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CVs & Cover Letters

Department of Computing
October 2023

Richard Carruthers
r.carruthers@imperial.ac.uk

By the end of the session you'll:
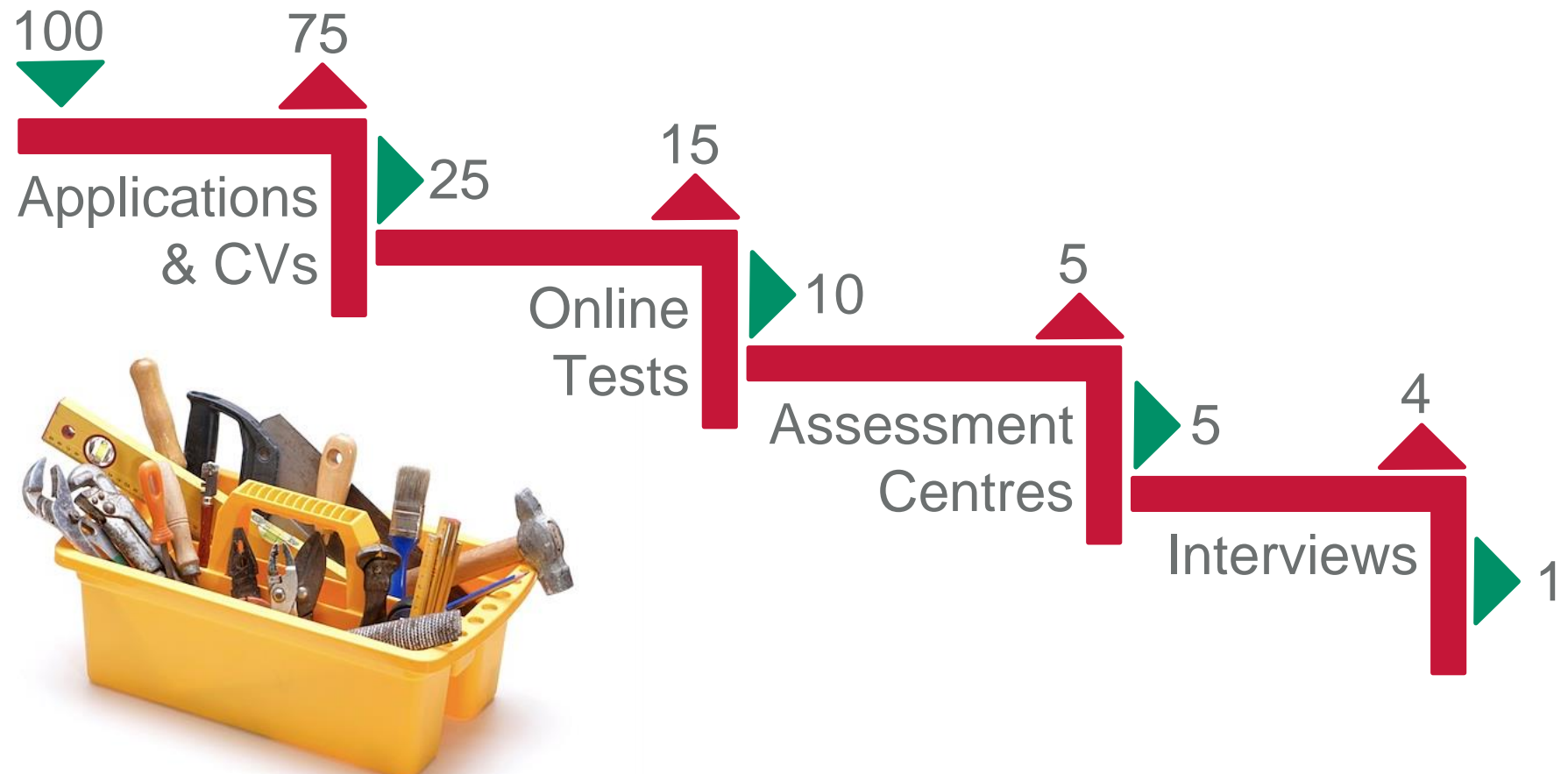
- Recognise the role of a CV & Cover Letter during the application process

- Understand appropriate layout, content and structure for your documents

- Identify areas from your experiences that should be highlighted to tailor documents.

