

**ENSEIRB
Language Department
2003-2004**

CVs and Cover Letters in English

Planning your CV

Curriculum vitae (literally 'the course of one's life') or CV is the term used in Europe. **Resume** is the usual title in the United States (pronounced as in French : 'résumé').

Its purpose is to highlight your value to a potential employer by selling your skills and experience. As first-time job hunters the emphasis is laid on your transferable skills and strengths, rather than on your career history. Later, different jobs will require different CVs – adapt your Cv to the job you are applying for and to the country of application.

A CV should be well laid out, succinct and easy to understand.

- Give yourself the time to prepare and revise your CV
- Always consider who is likely to read your CV

Know yourself and fix your objectives.

- Be positive about yourself and about what you can achieve, without creating unrealistic targets
- Think about the kind of the working environment that will suit you (small/large company ; strong company culture)
- Try to secure work that you enjoy to ensure job satisfaction
- Be clear about your strengths so that you are able to communicate them (see page xx)
- Talk to friends about what they identify as your strengths and weaknesses
- Understand & identify your transferable skills : managerial qualities ; professional qualities ; entrepreneurial qualities ; personal qualities

MANAGERIAL QUALITIES	PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LEADERSHIP Motivates others to reach team goals.• PLANNING AND ORGANIZING Organizes and schedules events, activities, and resources. Monitors timescales and plans.• QUALITY ORIENTATION Ensures quality standards are met.• PERSUASIVENESS Influences and convinces others leading to acceptance, agreement or behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE Understands technical or professional aspects of work, and updates knowledge.• PROBLEM-SOLVING AND ANALYSIS Analyzes issues and makes systematic and rational judgments based on information.• ORAL COMMUNICATION Speaks fluently to individuals and groups.• WRITTEN COMMUNICATION Writes in a clear, concise, relevant manner.

ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITIES	PERSONAL QUALITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COMMERCIAL AWARENESS Understands commercial principles. Views issues in terms of costs, profits, and added value.• CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION Creates new and imaginative approaches, and questions traditional assumptions.• ACTION ORIENTATION Makes decisions, takes initiative, and originates action.• STRATEGIC THINKING Demonstrates a broad-based view	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTERPERSONAL AWARENESS Interacts with others in a sensitive and effective way.• FLEXIBILITY Adapts to changing demands and conditions.• RESILIENCE Maintains effective behaviour in the face of setbacks or pressure.• PERSONAL MOTIVATION Shows enthusiasm for goals and career commitment.

Creating your CV

Your CV and letter are often the first contact with a prospective employer and may receive just 30 seconds of their time on first reading. Make sure that your CV contains the right information in the right order in a layout that is easy to read.

When applying for work outside France, remember that your reader is not French. Give him/her the information necessary to understand your qualifications and to contact you.

Different cultures have different conventions eg. in the United States your age should not be included whereas in the UK it is considered as relevant information. As for photographs, it is more usual to include them in Continental Europe but not in the US or in the UK.

Contact information

- Put your first name first and then your family name
- Remember to add France at the end of your address (!)
- For phone numbers, remember to add the country code and remove the first 0.
A Bordeaux phone number begins : +33 5 56

<p>Philippe Brun 14 place de la Victoire 33000 Bordeaux France</p> <p>Tel : +33 5 56 97 84 56 E-mail : brun@enseirb.fr</p>
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Your objective or aim

You are student engineers and you're probably looking for a 'placement' or 'training period' in Europe, called an 'internship' in the United States.

In what field? In electronics, computer science or telecommunications. Check the vocabulary used eg IT, multimedia

Or maybe you are looking for 'a summer job' or 'vacation work'.

Headings

Use clear headings to organize your skills and make them easy to read & understand

Education/Qualifications

- At age 21 your educational background is an important part of your achievements and should therefore be placed before your experience. In 10 years time this will be different - your work experience will be more important. Right now you probably have more education than qualifications.
- List your education history in reverse chronological order.
- Take care to offer equivalents depending on where you are sending your CV
- Do not translate your qualifications
- Do not leave just an abbreviation which is meaningless to the non-French reader.
- Use the new ENSEIRB name & get it right !
- A degree is delivered by a university. ENSEIRB delivers a Diploma of Engineering at a level equivalent to 5 years of higher education

- Maths sup. ; Maths spé : « A 2 year advanced Maths ('Math' in US) course in preparation for the selective entrance examination to French engineering schools »
- The 'DEUG' is a degree following a two year university course
- The 'DUT' is a degree following a two year course in a University Technical Institute

Computer Skills

- Do not confuse Computer languages & Languages such as Spanish under the same headings. They are different types of skills

Languages

- Fluent - Excellent working knowledge - Good working knowledge - Good command of spoken and written English - English spoken and written well - Working knowledge - Fairly good command of English - Read and written - Basic notions
- Include your TOEFL score and give the date e.g. 583 points, January 2002

Work Experience / Technical projects / Summer jobs

Include :

