University of Salford
A Greater Manchester University

Creating a CV: a guide for Postgraduate Research Students

Careers Service
University of Salford Careers Service

Careers Service
Student Life, 1st Floor, Humphrey Booth House, The Crescent, Salford, M5 4WT
Tel: 0161 295 5668/5088
Fax: 0161 295 5922
E-mail: enquiries-careers@salford.ac.uk
Website: http://www.careers.salford.ac.uk

CVs for Research Students[1]

This is a short guide to developing your CV, focusing on applying for jobs using your specialist knowledge, academic jobs, and jobs unrelated to your subject area, in the UK. For information on non-UK CV formats *(each country differs),* the country profiles on http://www.prospects.ac.uk will be able to help. However, many of the basic principles are common to most types of CV.

For individual help, ideally draft out a rough CV, then either come to the regular drop - in sessions, Monday-Friday, 11am-3pm for a quick chat or book an appointment with a Careers Adviser (call 0161 295 5668) and we can work with you to improve its effectiveness.

Also see our website, *http://www.careers.salford.ac.uk* for more detailed information.

What do you have to offer - Where's the evidence?

When it comes to applying for jobs, you need to start by knowing yourself - think of yourself in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. An initial wide sweep of everything you have to offer will help when you're choosing which elements of your life to highlight to an employer.

What experience do you have?

Experience includes being a research student, but also previous work or professional experience (casual student jobs can count), other activities in your social life, or activities which help with the smooth running of your department. The key to using these successfully in a CV lies in focusing on achievements and key responsibilities.

What knowledge do you have?

Your subject knowledge may be of prime importance for an academic research post. But for jobs slightly outside your subject area, it may be effective to highlight how certain techniques or subject knowledge are transferable and how they relate to the job in question. Also, although personal transferable skills are important in any job, if your subject knowledge is relevant, this should be a major part of your CV.

For jobs unrelated to your specialism, try to explain your research briefly in plain English

- ***Hint:*** *Get a non-specialist friend to read it and tell you if they understand.*

Don't feel you have to hide your research degree, but your research area is unlikely to be the focus of your CV if you're applying for a non-specialist job.

What skills do you have?

Write down what you think your skills are. Systematically reflect on all aspects of your life and consider what skills you have gained from them. Think through the concrete achievements as evidence of skills.

Don't ignore skills gained outside your research or your department, for example, working in a bar gives scope for demonstrating tact, diplomacy, persuasion and assertiveness. Teamwork or leadership can be shown whilst rock climbing, playing in an orchestra or organising fundraising events for your daughter's playgroup.

Examples from your non-research life are often of limited (or no) interest to academic recruiters. However, employers outside academia, even for scientific research, often look for these sorts of examples to point to your general skills.

- ***Hint:*** *Examples should be recent – most school activities are long past their sell-by date by now.*

Who are you writing this for?

Most people write a first CV as a history of their life. This is fine as a starting point, but the trick is to set this to one side, and then focus on what the employer wants to know – what will convince them that they would like you to work with them?

A CV is like an advert – it will work best when it focuses on how the finished product (you) will satisfy the needs of the customer (the employer). This means you need a different CV for different types of jobs, even for different employers if you want to be really targeted.

[1]Acknowledgements to the University of Manchester Careers Service whose handout has informed this document

Jobs using your specialist subject – focus on your subject specific achievements, ability to deliver end results, your education, any projects and resources managed, relevant techniques and knowledge, and skills such as team work, problem solving and creativity.

Academic jobs – focus on your subject specific achievements and education, your past, current and future research interests, any teaching, demonstrating or departmental administration activities and anything to demonstrate your research skills and professional standing.

Unrelated jobs – focus on your key transferable skills which are appropriate to the job, particularly highlighting achievements which have been gained outside an academic research context and avoid over-technical descriptions.

For any job, try to find out what the employer is looking for – if they won't tell you directly, the clues are in adverts, recruitment and organisation literature.

