local clubs for 6 years.

## ALEX ACCOUNTING

95 rue Victor Hugo • Paris, France • 06.88.88.88.88 • student@edu.fr

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**Education**  
**Bachelor of Science, Management Science**  
 Expected Graduation Date: June 20xx  
 HEC Paris  
 GPA: 3.45

**A**

**B Relevant Coursework**

• Intermediate Accounting	• Auditing
• Federal Taxation	• Advanced Cost Accounting
• Financial Accounting	• Corporate Finance

**C Skills/Qualifications**

- Experience reviewing, analyzing and presenting case projects through auditing, cost accounting, and forensics accounting classes
- Strong background in research and analysis developed through work experience and coursework
- Work effectively within a team as well as independently with minimal supervision
- Proven leadership and public speaking abilities through student organization and work experience
- Proficient in Bloomberg, Quicken, QuickBooks, Turbo Tax, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access

**D Relevant Experience**

**Operations Assistant**, Caywood-Scholl Capital Management, London, UK (9/xx-present)

- Support 15 portfolio and trading administrators with processing more than 200 daily securities transactions, resulting in increased productivity
- Update bank loans to reflect principal payments and weekly interest payments from borrowers
- Analyze and resolve pending trade and settlement issues

**International/Domestic Trading Intern**, Nicholas-Applegate, New York, NY (6/xx-1/xx)

- Assisted traders with multiple large volume trade orders from portfolio managers
- Converses with operations regarding price discrepancies and trade issues between traders and brokers, improving communication between various constituencies
- Created spreadsheets allowing for quick comparisons of broker fees from different trading methods

**E Leadership Experience**

**President/Founder**, Undergraduate Accounting Society, UC Berkeley, CA (3/xx-1/xx)

- Developed campaign to increase student membership by 30%
- Collaborated with the Career Services Center to organize the first annual Meet the Firms event
- Served as a student representative on the UC Berkeley Business Quarter Planning committee

**F UC Berkeley Membership & Activities**

Swin Team - 2011 Pacific Collegiate Swim and Dive Conference Champions (09/xx - present)  
 Delta Sigma (01/xx - present)  
 Undergraduate Economics Society (09/xx - 06/xx)

TIPS:

A – Highlight a strong GPA

B – Highlight relevant coursework

C – Review carefully the job description and include relevant skills

D – Be result-oriented! Add precise numbers or outcome

E – Memberships and activities reflect your soft skills

## William STUDENT 2nd year student at Ecole Polytechnique

+33 (0)600700742  
william.student@polytechnique.edu  
8 rue de la Liberté 12345 Jolleville, FRANCE

### Looking for an internship in the domain of nuclear energy Summer 2022

#### EDUCATION

- **2020 - present** *Ecole Polytechnique, Palaiseau, France.* France's leading school of engineering. Following a multidisciplinary curriculum: physics, mechanics, economics, computer science.
- **9/2020- 3/2021** *Ecole Navale, Lanveoc, France.* Naval academy for officers of the French Navy. Followed military training: maritime knowledge, sport, leadership activities.
- **2017 - 2020** *Lycée des Lycéens, Nice, France.* "Classe préparatoire". A three-year intensive program in math, physics and chemistry to prepare for highly competitive nationwide exam.
- **2014 - 2017** *Lycée Victor Hugo, Quilleville, France.* Scientific baccalaureate - equivalent to high school leaving exams - obtained with high honors. Participated in

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**WATCH OFFICER - 10/2020 to 4/2021**

**French maritime rescue coordination center (C.R.O.S.S) - French Navy - Cap Gris-Nez, FRANCE**

- Coordinated search and rescue operations in the Channel
- Acted as the international maritime point of contact for French people in distress overseas
- Obtained the Search and Rescue Training Certificate (ENSAM - Nantes, France, 11/2020)
- Trained professional soldiers to prepare for internal exam

#### ADDITIONAL SKILLS

##### Languages

*French:* mother tongue  
*English:* upper intermediate  
*Spanish:* intermediate

##### Computer skills

*Programming languages:* PYTHON, SQL, JAVA, ROOT, HTML, PHP  
*Office software:* Office, LaTeX, Google Suite ; quick to learn new software

##### Transferable skills

Analytical and problem-solving skills  
Fast learner, highly adaptable  
Attentive to detail and time management

#### INTERESTS

*Sport:* Football - regularly compete as a member of the school soccer team.