- Be able to construct a tailored CV and Cover Letter and locate support resources
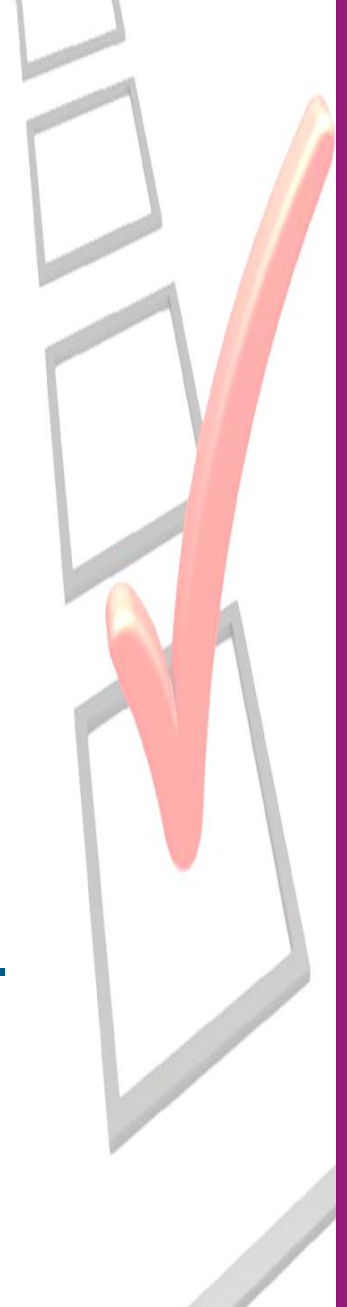
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Recruitment process:

100 → Applications & CVs → 75 → 25 → Online Tests → 15 → 10 → Assessment Centres → 5 → 5 → Interviews → 4 → 1

Careers Service
www.imperial.ac.uk/careers

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CVs
& Resumes

CV/Resume

A unique marketing document that is designed to:

- Document relevant qualifications

- Highlight relevant experience

- Evidence relevant skills/attributes

Skills recruiters look for:

- Communication
- Team Working
- Integrity
- Intellectual Ability
- Confidence
- Character/Personality
- Planning & Organisation
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Analysis & Decision Making

- Leadership
- Negotiation
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Problem Solving
- Computer Literacy
- Commercial Awareness
- Handling Pressure
- Creativity / Innovation
- Resilience

Skills audit:

Identify what you have to offer and how you can provide evidence for skills and attributes from all areas of your life.

This forms the foundation to your applications and will help you to create targeted documents.

Know Your Skills

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Skills audit:

Activity	Evidence	Skill(s)
MEng Computing	• Effectively explain, support and defend ideas and opinions in seminars and tutorials. • Develop good report writing skills through group and individual assignments.	• Critical Thinking • Verbal Communication • Written Communication • Time Management • Organisation • Group Work

Be professional and concise:

"As part of a 6-month research project for module XXXX I had to carry out a survey of people's attitudes to off-shore wind farms."

"Devised and conducted a survey of attitudes to off-shore wind farms as part of a 6-month research project."

Achievement	• accelerated, accomplished, achieved, carried out, completed, improved, delivered, enhanced, finished, negotiated, obtained, produced, secured, increased, implemented
Communication	• advised, participated, chaired meeting, wrote, instructed, demonstrated, edited, presented, discussed, promoted, persuaded, recommended
Taking initiative	• created, formulated, designed, established, introduced, devised, started, developed, set up, launched, initiated, enabled
Research	• classified, differentiated, investigated, determined, experimented, equated, searched, developed, surveyed, examined, indexed, compiled, catalogued
Organising & planning	• distributed, reorganised, arranged, restructured, budgeted, verified, scheduled, computed, planned, produced
Interpersonal	• advised, negotiated, consulted, evaluated, proposed, handled, sorted out, collaborated, discussed, mediated, facilitated

What employer wants:

accountability   organisation   Project management   communication

The applicant will:

- Be responsible for their own project(s) as part of a project team including senior management.
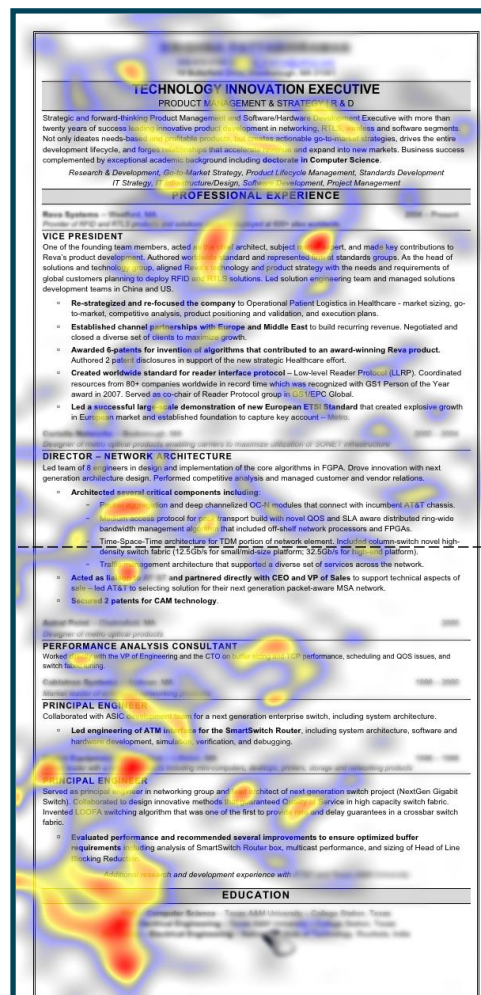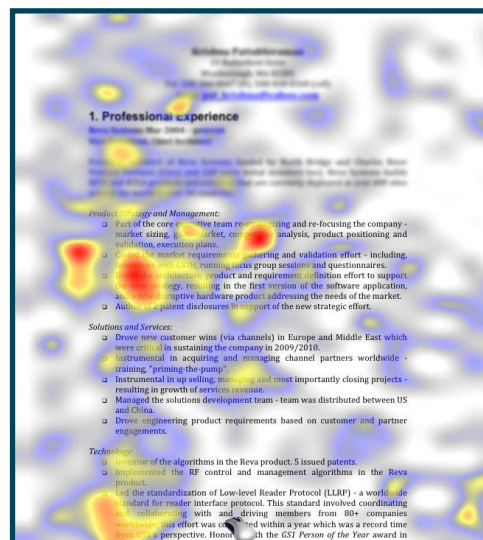
Team work   Influence and persuasion   negotiation

JOB ANALYSIS

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Immediate thoughts?

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Eye tracking technology:

Artificial intelligence:

- Algorithms can provide a fair and objective score for all CVs quickly.

- Assessment is made against criteria deemed important for the role.

- High scores are presented to recruiters for additional screening and selection.

- A human is still often involved in the process although AI is getting more sophisticated and reliable.

CV structure:

- Contact Details

- Profile (optional)

- Education

- Experience

- Additional Skills (relevant ones)

- Interests & Achievements

- References

- Employment History
- Projects
- Research Experience
- Positions of Responsibility
- Consultancy Experience
- Volunteering

CV success:

1. Easy to read & navigate

2. Avoid large blocks of unbroken text

3. Make it relevant and give evidence

4. Avoid clichéd phrases

5. Use professional language/tone

6. Right length (one or two pages)

7. Proofread!

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One page CV

Ensure your contact details are clear and accessible.
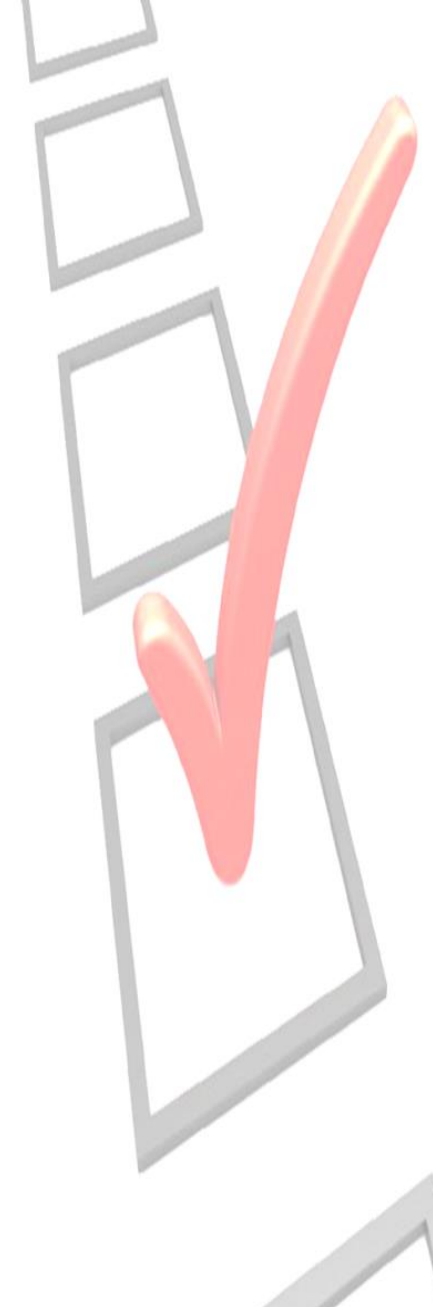
Put your most recent qualifications first. Summarise pre-university qualification.

Highlight relevant skills and achievements.

Highlight any IT or additional language skills that may be relevant.

Highlight your duties, responsibilities and achievements and where possible quantify specifics.