- ***Hint:*** *Use the **T** model of how to present yourself as a researcher – you can dig deep in terms of research and knowledge but also have the scope to think broadly and the flexibility to put your skills into practice. Especially useful if applying outside academia.*

Making your CV look good

Employers can spend as little as 90 seconds scanning a CV before consigning it to the "read later" or "bin it now" piles. If you've sent a speculative CV – think how much attention you pay to unsolicited mail at home or work … It will only pass the first cut if it looks professional, and something of interest to the employer stands out immediately.

Presentation counts

- For non-academic CVs, 2 sides of A4 maximum, new sheet for each side, laser printed. For academic CVs, use as much paper as you want (weight matters!) but get most of your good stuff on the first two pages.
- Use new, good quality paper; white or "professional" in colour (e.g. cream, parchment). Avoid folders or fancy slippery covers – often hated by recruiters.
- Graphics – use only if relevant and only if they actually add something.
- Avoid loud colours and cheesy PowerPoint clipart.
- Use **bold**, *italics* or <u>underlining</u> but not all at once or you will lose ***impact***.
- Avoid background shading – when photocopied it can be blotchy or can obscure text.
- USE DISTINCTIVE HEADINGS and clearly separate the different areas of your experience. Keep sections together - avoid them running over two pages.
- Indenting sections and using ● bullets add visual interest and signposts key information.

Sharpen up your written style

- Rambling prose and endless lists are boring to read – the recruiter may not bother. Make it punchy and to the point.
- If a sentence starts to runs over three lines, it is probably too long - split it up into shorter sentences.
- Use strong active words such as initiated, reorganised, co-ordinated. A thesaurus can help you.
- Be specific and quantify achievements for credibility and impact – e.g. *"negotiated £100 sponsorship from local companies to promote department charity fun run, raising £760".*

Getting the format right

There is no one right way to present a CV and you can move sections around or omit them, depending on their relevance to the recruiter - read it from their point of view. However, as starting points, here are some of the more common styles.

Conventional chronological CV

This is a safe option for many jobs, and often ideal for jobs based around your specialism outside academia.

- Education and work experience should be shown with the most recent first as this is generally most relevant. However if, for example, your most relevant work experience was 2 or 3 student jobs ago, you can separate them into two sections – Relevant Work Experience, Other Work Experience. Also, other experience gained within academia could be included, e.g. as Relevant Professional (or Technical) Experience.
- Don't leave unexplained gaps, but you don't have to list all jobs or qualifications, if they are numerous, not relevant or a long time ago.

Academic CV

Whilst some academics have strong views on the correct format for academic CVs, these can differ. However, virtually all academic CVs are built around the three pillars of research, teaching and administration.

- The right research focus is important – focus on your own research ideas if applying for a job where you'll be writing your own bids; show how your research ideas fit with the recruiter's if they hold the purse strings.
- Highlight any help you've given your department (paid or unpaid) – demonstrating, open days, schools events, organising study groups or seminars.
- Typically an academic CV goes beyond the standard 2 pages as you will need to include your publications and conferences.

Skills Based CV

This format comes into its own when applying for jobs where you are trying to change field. By highlighting the transferable skills, and de-emphasising the technical content of your education, you can help the recruiter see how you might fit into their non-research job. This is a hard model to get right and is best if targeted to a specific role.

- A Personal Profile or Career Aim can be very effective in setting the scene for the reader – just make sure it says something concrete, and avoids vague waffle
  ✓ *"Numerate graduate with up-to-date IT knowledge, proven leadership skills and practical customer service experience seeking a move into Sales in the IT sector"*
- Skills can come before your qualifications, but if your education is relegated to the second page, make sure the first page refers at least to your being a graduate.

CV Examples

The following four example CVs illustrate different approaches to presenting yourself. They should not be taken as templates or ideal examples, but should give you some ideas on how to approach writing your CV, according to the type of employer who is going to be reading it.

CV 1 & 2 these show 2 different academic CVs – you can see how different they are, which is a reflection of individuals' biographies.

CV 3 shows a conventional chronological CV which could be used for applying for jobs in your specialist subject based in industry, e.g. in research or design and development.

CV 4 is influenced by the skills-based CV model; it puts considerable emphasis on transferable skills so could be suited to a job unrelated to your research.

