

ENGLISH INSTITUTE OF SPORT

ATHLETE CV WRITING GUIDE



The CV is possibly the most important tool of the job search process. Your CV is your main marketing document and its purpose is to open doors to an interview by making a strong and positive statement demonstrating your education, qualifications, skills and achievements. It is, therefore, vital that you are aware of your own skills and marketability.

There are no hard and fast rules about writing CVs – they simply need to reflect your strengths. However, there are certain facts about you that are expected to be there (or not be there) and certain ways to write a CV that will present you clearly and favourably and in the manner that most businesses and organisations expect.

Some key guidelines are outlined below, followed by a suggested CV template that you may want to use.



THE PURPOSE OF A CV

- 1. To present a clear, concise and positive account of who you are and what you have to offer.
- 2. To get you to interview the purpose of a CV is not to get you a job but to get you an interview !
- 3. To present a professional document which serves as a reference and continues to sell you after you have attended interview.

WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US EMPLOYERS WANT

- 1. 92% of employers want to receive a reverse chronological CV as opposed to a Functional CV (highlights transferable skills) or a Hybrid CV (mix of transferable skills and experience).
- 2. The average CV reading time is 20 seconds with 93% of employers only scan-reading CVs. Flawless presentation is, therefore, essential. Rejection is usually due to poor presentation, typos, grammatical errors and irrelevance.
- 3. 70% of employers want to see a Personal Profile.
- 96% of employers want to see a 2-page CV. 4.
- 5. Quirkiness, photos, coloured paper and the use of humour tend to lead to a negative response, even when applying to more creative sectors (a portfolio of work would be used to display talent).



THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCE

- 1. 66% of employers rank the two most important hiring criteria as interview performance and relevant work experience. Gaining work experience, shadowing or an internship in the area you want to pursue as a career is, therefore, absolutely essential. Your transferable skills as an athlete will be attractive to a potential employer but as an added benefit on top of specific experience and/or relevant qualifications. Trying to market yourself using transferable skills alone will be very challenging.
- 2. With demanding training and competition schedules, you will need to plan the timing of this experience carefully. It might be a 2-week placement during a break period or 1 day a week or month over an extended period of time.
- 3. Obtaining work experience can also take some months (average time to find a job is 6 months) and a considerable amount of patience and perseverance so it is well worth planning in advance.
- 4. The good news is that a lot of employers really want to help GB athletes who are keen to gain experience and Linked In is a great way to research and explore possibilities.
- 5. Even better news is that the combination of specific, relevant work experience and your transferable skills and life experiences from your elite athlete career will make you a very strong candidate and, once hired, could put you on a steep career trajectory.

CV STYLE AND CONTENT

- 1. Your CV should take up 2 full pages if possible (no more).
- 2. Use your name, email address and mobile phone contact details as a header. Also include your Linked In page link if you have a profile (if not, seriously consider creating one). Do not include your actual address (due to identity theft risk) but simply note your location e.g. "London".
- 3. Stress your own achievements and skills. Which achievements are you most proud of? Quantify these where possible, including examples and figures and the specific impact that you have made.
- 4. The most relevant and most recent information needs to be read first. The challenge is to get your key messages across quickly and strongly at the very beginning of your CV. The majority of employers like to see a personal profile followed by recent professional experience listed in chronological order with your most recent role first.
- 5. Your profile should be a 3 or 4 line paragraph summarising who you are, your education or profession (may be aspirational) and the skills and qualities that you have to offer. This is often the hardest part of the CV to write so be prepared to spend some
 - time crafting it and consider writing the main content of your CV first.

CV STYLE AND CONTENT (CONT.)

