

HOW TO WRITE YOUR CV AND COVER LETTER FOR A JOB IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONALNGOJOBS.COM



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WELCOME !

A few years ago, I'd graduated from university, certain I wanted to work in international development and do the kind of work I was so passionate about. But when I'd send out applications, I'd either get a rejection or, worst of all, no response.

I tried several different strategies, and after a few months, job offers began to flood my inbox – for positions in Haiti, Nicaragua, Rwanda, New York, Paris, Bombay.

And here they are – all of the strategies I used to write successful applications to apply for (and get!) jobs at international NGOs. These are specific guidelines that will help you develop a concise and effective resumé and cover letter; follow these guidelines unless the job opening *specifically* requests that you do otherwise.

All of the examples provided in this guide are taken from the CVs and cover letters of real people building their careers in international development; therefore, do not copy them word for word.

I've used real examples to show you how you that it's very possible to start from a place of no experience (and perhaps, no degree, and no foreign language skills) and build a successful career in this field.

Malaika



FIVE GOLDEN RULES

1. ONE PAGE.

Both your CV and cover letter should be a maximum of one page long, each. Each page will receive a maximum of five seconds of viewing time. Be concise and specific.

2. BULLETPOINTS.

Use bullets to talk *only* about what's relevant to the kind of work you want to do, and highlight your accomplishments rather than explaining the day-to-day tasks you were expected to do. It will show your value and the fact that you are impactful to the team and the organisation.

3. SHOW, DON'T TELL.

"Flexible and dedicated work ethic with great ability to self-initiate and bring multiple projects to completion under pressure" might be true for you, but hundreds of people out there are writing the exact same thing. Don't copy the crowds; instead, under "Experience", talk about how you led a team effort to produce a complicated report, or found a new way to conduct interviews that made your target population feel more comfortable.

4. FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENTS.

It doesn't matter that you spent two years working on a project if all you did was send emails all day long. Focus on what you did to drive impact, not how long you spent doing it.

5. BE HONEST, BUT NOT TOO HONEST.

You don't need to justify taking a year off to travel, nor those three months spent lounging around at home, not doing anything. If you have a long gap between employment in your CV, invent a job for yourself – a research project on a topic interesting to you.

CV: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if my experience doesn't fit on just one page?

All of the most important information (your work experience, languages you speak, and education) should fit on the first page. If you have published research papers or articles, you can list those on the second page. List only the experience relevant to the job for which you're applying.

Should I attach a photo of myself?

Although many countries traditionally recommend including a photograph, it is neither necessary nor helpful to include a photo as it does not add anything to your application.

Chronological or skills-based?

When starting out, follow a chronological format, with your most recent experience and education first, and then going backwards in time.

Should I use a CV template?

A template is different from a format; your CV does not need to be identical to every other candidate. Start with a **summary**, the four-line description of your background and main skills (including the languages you speak), then your relevant **work experience** (i.e., do not include your summer job as a waitress), followed by your **education**, and any **publications** you have authored or co-authored. All of the critical information (your work experience and key skills) should fit on the first page.



CV: LAYOUT AND FORMAT

One font throughout

Pick one and use only that font throughout your resume: Times New Roman, Helvetica Neue, Calibri, or Arial, in font size 10, 11, or 12.

One column only

Any more makes it overwhelming for the reader.



PDF is best, but Word if requested

Sending a resumé as a PDF document looks more professional, and it also makes it easier for the hiring manager to download and view in the same formatting as when it left your inbox. You can use

www.freepdfconverter.com or “Save as a PDF” straight from Microsoft Word.

CV LAYOUT EXAMPLE

Separate each section by writing the headings in bold and capitalised.

Keep indentation consistent throughout the resume.

Break down your tasks into bulletpoints.



Make it clear to the reader that this is your CV. Write your name in bold at the top, too.

CURRICULUM VITAE:

Nationality:

Languages:

Education

Australian/British

Advanced French, basic German, some understanding of Spanish and Portuguese, a little Bahasa Indonesian and Tetum

Certificate in Education, [REDACTED]
Bachelor of Education, Hons First Class, [REDACTED]
Master of Education, Hons First Class, [REDACTED]
Advanced Certificate in Association Management, [REDACTED]

PhD, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, [REDACTED] University.
Thesis: Local NGOs in National Development: The Case of East Timor.

Work Experience

Fellow,

Managing a major ARC Linkage Grant Project with Reconciliation Australia, WA and NT Governments, and the Federal Government concerned with Indigenous community governance. Contributing to other research at CAEPR eg on NGOs, philanthropy and Indigenous Australia.

Program Coordinator, [REDACTED]

Responsible for management and coordination of the International Development Program, within the School of Social Science and Planning. The program has over 270 Post-Graduate students (125 EFTSU), and international development as a sub-major in the Bachelor of Social Sciences degree program.

Senior Lecturer, [REDACTED]

Teaching and updating courses on NGOs, Civil Society and Development; Gender Issues in Development; Gender Practice in Development; and Coordinating "Practising Development" Unit in the M. Soc Sci Course; teaching a broad International Development Unit to undergraduate students. Continuing consultancy work with NGOs in East Timor and Australia. Researching local NGOs in East Timor and capacity building.

[REDACTED]
Written three new Units: Gender Analysis Skills, NGOs and Development, Gender and Development. Chairing and teaching all these course units in the Masters of International and Community Development Program.

[REDACTED]
Consultant, specialising in support to NGOs. Have completed the following work:

- IANGO: Compliance Mechanism for International NGO Charter of Accountability
- PLAN Australia: Review of International Program
- ACFOA: Submission on Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Centre, and other research
- Marie Stopes International: Advice re preparing for AusAID Accreditation
- IWDA: Assessment of Women's Organisations in East Timor
- AngliCORD: International Program Evaluation

Leave at least half an inch margin on each side.

List your education in reverse chronological order.

