MDXworks CV masterclass:

How to 'tailor' your CV

'Tailoring' your CV means that you've adjusted it to 'fit' a particular role. A well-tailored application will have more chance of success than a 'baggy' generic application which loosely covers different types of role, but doesn't fit any of them particularly well. Here's how:

'Tailoring' your CV

What's tailoring? 'Tailoring' your CV means that you've made adjustments to make it 'fit' and meet the requirements of a particular role. A well-tailored application will have more chance of success than a 'one-size fits all' attempt, as it will allow you to show an employer how you are a suitable match for their specific vacancy opportunity.

Tip: If you haven't already seen our 'Ultimate CV template' then grab yourself a copy now! It's packed full of useful tips, links and suggestions to help you craft a great CV.

3 straightforward steps to tailoring your CV:

Step 1: Start by getting hold of a Job Description or Person Specification for the role you want to apply for.

Tip: If you're making a speculative application, you could look for job descriptions which are similar to the type of role you have in mind.

Step 2: Identify what the recruiter is looking for in an ideal candidate. This is generally pretty straightforward, as most job vacancies will list what's required. To make things easy for yourself, you could print off the job description and highlight any 'required' or 'desirable' skills / qualities / knowledge / experience. Read the job description carefully and re-read it.

Tip: If the job description is being all mysterious and isn't telling you much about the role, then we suggest looking for job descriptions for similar roles (such as those advertised by the company's competitors), or get in touch with the recruiter to find out more about the role.

Step 3: Now that you know what the recruiter is looking for in an ideal candidate, you need to add these skills / qualities / knowledge / experience to your CV, to show that you match the requirements (but only if you honestly have those talents… We don't recommend fibbing!). The more closely your CV fits the job description, the more likely it is that you'll be selected for interview. Don't expect recruiters to 'read between the lines' as they won't assume you've got any skills or experience that you've not mentioned on your CV.

Where to talk about your skills / qualities / knowledge / experience. You should ideally be showing how well you match their requirements throughout your CV –For example, your Work Experience section could focus on responsibilities which are similar to those in the job description, your Education section could list Course Modules which match the required knowledge they've mentioned, your Extra-Curricular Activities could demonstrate how you've kept your commercial awareness up-to-date.- However, to really grab the attention of recruiters, we recommend giving extra special care and attention to your Personal Profile and Key Skills sections, as these are often the first sections a recruiter will notice on your CV.

Tip: Focus on what's relevant and consider removing anything from your CV which doesn't seem suitable for the role. This will help to keep the attention of recruiters. If they want 'a candidate with a good eye for detail who can work under pressure', then why tell them you're 'a creative person who loves learning new things'?

Leave your Profile for later

We recommend that you actually write your Personal Profile *last*, after you have written *all* the other sections of your CV, because writing sections like your Key Skills and Work Experience will give you inspiration to help you with your Personal Profile. That doesn't mean you put it at the bottom! Your Profile still goes at the top (after your contact details).

For more information about tailoring your profile, read our MDX guide to 'Tailoring your Personal Profile'. If you're looking at a PDF, just scroll down, or you can find a printed copy in the MDXworks Employability Centre (room CG07).

Looking at a printout and wondering why the links won't work? Email MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk to request a fully-working electronic copy of this guide.

Key Skills without Cliché

What's a Key Skills section? Many applicants like to have a Key Skills section after their Personal Profile, and before their Education or Work Experience section (we'll come back to your Profile later). In your Key Skills section, you could include a brief list (perhaps 5 or 6 bullet points) for skills **which are relevant to the job you are applying for**. Mention any relevant skills you have picked up through work experience, volunteering, society membership, extra-curricular activities, projects or study.

Tip: Don't forget to include any language or IT skills. If you're particularly techy, you might like to keep a separate section for your relevant technical skills.

Do I need a Key Skills section? There are no unbreakable 'rules' for writing your CV, however keep in mind that a Key Skills section can really help a recruiter to see at a glance what you have to offer. If they're forced to go searching through your whole CV they may miss important points, and assume you don't have what it takes to do the job. We highly recommend including a Key Skills section.