Include society, charity, community or work shadowing experience.

Include any relevant additional information or positions of responsibility that demonstrate personal qualities.

Alex Student
58 Tennyson Road, London, NW9 2XB
Alex.Student@imperial.ac.uk
+44 (0)123 456 7891

Education:
2013 – 2017 — **MSci Chemistry, Imperial College London**
Current average: 67%
- Regularly worked in small groups to plan and conduct over 20 laboratory experiments requiring precision, when recording and reporting, as well as strict time management and substantial independent research.
- Completed two data handling modules and have good practical experience in using specialist software to capture, analyse and report on numerical data.
- Attained the highest mark in the year (86%) for a presentation made to panel of lecturers and industry professionals.

2006 – 2013 — **Passmore College, Bournemouth**
- A Levels: Chemistry (A), Maths (A), Physics (B), Biology (B)
- GCSEs: 10 A* - C

Employment:
Summer 2016 — **Research Intern (Imperial College London)**
- Completed an 8 week research project within a laboratory.
- Presented research updates at regular departmental meetings.

Dec 2014 - Present — **John Lewis, Oxford Street, Team Leader**
- Promoted from Customer Assistant during summer 2015.
- Demonstrate strong customer service in a fast paced retail environment.
- Develop an in-depth knowledge of products and train new staff.
- Ensure excellent communication while working across several teams.

Volunteering:
Feb 2014 - Present — **RAG, Imperial College London, Volunteer**
- Responsible for securing street collection permits from local authorities and arranging transport for up to 50 volunteers.

June 2012 - June 2013 Befriend a Child, Bournemouth, Volunteer
- Assisted with homework and arranged activities for two boys aged 9 and 11.

Additional Skills:
- Proficient use of Microsoft Office plus experience with several programming macros.

Interests:
- Imperial College Boat Club 1st eight. Organise five training session per week and take responsibility for the welfare and technical training of novice rowers.
- Active member of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Imperial College Chemistry Society (ChemSoc).

References available on request.

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Two
CV

How should a recruiter contact you? Provide key contact details. It is unnecessary to state 'Curriculum Vitae" but your name should be clear.

Highlight skills that are relevant to the role you are applying for by writing about your duties and responsibilities.

A personal profile is optional. If you chose to use one it should be specific and evidence based for the role.

Provide a balanced picture of yourself by demonstrating the skills you have developed in a variety of experiences including societies, charity or community work.

Put your most recent qualifications first and use bullet points and direct language to help highlight relevant skills and to make the CV more accessible to the reader.

Showcase additional skills that may be relevant in a structured and meaningful way. You may want to include relevant IT skills or additional languages.

Make the CV work for the role you are applying to. If specific technical abilities are required ensure you reference to these. You can also use headings to help evidence other relevant skills.

It is perfectly acceptable to summarise earlier qualifications.

Extracurricular activities are an important way to show you have interests outside of your studies. Use them to highlight transferable skills and demonstrate your personal qualities.

Consider highlighting any relevant work experience in specific sections of the CV. Be specific and concise, mention achievements and outcomes.

You can provide contact details for your referee but it is also fine to state "available on request". This concludes the CV and allows flexibility. You will need permission of a referee prior to supply their details.

Alex Student
58 Tennyson Road, London, NW9 2XB
Alex.Student@imperial.ac.uk
+44 (0)123 456 7891

Final year MSci Chemistry student with proven project management abilities developed in both academic and extracurricular activities. Seeking a laboratory based graduate training opportunity within the chemical industries.

Education:
2013 - 2017 — MSci Chemistry, Imperial College London
Current average: 67%
- Course modules covered the full range of physical, organic and inorganic chemistry, including the handling of air/moisture-sensitive compounds. Examples include:
  - Atomic Structure
  - Bio-organic Chemistry
  - Measurement Science
  - Photochemistry
  - Molecular Architecture
  - Molecular Imaging

Technical Skills:
- Completed two data handling modules and have good practical experience in using specialist software to capture, analyse and report on numerical data.
- Competent in the use of UV-Vis, IR and NMR spectroscopies, TLC, flash chromatography, and other standard techniques.
- Experienced in both organic and inorganic synthetic chemistry, including the handling of air/moisture-sensitive compounds.
- Excellent laboratory safety and experience of completing relevant documentation.

Group Projects:
- Regularly worked in small groups experiments. These covered a recording and reporting, as w student research.
- Third year group project involved using NMR helped to attain the highest mark in the study of mismatched DNA. Good team lecturers and industry professionals. the year (86%) for a presentation to a p

06 - 2013 — Passmore College, Bournemouth
- A Levels: Chemistry (A), Maths (A), Physics (B), Biology (B)
- GCSEs: 10 A* - C

Research Experience:
July-August 2016 — Research Intern – (Imperial College London)
- Synthesised previous literature in the field of enzyme behaviour in pasteurisation.
- Prepared compounds for catalysis experiments, categorised 25 organic molecules to library and presented research at departmental meetings.