- work experience in your field of competence
- technical projects carried out in school
- summer jobs if they are interesting
- Be positive about what you achieved
- Remember employers look for motivation and enthusiasm
- Use an active verb to say what you did or are doing
- Do not use 'I'
- Define your success : Event - Quantify – Outcome

Eg

'Led team of software developers' could become

'Led team of 6 software developers on a FF 2m, 12-month project' or even better

'Led team of 6 software developers on a FF 2m, 12-month project. Achieved target time-scale. Project gave 30% productivity gains for program users'

Incorporating action words

USING INITIATIVE	SOLVING PROBLEMS	MANAGING SITUATIONS	ACHIEVING TARGETS
Bought	Advised	Appointed	Accomplished
Built	Analyzed	Appraised	Achieved
Created	Combined	Approved	Completed
Designed	Cut	Controlled	Delivered
Engineered	Examined	Developed	Demonstrated
Forecast	Identified	Directed	Exceeded
Generated	Investigated	Drove	Improved
Improvised	Reduced	Employed	Increased
Initiated	Reorganized	Guided	Obtained
Instigated	Resolved	Headed	Produced
Launched	Revised	Inspired	Promoted
Organized	Solved	Led	Secured
Pioneered	Streamlined	Managed	Selected
	Trimmed	Ran	

See also the 'Effective Action Words List' included

Interests

Employers will draw conclusions about the type of person you are from your interests. Highlight any personal achievements or successes. Rock climbing or walking will suggest an active person ; archaeology or reading will suggest that you have an enquiring mind ; painting or music suggests creativity. If you take part in charity work, the reader may infer that you are socially conscious, while youth work or working with voluntary organisations show your leadership potential. Sports can suggest either a competitive individual or a team player and also energy !

- Be yourself
- Remember you may be asked about anything you include on your CV

Do's and Don'ts

- Use one page
- Use good quality paper
- Create a CV that looks good
- Type on a computer and use a spelling checker
- Make sure there are no spelling mistakes
- Use a laser printer where possible
- Be positive ; do not undersell yourself
- Include your objective
- 'Age' rather than 'Date of birth'
- Organize under clear headings
- Use short clear sentences
- Include references only if asked to do so
- Do not use too many different types (eg *italic*, **bold**, underlined, Times, *Brush Script*, Arial, shaded etc) – keep it simple & clear
- Do not use 'I'
- Do not lie
- Do not attach a photograph
- Do not talk about salary

Cover letters

The letter accompanies your CV and introduces you to a potential employer. Like all business correspondence, it should be well written, to the point, clear and polite. It should be written in a way to present factual information, arouse interest and persuade the person reading it that you are the one to interview or hire.

The letter should not reproduce the same information given in the CV. Always write in plain straightforward English, state your strengths and the sort of job you would like to be considered for.

- Address your letter where possible to a specific person by name & title.
- Type letters and use the spelling checker on the computer.
- Respect the layout and letter convention .
- Check use of **dates** : **4 January 2001 for UK, January 4, 2001 for US**
- Organize using 3-4 paragraphs
 1. Say why you are writing.
 2. Say why you are interested in the company and what you can do for them.
 3. Close by taking the initiative of asking for a response – or an interview.

Letter convention

- If you know the name of the person, you should use it :

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Smith,

And you finish

Yours sincerely,/Sincerely,

- If you don't know the name of the person, you begin :

Dear Sir or Madam :

And you end with

Yours faithfully,

You will find information about letter writing in any good dictionary. The Robert-Collins is perhaps the most useful and easy to consult.

- **Letter layout**

<p>Employer's Name Title Organization Address</p> <p>Dear,</p> <p><u>Introductory paragraph</u> : State the purpose for which you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying. You may mention briefly the source of information concerning the opening.</p> <p><u>Body or Middle Paragraphs</u> : Explain why you are interested in working for this organization and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. Point out any relevant work experience or related education, but do not reiterate the contents of your CV. Emphasize skills or abilities you possess that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be confident in your manner. Remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.</p> <p><u>Closing paragraph</u> : Restate your interest by indicating your availability for an interview. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for an interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date. Above all, if you state you will telephone within a specified timeframe, do so ! Follow through is extremely important. Mention your sense of appreciation for the employer's consideration.</p> <p>Yours sincerely/faithfully Your signature Your name typed</p> <p>Enc. : CV / Resume</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Your address but not your name 3 rue de la Faculté 33600 Pessac France</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Your phone number</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date</p>
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Here is a letter written by a student at ENSEIRB looking for a placement in industry. Don't even think of copying it !

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to apply for an electronics engineering internship in (« company name »), which would start in April and finish in June of the year 200X.

In July of the year 200X, I will complete my third year in the Electronics Engineering School called ENSEIRB, so that this internship will be for me the last step before receiving my degree. During my education, I've carried out some projects that have shown me the use of theory in high technology product design. The internship at Tecmag (Houston, Texas) has taught me, not only ways of applying my knowledge, but also the quantity of obstacles deserving meticulous attention as well as the ability of working in a group, in order to lead a project to its finalization. Therefore, I feel ready to work in various fields of analog and digital electronics and particularly in telecommunications, which is my third year specialization.