6. Consider 'Performance Athlete' as a section within your Professional Experience section. Quite often the many transferable skills, gualities and values that athletes offer come from their experience of elite level sport - see some examples below:

Leadership	Motivation and enthusiasm	Negotiating
Communication skills	Success-oriented	Adaptability
Decision-making	Competitive	Team skills
Problem-solving	Ability to perform under pressure	Positive energy and 'can do' attitude
Planning and organisation	Determination and passion	Coachability
Ability to prioritise	Resilience	Initiative

- 7. Each bullet point should be constructed to follow the PAR structure (Problem or challenge faced/Action taken and Result achieved), addressing a key transferable skill, quality or value that you have demonstrated through your training, achievements or performances and should be tied to a real example. These bullet points often need some creative thought and can take some time to write. To help get you started, some examples written for a hockey athlete and a rower follow:
- Natural leadership skills were displayed and developed whilst captaining England in (add dates and tournament/ competition), leading from the front, guiding the team on and off the field, and communicating effectively to facilitate constructive interaction between the players and the coaching staff.
- Demonstrated commitment and determination to achieve personal goals and ambitions by playing hockey for England through all age groups, under 16s, under 18s, under 21s and now senior level with x number of appearances for England and Great Britain.
- Dedicated teamwork towards training and preparation in order to achieve success and win medals (add examples).
- The ability to perform under pressure tested to the full at(competition example)
- Performing maximally during training and competition and constantly looking to push self to develop new ways to further own skills and abilities.
- Through professional approach and application, have represented hockey in a positive and proactive way both on and off the field (include any appearance examples).
- Consistently focussed to be results-driven and achieve four year objectives through strategic, logical and achievable short-. term goals; as demonstrated by having completed over 3,000 training sessions for one day, one race; the Olympic Final.
- Ability to strategically analyse performance and identify areas for development in order to achieve results as demonstrated by reviewing fourth place performance in 2010 world championships, identifying areas for improvement and acting on those areas through a strategic work plan resulting in an unbeaten 2011 season.
- Demonstrated leadership in controlling the boat during training and racing at the World Championships and Olympic Games, spearheading tactics and technical improvements. More recently showing the ability to develop and encourage an individual athlete as a peer as a new team member transferring experience and knowledge in a motivational and enthusiastic way.

CV STYLE AND CONTENT (CONT.)

A number of athletes will also have some short or long term coaching experience. Coaching roles can also be used to highlight a number of skills and levels of responsibility. Again, to get you started, some coaching PAR examples could be:

- Responsible for leading and planning sessions, demonstrating and teaching new skills and developing the potential of individuals.
- Strong leadership, organisation and interpersonal skills were crucial when planning the sessions as was an ability to motivate players so that the sessions were both informative and enjoyable.
- Created and developed appropriate tasks to ensure any individual skill acquisition issues were identified, addressed and successfully resolved.
- Rewarding opportunity to act as a positive role model to young people through coaching and personal interaction

Through their Athlete Volunteer Appearances, many athletes will also have valuable public speaking experience and some examples bullet points would be:

- Delivered speeches to a wide range of audiences from schools, businesses, sports clubs and charities. Recent varied examples would include speaking to an autistic school, motivating 100 talented youngsters for the Youth Sport Trust, after dinner speaking for BestInvest at their 120 strong client dinner, speaking to 450 women at a charity lunch and an hour long presentation to industry experts at the HLST conference.
- Demonstrated various range of styles, from formal presentations accompanied by multimedia presentations, to interactive physical challenges.
- Showed ability to motivate and inspire a wide range of audiences using a variety of techniques, showing the human side of a story, appropriately pitching the contents for the audience.
- 8. Tense CV convention is to write in the third person past tense (even for your current role), so try and avoid the use of "I" and "my" and write as if you are writing about yourself as someone else. This will seem a little awkward at first but you will soon adjust.
- 9. Keep the presentation simple. Use a classic font (Cambria, Arial or Times New Roman are space efficient, clean fonts), keep the font size to 11 or 12 and print your CV on good quality paper if you are sharing a hard copy. If you are sending an electronic copy, save and share it as a PDF document this will ensure that the formatting and content is protected.
- 10. Justifying the text where possible can improve your CV's appearance and if you're having trouble keeping to two pages try widening. your margins (left, right, top and gutter) or using a narrow or more space-efficient font e.g. Cambria.
- 11. Remember the 'lazy S' tendency of the reader which supports left justification so make sure that your job roles and companies/ organisations are on the left side of the page with dates tabbed to the right.
- 12. The use of simple design additions can help but don't go overboard. Evidence tells us that including a photograph tends to solicit a negative response. It is vital that you keep the reader in mind. If you can, tailor the content to particular jobs/industries, especially regarding experience then your CV is likely to make even more of an impact.
- 13. Stuck for words? The table of Action Verbs below contains lots of examples that may help to get you started.