Other Employment:
Dec 2014 – Present — John Lewis, Oxford Street
- Promoted from Customer Assistant to Team responsibility for training new starters in pr
- Demonstrate strong customer service skills retail environment at the flagship store.
- Develop an in-depth knowledge of various p
- Ensure excellent communication between a several teams.

Volunteering:
Feb 2014 – Present — RAG, Imperial College London, Volunteer
- Assist in organising fundraising activities of the Students' Union charitable department at Imperial College London.
- of £91,527.19 for good causes during the academic year
- ollection permits from local authorities.
- 50 volunteers.

— Befriend a Child, Bournemouth, Volunteer
- port to two boys aged 9 and 11 who came from very
- isted with homework, providing around 2-3 hours contact time each week.
- anged outings to football matches and trips to the beach etc.

Additional Skills:
- Proficient use of Mic
- Familiar with ChemD
- Clean driving licence

Interests:
- Imperial College Boat Club 1st eight. Organise five training session per week and take responsibility for the welfare and technical training of novice rowers.
- Active member of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Imperial College Chemistry Society (ChemSoc).

References available on request.

Targeting (Banking):

Education:

2013 - 2017   MSci Chemistry, Imperial College London

Modules have included:

- Modern Chemistry Fundamentals
- Fundamentals of Organic Chemistry (I & II)
- Fundamentals of Physical Chemistry (I & II)
- Intermediate Inorganic Chemistry (I & II)
- Atomic and Molecular Interactions
- Organic Reaction Mechanisms
- Change and Equilibrium
- Pharmacology A

Education

2013 - 2017   MSci Chemistry, Imperial College London
                         Current average: 67%

- Regularly worked in small groups to plan, carry out and conduct over 20 laboratory experiments. These covered a wide range of areas requiring precision, when recording and reporting, as well as strict time management and substantial independent research.
- Completed two data handling modules and have good practical experience in using specialist software to capture, analyse and report on numerical data.
- Attained the highest mark in the year (86%) for a project presentation made to panel of lecturers and industry professionals.

Peter Jones

Bedford House, Tennyson Road, Colindale, NW9 2XB

Peter.Jones@imperial.ac.uk +44 (0)123 456 7891 www.linkedIn.com/uk/12/345/678

A third year MSci Chemistry student seeking an entry level position within an investment bank. Possess strong technical attributes and proven project management abilities in both academic and extracurricular activities.

Education

2013 - 2017   MSci Chemistry, Imperial College London
                         Current average: 67%

????

2006 - 2013   Passmore College, Bournemouth

- A Levels: Chemistry (A), Maths (A), Physics (B), Biology (B)
- GCSEs: 10 A* - C

Employment

Dec 2013 – Present. John Lewis, Oxford Street, Customer Assistant

- Demonstrate strong customer service skills and attention to detail in a fast paced retail environment.
- Developed an in-depth knowledge of various products.
- Successfully train new staff in process and procedures.
- Ensure excellent communication between all team members while working across several teams.

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Computing CV

Charles Babbage
44 Crosby Row, London, SE1 8DP
charles.babbage@imperial.ac.uk
+44 (0)123 456 7891

Ensure your contact details are clear and accessible.

Education:
2013 – 2017   MEng Computing, Imperial College London
                     Current average: 67%
- Modules include: Databases, Web Security, Compilers, Networks, Logic and OS.
- Regularly work in small groups to plan, conduct and deliver projects.
- Winner of the Gloucester Research Prize (2015) for academic excellence.
- Attained the highest mark in the year (86%) for a presentation made to panel of lecturers and industry professionals.

Detail key achievements from your degree and any USPs

2006 – 2013   Northampton College, Bournemouth
- A Levels: Chemistry (A), Maths (A), Physics (B), Biology (B)
- GCSEs: 10 A* - C

Projects:
- WACC Compiler
  - Wrote a complete compiler in C++.
- Smart Hack '15
  - Wrote a Python code to enable a web app to update an online shopping list using voice recognition.
- Pintos OS
  - Developed a simple operating system from a baseline code using C.

Highlight project work both academic and personal projects.

Employment:
Summer 2016   WCN, Software Developer Intern
- Participated in a software development life cycle project during a 12 week placement within a pioneering recruitment technology firm.
- Worked on user-facing features using C/C++ and Qt.
- Presented research updates at regular departmental meetings.