*Sound and light shows:* Organized a show about the history of Polytechnique with 50 actors.

## Louise Candidate

Student at the Ecole Polytechnique Engineering School, expected graduation: 2024

**Temporary Address:**  
App 11-10-99  
Résidence Fayolle  
Ecole Polytechnique  
91128 Palaiseau, France

**Home Address:**  
53 rue Alphabet  
75020 Paris, France  
  
+33.7.80.90.20.90.  
louise.candidate@polytechnique.edu

### EDUCATION

- 2020-present Ecole Polytechnique, Palaiseau, France**  
France's leading engineering school. Currently a second-year student specialising in the domains of physics, applied mathematics and IT, working towards a Masters level degree in physics
- 2018-2020 Lycée Henri IV, Paris, France**  
"Classe préparatoire", an intensive two-year preparatory course for the competitive entrance exams to top French engineering schools
- 2015-2018 Lycée Henri IV, Paris, France**  
"Baccalauréat", French high school leaving diploma, awarded with highest honours
- 2017 Laureate at the Geosciences "Olympiades" (high level geology competition).**  
Awarded first prize in the "Concours de nouvelles interlycées" (short story competition organised by Parisian high schools)

### PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

- June 2021-present Treasurer of the student club 'Raid de l'X', a multisport cross-country race held each year with over 300 athletes from 30 countries.**
- Handled a €50 000 budget; maintained perfect accounting results
  - Participated in the coordination of a dynamic team of thirty people
- Dec. 2020-April 2021 Auxiliary platoon leader, military unit ensuring public safety, Brignoles, France**
- Coordinated and oversaw several military training courses for young soldiers
  - Provided academic support in maths and physics to corporals preparing a competitive exam to become officers; helped to secure an excellent pass rate
  - Obtained first aid certificate and qualifications in forest fire and rescue management

### LANGUAGES AND IT

French Native Language  
English Advanced  
German Upper-intermediate  
IT Programming: Java, Python

### SKILLS

- Proven organisational and communication skills
- Excellent written expression
- Effective team member and leader
- Highly adaptable

### ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

- Writing** Wrote several short stories and novels. Intend to publish a collection of novels in the coming years.
- Sport** Running (participated in several regional and national student competitions), cycling, tennis, rugby.
- Arts** Piano (playing for 14 years), choir (singing for 10 years)  
Music: classical music and jazz. Cinema: particular interest in Hitchcock's movies  
Reading: French and German literature, philosophy, essays on economics (Amartya Sen, Ivar Ekeland)





# PART II: COVER LETTERS

## Structure

- › *First paragraph: YOU.* A clear, short and catchy statement on who you are and what you want.
- › *Second paragraph: THEM.* Show that you know the company you are addressing. Include some specific information and clearly state why you want to work there.
- › *Third paragraph: YOU AND THEM.* Focus on what you can do for the employer. Your skills (one or two precise examples).
- › *Conclusion:* a **pro-active** statement/your interest in obtaining a meeting.
- › Do not forget to sign your letter!

## Content

- › Your cover letter should highlight your CV. Expand on your skills, and give precise examples (see below).
- › Make sure that what you are saying reflects your personality and skills. Here again, use the list of action verbs for a purpose.
- › Keep concise: a cover letter is one-page long maximum.

## Layout (UK)

### Top left-hand corner

Your Contact Information (make sure they are the same as your CV's)

Your Name

Your Address – Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Phone Number

Your Email Address

(space)

Date

(space)

Employer Contact Information

Name

Title

Company Address City, State, Zip Code

(space)

### Object of your letter

Re: Application for a three-month internship in... (usually in bold or italics)

(space)

### Salutation

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Last Name (try to get the name of the person you are addressing. If not, use

Dear Hiring Manager (Dear Madam/Sir is a bit old-fashioned)

(space)

### First Paragraph: Object of your letter

Currently in..., at ..., I would like to/seek to/am seeking...

The first paragraph of your covering letter should include information on the position you are applying for, the job title and the required dates.

(space in between paragraphs)

### Second Paragraph:

#### *You and Them*

Working for... would give me the opportunity to...; An internship at... would be a unique opportunity...