ACTION VERBS

Accelerated	Established	Persuaded	Stressed
Accomplished	Evaluated	Planned	Stretched
Achieved	Expanded	Presented	Structured
Administered	Financed	Processed	Succeeded
Analysed	Forecast	Produced	Summarised
Approved	Formulated	Programmed	Supervised
Budgeted	Founded	Promoted	Surveyed
Built	Generated	Proposed	Systematised
Completed	Headed	Provided	Terminated
Conceived	Implemented	Purchased	Traced
Conducted	Improved	Recommended	Tracked
Consolidated	Improvised	Recruited	Traded
Controlled	Increased	Redesigned	Trained
Converted	Influenced	Reduced	Transferred
Convinced	Innovated	Reorganised	Transformed
Coordinated	Installed	Researched	Translated
Created	Instituted	Revised	Trimmed
Cut	Introduced	Scheduled	Tripled
Delegated	Invented	Serviced	Uncovered
Delivered	Launched	Set up	Unified
Demonstrated	Led	Simplified	Unravelled
Designed	Maintained	Sold	Utilised
Developed	Managed	Solved	Vacated
Devised	Motivated	Sparked	Verified
Directed	Negotiated	Spearheaded	Widened
Doubled	Operated	Staffed	Withdrew
Earned	Organised	Started	Won
Edited	Originated	Streamlined	Worked
Eliminated	Performed	Strengthened	Wrote

CV EXAMPLES

Suggested CV templates follow, both one page CV example and a two page CV example.

These templates have been designed for an elite hockey athlete but the basic structure and design could easily be used for athletes from any sport.

Remember, your CV is your marketing document and should be something you feel confident and happy with.

If you want to add your own design or content changes by all means do so. This is very much an example to get you started.

A number of good athlete CV examples are also available from your Performance Lifestyle Adviser so just ask to see them.

FULL NAME Mobile: Email: Location: Linked In:

PERSONAL PROFILE

This should be a short statement summarising your key strengths, qualities and experience. Your summary needs to resemble the person they are looking for, and is most important, as it is the first paragraph to be read. This is also the hardest part to write, so you may prefer to leave it until the end. You should make reference to your education level (e.g. graduate) and your elite sporting status in this paragraph as this will make your CV stand out and grab the reader's attention straight away.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Full-Time Performance Athlete

England and Great Britain Hockey Association

- Create 4-6 PAR (Problem or challenge, Action and Result or achievement) bullets
- Each one addressing a key transferable skill, quality or value that you have demonstrated through your hockey training, achievements and performances.
- These, along with your personal profile are the key headline-grabbing pieces of your CV so it is vitally important that they are as strong as possible.
- skills to consider.
- If you have captained your country be sure to include leadership skills as one bullet.
- Remember, each bullet should be tied directly to a concrete example demonstrating what you have accomplished. Including key medals or tournament placings as examples is well worth doing.
- combined a very professional approach to your sport with your education or work career to date.
- commitment and application.
- You will have delivered some Athlete Volunteer Appearances so consider including these as examples of how you are 'giving back' and representing your sport in an ambassadorial manner/as a role model.

Most Recent Job Title/Work Experience/Shadowing/Internship **Employer**, Town/City

- Aim to add 2-4 PAR bullets outlining your main work achievements, skills and contributions to the company. A good PAR bullet answers the question: "So what?"
- To present as a serious candidate, this experience should be in the area that you are looking to pursue as a career. Keep in mind the key skills the employer is looking for and highlight your relevant experience.

2nd Recent Job Title

- **Employer**, Town/City
- adaptability and resourcefulness.
- You should account for all of your working life leaving no unexplained gaps. Your Performance Athlete section is also likely to overlap with a number of other jobs, demonstrating your commitment and multi-tasking abilities to deal with dual aspirations.