Identify key responsibilities from any internships or job roles.

Dec 2014 - Present   Scholarly, Private Tutor
- Taught GCSE and A-Level maths to students aged 14-18.

Make reference to any additional experiences.

Volunteering:
Feb 2014 - Present   RAG, Imperial College London, Volunteer
- Responsible for securing street collection permits from local authorities and arranging transport for up to 50 volunteers.

Reaffirm coding skills and languages.

Programming Languages:
- Preferred: C/C++, Java, Python, Haskell
- Familiar with: Ruby, JavaScript, Bash, SQL, HTML

Interests:
- Active member of the Department of Computing Society attending industry talks and regular member of the football team.

Mention any extra curricular activities to show your personality.

References available on request.

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Further examples:

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CVs, Cover Letters and

Personal Statements

Careers Service
www.imperial.ac.uk/careers

Value for money:

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Cover Letters

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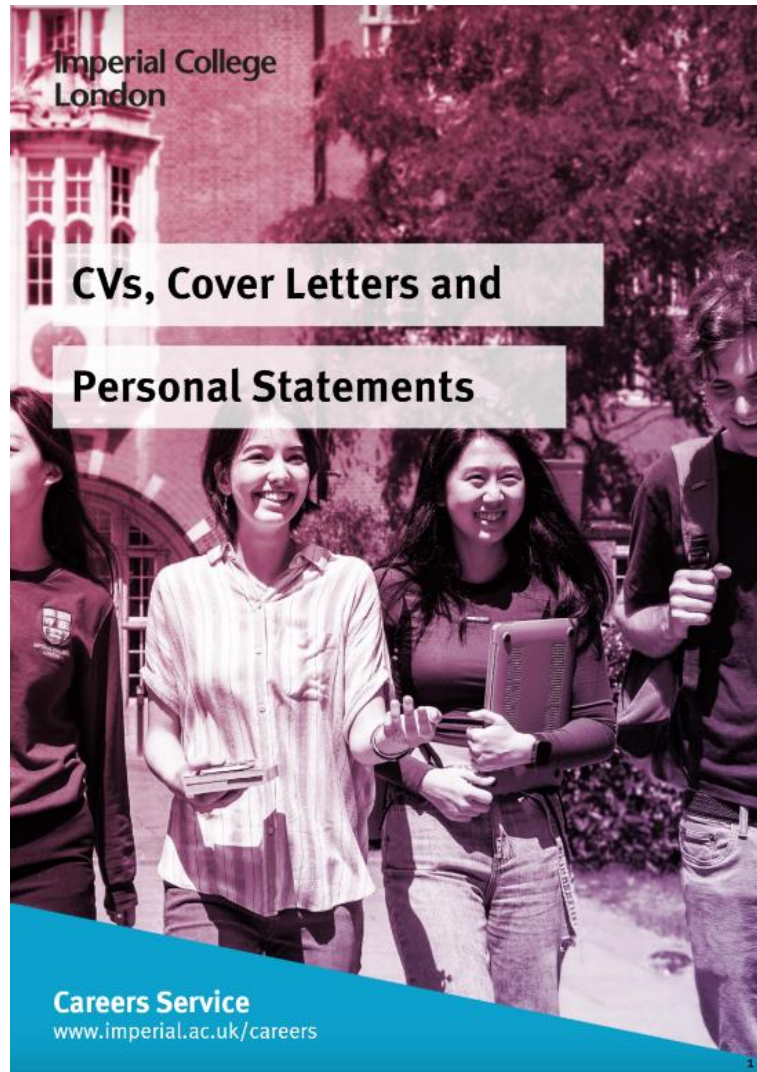
Evidence your skills:

Employers expect you to make a connection between what they require and what you can offer.

Evidence should come from:

- Education/Research Projects

- Work Experience

- Extracurricular Activities

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Cover Letters:

Dear Sir/Madam,
>>>
Yours Faithfully,

Dear Mr Jones,
>>>
Yours Sincerely,

Yours xxxxxxxx,
Alex Smith
MEng Computing (2020 – 2024)
Imperial College London

Their address

Your address

Date

Dear ...

Opening
- Who are you, what are you applying for.

Why them and this opportunity
- Give reasons for your interest
- Highlight any particular aspects/areas of interest to you.
- Demonstrate your research and understanding of the role.

Why you.
- Give reasons why you should be considered.
- Evidence relevant skills, knowledge and experience.
- Present a positive picture and reflect the skills they seek.
- Develop themes within your CV, don't just repeat it but expand on the most relevant information found within it.
- Draw experience from academic and extra curricular activities

Thanks and closing remarks.
- Summarise your suitability and look toward the interview.