I am appealed by... (focus on the company's assets)

(space in between paragraphs)

### Third Paragraph: Your qualifications and specific skills

"Having frequently travelled to the USA and Canada and having worked as a volunteer in.... As a..., I was in charge of... I was also responsible for.... This experience also confirmed my abilities to... During..., I handled working under pressure. It was a great opportunity to prove my commitment, my adaptability, my flexibility"

(space in between paragraphs)

*Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow-up.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you for reviewing my skills.

I would be delighted to meet, either in person or virtually, in order to discuss further my interests and motivations.

I look forward to hearing from you, I look forward to your response,

(space)

### Closing:

Sincerely yours/Best regards

(double space)

*Signature:* Handwritten Signature (for a mailed letter)

## LAYOUT (US)

### Top left-hand corner

Mr. Peter Johnson  
Personnel Manager [position within  
company]  
IBM  
123 Maple Street  
Ithaca, New York 12345

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Dear Hiring Manager:

**Opening paragraph:** State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and, if relevant, mention how you heard of the opening or organization. Be specific.

I am currently a second-year student at the “École Polytechnique”, France’s leading university for high-level scientific training. As part of the program, students are encouraged/ have the opportunity to complete a one-month internship/training period during the summer of...

(or)

Mr. X, director/head of the xxx department, who supervised my student project last year, has encouraged me to write to you about a position in your firm/ about the possibility of completing a one-month training period in your firm during the summer of... (or)... *and I would be thrilled to gain experience in the... field/sector.*

Top right-hand corner

Your details

Month/Day<sup>st</sup>, <sup>nd</sup>, <sup>rd</sup>, <sup>th</sup>, Year

Mr. X, Professor of Computer Science at the *École Polytechnique*... spoke to me about the possibility of/suggested I write to you...

**Paragraph 2:** Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. Point out relevant work experience or related education. Emphasize skills or abilities or interests you have that relate to the job.

I would be particularly interested in working for your company, because...

In addition, I would like to use this time to deepen my knowledge and experience of ... the USA, Spain....

### Paragraph 3:

Enclosed please find my resume, which outlines my qualifications in further detail. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Type your name under your signature

Enc.: resume

## Templates

### E-mail/Shorter Cover letters:

*Dear Mr Pink,*

*A third-year, engineering and science student at the Ecole Polytechnique, I'm writing in regards to the internship position advertised on... (website)...*

*My curriculum, specifically coursework in «Renewable energy and environment», has truly prepared me for this position. The programme involved a great deal of independent research, requiring initiative, self-motivation and a wide range of hard and soft skills which culminated in a 6-month science project on photovoltaic solar energy. I found this subject highly stimulating, and would jump at the chance to gain work experience in the field and develop my career.*

*I am a fast and thorough student, with a keen eye for detail that could prove beneficial to your team in Burlington, MA. I am able to take on this position from June XXXX to August XXXX, and have the enthusiasm and determination to contribute to on-going projects and learn from them in return.*

*Thank you for taking the time to consider this application. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Pierre Fermat*

Dear Mrs Green,

With a Master's Degree in computer science, six months of hands-on experience implementing software applications, and the ability to troubleshoot and solve problems in a timely and efficient manner, I would like to express my deep interest in your LinkedIn posting for a software engineering intern.

I was involved in several software release projects while completing a 6-week internship at..., UK, where I gained a great deal of technical experience, especially in XYZ. This stimulating period at... also helped me understand the importance of time management to overcome roadblocks, and of open communication to optimise team work. Exploring new software and methods to assist with product development is exciting and dynamic work, and I hope to bring my expanding knowledge to your company.

Attached is a copy of my resume that further develops my background and technical skills.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Yours sincerely,

Louise Le Grand

**Longer, attached cover letter:**

Dear Hiring Manager,

Please accept the attached resume in application for current openings at ENERGY corporation.

ENERGY corporation clearly holds its clients' best interests as a core principle. This, along with the belief that 'management of environmental and public health risk is integral to the successful operation of a business' constitute a compelling and attractive ethos I would be proud to adopt. My scientific knowledge and work experience would enable me to confidently contribute to your organisation and clients' future needs.

