

Getting an internship

A look at CVs and cover letters

Dr Sonali Shukla
Careers Consultant

**CAREERS
SERVICE**



What's the Purpose?



CV

- Factual account of your skills and experience
- Focused on impact and outcomes
- Provides context to the cover letter – what, when, who, where



Cover Letter

- Persuading the recruiter that you're motivated by the role and the company
- Provides evidence of your relevant skills and/or experience
- Gives your experience context in relation to the role

What is the purpose of the CV? An analogy



According to recent research carried out by Glassdoor, The Guardian and Reed what is the average time a recruiter spends on an initial sift of a CV ?

- **1 minute**
- **45 seconds**
- **35 seconds**
- **20 seconds**
- **10 seconds**



CV

- Succinctly lists your relevant background & experience
- May be useful in showcasing your ability to present information clearly
- Easiest for the recruiter (no need to set specific questions)

Personal details

- Name Email & Phone
- Address/Social Media?
- *Profile?*

Education

- University
- School

**Work experience
(Relevant / Other)**

- Paid & Voluntary
- Internships
- Evidence of Skills

Skills

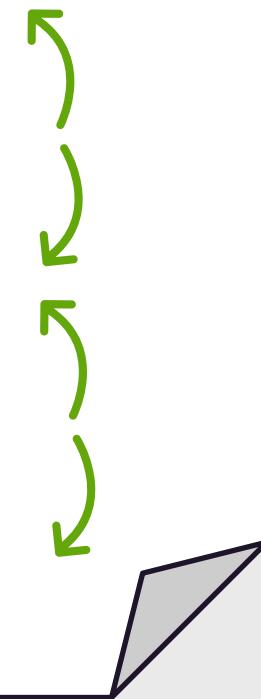
- IT, languages
- Technical skills

**Achievements/
Positions of responsibility**

- E.g. Awards
- E.g. Society positions

Interests

(References available on request)



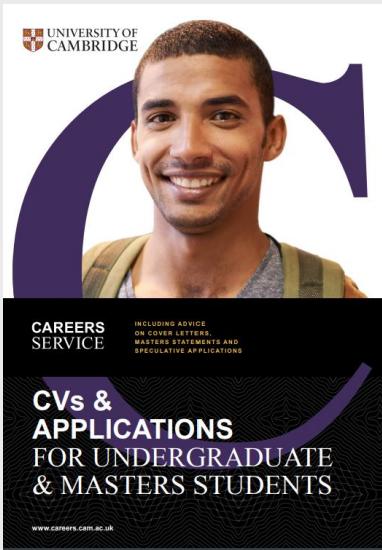
What do you see?



Where you can find active verbs

Competency requirements	Experience you could draw on	Active verbs
Adaptability/ready and quick to learn Your breadth of interests; ability to move rapidly between topics; readiness to change field of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • living abroad (during upbringing or as part of course) • the range of your extra-curricular activities • switching degree courses • cross-disciplinary research • transitioning from home to Cambridge • transitions between Cambridge term and vacation work settings • picking up language skills 	recognised, re-assessed, explored, learned, changed, travelled, adapted, extended, combined, improvised
Ambition/commitment You can set high standards; aim to improve; aim for difficult goals; have stamina and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coming to Cambridge from non-university home, non-Cambridge school, non-UK country, as a mature student, as a graduate student • self-financed study • improving yearly academic results, academic awards • learning new skills (IT, social media, languages, etc.) • volunteering/unpaid work experience • successful sporting/music/campaigning/fundraising activity • Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise • on the river 6 days a week, rain or shine, with 5am starts AND a 9am lecture 	aimed, attained, awarded, determined, effected, decided, improved, succeeded, persevered

CVs: Additional Resources



Key resources and tools

At the Careers Service, we offer a wealth of essential careers-related resources online:

Alumni Careers Connect

Cambridge Careers Guide

CareerSet - CV checker

Careers Essentials programme

Careers Service blog

Careers Service YouTube channel

BaseCoach - consulting interview prep

Catch up on talks

CVs & Applications (for undergraduates) book

Funds Online (previously Grants for Individuals)