CV1 - Example of academic CV

Theo Papadopoulos

15 City Point
Chapel Street
Salford
Manchester
M3 6AF
Mobile Tel. No: 0772783056
Email: t.papdopoulos@student.salford.ac.uk
Nationality: Greek

Career objective

PhD graduate with research background in data mining and operational research. Seeking to build on strong research skills gained through studies so far as a research associate in a leading research centre in the UK. Ambition is to eventually have broad-based academic career including teaching, research and management responsibilities.

Education

PhD in Informatics **September 2005-2008**
University of Salford, Informatics Research Institute
"Fuzzy Clustering and Classification"
Key features of research:

- Development of algorithms that identify meaningful groupings and future trends in medical and marketing data.
- Modelling these structures via a set of hierarchical rules that can be further used to classify similar examples and predict potential behaviours.
- Fuzzy Logic for rigorous input representation to allow for human-like reasoning, knowledge integration and inferencing under uncertainty.
- Original publication of initial algorithm by IEEE International Conference Fuzzy Systems, 2007, FUZZ-IEEE 2007, with a second updated hierarchical version under review.

BSc (Hons) Information Systems Engineering (1st class) **September 2001 – 2005**
University of Salford

- Final Year Project: An exceptional 3rd year project regarding a web based Group Decision Support System. Interactive and Dynamic Java web programming, decision making logic & advanced mathematics.

Research Interests

My principal research interests lie in the field of data analysis and fuzzy data modeling, mathematical and statistical modeling as well as similar prediction and optimization techniques such as Linear/ Dynamic/Stochastic Programming, Simulation, Structured Decision Analysis (AHP), Trend & Sensitivity Analysis (Linear & Logistic Regression), My future research plans are to build on the foundations of my PhD to further investigate Business Intelligence applications using software packages like SAS, Business Objects & Cognos with a strong preference to Risk and Market Analysis industries

Teaching experience

Academic, Teaching Assistant and Lab Demonstrator **Academic years 2005 - 2007**
Course responsibilities

- Systems Integration (3rd year & MSc): interactive & dynamic web applications, J2EE development platform - SQL Server, extensive use of multiple data-sources (mdb & xml files).
- Advanced Java Programming (2nd year): advanced Java applets, multithreading, db connectivity, exception handling and other.
- Databases Lab – Database design & implementation.

Skills developed

- Assisted academic staff with organising and delivering their teaching material as well as occasional marking and commenting on coursework and reporting back to students and lecturers.
- Responsible for planning of teaching of technical academic material to undergraduate and postgraduate students during the laboratory sessions.
- Accurate and in depth knowledge of the taught material plus extended teaching & communication abilities, patience and responsibility.

Administrative and industrial experience

Knowledge Transfer Conference Organisation (2007-8):

- Organisation of a conference on behalf of the University of Manchester and Salford as part of an extended doctoral training programme. Multidisciplinary, 12-month project that demanded excellent project organisation and managing skills, efficient team building, working and communication.
- Elected chair of the group of 5, regular weekly meetings monitoring the progress and the quality. Triumphant organisation of the event that exceeded expectations.

Integration Tester, Schlumberger/Atos Origin, Athens 2004 Olympic Games Placement
September 2003 – July 2004

- Placement for graduate or 2nd year students to take place in Athens for 8 months.
- Integration and Acceptance Testing on the main score-keeping software developed by Swatch and Schlumberger, in the central ATHOC Software Integration Lab. The testing involved the execution of several test cases and analysing the results by checking and querying the result, Oracle based, database.

Academic prizes

- University of Salford, Bank of Salford Prize: Awarded for the best group project of the academic year 2004-5, Prize won after successfully conducting a scientific survey and statistical analysis for a medium-sized company as part of the Professional Development module.
- 9th Annual Student Team Working Awards 2007: Awarded for the successful completion of 'Beyond Academia? A Conference on Knowledge Transfer' project. The awards represent the highest contribution of academic members to extra-curricular activities, sponsored by a leading blue-chip company.

Skills

- Fuzzy data modelling, classification and decision making.
- Strong Java, J2EE, (PL)SQL, XML and some Matlab & SAS.
- Business Modelling & Requirements Engineering, UML, MS Visio.
- Databases Design, Querying & Implementation, Access, MySQL, Oracle, SQLServer2000.
- Strong Statistical/Data Analysis and Reporting, Excel & SPSS Clementine.