My undergraduate studies at the Ecole Polytechnique, IP Paris, provided me with the opportunity to study and analyze key concepts, principles and practices in environmental engineering. Subsequently, I demonstrated in-depth knowledge of environmental issues and problem-solving strategies through my work in upper-level class assignments and projects, such as XYZ. Because I intend to maintain professional development throughout my career, you can be assured that I will always keep abreast of emerging, critical environmental matters.

While completing my degree, I worked as a Research Associate and Assistant in the XYZ department at the Ecole Polytechnique. I learned the importance of precise analysis and attention to detail in field research. In addition, I gained experience in examining and solving problems with environmental concerns such as waste water treatment and brush control. Both my experience and education demonstrate the level of performance I would bring to your organization.

My resume is enclosed to provide additional details concerning my background and achievements.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jeanne Ginette



# PART III: JOB INTERVIEWS

## TIPS

From [https://economics.ucsd.edu/\\_files/.../JobSearchHandbook.pdf](https://economics.ucsd.edu/_files/.../JobSearchHandbook.pdf)

Employers are selective about who they interview. An interview means they want to get to know you. It is a great accomplishment to get selected, but it means that you need to be ready to talk about your qualifications and present yourself in a professional manner.

### I. Top Ten Interview Tips

1. Research the company and review the job description prior to the interview.
2. Identify your top 5 skills and experiences that are relevant to the position.
3. Complete a practice/mock interview prior to the actual interview.
4. Dress appropriately – formal attire always; never casual.
5. Bring additional copies of your resume and references to the interview.
6. Arrive 10-15 minutes before the interview, turn off cell phone, go alone.
7. Be specific and provide examples in your responses. This adds credibility to statements you made about your qualifications and is why you were invited to interview.
8. Ask 2-3 pertinent questions when they ask you “Do you have any questions for us?”.
9. Collect business cards of the individual(s) who interviewed you.
10. Always send a thank-you note to interviewer(s) within 24 hours of the interview.

### II. Preparing for an interview

**Tell me about yourself.**

Create a 2 minute ‘elevator pitch’ of your education, experience and skills that qualifies you for the job.

**What do you know about our company?**

Do your homework. Know the company’s core business, mission statement, services, products, clients, goals, organizational structure, history, and philosophy.

**Why do you want to work for us?**

Focus on how your skills, abilities and qualifications specifically meet the organization’s needs and goals.

**Why should we hire you?**

Give concrete examples of your experience, knowledge, skills and added values that are relevant to the position.

**What is your biggest weakness?**

Be honest, but end on a positive note. Turn a negative into a positive or explain

that it is something on which you are actively working to improve. Briefly explaining HOW, specifically, you will overcome this weakness, shows that you are aware of your shortcomings and are proactive in improving your skill-set.

#### Why are you leaving your present job?

Never speak negatively about your former manager or organization. You can mention that you want more opportunity to advance, more responsibility and challenge.

#### What is your greatest accomplishment?

Be as specific as possible – cite the number of people you supervise, your

sales percentages, the money you saved your previous organization, programs created, awards, etc.

#### How do you work under pressure and with deadlines?

Assure the employer by providing relevant examples that illustrate your ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

#### What are your salary expectations?

Research salary ranges. Give a range of what similar positions pay and one based on your skills and experience.

Interview questions	Where to find powerful content?	Type of content to add to list
What are your strengths ? (i.e. prove to me that you have the soft and hard skills listed on the JD with past results)	Job description	Soft & hard skills, achievements, examples, quantified results,
What do you know about the company? (i.e prove to me that you fit the mission, vision and culture of the company?)	Mission and vision statement	Personal beliefs, soft skills, interests, ambitions
Tell me about yourself (i.e. tell me why I should hire you over the other candidate)	Jodi Glickman - Lead with your destination Simon Sinek - start with why	Personal mission, qualities, ambitions, added value
Give me an example of this ? What was the impact of that What was the quantified result ? etc.	Teacher	Examples, achievements, results

### Things to watch out for in interviews

I am Coline. I am from Lyon. I went to xxx Lycée. After that I moved to Paris to come to I'X. I am 20 years old. I like sports.....	➡	Irrelevant
I am punctual	➡	Assumed quality
I think that AI will be very important	➡	Underdeveloped - ask why, find insights, what is personal mission
As part of my studies, I completed a project where I created a new website. It was a great Website.	➡	Underdeveloped - ask for challenges faced, actions taken, concrete results
I am a good team team player. I like working with people and people like working with me.	➡	Underdeveloped - ask for specific examples, concrete results
		Body Language : No arm crossing, eye contact, smile!



