

Tips for a good graduate technical CV

Putting together a good graduate technical CV that will catch an IT recruiter's eye is no mean feat, but employers notice when a CV is well structured and some thought has gone into the process.

While many large IT employers use online application forms, some still prefer the personal touch of a CV and covering letter, particularly smaller organisations recruiting for specific technical positions. This article will take you through what you should include in your CV and how you should structure it.

Tailor your CV for each graduate job

Your CV should always be tailored for each graduate job you apply for. Recruiters will quickly pass over a generic CV that isn't properly targeted. Graduate technical CVs that stand out have a clear and logical structure. In one quick glance you need to capture the reviewer's attention and make them want give your resume another more considered look. Make sure key facts that show you meet the minimum requirements and have the right skills for the job are obvious.

Outline CV structure for IT jobs

For a graduate technical CV you could use the following structure:

- Personal details: name and contact details.
- Educational background and academic details – you may wish to list the names of key modules you have completed on your degree course that are particularly relevant to the job.
- Basic information on relevant courses/qualifications you have completed in addition to your university studies.
- Relevant technologies and skills, including brief information on your level of experience.
- Supporting information, including work experience, relevant projects and general skills that support your application.
- Further interests: include activities that show off general skills and show that you are a well-rounded human being. (Read what Jade Daubney, graduate talent scout at ThoughtWorks, has to say about this at the bottom of this article.)

Use bullet points to organise your information and keep your points clear and concise. Check out our [example one-page technical CV](#) for inspiration.

Highlight your technical skills

On your CV include key technical skills (programming languages, platforms, systems, etc) that are relevant to the job, but do more than just list them. Indicate your level of ability and include brief information on how you have applied each skill.

Use examples from university, work experience and home projects. (Important note: if you include links to web projects, make sure the content of such sites is suitable for viewing on a company's network!)

Not all computer science and technical degrees cover the same content, so it can be helpful to provide brief information about modules and projects that you have completed, particularly if they are relevant to the job.

If you've taken the initiative to get some additional computing and technical qualifications make sure that you include

these on your CV.

Don't exaggerate in your CV

Don't overcook your abilities and experience. The person reviewing your CV will have substantial technical experience and will quickly spot any flaws and inconsistencies in the information you include. You may also be tested on them at interview.

Some technology employers recruit graduates from all backgrounds into technical positions, so in this case tell an employer why you would be suited to a technical role. Include examples of any technical skills you have gained and how you have been able to pick up new skills quickly, and highlight what transferable skills you would bring to the company.

Promote your soft skills

While technical skills and aptitude are obviously essential for a technical job, graduate employers view behavioural competences with equal importance.

Recruiters will want to see that you have the ability to:

- communicate well
- work with others
- complete tasks on time
- work at a high-quality level
- adapt and pick up new skills quickly
- think commercially
- be innovative

If you have examples of when you have done a job well or solved a problem in a smart or new way, include a brief example on your CV or in your covering letter. Your interests and activities outside work are also useful indicators of how well you will fit into a team.

Assess your accuracy

Details matter. Before you send out your CV and covering letter you should always check through the text with the same rigour that you check your code. Check:

- spelling and grammar carefully
- that what you have written makes sense
- that you've included the information the employer wants – evidence of skills, etc
- that you haven't left another company's name in your CV

It's easy to let glitches slip through. IT employers look for smart, professional people, who can develop high-quality technical solutions. Use your CV and covering letter to demonstrate that you fit the bill.

Advice from a graduate recruiter

Read what Jade Daubney, graduate talent scout at ThoughtWorks, has to say about the 'personal interests' section on your CV.

'People tend to neglect the personal interests part of their CV, but this is the only section where I can get to know you. I'd expect a CV to really show me how much you love the tech industry. I put as much, if not more, emphasis on reading this section as the education section on a CV. You should use this to show me how passionate you are.

'The CVs that include things like hackathons, codejams and meetups, are the ones that grab my attention. You should also include any online courses and any tech blogs you read. All of that is as important as your degree. What you do in your own time tells me a lot about your natural motivations. These activities are the things that nobody tells you to do, so seeing this is as vital as seeing what you studied.'