If you have a PhD., list your education before your work experience. If you don't, start with your work experience.

How can I summarise my skills and my experience?

Four lines at the top of your CV gives you a chance to quickly summarise the unique qualities you bring to the job. Here is where you list the languages in which you are **fluent**, the size of budgets with which you've worked, the size of teams you've managed, or the length of the reports you've produced (and the size of the sample you analysed). Think from the perspective of the hiring manager: what's the one thing you could tell them that would convince them that you're the best candidate for the job? What qualities do they dream of their candidates having?



SUMMARY EXAMPLES

BAD

[REDACTED] was born and grew up in Mexico City. She attended the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) where she obtained a BA in Organizational and Educational Psychology. A scholarship from the Mexican National Council of Sciences and Technology (CONACYT) made it possible for her to do her graduate work at Harvard University, receiving an M.A. in Administration, Planning and Social Policy, and an Ed. D., in Policy Analysis and Evaluation Research in Education and International Development. [REDACTED] has taught classes in the undergraduate, masters's and doctoral program at MSU in social foundations, evaluation research, educational policy, and comparative education. She combines the use of quantitative and qualitative methods as well as participatory and reflective approaches to inquiry in her teaching, research and service activities.

Break your summary up using bullet-points.

Avoid jargon; use task-oriented terms to describe what you are best at doing.

BETTER

An economic development consultant with thirteen years experience working with firms and entrepreneurs to explore new market opportunities and develop businesses. Recent assignments completed in Tanzania, Nicaragua, Mongolia, and Saint Lucia. Strong writing, presentation and communication skills. Master's and bachelor's degree in Economics from [REDACTED] University. Fluent French. US Citizen.

Show; don't tell. Instead of writing "Strong writing skills", list the number of journals in which you've been published.

BEST

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong Human Rights Knowledge• UN Experience in Africa• Fluent in English, German, and Russian• Solid Knowledge Of Development Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent Interpersonal Skills• Project Evaluation Experience• Good Negotiator• Familiar with All Microsoft Office Applications |
|--|--|

Stick to one column only.

Show; don't tell. Instead of writing "Strong writing skills", list the number of journals in which you've been published.

Good interpersonal skills and familiarity with the Office suite are expected in any multicultural organisation that uses computers. The most important point here is 'project evaluation experience', but it would be better if he listed, "Experience evaluating projects in Malawi and Burundi with budgets from USD 4-7 million."

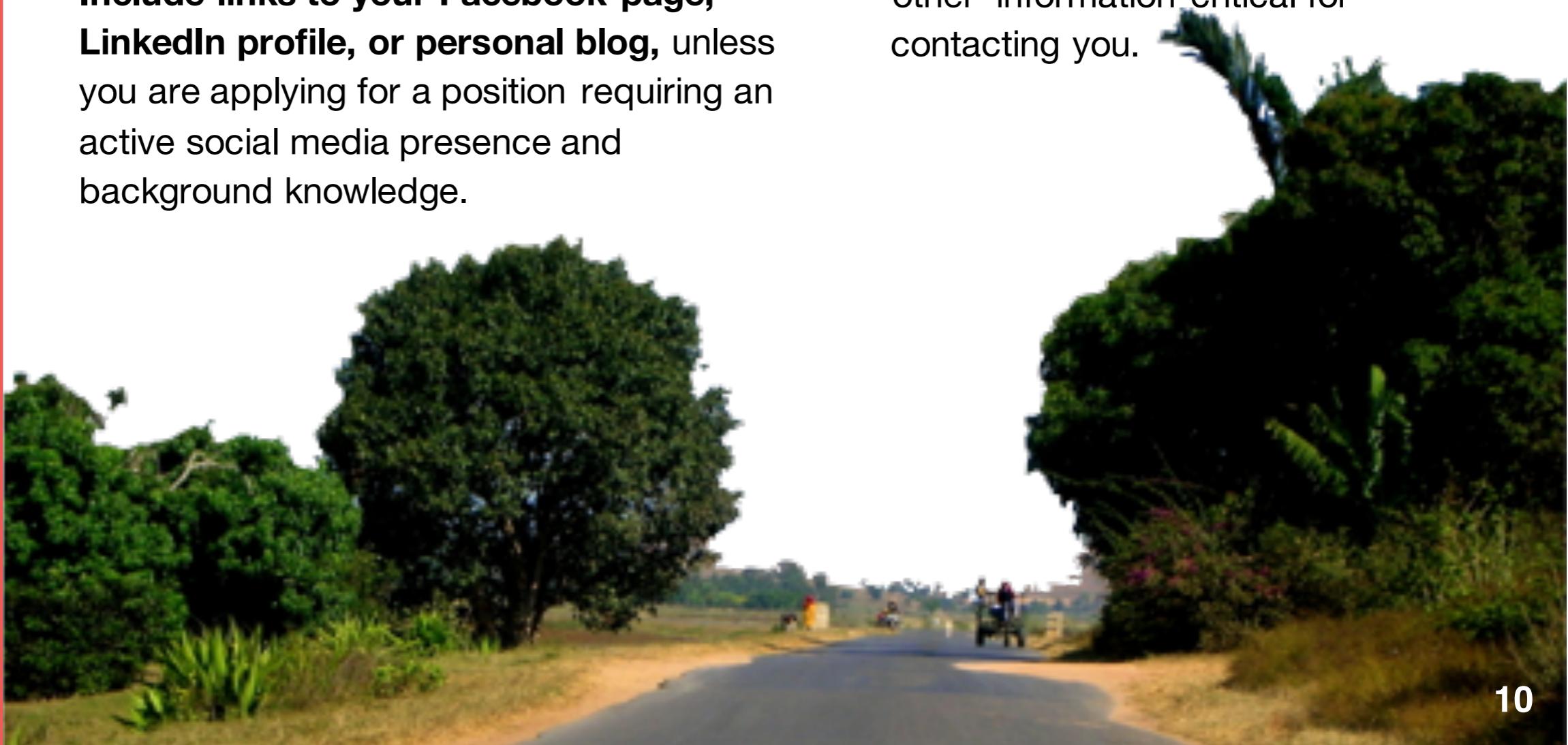
PERSONAL INFORMATION

DON'T:

- **Include your weight, height, birthdate, or home address.**
- **Mention your gender.** Most employers can guess from your name if you were born male or female, and it is illegal to discriminate against a candidate based on their gender.
- **Include links to your Facebook page, LinkedIn profile, or personal blog,** unless you are applying for a position requiring an active social media presence and background knowledge.