Professional courses completed

Various doctoral training courses completed including:

- Multivariate Statistics
- Qualitative & Quantitative data analysis & visualization.
- Structural Equation Modeling
- Optimization & Prediction mathematical methodologies.

Publications

Can include journal articles, conference papers and presentations, and work in progress etc. Use the Harvard System to reference – http://www.edu.salford.ac.uk/academic-learning-skills/referencing/

References: Available on request *(you should have two available for an employer to contact who can comment on your academic and research skills).*

CV2 - Example of academic CV

Della Barton

Address	27, Woodland Road, Moseley, Birmingham B14 6TT
Tel.	0121 343 267
E-Mail	dellabarton@hotmail.com
D.O.B.	12/04/79

Academic Education and Qualifications

University of Birmingham
October 2005-2008

PhD in English Literature
(Submission date July 2008)
Thesis Title: *A Study of the Metaphor of the Palimpsest in Modern Literature and Culture*
(funded by AHRC Studentship)
Supervisor: Professor David Hughes
[see appended Research Abstract]

University of Warwick
September 2004–September 2005

Masters Degree in Philosophy and Literature,
Distinction.
(funded by AHRC Studentship)
Thesis Title: *The Absurd Aporia of Meaning: Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett*

Clare College, Durham University
September 2000–June 2003

BA Honours Degree in English Literature,
First Class.
Thesis Title: *Wallace Stevens: Poeticising (In)Finitude*

Dover Girls' School
June 2000

4 A-Levels, grade A, including English Literature
AS level French, grade A
English Special paper, grade 1

Publications

Della Barton 'Palimpsesting: Reading and Writing Lives in H.D.'s Palimpsest,' submitted to 'Hystorical Fictions: Women, History and Authorship,' special issue of Women: *A Cultural Review,* Summer 2004.

Della Barton, 'The Palimpsest,' submission to Textual Practice, October 2003.

Teaching Qualifications and Experience

Associate Teacher (Staff and Education Development Association)
Subject to assessment of Portfolio compiled after attendance at the Birmingham Postgraduate Tutors Teaching and Learning Programme. Confers credits towards the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCertHE).

Teaching:

University of Warwick
2004 and 2005

Third year English Major course 'The Uncanny'
Two seminars per week of 15 students for ten weeks.
The course aims to develop students' engagement with the notion of the uncanny across a broad range of literary and other texts, developing their skills of reading and critical analysis.
Responsibilities:

- planning and leading seminars
- marking two pieces of coursework and giving feedback
- supervising dissertations
- writing end of term course reports
- evaluating the course

First year English and American Studies School course 'Reading Literary Writing'
Two seminars per week of 15 students for ten weeks.
The course aims to introduce non-English major students to a broad range of literary texts and critical approaches, and to improve both close reading skills and theoretical astuteness.
Responsibilities:

- designing course outline
- planning and leading seminars
- marking three pieces of course work
- writing end of term course reports
- evaluating the course

Examining:

University of Birmingham
2006 and 2007

Examining of 30 finalist dissertations (on The Uncanny) including co-marking and moderation with colleagues.

Positions of Responsibility

- Staff Student Liaison Committee Student Representative for Philosophy and Literature Masters, Warwick, 2004-05.
- Durham University Tadpoles (Social-side of Swim Team) Secretary and Treasurer, 2000-2003.

Conference Papers Delivered

- 'Palimpsesting: Reading and Writing Lives in H.D.'s Palimpsest'
  Hystorical Fictions: History, Women and Authorship, University of Wales, Swansea, August 2007.

- 'Palimpsesting: Reading, Violence and Detective Fiction'
  Effects of Reading Series, Aston University, May 2006.

- 'Palimpsestuous Undergrounds: Sigmund Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895), Thomas De Quincey and the Structure of the Psychical Apparatus'
  Undergrounds, Manchester University, January 2006.