## Adjectives to Reflect your Skills

Communication skills	accurate articulate communicative expressive persuasive
Interpersonal skills	supportive adaptable available compliant
Teamwork skills	enthusiastic supportive co-operative constructive motivated
Organisation, management and leadership skills	assertive creative goal-oriented leading managerial multitasking well-organised responsible results-oriented
Initiative	pro-active self-accountable self-aware self-managing self-motivated spontaneous
Adaptability	adaptable adjustable flexible mobile open-minded willing to adapt
Analytical, research and planning skills	accurate analytical resourceful thoughtful
Numeric, computer and technical skills	innovative numerate number-literate computer-literate



# PART IV: LINKEDIN PROFILES

**Photo:** Choose a friendly but professional picture. Investigate your target company, industry sector, or business level for examples.

**Headline:** Your headline should showcase your field of expertise or your value proposition. The more specific you can be about what sets you apart from the competition, the better.

**First Person Singular:** You shouldn't use the first person on your CV, but it's actually fine to do so on LinkedIn (e.g.: "I'm a dedicated development officer who raised \$400,000 for a cancer charity last year"). Getting personal is a good idea: write as if you are having a conversation with someone. Let people know about your values and passions.

**Make sure people can find you:** Add your details. You may also include links to photos, videos, and slideshow presentations in your profile summary.

**Endorsements:** Keep them updated: as you transition between careers, develop new skills, or take on new responsibilities, drop outdated skills from your profile and add the ones you really want to be known for.

**Buzzwords:** avoid them like the plague! Words like *'responsible, creative, effective, analytical, strategic, patient, expert, driven, or innovative* are the most overused on LinkedIn. Be more creative, use our list!

Establish your professional brand	Find the right people	Engage with insights	Build relationships
Take a professional photo	Draft attractive invitations	Read news of followed companies	Connect with people to expand network
Write an impactful title with a call for action	Reach out for warm introductions	Draft comments on current news	Share contacts' updates
Add relevant content, blogs, videos, articles	Regularly update career interests to be found	Reach out to contacts with relevant information	
Give and receive recommendations and skills endorsements			



# PART V: MISCELLANEOUS

## Acceptance Message

To: [PAYNE@MIT.EDU](mailto:PAYNE@MIT.EDU)  
From: [henri.quatre@polytechnique.edu](mailto:henri.quatre@polytechnique.edu)

Re: acceptance of business development intern position

Dear Ms Purple:

It is with great enthusiasm that I accept the position of... at the Clinical Research & Drug Development (CRDD) Chambers of Boston.

I am thankful that you have accepted a different start date for the internship and look forward to joining your team, beginning on June 12, 20XX.

In the meantime, please send any marketing collateral or readings you think will be useful in my transition.

Thank you again for this great opportunity,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Quatre

35

Professional English  
Handbook

## Thank you and Follow-up Letters

Sample Thank You letter

Dear Mr Gray:

Thank you for taking time to interview me for the software engineering intern position available at your agency. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation, and was impressed with the opportunities this internship would offer me.

As a result, I am even more convinced that my education and previous experience is a strong match for the position. I am excited to continue learning more about your innovative programs, and am confident that my expanding experience will enable me to make a contribution to the team.

Thank you again for the interview and for your consideration.

Please feel free to contact me at +33 (0)6 55 55 55 55.

Sincerely,

Pascal BLAISE

## A Few Extra Websites and Links

### UK

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv>  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/applications-and-interviews/cv/>  
<https://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/applying-for-jobs/cvs-and-cover-letters>  
<https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/cvs>

### US

[https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/materials/resumes\\_and\\_cover\\_letters.pdf](https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/materials/resumes_and_cover_letters.pdf)  
<https://capd.mit.edu/resources/cvs/>  
<https://career.berkeley.edu/Tools/ResumeSamples>  
[https://careerdevelopment.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf1041/files/media/resume\\_guide\\_2019.pdf](https://careerdevelopment.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf1041/files/media/resume_guide_2019.pdf)



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