Signature

Why the company/role?

You need to appear informed, interested and motivated in them. The following can help:

- Their webpage – "about us" etc

- Social Media – Twitter; Instagram; LinkedIn

- The News – articles; press releases

- Networks – talk to employees/recruiters

- MarketLine Advantage – company profiles

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Top Tips for Cover Letters:

1. 1 page for graduate level roles

2. Be relevant and concise

3. Talk about why this company/role

4. Provide evidence of experience/skills

5. Use examples and quantifiable data

6. Reflect your personality/values

7. Attention to detail is key
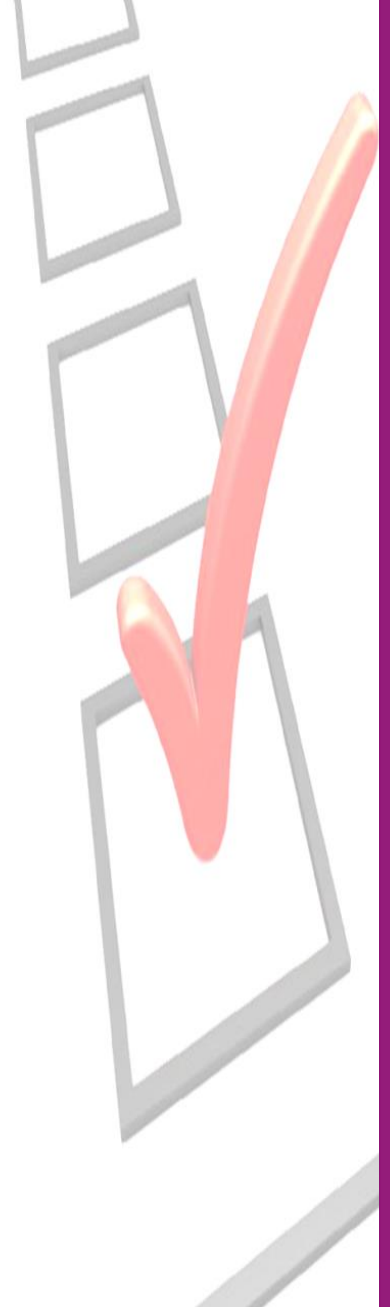
Writing Style:

- Write in a coherent and fluid style.

- Be professional but not grandiose, ostentatious or pretentious e.g. minimise the use of:

  - Moreover
  - Furthermore
  - Therefore
  - Nonetheless

  - Not withstanding
  - Indeed
  - Hitherto
  - Supplementary

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Next Steps & Further Support
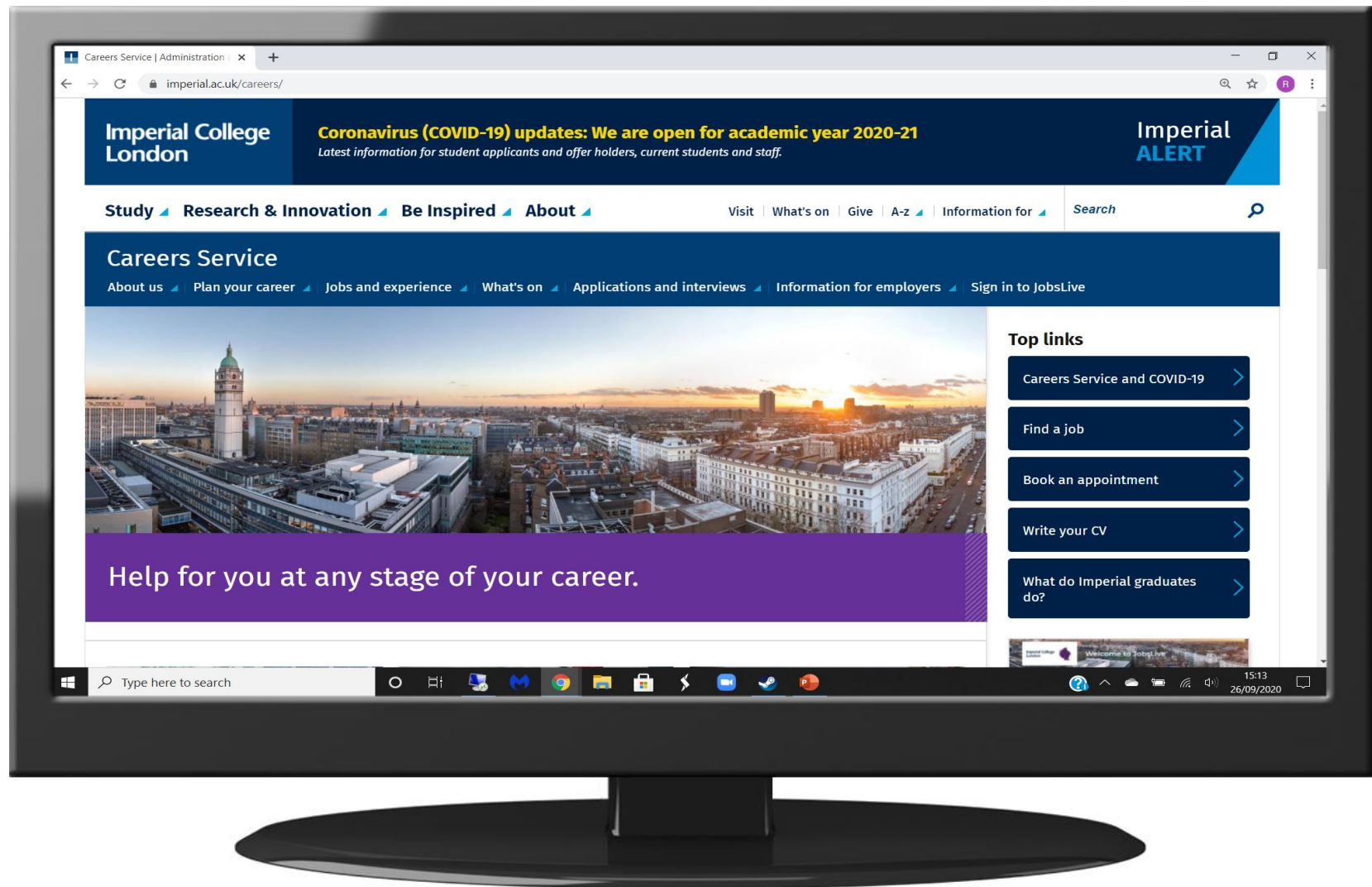
MyCVs:

Access via JobsLive for a quick CV health check.

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Seminars & Workshops

Essentials
- Discussion based seminars exploring core knowledge
- Typically 50 - 60 minutes

Labs
- Highly interactive practical workshops
- Typically 90 - 120 minutes

Discoveries
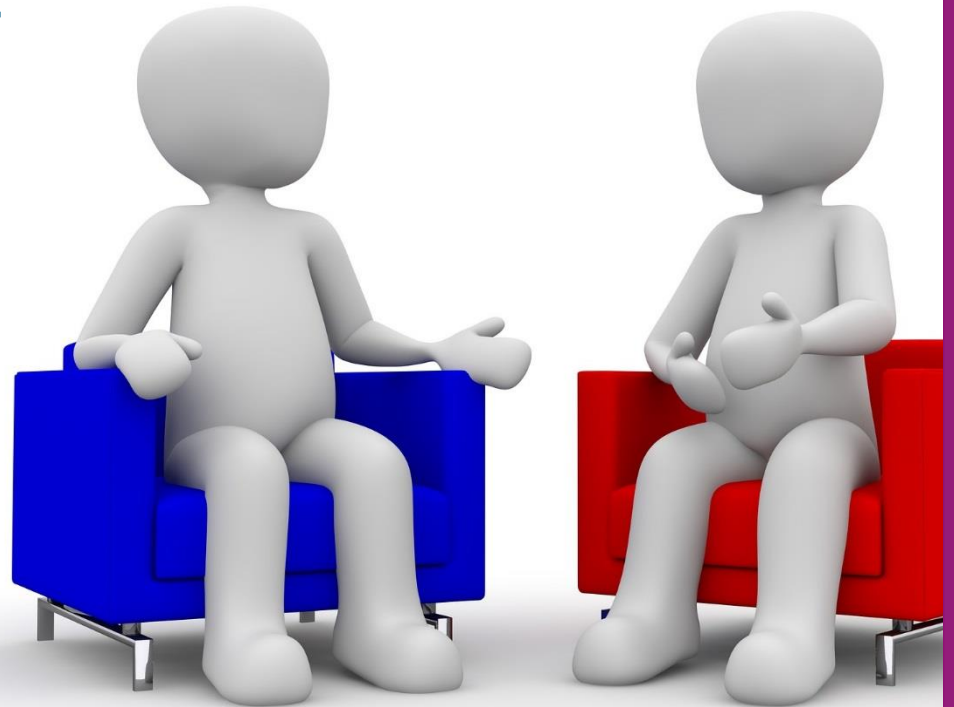- Sector specific placement and internship pre-recorded information and resource links.

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Q&A

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The Careers Service

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and for three years after graduation.

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careers@imperial.ac.uk
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