Referees Available on Request

Non-academic job related to PhD

CRAIG WATTS

26 Lymington Terrace, Worsley, Manchester, M28 7YD
c.watts@student.salford.ac.uk
07989 012 3456
Nationality - British

Education

PhD Chemical Physics, University of Salford (2005-8)

"Towards Non-Noble Metal Emission Control Catalysts"

- The research objectives of my PhD project were to understand the preparation, characterisation and catalytic activity of a number of transition metal promoted heavy metal oxide catalyst materials. The heterogeneous catalysis discipline is very diverse, using impregnation, precipitation and inorganic sol-gel routes for the materials preparation.
- A wide range of analytical techniques were employed for the characterisation of the prepared materials including Powder XRD, TEM, EXAFS, FTIR, FT-Raman, BET, and PCS. The pore structure of the prepared catalysts was studied using the BET method as part of a collaboration with the University of Technology in Malaysia.
- Catalytic activity was measured using a flow-reactor and on-line FTIR to monitor the oxidation and reduction processes. A potential application of these materials is in automobile three-way catalysts as a replacement for precious metals.

BSc (Hons) Chemistry 2(i), University of Ulster (2002-5)

- **Final year project** - As part of my undergraduate degree I carried out an analytical research project using supercritical fluid chromatography to separate components of food-stuffs, and a theoretical project using computer models to predict photoelectron angular distributions. In the first year of my degree some experimental work in Materials Science was undertaken as an optional subject.
- **One year placement** - Ohio State University, USA.

A-Levels, Tadcaster School, Coleraine, Northern Ireland

Chemistry(B), Geography(B), Mathematics(B).

Relevant Work Experience

Laboratory demonstrator, University of Salford (2006-8)

- Demonstrated to undergraduates for 2 years specifically around analytical techniques including Powder XRD, TEM, EXAFS, FTIR, FT-Raman, BET, and PCS.
- Supervised four undergraduate research projects around heavy metals.

Research Assistant, Johnson Mathey Technology Centre (Summer 2006)

- Successfully managed two six week research projects to refine two experimental waterproof wall coverings under the direction of a Senior Research Manager. Skills developed included:
    - Project management – delivered required results on time, and within tight budgets (of £39,000 and £16,000 respectively).
    - Planning and flexibility – agreed detailed project plan which was reviewed weekly. Used these reviews to modify plan when alternative research strategy was suggested by a colleague, resulting in enhanced results and budget saving of £5000.
    - Negotiation – through contacts at the University of Ohio arranged access to key equipment and software reducing the costs of the project.

Temporary Scientific Officer, Fisheries Research Laboratory, Northern Ireland (Summer 2005)

- Worked on and off shore within a team on projects in both marine and freshwater departments. Used specific mathematical modelling techniques to analyse water quality.

Other Work Experience

Webmaster, Manchester Disabled Pupils Forum - voluntary (2005-present)

- Currently manage 5 volunteers to deliver web-based services to local children.
- Developed interactive features to keep the interest of a young audience, including a discussion forum, quizzes and polls.
- Regularly meet with groups of school pupils and teachers to receive feedback and establish future needs.
- For details of my work visit the site at http://www.12345.org.uk

Co-ordinator, Students For Schools Scheme, Belfast - voluntary (2003-2005)

- Initiated and co-ordinated this programme to link university students to special needs and regular schools as part of classroom support and local community paired reading schemes (part-time during term, full-time during vacations).

Positions of Responsibility

- **Department Rep (final year)** - Staff/Student Committee for Science and Engineering; introduced recycling bins to all labs, lecture theatres and concourses.
- **Class President** - Elected to this position representing overseas students on my course at the University of Ohio: organised regular social events with the US students and an end of course Science Fair for local school pupils.

Key Skills

IT skills	- Experienced in programming in BASIC, C++, Java, Visual Fox Pro 5, Perl, Macromedia Flash 4, and using database such as Fox Pro and Microsoft Access. - Proficient in many Microsoft Office packages (Word, Excel etc), UNIX and LINUX operating systems, and in the use of many scientific database packages.
People & Project Management	- Supervised the laboratory project of an undergraduate, both in the day-to-day running of the project and its overall planning, which has yielded valuable data. - Mentor to other postgraduate students, a position I have held for two years.
Problem Solving	- Working across four distinct areas of Interstellar Science, demonstrated independent thought in analysing problems, adopting suitable strategies and developing new techniques. The results are being reviewed for publication, and have been presented to my colleagues in a series of seminars.

