

Seminar 1:

**General principles of CV &
cover letter writing**

1 Introduction: What are CVs for?

- i. Personal Introductions
- ii. Course overview and aims

Seminar/session	Learning objectives
1 General principles of CV and cover letter writing (17/03/14: 14:00)	Understanding CVs in an English language context
2 CV writing (24/03/14: 14:00)	Understanding: how to choose the right format; how CV English differs from academic English; what to include and what to leave out.
3 Cover letter writing (31/03/14: 14:00)	Understanding: the purpose of cover letters; key 'dos' and 'don'ts'; how to structure a cover letter.
4 Individual tutorials (12-13/05/14)	To help students apply the above information in writing their own CVs and cover letters.

iii. What are CVs for?

- To get you **an interview**
- To present a picture of yourself that reflects you at your best

iv. CVs for academic and other organisations?

v. CVs for professional roles in English speaking organisations

Key points:

- 2 sides of an A4 page (brief but not too brief)
- Always tailor the CV to the job and organisation
- Put the most important information first
- Talk about achievements not responsibilities
- Dare to stand out – understand what you offer
- Clean, simple layout
- Never lie.

vi. Academic CVs

Key differences:

- No page limit
- Traditional structure (personal details, education, honours/awards, research interests, research/teaching/professional experience, publications, conferences...)
- Focused purely on academic achievements
- Make sure you follow specific instructions for the application
- See the following guidance at:
<http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/the-application-process/cvs/>
http://www.careers.utoronto.ca/progServ/CH01/Creating_your_academic_cv_handout.pdf

2 Understanding you: what do you offer?

- i. Why is self knowledge is so important?

- i. How well do you know you?

Self image exercise

Psychometric tests:

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)[®]

3 Researching the organisation

i. Why research the organisation?

Against

- If you are not shortlisted for interview then you have wasted your time.

For

- To show the employer that you are a serious applicant (motivation)
- So you are able argue that you are: a) a good fit ('right') for the role and; b) that you share the organisation's values and aims
- To make a start with more detailed research, should you be shortlisted for interview
- To find out if you like the job and organisation.

ii. How do I research the organisation?

- The organisation's website
- Newspapers (via their websites – keyword search)
- Google 'the truth about [co. name]'
- Google '[co. name] customer reviews'
- Reports (plcs have to produce these)
- Visit the company (if it is open to the public, e.g., retailer, hospital).

ii. How do I research the role?

- Read the advertisement carefully
- If there isn't much detail here, contact the employer (or agency) to request a full job description
- Google the job title and industry, e.g., 'account executive, advertising' – prospects.ac.uk
- Draw on your personal networks to find someone already working in the organisation.