

Finance Career Lab: CV Hints and Tips

The following is a simple guide to making your CV stand out from the crowd by avoiding some incredibly common errors. Cover these points to maximise your chances of having your profile placed in front of the key decision makers for a hiring vacancy and not automatically rejected.

Created and compiled by Investment Professionals with extensive Investment Management and Advisory experience structuring investment solutions for institutional clients at some of the largest global organisations.

No spelling mistakes

This seems obvious, but you would be surprised at the number of CVs with spelling errors. In an ecosystem with huge demand (candidates) vs limited supply (jobs) this could be the difference between HR passing on your CV to an investment desk and receiving an automatic rejection. Proof-read your CV again, again and again.

Keep the CV to 1 page

Consensus around how many years into your career this point is valid for does vary. One thing is for sure, a young professional/graduate should not have a CV longer than 1 page. Keep your points and descriptions brief – a hiring manager will switch off if they see the text spill over and you would unlikely have enough valuable and relevant experience to justify having a longer CV.

Housekeeping Rules: Keep it professional

Presentation is everything in the Financial Sector. Make it clear you understand this concept. No photos. No fancy fonts or gimmicky formatting. Font size 10-12. Professional email address. File name is clean.

✓ FirstName_Surname_CV.pdf

✗ CV_v71_final_latest_.pdf

Again, it might seem obvious, but you would be surprised and speaking from an insider perspective, it leaves an impression...

References available upon request

Think of your CV as prime real estate. Save yourself some space and remove this line from your CV. Employers will ask you for references as and when they require them. No need for this line.

Clear demonstration of skills

For analytical skills, list out any tools and programmes you're competent in. Ensure these are industry relevant (Excel modelling, Coding languages, Bloomberg, Morningstar etc.) and that you actually are competent in them!

Softer skills can either be demonstrated through work experience or university societies. A crucial skill in the industry is being able to distil complex information and present that to a stakeholder in a palatable way. But make sure they're relevant and applicable to the industry.

Show you're interested!

If you're lucky enough to have a host of equity research experience and apply for an equity research role, it certainly helps to explain the story naturally. However, for those looking to break into their first role or pivot after landing a first graduate position it's important to highlight key experience and tailor to the next role. For example, a more technical candidate looking to pivot to more of a sales/client-facing role should look to bring out experience in presenting, working with stakeholders and producing presentational material.

This extends to non-financial related experience, especially for those trying to get their first role. Not everyone necessarily has a long list of internships, but any experience you do have try to bring out the transferable and applicable skills.

Apply the "So What?" test

Whenever you put something down on your CV, ask yourself this question. It helps to take a step back and actually scrutinise the content you're including and if it adds any value. Make someone want to read your CV and then make them understand your experience.

It may be obvious to you but imagine someone reading it that hasn't worked in your exact role before. You need to explain what's going on. Keep each work experience to 3-6 bullets and follow this structure:

Action → Context → Quantified Impact

For more tools, including a free CV Template, visit the www.FinanceCareerLab.com and join the mailing list for ongoing insights and early access to new resources.

Disclaimer: The information in this document is for educational purposes only and should not be interpreted as a guarantee of job offers or hiring outcomes. The content provided is solely based on industry experience and personal perspective and may vary from individual to individual.