GoinGlobal - global career planning

Graduate Digital Publications

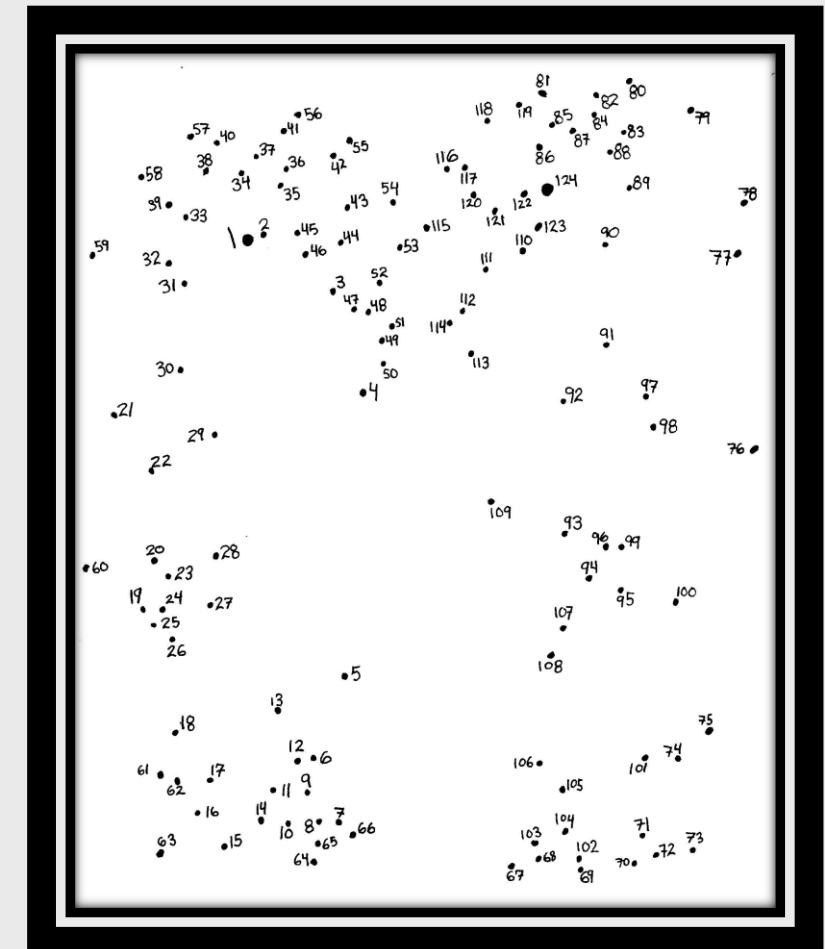
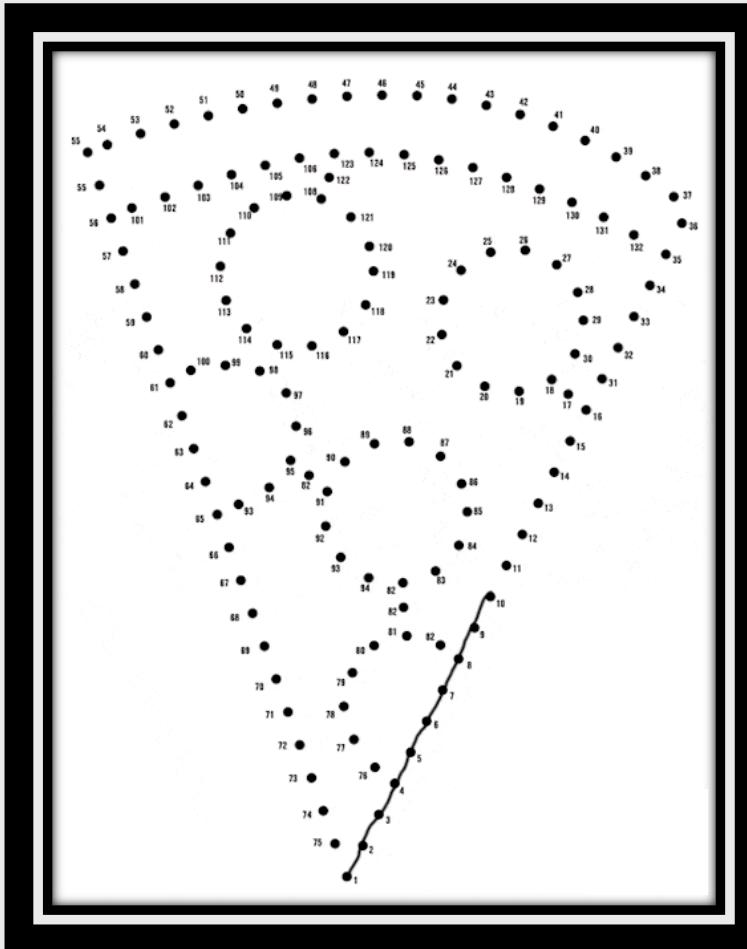
Graduates First:
Psychometric tests

Profiling For Success -
psychometric tests

Shortlist.me - interview practice

Vault Career Insider

What is the purpose of the cover letter? An analogy





Cover Letter

- Persuades the recruiter that you're the right fit for the role, and the organisation
- Gives your experience context in relation to the role
- May show a bit more personality than CV

Structuring your cover letter or statement

Why are you writing?

- Say what you're applying for and where you found the opportunity
- Include some key details e.g. your course, graduation year

What do you bring to the organisation?