My experience makes me open to and very challenged by working in the US, since my first internship in Houston has been very fruitful professionally as well as socially. Moreover, it agrees with my vision of current engineering, which requires world communication and working with others.

I think my skills could be useful to your firm and I'd welcome discussing my qualifications with you. I can be contacted by e-mail or by letter at the above-mentioned address.

Yours faithfully,

Enclosure: Resume

Sending CVs and letters by e-mail

- Use the e-mail itself as a cover letter. This remains the first thing a potential employer will see, so make sure that you take as much care writing this part of your document as you would if you were posting your job application.
- Send your CV as a part your e-mail –you don't know which word-processing packages can be opened by the recipient.
- There are different conventions concerning page layout. In the US Quarto is standard set-up , whereas in Europe A4 is standard.
- Create your own Web page to make your CV available – the ultimate in self-promotion !

Web sites for help writing CVs and letters

www.int-evry.fr/lfh/ressources/cvs/	Institut National des Télécommunications site – very useful for help writing CVs & letters for UK & US. Info on how to send a CV online. The site is worth taking the time to look through.
www.eresumes.com	How to apply for jobs online or how to choose your best electronic resumé.
www.truecareers.com	A useful website for tips on resumé writing, resumé samples, cover letter tips, sample cover letters for responding to ads, interview techniques.
www.careerbuilder.com	Tips & advice
www.washingtonpost.com www.washingtonjobs.com	All kinds of info on CVs, letters, and netiquette in the Career Advice section

Web sites for placements/internships

www.bgsu.edu	Bowling Green State University ideas for vacation work (USA)
www.cfce.fr	Le Centre Français du Commerce Extérieur
www.ciee.org	Council on International Educational Exchanges in Paris. It will cost you around 600 Euros (flight not included) to participate in their Summer Work USA program (Work and Travel USA). They offer a similar program in the UK, Canada and Australia Booklets are available in the Language department.
www.dree.org/me/	La Direction des relations économiques extérieures
www.europages.com	European business directory. Select a field of work, select a country & you have the companies & their links. It couldn't be simpler
www.expatries.org	La Maison des français à l'étranger. Go to Livret MFE and Sites de l'expatriation to have info on French companies implanted outside France. Also access to a high-tech job site.& to work in the US
www.hotrecruit.co.uk	Seasonal jobs in UK

www.jobpilot.com	Jobs & internships worldwide. Company profiles.
www.JustJobs4Students.co.uk	They send out regular info if you register. Free service
www.letudiant-emploi.fr	This site also has offers in the UK and Germany
www.lefigaro.fr/stages	Placement & summer job offers in France & abroad
www.livein-jobs.co.uk	Pub jobs etc. in the UK
www.monster.co.uk	Useful to search for jobs. Help with CVs
www.newscientist.com www.newscientistjobs.com	A wide range of new and emerging issues in Science and Technology. The best Science and Technology jobs in the UK. Country spotlights on Scotland, Ireland, Europe, The Netherlands, Singapore, Australia, Germany, Denmark & Sweden.
www.prospects.ac.uk/cms	The essential guide to graduate jobs, careers and postgraduate study in the UK and Ireland. Explore jobs and work experience. Placements & summer jobs too : go to the 'Looking for work experience' page.
www.gsj.petersons.com	Summer jobs in the USA
www.summerjobs4students.co.uk	Sends out regular info on jobs in GB if you register. Free service
www.yell.com	Les pages jaunes en GB (& also Japan !)
www.yellowbook.com/	Les pages jaunes aux USA
www.uccife.org/	Union des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie Françaises à l'Etranger. Annuaire etc.

Other resources :

ENSEIRB Intranet pages - Stages à l'étranger

Placements details of ENSEIRB students. Organisations that help you find a placement. How to find financial support.

ENSEIRB web site – course details

www.enseirb.fr in the English section will give you information about the school as well as course details.

enseirb.stages newsgroup

For all placements check the ENSEIRB - stages newsgroup regularly. On the Netscape menu, choose Communicator, then enter Forums. You have to subscribe to the newsgroup. Very often you cannot see that the offer is an international one – I often open them & resend the international offers with titles such as New York, London etc

enseirb.international newsgroup

A recently opened forum with exchanges concerning Erasmus programmes, placements, a year out etc.

Language Department Web Page in the Multimedia Room

Log in - Démarrer – Programmes – Web Page

Links to international press, TV and radio. language learning sites, resources in the department etc.

Company websites

Most companies have their website, so find out information about the company before you write. Take a look in the magazines in the ENSEIRB librairies to help you see what field and companies interest you. Many companies have branches around the world.

In the **Language Department Resource Room** we have a collection of books on CV and letter writing, placements, summer jobs etc. You may borrow these books but please don't keep them too long.

March 2003