DO:

- **Write your first and last name as you used it at school.** Many of us have second and third names; these are neither necessary nor relevant to your potential employer.
- **Include your email address and primary phone number,** and any other information critical for contacting you.



PERSONAL INFORMATION EXAMPLE

Though not required, you can use the first four lines to write a concise description of your background, noting the languages you speak, the size of teams you can manage, and any particular skills considered non-negotiable for the job for which you're applying.

No one needs to know your street address, and unless it's critical that you are based locally for the job, do not list your address.

Curriculum Vitae

Information and Qualifications:

Profile: [REDACTED]

Address: Flat [REDACTED], Street [REDACTED] Islamabad, Pakistan [REDACTED] Current duty sta[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED] @hotmail.co.uk / Skype name: [REDACTED]

Telephone: + 92 3[REDACTED] (Pakistan) +44 (0)7[REDACTED] (UK)

Education: Post Graduate Diploma in Social Sciences, MSc International Development – [REDACTED]
BA English Studies and Marketing Management, [REDACTED]

Country Experience: India, Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Hungary, Bosnia, Czech Republic, Chile.

Roster: Handicap International Roster

Your email address should be some form of your name and surname. Make sure it sounds professional.

Demonstrate your country experience through the jobs you've had, instead of just listing the countries in which you've lived.

No one needs to know your street address, and unless it's critical that you are based locally for the job, do not list your address.

There's no need to mention your Skype ID on your CV. If someone wants to interview you via Skype, they will ask you for this information via email.

List only your primary phone number; more than one confuses the person trying to contact you.

Unless you're a seasoned professional with over 10 years of experience, skip mentioning rosters for which you've signed up.

WORK EXPERIENCE

What counts as work experience?

This is where you need to think outside the box. **It's not only paid experiences that count, but volunteer experience, summer projects, side projects, team projects, and projects you worked on as part of a course.** They might include working with a local farm to increase use of organic food in local schools (refer to your ability to connect daily tasks to the big picture vision), volunteering at the local library (talk about how you contributed to process and organisation of their systems), or even a two-month consulting assignment to a local organisation (which developed your research and interviewing skills, and from which you produced a forty-page report outlining long-term solutions for the organisation's budget problems).

Don't make stuff up. Everything you write on your CV must be true, because it might be verified through reference checks; lies could come back to haunt you in the future. Rather, describe yourself as your best friend might talk about you: what are you good at? What are you a natural at doing? Then, tell the story (through each individual work experience and project) of how you acquired those skills through talking about your contributions to an organisations big-picture goals (such as reducing hunger or increasing access to water) through completely and perfecting certain tasks (such as organising events, writing reports, interviewing the target group).



WORK EXPERIENCE: FAQ'S

What if I don't even have 40% of the requirements they want? I'm just getting started and looking for a job that give me some experience.

You only feel you don't have any experience because you are thinking too literally. **Work experience could come from a variety of different projects, experiences, travels, and encounters.** Refer to the previous page for more information on how to bring this together into a cohesive narrative.

Should I separate paid and unpaid/volunteer experience?

No. They can both count as work experience.

Should I explain why I left my previous job?

No. If they ask you in the interview, you can comfortably say that it was the best decision for you and your career at the time.



WORK EXPERIENCE EXAMPLES

May 1998 – Jul 1998

Team Leader / Land Use Planner and Community Deve

Facilitator. Participatory development of a regional land-use plan with the indigenous Kija people in the East Kimberley region of Australia. Supporting the community in the appraisal of a business plan and financing plan for a large commercial cattle enterprise (A\$20m). Leading a team of three including an anthropologist and GIS technician. (PDM Pty Ltd, for the Kimberley Land Council, Australia).

Avoid blocks of text and use numbers to be descriptive.
In this example: how large is the community? How did she support the community? What did she actually do, besides leading the team?

BAD

List organisation/project name and location first, then your tasks.

Briefly describe the big-picture goals of your job (if not clear from the name/title of the project/organisation), followed by your contribution to the project and/or organisation.

Albania Private Forestry Development Program, Tirana, Albania

October 1995

APFDP was a five-year project to increase Albanian rural household incomes and alleviate and ultimately reverse forest environmental degradation by encouraging and supporting development of sustainable private sector forestry management on private and communal forests and pastures. Aggregate value of \$60 million. Led day-to-day administrative and contractual management of projects, including compliance, budget development, financial reporting, recruitment, subcontract management, and liaised with donors.

BETTER

Do not simply describe the tasks you did, but describe your output (e.g., summarised 100 pages of data into four page report) in relation to the project's goals.

Center for Technology, Policy and Industrial Development (CTPID), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., USA

- **Research Assistant/Staff Researcher.** Conducted research on the ecological life-cycle analysis of industrial use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Part of MIT team for a multi-disciplinary study on industrial ecology of chlorine.

1992

Esquel Foundation, Brasilia/Fortaleza, Brazil

- **Research Consultant** for the International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD).

