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It's a good idea to use your name as the main heading using a bigger font size, such as 16 pt, so it stands out.

The main text should not be smaller than 11 pt. This example is in Times New Roman 12 pt. Remember your reader: be professional and stay away from novelty fonts or gimmicks.

Education and qualifications

2011–present *University of Birmingham, LLB law*

- First year: Introduction to Law (72%); Legal Process (66%); Obligations I (63%); and Constitutional and Administrative Law (67%)
- Second year: Criminal Law; Company Law; Obligations II; Property Law; and Intellectual Property

Graduate recruiters from both Linklaters and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer agree that at this stage in your career it's a good idea to put your education and academic results first. Use percentages to make your grades stand out, but order them carefully. If you end your list with your lowest grade, the reader may remember the 63% rather than the 72%.

2004–2011 *Wellington High School, Easterby*

- A levels: English Literature (A), French (A), History (A), German (B)
- GCSEs: 10 A and A* grades including Maths and English

You don't need to list all your GCSEs.

Sharon Jacobs, graduate recruiter at Linklaters, advises putting awards or scholarships under a separate heading.

Academic awards

- Awarded law prize for the highest recorded grade (81%) for a criminal law essay

Use subheads and bullet points to make your CV easier to read. Sharon suggests no more than two or three bullet points to explain what you got out of each experience and how you made an impact. Use strong, active verbs and don't go over two pages. 'Make sure it's not too prose heavy,' suggests Anup Vithlani at Trowers & Hamlin.

Employment history

Legal work experience

May 2012 *Two-day insight placement, Towers & May*

- Work-shadowed trainee in property law seat
- Proofread leasehold contract for associate
- Networked with associates and partners at a drinks reception

July 2011 *Two-week work-shadowing placement at high street firm, Porters, Nottingham*

- Invited to take minutes at client meetings and conferences with barristers
- Researched legal precedents for two family law cases
- Observed the importance of meeting the business objectives of a chain of vet surgeries focused on buying another local practice

June 2012 *Experienced two days of open court sessions, Norfolk County Court*

- Observed the teamwork between barristers and solicitors in a range of criminal cases

This section is your opportunity to illustrate your motivation for a career in law, with a particular type of firm. But don't go overboard about the skills you developed on your placement; you're also likely to have developed soft skills in extra-curricular activities, part-time work and in positions of responsibility.

Don't be downhearted by a lack of legal experience on your CV. Recruiters are keen to hear about the skills you have picked up elsewhere. 'Law firms like variety,' explains Jessica Booker, graduate recruitment manager at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer.

Commercial work experience

September 2011–present *Part-time customer services assistant, Sainsbury's, Solihull*

- Promoted from cashier role after four months after demonstrating good rapport with customers

Use confident language to describe your part-time or holiday experience of retail or bar jobs. Make sure you mention any promotions. It tells the recruiter that, out of hundreds of cashiers in that

- Advised and assisted customers, resolved customer complaints and handled unexpected situations
- Developed key skills for a career in law: understanding of how large businesses operate, dealing with conflict, working under pressure and negotiating with clients

Separating your experience into different categories, such as legal, commercial and voluntary, makes it easier for the reader. Jessica warns against using subheads such as 'Relevant work experience'; it suggests that you think the rest of your CV is irrelevant.

Voluntary and pro bono experience

October 2012–present *Elected President of the Birmingham University Law Society*

- Chair monthly committee meetings, liaise with the Students' Union and organise social events for 200 society members
- Raised £1,000 of sponsorship for new initiative: the Client Interviewing Competition 2012
- Arranged and introduced speaker – Peter Lodder QC, Bar Council chairman and university alumnus – at Annual Law Society Dinner 2011

Be consistent with the way you present information. Here academic subjects are all in initial upper case, the job titles/position/placement are all italicised and dates are all on the left-hand side.

October 2012–present *Student manager, university legal advice clinic*

- Set up a legal aid weekly drop-in clinic (run through the welfare office on campus) for students experiencing problems with rental lease or employment rights
- Persuaded two local law firms to supply three qualified solicitors on voluntary basis
- Established a rota of law students to support the solicitors
- Wrote marketing material to increase clinic users from 10 students to 30 students in first month

Ask as many friends and family to proofread your application as necessary; there's no room for typos in an application to a law firm – you're trying to convince people of your attention to detail. Here, using the verb 'advise' rather than the noun 'advice' in 'university legal advice clinic' could jeopardise your chances of an interview. All lawyers need excellent drafting skills and attention to detail.

Further positions of responsibility and interests

September 2012–present *Captain of the university korfball team*

- Organise fixtures, practices and teambuilding events for 20 squad members
- Took team from 14th to 4th rank at national university league level and won bronze in National Korfball Championships 2012

Include any personal impact you had in a role or position, such as improving productivity, introducing a new process or, in this case, improving your team's success – and quantify your impact where possible. If you proposed a new idea, explain briefly what it was and whether it was implemented. As Jessica pointed out, 'took team from 14th to 4th rank at national university league level' shows the personal impact this person has had on the team as captain. Graduate recruiters are unlikely to be interested in positions of responsibility from your school days, so don't include these.

November 2011–February 2013 *Features Editor, Redbrick*

- Contributed weekly features to university newspaper, Redbrick
- Pitched new monthly features to editor – including theatre review series

Try not to lose momentum towards the end of the CV. This section helps the recruiter build up a picture of what makes you tick. You could pull out various tasks here but think about what lawyers do: they pitch for new work and have to meet regular deadlines, under pressure.

June–August 2010 *Au Pair, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris*

- Working entirely in French, developed diplomacy and organisational skills when caring for three children
- Learned the importance of flexibility and adapting to new and unexpected situations

If you have a lot of legal experience earlier in your CV, you could break it up by adding in a section here headed 'Seminars/conferences' and include open days, any legal conferences you've attended or diversity events such as TARGETchances City law.

Language skills

- Fluent French
- Working knowledge of Spanish

References available on request

You do not necessarily have to include your references. You can say 'References available upon request', or just omit this as it can safely be assumed