Give examples (you're not writing a shopping list). Don't just list your skills such as 'Communication skills', 'Organisation skills', 'Problem solving', 'Teamwork', or 'Leadership' without 'backing-up' these claims. Give brief examples (perhaps just a sentence) to explain how you have used each skill to achieve something (It doesn't have to be something you did day-to-day). This will help to convince recruiters that you really have these skills. Don't leave doubt as to whether your 'organisation skills' involve remembering to put your trousers on before you leave the house, or planning a concert for 50,000 people!

Some examples of examples:

- *Ability to motivate and empower: Providing support for students face-to-face, over the phone and by email on a daily basis. Providing tailored 1-to-1 support resulted in 10% increase in students securing graduate jobs (compared to previous year).*
- *Employer engagement: Liaising with recruiters and employers, to secure job opportunities for students and graduates. Established over 50 new 'partnerships' with local employers, within 6 months of joining the team.*

Tip: If you don't have much relevant work experience, then we recommend making your skills the main focus of your CV (known as a 'Skills based CV'). You may want to write as much as a paragraph for each skill to explain why you think you have that skill, giving brief examples of how and when you have used that skill to achieve something.

Another tip: During an interview, you could face further questioning about any skills you mentioned in your CV, so make sure you're familiar with your CV, and that you can comfortably provide examples to support any bold claims you've made.

Need more help?

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We also recommend reading our 'MDXworks ultimate CV template' and our 'MDXworks outstanding cover letter / email template' as you'll also need a great cover letter / email to introduce your CV.

Before you send us your CV or cover letter for review, please ensure that you…
- Attach your CV or cover letter as a Word document and give it a suitable filename (which includes your full name).
- Include an explanation of who you are, in your email. Tell us your MDX student ID number.
- Explain your job goal. Send us a job description, if you have one (a link in your email will do). This will help us to provide you with more specific feedback.

Your feedback matters: If you've got any comments or suggestions, please give us your feedback. Your feedback will help us to improve our service for students and graduates just like you!

We hope you found this guide helpful. Good luck with your applications and please don't hesitate to let us know if you require any further support.

📍	bit.ly/MDXworks_appointments Drop-in Mon-Fri 10am-5pm	📞	01707 398293
✉	MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk	Ⓢ	Chat via mdxworks
🔗	linkedin.com/in/mdx-works/	🔗	MDXworks.WordPress.com

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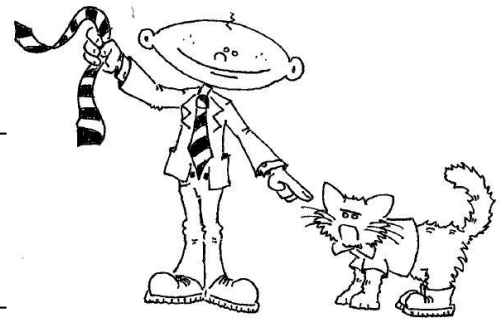
MDXworks CV masterclass:

Tailoring your Personal Profile

Unless you stapled a £50 note to your CV… your Personal Profile will probably be the first things a recruiter notices. So make that first impression count. Here's how:

Perfecting your Personal Profile

Tip: We recommend that you actually write your Personal Profile last, after you written all the other sections of your CV, because writing sections like your Key Skills and Work Experience will give you inspiration to help you with your Personal Profile. That doesn't mean you put it at the bottom! Your Profile still goes at the top (after your contact details).

Make sure you've read our MDX guide: 'How to tailor your Key Skills'. If you're looking at a PDF, just scroll up. Alternatively, you can find a printed copy in the MDXworks employability centre (room CG07).

What's a Personal Profile? It is common practice to start your CV with a short paragraph (around 5 or 6 lines) which introduces your CV. It could include a brief explanation about who you are, your background, what relevant experience, knowledge, skills, and qualities you will bring, your relevant achievements and your career aims.

Do you need a Profile? We recently carried out a survey with employers across a range of industries, to find out if they want to see a Personal Profile on an applicants CV. 49% said they like to see a Profile. 50% they didn't mind if a CV has a Profile or not. Only 1% said they prefer CVs without a profile. So that tells us that adding a Profile to your CV should keep 99% of recruiters happy.

Avoid statements that are generic and clichéd. Some phrases are over-used and can be cringe-inducing. Avoid the following clichéd statements (or use very sparingly), such as
'Team player, also able to use own initiative', 'Highly motivated, flexible and hardworking individual', 'Able to communicate at all levels', 'Can think outside the box', 'Works well under pressure', 'Seeking new challenge', 'Looking to join a reputable company', 'Keen to contribute to the success of any business'.

