



CV – Writing Tips

Your CV represents YOU in words. Employers use them as a screening tool – but have lots of them to look at and therefore each CV may not get long on their desk/screen. You are writing it for the potential employer in the context of a specific job/programme, so make sure it is tailored to their requirements. This note contains CV writing tips on from Shell’s perspective. Other employers will have a different view, which you should research before making an application.

Your CV needs to be accurate, up to date, tailored, action-oriented (rather than passive), readable, logical, well laid out and should avoid generalities such as “I am good team player”. It should describe the achievements and positive qualities you want an employer to know about. Avoid meaningless phrases such as ‘responsible for’ or ‘involved with’. If you choose to have a ‘skills’ section, you must explain where you have demonstrated them. (If you have CV reviewed by a Shell person, they will likely use the Evidence word at least a dozen times.)

It should not include:

- Spelling or grammatical mistakes
- Lies (one strike and you’re out)
- The blindingly obvious (*e.g. thermodynamics and mathematics as components of a Chem. Eng. degree*)
- Inappropriate detail (*e.g. detailed GCSE results – “6 As and 3 Bs” is fine*)
- Long sentences or paragraphs when bullet points can do the job
- More than two pages, unless you have a host of publications to your name
- Everything you’ve ever done, ever. A CV is not an autobiography.

What Shell is looking for

Shell is looking for the following in its graduate hires:

- CAPACITY – your analytical ability to place problems in a wide, but relevant perspective
- ACHIEVEMENT – your ability to get things done
- RELATIONSHIPS – your ability to work efficiently with others in a team

Below is bit more on each of these subjects – you don’t have to “tick all of these boxes” but they are all potential ways to demonstrate the characteristics we are looking for.

Capacity

- **Analysing and strategic thinking:** Are you able to provide evidence of identifying, gathering and analysing multiple sources of information? Do you have experience of reaching informed conclusions through broad thinking?
- **Developing solutions:** Have you produced solutions to a problem based on information from a variety of sources? Are you familiar with working with incomplete or conflicting data and taking well calculated risks?
- **Creativity & innovation:** Have you identified new ways of doing things based on an analysis of current conditions/data/feedback? Did you manage to implement these changes, how did they impact productivity/efficiency/cost?

Achievement

- **Deliver results:** Can you demonstrate a personal motivation to consistently achieve results by setting targets, monitoring progress and dealing with setbacks? Are you skilled in working by yourself as well as in a team environment – can you provide evidence of this?
- **Learn and Adapt:** You should be practiced in identifying opportunities to learn and develop and demonstrating an awareness of personal strengths and development areas. Do you take on new and unfamiliar tasks?
- **Benefit from work experience/internships/voluntary work:** Showing some previous interest or experience in the role you are applying for is useful.
- **Achieve awards/prizes/scholarships:** Being able to provide evidence of excelling in any field is important to us. This offers you an opportunity to highlight achievements in any area of your life. What did you achieve? Who were your peer group? What assessment criteria were used?



- **Strong and consistent academic performance:** Qualifications are not the key determining factor in whether you will be successful in your application, but you will need to exhibit a strong and consistent academic performance.

Relationships

- **Building relationships:** Can you give examples of communicating honestly and interacting respectfully with a wide range of people? Have you been in situations where you have had to influence people through tailoring communication style appropriately?
- **Achieving leadership roles:** We would like to see what positions of responsibility you have had in the last five years and the specific dynamics of the role – how many were in the team; your role; responsibilities; actions taken and results.
- **Exhibiting teamwork and valuing difference:** Treating others with respect and appreciating the value of involving people with different viewpoints and styles is essential within Shell. Exposure to different cultures and environments is also important – can you demonstrate experience in this area?
- **Examples don't have to come from academia or work:** and it may well be that the most interesting ones are indeed from your outside interests

Section-by-section

Your CV must have the basics of full names, postal and email address and telephone number.

Summary/Objective

This section is optional and is more appropriate for “experienced hires” who already have a career to describe. It can be a very short (maximum five lines) description of you and the kind of role you are seeking. If you include such a section think about how it can help the person reviewing your CV.

Education

You should include your education details from secondary education in reverse chronological order, so your most recent/current first. Each of these should include dates and qualifications obtained/expected. Think carefully about what other relevant information to include – what are the pertinent projects/dissertations/electives/prizes/average grades that help the person reviewing your CV get a better idea of you – without telling what they already know about (for instance) a Mech. Eng. degree?

Career History/Professional Experience

All experiences – paid, voluntary or shadowing – are an opportunity to gain and improve yourself, so state them in reverse chronological order with dates/durations so it's clear how long you were there. You may need to briefly explain what the organisation does if it's not obvious or well known, and you should concisely describe your role, responsibilities and achievements. CV screeners will not assume that job X confers competence Y. It is your job to spell it out for them.

Positions of responsibility/achievements/interests

This can be one or several sections and allows you to demonstrate that you are motivated to pursue other activities outside your studies or work. The reader doesn't want to know everything single thing about you, but activities that have allowed you to develop your involvements and skills can show that you are a rounded person. Be sure to make it clear what your contributions were, the skills you developed and the outcomes achieved. Again, we will be looking for capacity, achievement and relationships. Quantify if you can: how many people involved? How big was the budget? Did your sports team win? When? Etc.

Finally.....

Overall, successful graduate hires into Shell tend to have the following characteristics – a consistently strong academic record, relevant academic, relevant work experience/internships and a variety of extracurricular roles. Your CV is your chance to demonstrate your key attributes, recognise your own achievements and describe the key challenges you have overcome.

Good luck!