

## Cover letters, CV & LinkedIn profiles

Your Cover letter, CV and LinkedIn profile all contribute to your **personal brand**. They're often the **first impression** a potential employer gets of you, so let's make sure they actually work for you.

### Cover letters



The great debate is whether you need to provide a cover letter or not! Personally, we like to receive a well written cover letter, that demonstrates why you are applying, so make sure yours is an asset for you.

#### What to include:

- ▶ Who you're writing to (use a name if possible)
- ▶ The role you're applying for
- ▶ Why you're a good fit (what have you got that they want)
- ▶ What you can offer

#### Addressing your cover letter

If you know the name of the Hiring Manager or Recruiter, address your cover letter to them:

"Hi [Name]"

If you don't, just go with: "Good morning"

#### Avoid:

- ▶ "To whom it may concern"
- ▶ "Dear Sir/Madam"

These are too generic and somewhat old fashioned to make any impact.

#### Content of your cover letter

A well worked cover letter will show how you match to what is required. For example:

- ▶ If they want teamwork → mention group projects you've done
- ▶ If they want reliability or time management → mention how you've balanced work/study commitments

#### Top tip:

Don't point out what you *don't* have. Think about your transferrable skills and how they might be relevant and describe those in your cover letter.



## Your CV



Early in your career, you don't have a lot of work experience to put in your CV. But you do have your:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Projects
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Part-time jobs
- ▶ Life skills

It's all about **how you present it**.

### What goes in your CV?

Your CV is simply your foot in the door with a potential employer. You need to be able to back it up with evidence when you get to interview. So keep it simple – one to two pages are all you need.

#### Must-have sections:

- ▶ Contact Details
- ▶ Personal Statement
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Technical Skills
- ▶ Transferable Skills
- ▶ Work Experience (if any)

### Page 1: Contact details

Make it easy for employers to contact you. Include your:

Name | Phone number | email address | location

#### For security reasons, don't include your:

- ▶ Full address
- ▶ Date of birth
- ▶ Passport number or bank account details

### Personal statement (your elevator pitch)

This is a short paragraph at the top of your CV that gives insight into who you are and what you are looking for.

- ▶ Think: "Why should someone hire me?"

#### Example:

*I'm a recent graduate with a strong interest in marketing and communications. During my studies, I developed skills in teamwork, time management, and problem-solving through group projects and part-time work. I'm reliable, motivated, and keen to start my career in a role where I can learn and contribute.*

#### Top Tip:

Keep it Short (3–5 lines), relevant and real.



### Education & Qualifications

List your most recent study first.

#### Example:

- ▶ Bachelor of Business – Major in Marketing, Auckland University
- ▶ New Zealand Certificate in Gas fitting & Drain laying - BCITO
- ▶ ITIL Foundations Certificate, AUT Auckland

If your qualification is incomplete, be honest and list only your completed papers.

### Technical skills (Sometimes called hard skills)

These are things you *know how to use*:

- ▶ Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- ▶ Design tools like Canva
- ▶ Industry tools (if relevant)

### Transferable skills (Sometimes called soft skills)

These matter a lot, especially if you don't have much work experience.

Examples might include:

- ▶ Teamwork (participation in group projects, sports teams)
- ▶ Leadership (captain, group leader)
- ▶ Time management (study + work balance)
- ▶ Reliability (showing up, meeting deadlines)

- ▶ Communication or interpersonal skills (being able to interact with others)
- ▶ Internship experience

Always think: “Where have I shown this?”.  
Can I give examples of these skills if asked?

## Page 2: Work experience (If you have it)

Even casual jobs count, when it comes to your work experience. Include:

- ▶ Job title
- ▶ Company
- ▶ Dates you were employed
- ▶ Bullet points of what you did and what you achieved

Keep it simple, there is no need to overcomplicate.

### Top tips:

#### DO:

- ▶ Keep it clean and easy to read – use lots of white space
- ▶ Tailor your cv using keywords from the job ad to show relevant skills & to satisfy any AI screening tools used
- ▶ Check spelling, grammar & formatting

#### DON'T:

- ▶ Add a photo (save it for LinkedIn)
- ▶ Use crazy graphics or colours (these don't get past the firewalls as easily)
- ▶ Include personal/sensitive info (other than your phone number and email details)
- ▶ Make it overly complicated



## Using AI to generate your CV



Tools like **ChatGPT** can help – but we don't recommend relying on them entirely.

### Why?

Everyone uses the same tools, which results in very similar content, which means you don't stand out.

### Best approach:

1. Write the content of you CV yourself first
2. Use AI to improve and tailor your content

### Top tip:

Make sure your CV, reflects who you are and that you can back up anything you write with evidence in an interview.



### CV and cover letters checklist:

Before applying for a role, check that you have:

- ✓ Kept it simple
- ✓ Been honest
- ✓ Shown your strengths
- ✓ Made it easy to read
- ✓ Stayed authentic

Even if you're just starting out, having a **LinkedIn** profile is a big advantage and helps to improve your visibility to potential employers. Here's some tips on how to construct a simple LinkedIn profile.

### Profile Photo

- ▶ Upload a clear headshot that says 'I'm professional and friendly'
- ▶ Avoid selfies or party pics.

### Banner Image

This is the background at the top of your profile. Populating this tells the LinkedIn algorithm that you are an active user. This is important for being found in LinkedIn searches.

Ideas for your banner:

- ▶ Clean landscape
- ▶ Something related to your career
- ▶ Having a banner image looks more active and polished.

### Your Title

This is the most searched field in LinkedIn.

Your title doesn't need to be literal, for example: Student

This field can be used to describe your motivation and interests, so try something like this:

"Aspiring Marketing Graduate | Interested in Digital Media & Branding | Seeking Opportunities".

#### Top tip:

In your Title, use keywords employers might search for.



### About Section

The About Section is your LinkedIn search engine boost.

You can:

- ▶ Tell your story
- ▶ Highlight your skills
- ▶ Show your goals

#### Top tip:

Include keywords that related to your career goals and what you are searching for. (e.g. "Accounting", "Design", "Engineering").



### Education Section

- ▶ List your school/university
- ▶ Add your qualifications

Don't include dates on your qualifications (this helps to avoid bias & protects you a bit from identify theft).

### Make your profile visible

You have some options in LinkedIn, to make your profile visible to recruiters and employers, so turn this function on if you would like to be found by these groups.

### Want to know more about how to make LinkedIn work for you?

LinkedIn has substantial learning resources online, so we recommend that you get your basic profile set up and then explore LinkedIn learning.