

Writing a Good CV

Here you will find a series of top tips, in order to help you write your CV and your covering letter. This is not the definitive guide, but merely acts as a prompt if you need it.

Covering letter

This is a key part of your application. Keep it succinct and compelling - no more than one page. Explain to us why you think you should be called for an interview, what excites you about consulting as a career in general, and McKinsey as an employer in particular. Avoid repeating verbatim what is included in your CV but do emphasise the highlights. Please use your covering letter to explain any gaps in your CV or unusual circumstances relating to your application. Include copies of your major examination certificates, if you have them, and let us know when you would be available to interview. You should also let us know your office preference and whether or not you will require a work permit.

It is advisable to tailor your CV to each position and employer. Check our 'What we're looking for' section and make sure you provide us with as much 'hard evidence' as possible regarding your personal achievements and strengths.

Presentation

Use white paper of good quality (it may be photocopied many times), neatly typed and clearly laid out. Use a reasonable sized font and allow some margin around the text for reviewer's notes. Don't be overly creative with the formatting - it will only distract from the real focus of the document, which is you.

Write in good, clear English and don't forget to check your grammar and spelling!

Include your name and contact details at the top, with daytime and evening phone numbers and an email address if you have one.

Lay out your prior jobs (if any) in reverse chronological order, with your most recent role at the top.

Dates are best tabulated on the left hand side. Please explain any gaps in your career or educational history.

The length of your CV will depend on you and your achievements - but don't pad it out! Three pages is usually too long. The trick is to be concise but not incomplete.

Remember, the person reading your CV may not be familiar with your specific credentials. Avoid using any jargon. Ask friends from different backgrounds to read it for you. If they're impressed without being confused, you're looking good.

There is no need to send in a photograph.

References

If you are still in full-time education, tutors' reference will be required at the interview stage. This can be sent in with your initial application, or sent separately anytime before the deadline, or sent to us once we have invited you to interview.

If you have already graduated a tutors' reference is not necessary.

Content

Education

We prefer to see details of tertiary education first. Include your degree subject, university, degree grades at each major milestone of your course (1st Class Honours, 2(i) e.g. first class results in first year, distinction in dissertation etc.) and any major prizes or awards. Specify key dates.

For your secondary education, it is important that you provide details of your results in the final two-year subjects (eg: 'A' level, baccalauréat grades).

If you have grades from abroad, include your original results and try to translate them into the UK equivalent, to give us a better idea of your achievements. It would also be helpful to include copies of your academic transcripts.

Work Experience

If you have work experience, emphasise what you have achieved in each major role over and above your key responsibilities. We are most interested in the impact you have had in your career: please show us evidence of it. Describe unique skills and experiences.

Other Activities

We are interested in any voluntary or charity work, or positions of responsibility in professional bodies - particularly where they demonstrate leadership, initiative-taking or extraordinary commitment.

Languages

Include any foreign languages for which you have business conversational ability or better.

Other Interests

These are relevant if you believe that they add insight into your distinctiveness as an individual. Do include leadership activities and significant participation in sports, games, societies or hobbies. For example, a high level of achievement in a sport does tell us something about your drive and aspiration! Equally other relevant achievements are important to note. Be candid, but keep it relevant, try not to include something 'for the sake of it'.

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