

ALISON THORPE

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It's a good idea to put your name in a bigger font size, such as 16 pt, so it stands out. The main text should not be smaller than 11 pt. Our sample general CVs are in Times New Roman 12 pt. You could try Arial, Verdana or Lucida Sans, which may be easier to read on screen.

A sensible email address is a must.

Think about how to make headings and sub-headings stand out, but don't go overboard.

Education and qualifications

2017–present *University of Abingdon, BA in modern history. Predicted 2.1*

2010–2017 *John Redmond High School, Ipswich*

A levels: History (A), English (A), French (B)

GSEs: 10 A and A* grades including maths and English

You don't need to include details of what you studied in your degree course unless it's relevant to the job. This is most likely in technical roles, for example in engineering or IT. A breakdown of modules can be helpful, but say what mark you got in each. If you're currently taking a module, say so. If you mention your dissertation, give the title, length and mark. You could mention any relevant awards you received during your studies. If you are doing a postgraduate course, highlight relevant modules if they develop professional skills referred to in the job description.

Employment history

2019 (June–September) *12-week PR and communications internship with Galactic Cosmetics, based in London*

- Provided organisational support to team behind successful launch of new product, Vita Shampoo, which exceeded sales targets for first month by 7%
- Devised and presented plan on how best to market Vita shampoo to a younger audience by using social media to engage with potential influencers
- Put my plan for marketing Vita shampoo into action, using Facebook and Twitter to attract target audience. This contributed 20% of traffic to product website
- Negotiated and organised reader offers and makeovers with 10 publications
- Checked and updated a database of hundreds of media contacts such as beauty editors on consumer magazines and bloggers. Managed product mailout to them
- Handled press calls and persuaded journalists to feature Vita shampoo
- Monitored newspapers, magazines, online and social media for coverage
- Compiled daily reports for project launch team leader, analysing sales information and media impact

Be consistent in the way you present date information. Here dates are always on the left-hand side.

You don't need to list all your GSEs.

Try to match the competencies in the job description and put examples of the most relevant skills first. You don't need to say 'Skills developed' and reel off a list. Avoid using broad, standard terms such as communication and teamwork and try to define the skills more closely: refer to negotiating, persuading, influencing and so on. Bullet points are a concise way of conveying information, but keep them snappy – no longer than two lines. Give concrete examples and quantify your impact where possible. This could involve saying how frequently you carried out a task, or giving a numerical outcome. If you worked as part of a team, give an indication of how you contributed. If you proposed an idea, explain briefly what it was and say whether it was implemented.

2018 (June–September) *Retail assistant, Waterstones bookshop, Ipswich*

- Won Employee of the Month award for outstanding customer service
- Deputised for the department manager. Resolved problems such as customer complaints and colleagues' difficulties with retail systems
- Trained and supported two new members of staff on how to use the retail point of sale, cash management and order management systems

Use confident language to describe your part-time or holiday experience of retail or bar jobs. Convey your customer care skills without coming across as deferential. Drawing attention to awards or praise employers give you is a good way to do this.

2017–2018 (October–April) *Waitress, The Winery, Abingdon*

- Tact, diplomacy and judgement needed in situations such as: asking for proof of age; responding to complaints; managing incidents such as disputes between customers

If you took on a role such as deputising for a senior colleague, give a brief example or description to get across what that involved.

2017 (June–September) *Telesales, Eastern Electricity, Ipswich*

- Exceeded personal sales target by 10%
- Proposed the introduction of a mentoring scheme for new starters and revisions to the standard sales script given to them. Both ideas were implemented

Give brief details of the systems you used.

Including information about your performance and targets helps to quantify your impact.

Further positions of responsibility

2018–present *Secretary of Abingdon University History Society*

- Worked with the rest of the committee to brainstorm, agree and act on a plan to reverse a decline in membership of the society. Increased membership by 10%
- Arranged the venue, refreshments, publicity and entertainment for a fundraising fancy dress gala attended by 250 society members and guests, which made £500 profit
- Promoted the society using social networking. Engaged with students using the society's Facebook page, blog, website and Twitter feed
- Organised management committee meetings. Wrote and circulated agendas and meeting notes. Kept committee members up to date with progress on our plan

2017–present *Freelance journalist for local and student publications*

- Contributed monthly music review column to student newspaper, Abingdon Student
- Used initiative, news sense and understanding of interests of different audiences to pitch proposals and place articles in range of local publications

2017 (September–April) *Fundraiser for Abingdon University Snowboarding Society*

- Persuaded local branch of White Sports to sponsor the Snowboarding Society's Easter trip to France by providing kit
- Placed a photo story about the society's French trip in two local newspapers. This positive publicity secured White Sports' ongoing support

Language skills

- Fluent French, used to liaise with Galactic Cosmetics' head office in Paris during internship.
- Working knowledge of Spanish

IT skills

- Highly competent user of Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint
- Confident and effective user of social media: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
- Good working knowledge of both Microsoft Windows and Mac OSX environments
- Good understanding of HTML mark-up and principles of website design
- During internship with Galactic Cosmetics, gained basic understanding of project management software and tools (MS Project, PERT and GANTT charts)

References

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Do you need separate sections for your positions of responsibility and your interests? You may not. The sort of information you should be including about your interests – for example, roles on student societies – is likely to include positions of responsibility, and you can structure your extra-curricular activities in the same way as your work experience. However, this is one of the grey areas of CV writing, as some recruiters like to see evidence of a breadth of interests. If you do include further interests, avoid listing hobbies such as socialising with friends. Try to pick out activities that are relevant to the job description or that have developed skills the employer wants. Unusual or team sports, volunteering and overseas expeditions can all help to give the recruiter a sense of who you are.

If you mention travelling, highlight aspects of your travels that developed skills relevant to the workplace, such as how you approached fundraising.

By the time you are in your final year and applying for graduate roles, employers are unlikely to be interested in positions of responsibility from your school days, so don't include these.

You don't have to squash language and IT skills in together. Separate them out and give them some space.

You do not necessarily have to include your references. You could say 'References available upon request', or just omit this as it can safely be assumed that you will provide referees' details if you are offered a job. In this sample CV, the space taken up by referee details could have been used to expand on further interests or positions of responsibility.