1992

BEST

WORK EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE

Europass Curriculum Vitae

Personal information

First name(s) / Surname(s)

Marta ██████████

Address(es)

Poland, 02-495 Warsaw, ██████████

Telephone(s)

48 ██████████

E-mail

████████████@gmail.com

Nationality

Polish

Date of birth

██████████

Languages

Polish (mother tongue), English (fluent), German (fluent), Russian (fluent), Georgian (very good)

Work experience

Dates

██████████

Occupation or position held

Project Assistant

- Assistance to the project manager in partnerships development and coordination with key stakeholders, particularly the donors, private sector, and the government.
- Provision of administrative support in organizing project meetings and seminars
- Assistance in substantial and organizational project activities, financial reporting and organization to project partners and Intermediating Institutions and support project activities
- Organize and facilitate seminars, workshops under the activity at local and regional level

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project Office Poland, Szpitalna 6/23, 00-031 Warsaw

Name and address of employer

Dates

██████████ till now

Occupation or position held

Trainer, project coordinator, mentor

- organizing and facilitation of trainings on diversity approach, intercultural cultural learning, European Citizenship and Identity, project cycle and organisational management (public relations, fundraising, conflict management, team work) for young activists from Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- designing and facilitating trainings, seminars and educational workshops
- developing and implementing projects, mentoring of the projects of youth from Eastern Europe and Central Asia

MitOst e.V. , earlier Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg of the Robert Bosch Foundation, Alt-Moabit 90, 10559 Berlin
Mitost.de

Name and address of employer

Dates

██████████, 15 months

Occupation or position held

Project coordinator in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding

- Organization and facilitation of the trainings, workshops and stakeholder meetings
- assessment with planning, development and implementation of all project activities
- coordination of project components: business micro grant component, grants for local initiatives and community development projects
- coordination and supervision of 9 social workers
- organising educational workshops for the social workers from the region
- writing reports to the European Commission
- organising PR actions for the organisation
- organising trainings on community development and post-conflict peacebuilding

People in Need, non-governmental, non-profit organisation, Czech Republic, Šafářkova 635/24 Praha
www.pin.cz; www.pin.ge
office in Georgia: Georgia, 2100 Zugdidi, 3 Ts. Dadiani

Name and address of employer

Dates

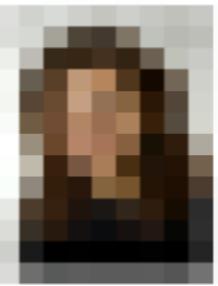
██████████ (10 months)

Occupation or position held

Journalist

Writing articles for the English version of the newspaper about the current issues

Use action verbs (not nouns) to describe your activities and achievements at each position.



Your previous employer's address is irrelevant.
Leave it out.

This applicant clearly has a lot of experience organising trainings and events, but could make their CV stronger by writing “organised event for 300 people from 17 different countries”.
Use numbers to make your past experience more concrete for the reader.

You don't need to specify how many years or months you worked somewhere. Everyone is capable of figuring this out. Simply list the years (e.g., 2015-2016) to give the reader an idea of when it was. Dates are not crucial; your experience and outputs are.

WORK EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE

CURRICULUM VITAE:

Titles provide information, but they don't tell the whole story. Your CV is, above all, a marketing document. You can decide whether or not to include the titles of your previous jobs and internships, but ensure that every single piece of information you provide contributes to selling you as the best candidate, bar none, for the position.

Use numbers to describe the size of the teams you've worked with or managed, or the classes you've taught, to demonstrate your ability to work with or manage groups.

Lists are useless if they don't clarify what skills and experience you've gained. Describe the outcomes and outputs you produced, not simply the projects on which you worked.

Nationality: Australian/British
Languages: Advanced French, basic German, some understanding of Spanish and Portuguese, a little Bahasa Indonesian and Tetum

Education

Certificate in Education, [REDACTED]
Bachelor of Education, Hons First Class, [REDACTED]
Master of Education, Hons First Class, [REDACTED]
Advanced Certificate in Association Management, [REDACTED]

PhD, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, [REDACTED] University.
Thesis: Local NGOs in National Development: The Case of East Timor.

Work Experience

Fellow,
[REDACTED]
Managing a major ARC Linkage Grant Project with Reconciliation Australia, WA and NT Governments, and the Federal Government concerned with Indigenous community governance. Contributing to other research at CAEPR eg on NGOs, philanthropy and Indigenous Australia.

Program Coordinator, [REDACTED]
Responsible for management and coordination of the International Development Program, within the School of Social Science and Planning. The program has over 270 Post-Graduate students (125 EFTSU), and international development as a sub-major in the Bachelor of Social Sciences degree program.

Senior Lecturer, [REDACTED]
Teaching and updating courses on NGOs, Civil Society and Development; Gender Issues in Development; Gender Practice in Development; and Coordinating "Practising Development" Unit in the M. Soc Sci Course; teaching a broad International Development Unit to undergraduate students. Continuing consultancy work with NGOs in East Timor and Australia. Researching local NGOs in East Timor and capacity building.

[REDACTED]
Written three new Units: Gender Analysis Skills, NGOs and Development, Gender and Development. Chairing and teaching all these course units in the Masters of International and Community Development Program.

Consultant, specialising in support to NGOs. Have completed the following work:

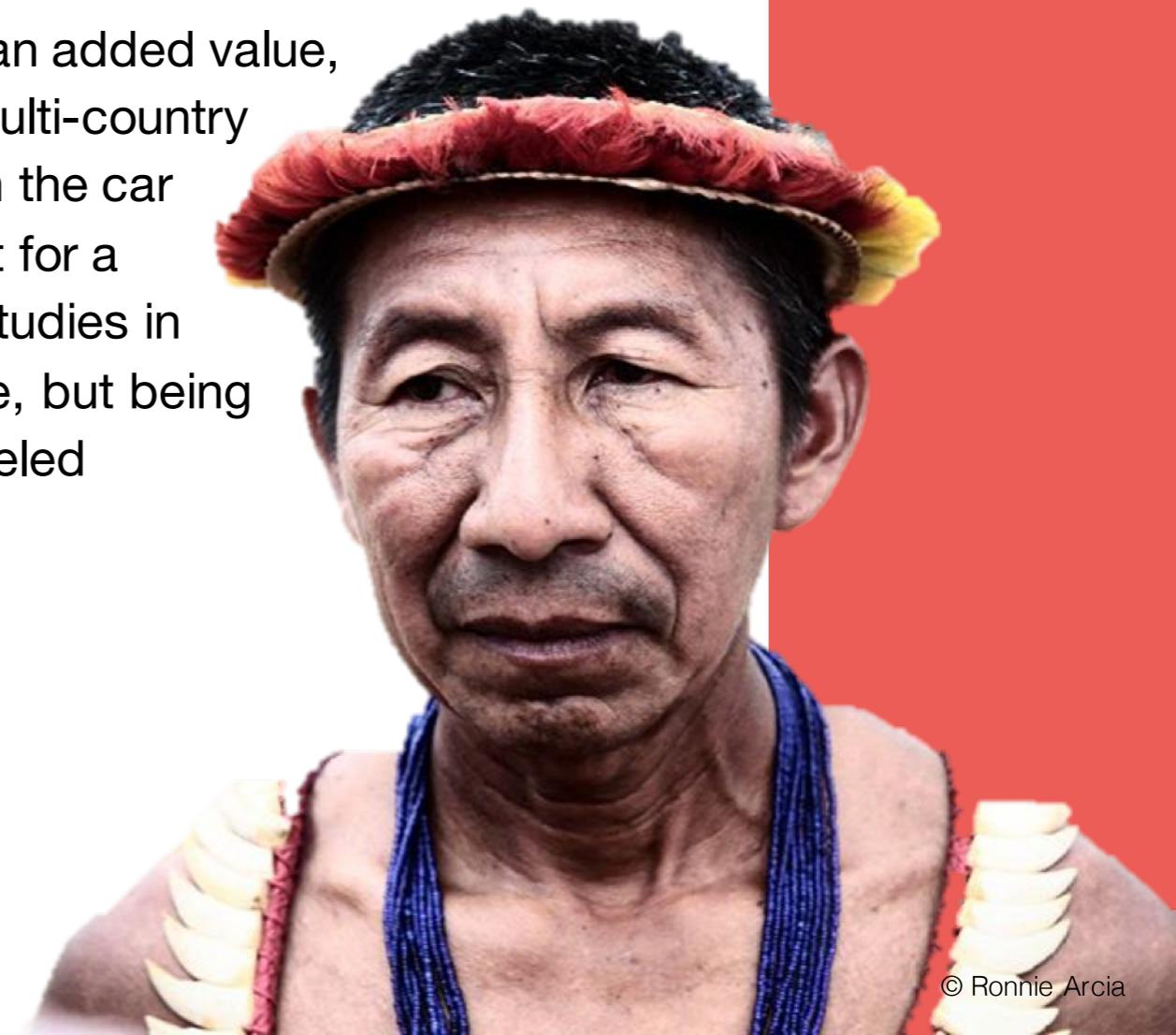
- IANGO: Compliance Mechanism for International NGO Charter of Accountability
- PLAN Australia: Review of International Program
- ACFOA: Submission on Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Centre, and other research
- Marie Stopes International: Advice re preparing for AusAID Accreditation
- IWDA: Assessment of Women's Organisations in East Timor
- AngliCORD: International Program Evaluation

EDUCATION

What counts as education?

In the development sector, it's common to encounter people who have more than one Master's degree, and, frequently, a PhD., or one in progress. This does **not**, however, mean that you need a degree from an accredited institution in order to get a job. If you do not yet have a degree and want a job that requires at least a Bachelor's, then you should have **four years of experience** or more, and be able to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that comes with intensively studying a subject relevant to the job, or to working in the field for that period of time.

If you have a Master's degree but no experience, you have an added value, But nothing trumps experience in this sector. Managing a multi-country group of outspoken stakeholders, knowing what to do when the car breaks down on the way to the project site, writing a budget for a five-year project: these are things you can analyse in case studies in class, and perhaps even teach yourself online from YouTube, but being physically present for these situations gives you an unparalleled confidence and sense of ease when they reoccur.



EDUCATION EXAMPLES

How well you did on your degree is largely irrelevant to the job market, as it does not indicate whether you will do the job well, and organisations in the development sector do not select for performance in university.

BAD

1974	Certificate in Education, Cambridge Institute of Education
1975	Bachelor of Education, Hons First Class, Cambridge University
1981	Master of Education, Hons First Class, University of New England
1998	Advanced Certificate in Association Management, Mt Eliza Business School/Monash University.
2008	PhD, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, RMIT University. Thesis: Local NGOs in National Development: The Case of East Timor.

Don't leave more than three spaces between the year and the degree. Visually, it's confusing to the eye.

BETTER

1999-2000	M.A., Economics, Queen's University
1995-1999	B.A., Collaborative International Development Studies (Honours), University of Guelph

It doesn't matter how long it took you to complete the degrees. List only the year in which you completed your studies for that degree.

Unless you're applying within your own university or to a job with an alum from your program, do not list the school or institute within your university. It's not relevant.

BEST

List education in chronological order, with most recent degree listed first.