Month Year - Present

• Take a look at the CV Style and Content section on pages 2-5 for examples and a list of transferable

For many of you, your time as a Performance Athlete is significant and reflects how you have

For those of you new to the squad, you can use your age group progression to demonstrate your

Date-Date

Date-Date

• Aim to add 2-4 PAR bullets as above. You can use previous positions to demonstrate your versatility,

2nd Recent Job Title

Employer, Town/City

• These could also be part-time or short term coaching positions (see p.4) demonstrating strong leadership, people development, planning and organisation skills.

Date-Date

If you have taken on positions to earn supplementary income, include them as this demonstrates your resourcefulness and willingness to work hard.

EDUCATION

Date-Date	University Degree studied and grade obtained
Main Modules:	Include if the modules are of particular relevance to the position you are applying for or if you have limited professional experience and want to 'flesh out' your CV a little.
Date-Date	Secondary School, Town/City
A Levels:	Subject (grade) Subject (grade) Subject (grade)
GCSEs:	X grades between A* and C including English, Maths (if attained)

ACHIEVEMENTS, OTHER QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- Here are some examples of the sorts of items to include:
- Trade or professional qualifications that are relevant and not included above.
- Possesses an excellent understanding of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Level 1 or 2 Hockey Coaching Qualification.
- X medallist or placing at any major Olympic or Commonwealth Games (that are not in your Performance Athlete section).
- Position at any other major international tournaments. Include the main highlights and if this section becomes too long consider separating the content into two sections 'Other Qualifications and Skills' and 'Interests and Achievements'.
- Any Personality/Player of the Year Awards or any significant accomplishment with your club.
- Any language skills.
- Any public or motivational speaking experience, including the range of audience type and size.
- Any corporate training courses e.g. team-building, customer service and management development are considered valuable.
- Full clean driving license (definitely include if position involves travel).
- Make sure all points are date appropriate, it has to be something relevant and 'outstanding' if achieved 5+ years ago.

OTHER INTERESTS

An example might be.... "Enjoys participating in and watching a wide range of sports, particularly..... Other relaxation interests include.... travel, reading, listening to music and watching films." Provide some detail as to the type of books / films that interest you, and why, as it's that type of information that builds an authentic picture of who you are. The inclusion of non-sporting interests helps to demonstrate that you have a rounded personality.

REFERENCES

Available on request

(no need to list them here, although be sure to ask your references for their permission and let them know that you are attending an interview and what the position is. Job offers are sometimes lost when references are not contactable or are unprepared).

FULL NAME

Location: Mobile: xxxxxxxxxx Email: xxxxxxx@hotmail.com Web: www.XXXXXXXGB.com

PERSONAL PROFILE

Olympic and World Championship medallist with more than 13 years experience in elite international sport. Outstanding self-discipline, leadership and a strong desire to improve through learning have led to a successful move to business coaching and consultation to share the lessons and learning of high performance sport needed to win in high achieving industry. An enthusiastic and motivated individual with a record of influencing and challenging other individuals to achieve successful teams. Extensive experience of working for and in teams, with strong-minded characters has developed good negotiation skills and effective communication.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Full-Time Performance Athlete Great Britain Rowing Team

- Commitment to excellence, the most successful sculler for the Great Britain Rowing Team in modern history having won the national trials a record nine times.
- Goal-orientated individual with the ability to think clearly and deliver under pressure performing to the highest international level winning the first Olympic medal in the men's single scull in eighty four years for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympic Games.
- Demonstrated strong leadership as a pivotal athlete in influencing a resurgence in British men's sculling that during his career has so far produced two Olympic medals and seven World Championship medals by setting new standards and encouraging others to achieve and expect more
- Highly resilient in nature having dealt with several career threatening injuries coming back each time in a strong and competitive stance by using the team of medical and sport professionals in an effective way.
- Prioritised and organised studying for an honours degree, meeting important deadlines whilst training and competing fulltime.

