

Employability & Careers Centre

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Effective Writing

This leaflet is designed to help you with the use of vocabulary, spelling and grammar when writing your CV and covering letter, or when completing application forms. You may find it most helpful to use it alongside our leaflets **Writing Effective CVs & Covering Letters** and **Application Forms**, also available from www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/leaflets/.

Action words

You don't need to write in long sentences or use lots of impressive words to put together an effective CV or application. However, it is important to describe things clearly and positively. By using positive 'action' words, like the ones listed below, you can give a clear description of the experience you have and the role you played in a particular project or task. Avoid non-specific words like 'helped', which don't really tell the employer what you actually did.

Acquired	Administered	Advised	Amended
Analysed	Appraised	Arranged	Assembled
Assessed	Audited	Bought	Budgeted
Built	Calculated	Checked	Coached
Collaborated	Collected	Compiled	Completed
Composed	Concluded	Condensed	Conducted
Confirmed	Constructed	Consulted	Controlled
Converted	Coordinated	Corrected	Corresponded
Counselled	Created	Decreased	Defined
Delivered	Demonstrated	Designed	Detected
Determined	Developed	Devised	Diagnosed
Directed	Discovered	Disproved	Distributed
Documented	Doubled	Edited	Eliminated
Enlarged	Established	Estimated	Evaluated
Examined	Expanded	Familiarised	Finished
Forecasted	Formed	Formulated	Founded
Generated	Guided	Identified	Implemented
Improved	Improvised	Incorporated	Increased
Initiated	Inspired	Installed	Instigated
Instituted	Instructed	Integrated	Interpreted
Intervened	Interviewed	Introduced	Invented
Investigated	Launched	Led	Logged
Maintained	Managed	Measured	Merged
Minimised	Modernised	Monitored	Negotiated

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Networked	Observed	Obtained	Operated
Ordered	Organised	Originated	Oversaw
Passed	Persuaded	Pioneered	Planned
Predicted	Prepared	Presented	Prevented
Processed	Produced	Programmed	Progressed
Promoted	Prompted	Proposed	Protected
Proved	Provided	Published	Purchased
Quantified	Realised	Recommended	Recorded
Recruited	Redesigned	Reduced	Referred
Regulated	Rejected	Renegotiated	Reorganised
Reported	Researched	Resolved	Restored
Restricted	Reviewed	Revised	Revived
Saved	Scheduled	Selected	Set up
Shaped	Simplified	Sold	Solved
Specified	Standardised	Stimulated	Streamlined
Strengthened	Stretched	Structured	Studied
Suggested	Supervised	Supplied	Supported
Surveyed	Taught	Tested	Tightened
Trained	Translated	Treated	Trimmed
Tripled	Uncovered	Unified	Unravalled
Wrote			

Useful adverbs

Adverbs are a great way to communicate how you have achieved something and indicate your personal qualities concisely. You might be able to include some of these in your applications and CVs.

Accurately	Analytically	Appropriately
Astutely	Calmly	Carefully
Clearly	Competently	Competitively
Comprehensively	Concisely	Confidently
Consistently	Constructively	Correctly
Courteously	Creatively	Critically
Diplomatically	Discreetly	Dynamically
Effectively	Efficaciously	Efficiently
Energetically	Enthusiastically	Helpfully
Imaginatively	Impartially	Judiciously
Logically	Methodically	Passionately
Patiently	Persuasively	Politely
Politically	Positively	Precisely
Productively	Promptly	Punctually
Purposefully	Quickly	Rapidly
Reassuringly	Regularly	Reliably
Resourcefully	Responsibly	Responsively
Safely	Smoothly	Strategically
Successfully	Succinctly	Suitably
Supportively	Tactfully	Thoroughly

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Or you could use adjectives instead, in phrases like:

In an *organised* manner
In a *friendly* way
With a *practical* approach
With an *open* attitude

Some other useful adjectives:

Adaptable	Assertive	Caring
Collaborative	Commercial	Empathetic
Encouraging	Flexible	Inclusive
Proactive	Professional	Sensitive
Sympathetic	Systematic	Versatile

Commonly misspelled words

These are the CORRECT spellings of words that people often get wrong in letters, CVs and application forms:

Accommodation	Affect (verb)	Appalling
Availability	Benefit	Defer / Deferred
Definite, Definitely	Driving licence	Effect (noun)
Environment	Excellent	Experience
Extremely	Independent	Liaison
Necessary	Occur / Occurred	Opinion
Persuaded	Practice (noun)	Practise (verb)*
Prefer / preferred	Professional	Receive
Recommend	Relevant	Responsibility
Successful		

* the difference is the same as for Advice / Advise.

Help with grammar and English usage

If you are uncertain about the correct use of grammar and other aspects of English usage, you may find the following useful:

University of Surrey English Language Support Programmes
www.surrey.ac.uk/englishandlanguages/study/english_language_programmes/english_language_support_programme/

BBC Grammar Guide www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/

The Open University offers free, online courses on more advanced aspects of writing at <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>.