Full driving licence held since 2000.

Interests and Activities

Running	An avid runner, I usually run over 20 miles a week.
Football	Regularly play five-a-side with friends and in competitions.
Music	Qualified to grade 5 on the violin; also enjoy many genres of contemporary music.

References

Available on request.

Non-academic job indirectly related to research

James Wright

Address:
21 Steele Lane, Great Darnworth, Manchester, M22 4RF.
Telephone:
(0161) 379 502
E-Mail:
j.wright@hotmail.com

PERSONAL PROFILE

A confident team member with excellent communication skills, I am now seeking to apply and further develop my skills and knowledge within a commercially focused technical environment.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

2005-2008
University of Salford - Procter and Gamble Research Studentship

PhD Research Degree - 'The Behaviour of Water in a Synthetic Zeolite'
A very diverse project, with strong product related objectives concerning the use of zeolites in commercial washing powders. I was ultimately responsible for all aspects of my research, and had to utilise and develop a broad range of key skills to ensure the success of my PhD.

Project management skills - Throughout my PhD I have had to maintain and prioritise different projects, set objectives and meet targets within the tight constraints of time and resources. I have also had to continually develop my own knowledge and skills to keep up to date with current work.

Communication skills - I am able to communicate confidently with people at all levels, from senior scientists (at Procter and Gamble Research) to my own immediate peers and technical staff. I have developed excellent written communication skills as a result of preparing a detailed PhD thesis.

Team working skills - I am a confident team player with excellent organisational skills, developed through working within a very multi disciplinary research group. I am able to utilise the expertise of individual members, as well as offer my own skills and knowledge to achieve a common goal.

Computational skills - I am a confident user of various MS Windows and VAX VMS based programs, particularly to control technical equipment, and to analyse and present complex data.

2002 -2005
University of Salford - BSc. (Hons.) Physics Degree with Industrial Experience (Pfizer)
First Class
My final year was sponsored by Pfizer, following my industrial placement. I also arranged to do my final year project with Pfizer: 'The influence of Surfactants on the Rheology of Associating Polymers in Solution'.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Awarded the University Prize for Physics twice, in recognition of first and second year degree examination results. Received the David Lyons Prize, upon graduating with first class honours.

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Laboratory Demonstrator University of Salford (2005-2008)
I supervised students in the Physics Department undergraduate teaching laboratories, making sure they fully understood and successfully completed their practical work. The ability to convey complex and technical details in a simple, comprehensible manner was therefore essential.

BSc Industrial Placement Pfizer, Little Merring, Cheshire (2003-2004)
My project was related to the development of a new generation of environmentally friendly, water based paint formulations. I used a variety of experimental techniques and developed my own innovative ideas to investigate the rheology of novel paint thickeners under a range of different conditions. This contributed to the development of my practical and analytical skills and taught me how to apply my knowledge to other disciplines.

VACATION WORK

June 2005: General factory labourer at Pearson Engineering, Worsley, Manchester

Summer 2004: Waiter and barman at The Lyceum Hotel, Preston, Lancashire

Summer 2003: Part time sales assistant at Top Man, Manchester

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

I regularly play squash and was a member of the University Squash Club during my first degree. I have just taken up mountain biking and benefit from the relaxation and, of course, the exercise. I enjoy the theatre, particularly modern musicals. For the past two years I have been attending ballroom dancing lessons.

I have worked as a volunteer for both the NSPCC and Scope at various fund-raising events. I recently travelled to France with Scope, to assist with one of its largest charity events, Beerjolais. I helped to co-ordinate team activities throughout the weekend and was also the event photographer. I had to capture the ambience of the event and organise the team photographs for the various companies that were involved.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS AND INFORMATION

I have a keen interest in personal computers and am fully conversant with various software packages, including Windows and the Microsoft Office Suite.

I am a graduate member of the Institute of Physics.
I hold a full, clean driving licence and have the use of my own car.