Business Coaching Facilitator Personal Best International, London

- Developed and delivered tailored bespoke presentations in conjunction with the Personal Best International team to business groups, ranging in size from ten to fifty.
- Powerfully communicated how to increase productivity and improve teamwork, from experience as an Olympic medallist.
- Presented to and facilitated development programmes with senior executives from high performing companies including Thermo Fischer, BG Group, Microsoft, Santander and L'Oreal.
- by various multi-media tools to interactive physical challenges such as rowing used as a method to teach teamwork.

Public Speaker

Pro-motivate Professional Speakers Agency

- Accomplished public and after-dinner speaker, communicating with varied groups with ease through a passion to inspire people to achieve their full potential, prompting a number of individuals to chase their ambitions through presenting a successful pathway.
- Capable keynote speaker, used regularly by the SAID business school, Oxford, to present as part

Jan 2003 - Present

May 2003 - Present

Used a wide range of coaching styles to achieve success from formal presentations accompanied

2004 - Present

of their short-course MBA, something that has received extremely positive feedback due to a strong and unique take on success in business.

Personable communicator delivering speeches at a wide range of forums from schools such as St Pauls, London and Ravencourts Prep School, London, sports clubs charities and societies including the Wheelwrights Guild at Guildhall to over 500 people including the Lord Mayor, all with excellent praise and feedback.

Sponsored Athlete and Consultant

June 2007 – Dec 2014

Jones Lang LaSalle, UK

- Negotiated a unique sponsorship proposition for an ambassadorial role within JLL to inspire and motivate staff, visiting offices throughout Europe, US and Rio de Janerio.
- Understanding of leadership and management saw this role extended to present in several director development programmes about leadership and business skills that was successfully implemented throughout the UK business and selected EMEA leadership programmes.
- This was a successful partnership that was extended beyond the initial contract period and has carved the way for JLL sponsoring additional athletes.

EDUCATION

2008-2016	Open University, UK Business Studies, Leadership and Management
Details:	Gained a Certificate of Business Studies in 2009 Final module on Innovation to conclude in May 2016, currently on course for a 2:1
2001-2003 Details:	Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, UK Read engineering before leaving to pursue rowing
1999-2001 A Levels:	Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College, UK Design and Technology, Math's, Physics and General Studies (BCDE)
1994-1999 GCSEs:	Coleraine Academical Institution, UK 10 grades between A* and C including English, Maths and Sciences

ACHIEVEMENTS, OTHER QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- Gave up a previous career in the British Army as a future officer having passed commissioning board at sixteen to pursue a career in rowing.
- Active and senior member of Tideway Scullers School rowing club, developed a successful mentoring programme in the junior section producing a number of Junior International athletes including medallists.
- Supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh awards having presented Gold awards to recipients on three occasions at St. James Palace on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh.

REFERENCES

Available on request

Full Name

PERSONAL PROFILE

An England and Great Britain Hockey Olympian with an excellent academic background and a proven track record of leadership and communication. A committed and enthusiastic individual whose strong attention to detail, determination to succeed and natural talent led to a full international debut at the age of just 17. Looking to apply strong quantitative skills and a burgeoning interest in global markets to a career in the fast-paced environment of the financial sector.

EDUCATION

2012 - 2016	1
1996 - 2011]
A Levels:]
AS Levels:]
GCSEs:	:

University of Nottingham, BSc (Hons) Economics, First Class **Inswich School, Inswich** Economics (A) Maths (A) History (A) Economics (A) Maths (A) History (A) Chemistry (A) Critical Thinking (A) 8A*, 1A, 1B