William's waffle recipe (How not to write a Profile). To help you understand the right way to write your Profile, it may be helpful to take a quick look at the wrong way to do it. Here's an example of an unremarkable Profile, where 'waffle is the main ingredient:
I am a hardworking individual with good communication skills who can adapt to any work environment. I'm flexible adaptable and self-motivated, able to work as an individual or as part of a team. I am reliable, punctual and well organised. I am a quick learner, seeking to learn new skills and develop my existing skills while contributing to the success of a reputable organisation such as [insert name of company here].

What's wrong with it? This offending Profile could apply to almost any applicant, from almost any background, applying for almost any job, almost anywhere. Ever. If your profile looks like this, then you probably copied a template. That's the problem with templates, they're deliberately generic, so that anyone can use them, which is why –if you want to stand out- you should avoid them! Walk away from the waffle.

How to write a Profile without the waffle. The first couple of lines of your Profile are mega-important, as they're probably the first thing that'll get read. Make sure it's not the only bit that gets read. Here's how to grab their attention:

The first line of your profile (Who you are). We don't recommend starting by calling yourself an individual. Everyone's an individual. You -on the other hand- are at least *rare*, if not *legendary*. Instead, we recommend calling yourself a 'First class Business Management Graduate' or an 'Innovative Mechatronics undergraduate' or whatever you happen to be. Mention what you've studied, and if you've achieved (or been predicted) a good grade, don't be shy about mentioning it. You could also mention if you've recently graduated or if you're an undergraduate looking to develop your experience in a particular industry.

The second line of your Profile (Your relevant experience). From your second line, we recommend giving a brief but specific overview of your relevant experience. This doesn't have to be work experience, it could be academic project work, extra-curricular activities, or volunteering. The important thing is that you keep it relevant (don't tell them about your star-sign or that you enjoy windy walks at weekends).

The rest of your Profile. Having already outlined your background and relevant experience in your first few lines of your profile, you could go on to give two or three brief examples of your most relevant skills or qualities that you'll bring to the role (make sure these match the requirements of the role), mention a couple of relevant achievements or briefly outline your career aim. Be specific, and focus on what you have to offer, rather than what you will gain. Saying something like you want to 'work in the Business sector to develop your skills and contribute to the success of the organisation' won't make your application stand out.

Tip: If you can't think of anything more to say It's probably better to have a shorter profile than to start waffling. Chop out the waffle (such as vague and generic statements that could apply to anyone). Remove anything which is not 'adding value' to your profile, because when a recruiter's reading your CV, the minute their attention starts to wander, your application could end up in the bin. Right where the waffle should have gone.

Example of a healthy 'waffle-free' Profile. A good Profile might look something like:
A high-achieving Education Studies graduate with practical experience working as an Employability Adviser during a recent placement at MDXWorks. Confident supporting students and graduates to find employment, by providing guidance with job-searching, applications, CVs, cover letters, and interviews. Strong knowledge of the graduate jobs market (UK and Europe) and of employability support solutions within Higher Education. Member of AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services).

Tip: Imagine your Profile is an advertisement for a new 'product', imagine recruiters in your industry are 'potential customers' and that the vacancy they've posted is a 'problem' that they need fixing. Now read your Profile and ask yourself... 'Could you tell straight away what the 'product' is?', 'Is it clear that this 'product' can fix the customers problem?', 'Is this 'product' offering something that other 'products' (candidates) may not offer?'. If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', then no-one's likely to buy it! So change your Profile!

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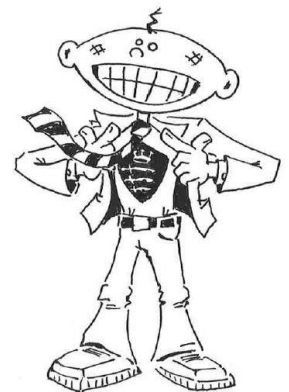
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o   Include an explanation of who you are, in your email. Tell us your MDX student ID number.
o   Explain your job goal. Send us a job description, if you have one (a link in your email will do). This will help us to provide you with more specific feedback.

Your feedback matters: If you've got any comments or suggestions, please give us your feedback. Your feedback will help us to improve our service for students and graduates just like you!

We hope you found this guide helpful. Good luck with your applications and please don't hesitate to let us know if you require any further support.

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