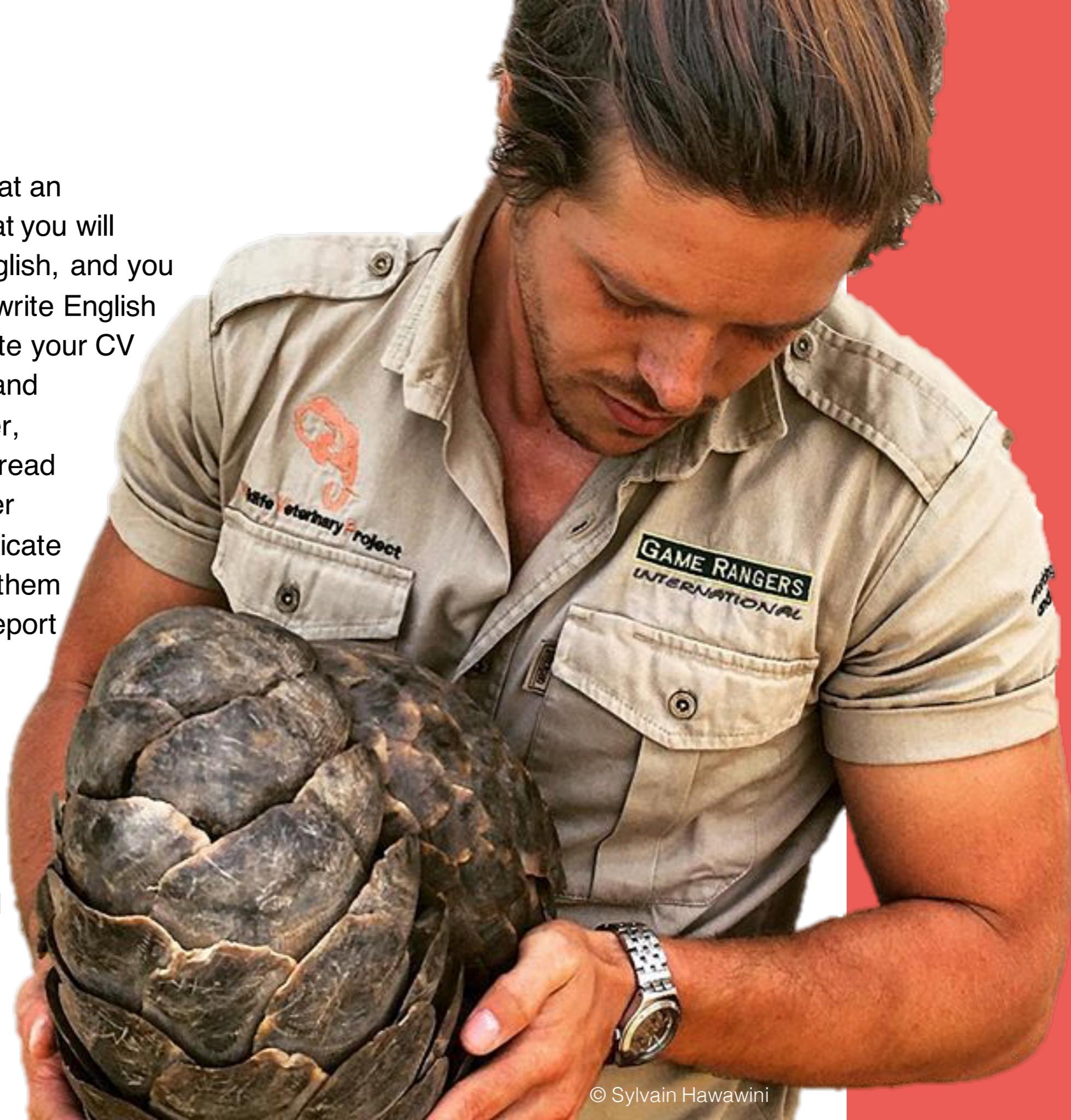
EDUCATION:

- 2007 Ph.D., Political Science, University of Iowa
Dissertation: *Cheap Signals, Costly Consequences: How International Relations affect Civil Conflict*
- 2004 Masters of Arts (M.A.), Political Science, University of Iowa
- 2003 Masters of Education (M.Ed.), University of St. Thomas
- 2001 Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Political Science & Spanish, Univ. of Nebraska-Kearney

Abbreviate degrees using the common abbreviations. This makes it faster for the reader to process what's written.

LANGUAGES

It is assumed, when working at an international organisation, that you will have an excellent level of English, and you are able to speak, read, and write English at a high level. Therefore, write your CV and Cover Letter in English, and if you are not a native speaker, ask a native speaker to proofread the text for you. List any other languages you speak and indicate your level of proficiency with them (e.g., have you published a report in French? Have you led a training in Arabic? Here is where you should never lie. If you only speak a few phrases in Bahasa, don't say you have basic fluency, Because you might be invited to interview with a native speaker, who might test you.



A CV is not an algorithm.
Simply list, in text, the languages you speak *fluently* and leave out the rest.

LANGUAGE EXAMPLES

6. Language skills: Indicate your competence on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 - excellent; 5 - basic)

Language	Reading	Speaking	Writing
German	1	1	1
English	1	1	1
Spanish	1	1	2
Portuguese	2	4	5
French	4	5	5
Croatian / Serbian	4	5	5

Specify your mother tongue(s). All of your languages should fit on one line. Don't pretend to be a polyglot unless you really are one.

LANGUAGE

In alphabetic order

Arabic

English

Farsi

Spanish

Turkish (Azeri)

Introductory

Fluent

Fluent

Intermediate

Fluent

BAD

This is just confusing. Does it mean the candidate can read and write Arabic? Does it mean he can conduct an interview in Spanish? Though he has listed five languages, we can only be confident that he is fluent and comfortable in English, Farsi, and Azeri Turkish.

LANGUAGES

ENGLISH, GERMAN: fluent, HUNGARIAN, RUSSIAN: native, ITALIAN: intermediate, INDONESIAN: basic

BETTER

What you write on your CV should encourage the reader to trust your integrity and intelligence, and confidence in the skills you promise to bring to the organisation.

LANGUAGES

Fluent Spanish

BEST

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Should I list the scholarship/fellowship monetary amount on my CV?

No. It's important to mention the names of the awards, the organisation awarding it, and the year in which you were awarded: these points are sufficient to show that you were a candidate of note and recognised within a merit-based system. The amount of money you received is not relevant to your ability to perform well in a new job.

How much context do I need to provide for the award/fellowship/grant/competition?