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND QUALITIES

- Performing under pressure: Consistently delivered world class performances under intense pressure at elite international level; demonstrated by successfully converting a penalty shuffle following the 2015 European semifinal draw against current Olympic champions Germany in front a vociferous home crowd of over 10,000.
- · Time management and organisational skills: Training and competing at international level to maintain position in GB squad alongside dual commitment of successfully studying for a degree required detailed planning, the ability to prioritise and delivering against deadlines.
- Determination, self-belief and resilience: Demonstrated to the full in achieving personal goals and ambitions, playing hockey for England through all age groups and winning first cap at senior level at 17 years old. During Rio training cycle exhibited high levels of physical and mental resilience in overcoming potentially career threatening injury
- Team player and leader: First selected as a teenage school-boy and developed into a key player with leadership responsibilities within a team currently ranked 4^{th} in the world and achieving the best Olympic (4^{th}) and Commonwealth Games (Bronze) finishes for over 20 years. Success has required detailed team preparation, involving tactical video analysis and assessment of opposition in order to devise a winning strategy.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

July 2010 - Present

- **Full-Time Performance Athlete England and Great Britain Hockey Association**
- Capped over 100 times at a senior level and was the youngest member of the Team GB hockey team at the 2012 London Olympics
- Competed at World-level international tournaments including: World Cup (The Hague, 2014), Commonwealth Games (Delhi, 2010; Glasgow, 2014), European Championships (Antwerp, 2013; London, 2015)
- Awarded England Hockey Young Player of the Year in 2011, 2012 and 2013; shortlisted for the FIH World Young Player of the Year Award in 2012.
- Back to back Premier League titles with Beeston Hockey Club (2013, 2014) and British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) 2015 Champions with the University of Nottingham for the first time since 1961.

2010 - Present

Hockey Coach JK Hockey, MT13

 Responsible for leading and planning sessions, demonstrating and teaching new skills and developing the potential of individuals with differing abilities. Strong leadership, organisation and interpersonal skills are crucial when planning sessions, as was an ability to motivate players so that the sessions were both informative and enjoyable.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- Possesses a proficient understanding of Microsoft Office and Stata.
- Awarded the University of Nottingham Vice-Chancellor's Medal 2015.

OTHER INTERESTS

Relaxation interests include participating in and watching a wide range of sports, particularly tennis, basketball and surfing. Also enjoys reading and going to music gigs.

REFERENCES

Available on request.

Telephone: xxxxx-xxxxx, Email: fullname@gmail.com

CV CHECKLIST

After writing your CV, print it off and go through the following checklist:

- 1. First impression what first impression does your CV create?
- 2. Check the wording and grammar, for example, is there consistency in your tenses and pronouns?
- 3. Spelling mistakes have you run a spell check and re-read a printed copy thoroughly? Have you asked somebody else to read it through for you too?
- 4. Do they feel it is an authentic representation of who you are and what you have to offer?
- 5. Is your CV well-presented? Is it too crowded or too fussy?
- 6. Are the margins too narrow/wide? Is there enough/too much white space?
- 7. When a reader scans your CV for continuity in your career, are there any unexplained gaps?
- 8. How do you come across interesting, team player or loner?
- 9. In your Interests/Achievements section, consider whether you have a range of interests. Consider artistic/creative, team/social, active/physical and intellectual interests. Do you have a mix of these, or are all your interests from one category? Three or four is the norm.
- 10. The following personal details are no longer included in CVs as, by law, they should not affect recruitment decisions age or date of birth, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality or marital or relationship status and whether you have any children.

It is well worth going through this checklist with your Performance Lifestyle Adviser or a friend (especially one who might be involved with recruiting or hiring staff) or colleague to check that you have covered all of the above. The slightest error can make all the difference to an application, particularly when the application process is very competitive and there are many applicants.

Once you have a final version of your CV, save it as a PDF file to prevent inadvertent changes and use this copy to send to potential employers or contacts. You should make sure that you always have an up-to-date copy of your CV in Word format on a USB stick or readily available on your PC. This will enable you to make quick changes and respond to jobs as quickly as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Huge thanks go to Melanie Chowns and Emma Mitchell along with the wider Performance Lifestyle team for creating and developing this guide, which now forms part of a growing number of athlete specific resources meant to compliment

and support Performance Lifestyle practice and delivery.





www.eis2win.co.uk info@eis2win.co.uk

ENGLISH INSTITUTE OF SPORT

National Office Manchester Institute of Health & Performance, 299 Alan Turing Way, Manchester, M11 3BS Tel: +44 (0)870 759 0400