- Show the research you've done by prioritising the most important skills and experience
- Select the most relevant examples and evidence for the criteria

Why do you want this opportunity?

- What's appealing about them? Did you attend their presentation?
- Demonstrate the research you have done into the company/role

Conclusion

- Provide a neat summary of the key points you have made in your letter or statement
- Include any key details you need to provide to the employer e.g. dates you can attend interview





Tailoring your CV & Cover letter

- **Do you do it? (How much? Which parts?)**
- **Is it worth it?**



Tailoring your CV

An analogy



Is it worth tailoring an application?

Pros

Cons

Convince
recruiters

Help
recruiters

Commitment

Time
consuming

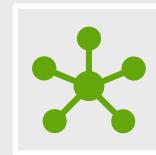




Tailoring a CV



Headings



Grouping
experience



Prioritise
content



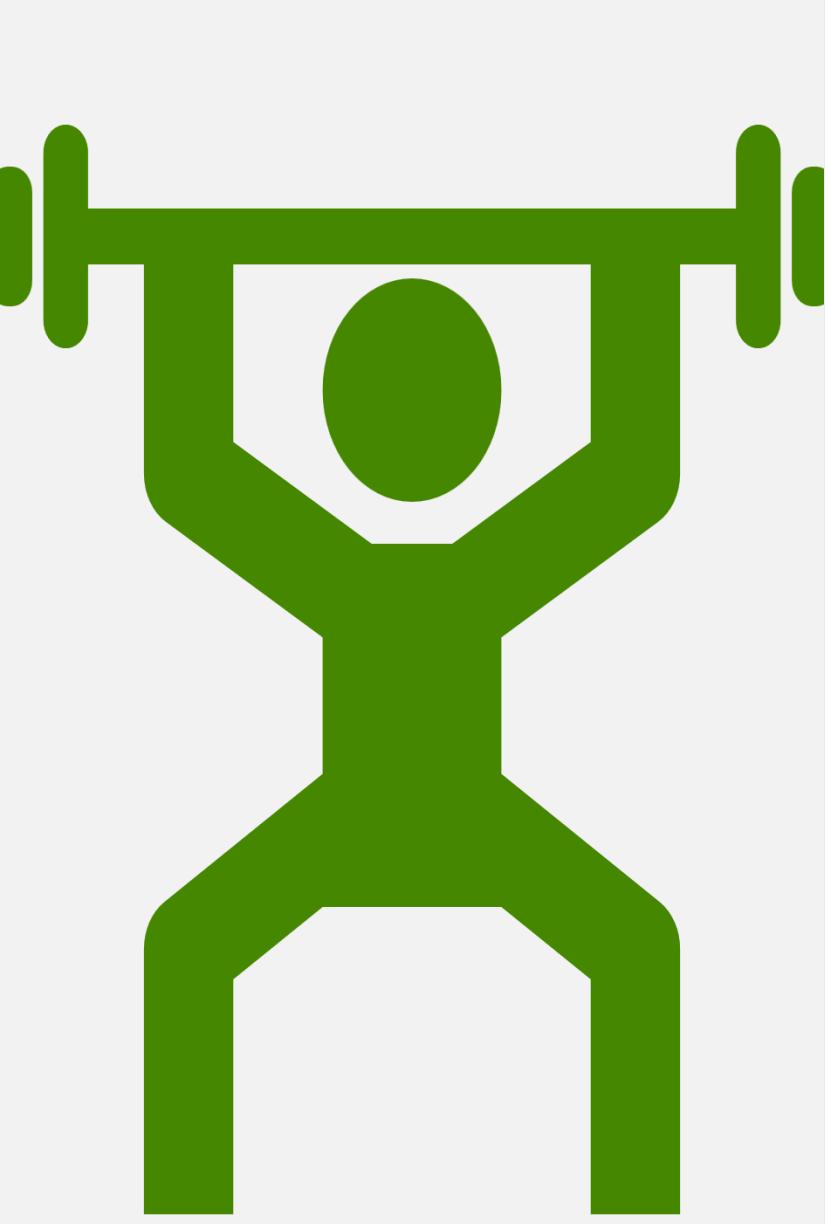
Mirror the
language



Signpost
relevant skills



Active verbs

A large, stylized green icon of a human figure, viewed from the side and slightly from behind. The figure is standing with arms raised, holding a large white square block with a green circle in the center. The figure is composed of thick, rounded green lines.

Standing out

**Skills
versus
strengths**

Using an AI Tool to Write Applications



Helps with the writer's block that comes when you face a blank page



Provides an initial structure to work with



It doesn't know you, your personal motivations or, necessarily the activities you have been involved with



You'll still need to put in some effort to personalise your cover letter and make your specific connection to the role or company