None, except for the award name and who awarded it. The hiring manager will ask for more details if necessary.



Should I mention it if I was a semi-finalist or finalist, but did not win?

Unless it is a huge competition and demonstrative of a particular, valuable skill (e.g., the MacArthur Fellowship, or a Google Award), do not mention an award unless you won the prize.

Should I mention my interests?

You are expected to be an interesting person with good social skills, and you can demonstrate this through a well-written, concise, and sharp application that is targeted and to the point. You don't need to mention your interest in knitting.

Although I've seen this movie and met and interviewed the person who produced it, I'm not sure what this candidate's contribution to the Emmy-winning film was, and I have to dig for the information buried in a block of text. Use bullet points and separate the date from the text to help the reader process information more quickly; mention only the key information (in this case, part of a team that produced an Emmy-winning human rights film).

AWARDS EXAMPLES

This section is the least important; therefore, each item should be listed as briefly as possible, without prepositions. List only the award name, the year of the award, and the organisation/program awarding it.

In 1994, hosted two women in USA that survived the rape camps during the war in Bosnia; and contributed in making the documentary film "Calling the Ghosts", which received the Emmy's and Human Rights Watch Awards 1995; rape officially became a war crime;

BAD

AWARDS

List the year for each award.

- United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo Medal
- Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal
- Canadian Public Service Merit Award

BETTER

2000	Prize of the Alumni Association of University of Konstanz (VEUK) for outstanding achievements
1999 – 2000	DAAD-Scholarship for attending the Int. Economics Program at the University of Konstanz
1994 – 1995	Scholarship of the Hungarian Republic (for excellence in studies)
2007 – 2014	Various travel grants by DAAD, EEA, Verein für Socialpolitik, Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft der Universität Freiburg, IZA, PEGNet

BEST

REFERENCES

Unless you are specifically asked to list your references, you do not need to list your references on your CV, nor on your cover letter. If the recruiting manager wants to follow up and contact your references, they will reach out to you directly to request their contact information. Therefore, the best thing to do is to leave this part off your application documents.

However, if you are asked to list your references, provide their names, job title/position, best phone number (if your reference has an office phone number, provide that number), and professional email address. Where possible, avoid listing personal phone numbers (mobile phone) and personal email addresses for your references – it may violate their privacy and comes off as slightly less credible.



REFERENCES EXAMPLES

Unless you're in Germany, "Professor" is not needed. List only the names of your references and their job titles, in this case simply "Professor of Economics".

REFERENCES

- Professor Rohan Samarajiva, Chairman, LIRNEasia, 12 Badminton Place, Colombo 00800, Sri Lanka.
- Professor Whitney Hicks, Emeritus Professor, Department of Economics University of Missouri, 909 University Avenue, 118 Professional Building, Columbia, MO 65211-6040, USA.
- Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and current Leader of the Opposition, The Parliament, Sri Lanka.

BAD

This is assumed every time you apply for a job.

Guy Lebeau
Director
613 123-4567
guy@uOttawa.ca

Mr. Lebeau was my supervisor during the symposium on the Mini-Courses of Enrichment Program

Explain your relationship to your reference, and which skills they might speak to.

References are available on request.

BETTER

Unless it is specifically requested, you can exclude any mention of references from your CV and cover letter. If necessary, you will be asked to provide their contact information after your first interview.

BEST

COVER LETTER: DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO:

- **Be descriptive**, using numbers and dates to discuss in detail the outputs and outcomes to which you contributed.
- **Be brief**. Read your cover letter aloud to see if it sounds natural, then rewrite it to sound as you would speak.
- **Be yourself, within limits**. Save the humour, cultural commentary, and sarcasm for your friends.

DON'T:

- **Be vague**.
- **Include information that is not relevant to the organisation, or the position**. Your resume is not a record of every job and internship you've ever had.
- **Lie**. If you don't particularly care about universal access to clean water, but are excited about the idea of running a digital campaign for an organisation that builds wells, then talk about your passion for social media, not your non-existent enthusiasm for water rights.



Your address is not necessary; you can simply write the name of the city or town in which you are currently living.

Before beginning the letter, insert the title of your desired job. This applicant should have written: "RE: Litigation Summer internship at Women's Legal Centre

[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA 02143

January 22, 2011

[REDACTED]
Senior Attorney
Women's Legal Centre
7th Floor Constitution House, 124 Adderley Street
Cape Town, South Africa 8000

Dear Ms. [REDACTED]:

I am a first-year student at Harvard Law School and am writing to apply for a summer internship at the Women's Legal Centre. The WLC immediately caught my eye on Harvard Law School's public service database due to my interest in and experience working with women's rights internationally. This summer, I am eager to build upon my understanding of women's legal rights, and I believe that an internship with the WLC would provide an ideal setting for me to do so through a combination of impact litigation and legal advocacy work.

My interest in international women's rights began as an undergraduate, when I studied abroad in both Morocco and Egypt. During this time, I was acutely aware of my position as an American woman, and this awareness sparked my interest in the status of women internationally. I explored this interest as an intern at Harvard's Women and Public Policy Program, where I honed my research and writing skills through work with program fellows from Iran and Pakistan, and I further developed these skills by writing an honors thesis that explored Morocco's family law.

My thesis work drew my attention to the disparity that exists between law and access to justice; despite Morocco's recently reformed family law, the status of women remains largely unchanged due to failures in education and implementation. I returned to Morocco as a Fulbright researcher to study this issue, focusing specifically on unwed mothers. During this time, I interned at *Oum El Banine*, a NGO that provides direct legal services for this group. Taking part in the organization's work to educate women about their legal rights emphasized to me that law is a powerful and necessary tool for social justice and human rights. With this in mind, I decided to attend law school in order to further women's rights through the law.

