The CV Guide

How to build a spring-week-ready finance CV

Prepared by the Careers Team

Warwick Private Equity • University of Warwick

Why Your CV Matters

Your CV and cover letter are your opportunity to depict your character and show a firm why they should hire you. Recruitment teams process thousands of applications, so your CV is what separates you from the pile and earns you an interview.

This guide walks through the four core sections every finance CV needs, the writing habits that separate strong applications from average ones, and a full worked example. Use it alongside the Warwick Private Equity CV Template.

The Four Sections, In Order

- **Education:** your university and degree, then your secondary school.
- **Work Experience:** internships, insight programmes, and any part-time or vacation roles, most recent first.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities:** leadership, societies, sport, and personal projects.
- **Skills, Certifications & Interests:** languages, technical skills, courses, and genuine interests.

1. Education

List your university first, including your course title and expected classification. Follow this with your secondary school. Always include your academic achievements, such as A-level/IB grades, GCSE results, and any scholarships or awards, since these are the first hard data points a recruiter sees.

> **Key tip**
> Include academic achievements and any scholarships. A First Class prediction, a full-tuition scholarship, or a subject prize all belong here.

2. Work Experience

List your roles in reverse chronological order, most recent first. Regardless of whether a role is past or current, write every bullet in the past tense; this keeps your CV consistent and reads more decisively.

Keep each bullet to one line wherever possible. A one-line bullet is easier for a recruiter to scan and lets you fit more genuine achievements onto a single page. As a guide, aim for a maximum of 3 to 4 bullets per role; longer, more substantial internships can stretch to a few more if there is genuinely enough to say, but resist the urge to pad shorter or less significant roles out to the same length.

If you haven't had prior industry experience:

- Emphasise transferable skills; for example, a tutoring job that sharpened your communication and explanation skills is directly relevant to client-facing finance roles.
- Any role involving targets, teams, or problem-solving has something worth quantifying.

Quantify your impact:

It is far more effective to write ‘reduced processing time by 30%’ than ‘helped improve processes’. Numbers give recruiters something concrete to compare across hundreds of applications.

> **Key tip**
> Start every bullet with a strong action verb in the past tense: led, built, negotiated, developed, presented. Avoid passive phrasing like ‘was responsible for’.

3. Extra-Curricular Activities

This section is where leadership and teamwork come through most clearly. Structure it as:

- A leadership example, such as captain, society president, or committee role.
- Other activities that show sustained commitment, such as team sport or a recurring society role.
- Personal projects or independent pursuits, such as a business venture, blog, or investment portfolio.

Key tip
Highlight activities where you have visibly displayed leadership and teamwork. Being a member is worth less than describing what you organised, grew, or improved.

4. Skills, Certifications & Interests

- **Languages:** list fluency level for each language you speak.
- **Technical Skills:** programming languages and finance-relevant tools (Python, SQL, Bloomberg Terminal). Basic Microsoft Office proficiency is assumed and should not be listed.
- **Certifications:** Bloomberg Market Concepts, CFA Level I, or other relevant courses completed.
- **Interests:** 3 to 5 specific, genuine interests. This shows recruiters you are a well-rounded candidate, but keep each one brief and avoid generic entries like ‘reading’ or ‘travelling’ without detail.

General Writing Rules

- **One page only.** Every finance CV must fit on a single A4 page. Prioritise brevity; each point you include should demonstrate a valuable trait.
- **One line per bullet.** Keep each bullet to a single line wherever possible, so you can fit more genuine achievements onto the page without it feeling crowded.
- **3 to 4 bullets per role.** Longer or more substantial internships can stretch slightly beyond this if there is genuinely enough to say; shorter or less significant roles should stay leaner.
- **Action verbs.** Start every bullet with one: led, managed, organised, developed, built, negotiated.
- **Tailor it.** Many firms publish the characteristics they look for in interns; mirror this language where genuinely true, and include any events hosted by that firm which you have attended.
- **Past tense throughout.** Every bullet, for both past and current roles, should be written in the past tense.
- **Consistent formatting.** Same font for all subsections, same larger font for all headers, identical spacing throughout.

A Note on Ambition

It is common to see CVs listing exceptional grades, multiple insight programmes, and several leadership positions. Don't be intimidated by this; most strong candidates have not achieved even 80% of what the most decorated applicants show. Normally we would not expect a candidate to have more than two finance work experiences; strong CVs regularly include roles such as tutor, sales assistant, or barista alongside one or two finance experiences.

When applying to spring weeks, what matters most is what you took from each experience and how it shaped your skillset, not the length of your CV.

Reference: Investment Banking Resume Template, Wall Street Oasis (wallstreetoasis.com/resources/templates/word-templates/investment-banking-resume-template).