I am drawn to the diversity and scope of the WLC's work and am particularly interested in the WLC's work with Muslim personal law and domestic violence. I encountered these issues frequently during my Fulbright research, and I am confident that my experience with these issues coupled with my substantial research and writing skills would make me an asset to the WLC. I am fully funded this summer, and will be available for ten weeks from June 1 to September 1. If you have any further questions or would like to schedule an interview, I can be reached at jference@jd13.law.harvard.edu or at (617) 495-3108. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia [REDACTED]

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Listing the organisation's address follows the classic business letter format, but is stating the obvious. Skip it.

In the last three lines, she mentions three critical pieces of information: that she has funding, her dates of availability, and her contact information. But because the paragraph is so long, this information gets lost. Stick to what's critical, and let it stand on its' own.

COVER LETTER: USE DETAILS

Use details to demonstrate your ability to do the job for which you're applying.

You are being hired to perform, and to conduct specific tasks. It is expected that your personal and professional values are aligned to those of the organisation. Use the cover letter to demonstrate in detail your ability to conduct those tasks, due to your previous experience and academic training.

This paragraph is full of interesting information. Instead of using jargon and vague terms, use numbers and bulletpoints to break down the information into concrete data points.

Again, it's not clear why the candidate is a perfect fit, and it's not sufficient to say "I am a perfect fit"; you must demonstrate it.

Quito, Ecuador

+ 593

@hotmail.com

Application for taking part to the Young Professional Program (YPP) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

Quito,

Duh. Don't state the obvious.

To whom it may concern:

I would like to convey my strong interest to take part to the Young Professional Program IADB, a highly respectable organization whose fields of work, in particular those related to social and economic affairs, are aligned with my background and interests.

As my education and career demonstrates, I have always been motivated by a desire of reaching excellence and by the continuous willingness to learn and broaden my horizons. I am a hard-working, multi-disciplinary person, having a strong background in social and economic policies, but also with experience in project management. In that context, I consider that taking part to the YPP would follow from my current career path, since it would enable me to develop further my skills in a stimulating environment.

More than two years ago, my career took a turn when I decided, after working mainly on social and economic affairs in the European context, to move to Ecuador and to work on humanitarian and development projects at the World Food Program. Not only this experience enabled me to become familiar with the Latin American context, it also shaped my vision of the many obstacles most vulnerable people face in trying to reach higher living standards. Among other things, I spent six months on the field, opening a new office and starting programs of food and vouchers distributions to Colombian population in search of international protection and to indigenous communities established in the area.

Whereas working with communities or analyzing country policies, I have always shown the same dedication and enthusiasm. Through my frequent travels, I developed a genuine cultural flexibility and enjoy all the aspects of living abroad. For those reasons, I think I would perfectly integrate a cosmopolitan environment as the YPP of the IADB.

I truly expect to be selected for the interview and to receive the possibility to demonstrate my motivation and skills.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Regards,

Clear explanation of what the candidate is writing about and why.

This paragraph doesn't explain why the applicant is a solid fit for the job. Make every single sentence justify its presence.

Keep all of your information left justified. This is how the human eye naturally reads, and is the least confusing for the reader.

CHECK IT TWICE, THEN CHECK IT AGAIN

P.O. Box [REDACTED]
Nairobi

4th April 2014

The Human Resources Manager
[REDACTED]

P.O. Box [REDACTED]
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: APPLICATION FOR PROGRAMME OFFICER [REDACTED]

Spelling mistakes and typos can indicate sloppiness and a lack of attention to detail. Proofread your application once, twice, thrice, then send it to a friend to make sure it's completely free of errors.

Make it as clear as possible which position you're applying for. This candidate even used a different font colour to highlight his position of interest.

I am writing in response to your organization's programme officer job advert placed on Daily Nation on 3rd March 204. Having worked with a human rights oriented NGO in the past two years and armed with a strong academic background in international aid and project management and a Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies, I am confident of being the right fit for the afore mentioned job.

During my working at [REDACTED] for the last two years, I have successfully administered a number of projects where among a number of duties I helped in carrying out detailed budget analysis, performance and project reviews, productive resource allocation including labor planning, and coordinating activities between the organization and the clients. In essence, I have achieved phenomenal results through all stages of typical project lifecycle well within the deadlines.

As an experienced programme officer, I feel that my greatest strengths is my proven track record in delivering NGO projects on time and doing so within a budget. I would appreciate an opportunity to further discuss your needs and my application and suitability for the position. Please feel free to contact me to set up a mutual convenient time and date for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

He talks about his “proven track record” and “suitability for the position” but nothing in his letter demonstrates this. Use details about your past experience to Show your ability to do this job.

He requests the organisation to contact him, but provides neither his email address or telephone number. The garbage bin becomes an easy target for his application. Put your email and telephone number at the top and bottom of your cover letter.

BEFORE YOU HIT ‘SEND’

C.V.

- Telephone number and email address clearly mentioned at the top of your CV.
- Each line begins with an action verb.
- Headings are capitalised and in bold.
- Numbers and percentages quantify the impact of your previous work.
- You’ve used words that can be understood by varied backgrounds, free of thematic jargon.
- Every single sentence has won its way onto the page, and strengthens the case for why you are the best candidate for the job.
- Keywords from the job posting are sprinkled throughout your Summary, Work Experience, and Education.

COVER LETTER

- Email and phone number mentioned at the top and bottom of your letter.
- First paragraph lists why you are an excellent fit for the job (e.g., your language abilities, previous monitoring and evaluation experience, extensive fieldwork in Western Africa).
- You’ve matched your experience to the top three requirements of the position and highlighted them using bullet points.
- You’ve listed three to four relevant achievements in bullet points.
- You’ve signed the letter with your full name only.
- You’ve proofread your letter for spelling errors and flow of language.
- Your cover letter does not exceed 300 words.

GOOD LUCK !



MORE STRATEGIES AVAILABLE AT: INTERNATIONALNGOJOBS.COM

