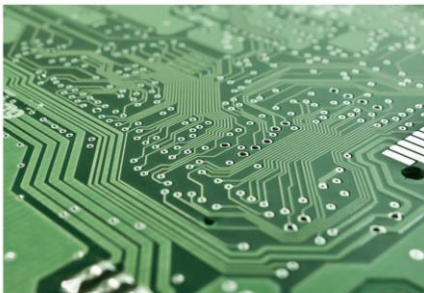




CVs, Cover Letters & Interviews Bachelor of Computing

Elizabeth Morris
Careers Development Services
20 May 2020








I am from the careers team and the following session and PPT is as you can see about CVs, cover letter and interviews. There are quite a few slides and some of them I will leave for you to work through yourself.

Today's plan:

- Story of you / Personal brand
- CV
- Cover letter
- Interviews
- Feedback



CV Review - How will you stand out?

					
Qualifications	Bachelor in Computing	Bachelor in Computing	Bachelor in Computing	Bachelor in Computing	Bachelor in Computing
Grades	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Extracurricular activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Part Time Work Experience	Cafe	Vet reception	Retail	Call Centre	Retail
Good Communicator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Works well in a team	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Before you start writing your CV, it is a good idea to think about who you are and how you stand out from the completion.

Which other organizations teach this course? Who else has your skills?

Think about the others in your class, chances are they have similar skills to you.

So... how do you stand out?

Personal Brand

- Appears in your CV / cover letter / Interviews
- Develops over time
- Very important on social media eg LinkedIn
- Focuses your direction



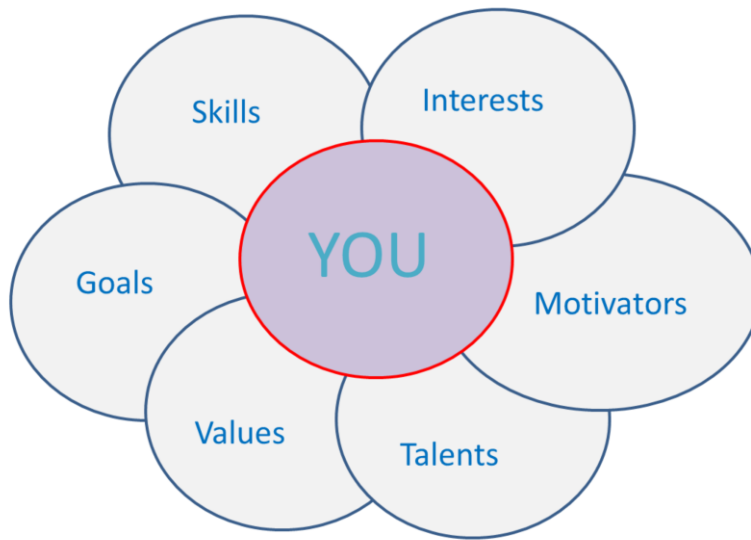
Personal brand is made up of who you are, including values, work, and skills. It is something which appears in various forms on your CV – most likely in the Personal Statement, in the About section of your LinkedIn profile as well as your pitch to anyone with whom you discuss your future plans.

According to Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, “Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.”

Due to us being online a lot, and especially during covid-19, it is important to keep an eye on our brand and what we share. 70% of employers use social media to find people – according to a 2018 Career Builder survey. So think about what you share now as it will still be there in 2 years time!

Focussing your direction is important, especially when there is a lot of information around, some good, some not so good. So take some time to do the following exercises.

Where to begin?



Inspired by *What Colour is your Parachute*, R.N.Bolles

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Here is a chance for you to think about your brand and do some internal research, before you go out to the market place. This is something to take your time over and you will continue to refine it. The book I took this from is also a good resource for all things career. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are my skills? They may or may not relate to work or study. What can I do?
- What interests me when I am not studying? What do my friends and I talk about, apart from Covid-19?
- What gets me out of bed, or makes me want to complete this course, apart from a job?
- Your talents, what can I do better than anyone else?
- What is important to you? Working in a team, starting your own business, being onsite or off-site?
- Is your goal to work for a large or a small organisation? Where do you want to work, short term and then long term? Where might the opportunities be in the next few years?

Remember everyone will be different and your ideas will change. They may or may not relate to work – think about your whole life.

Creating My Story

- What are your aspirations?
- Why are you studying this course? But why?
- What are the skills or strengths others see in you?
- What do you do when you are not at Unitec?
- If you were a super hero, what would your super power be?



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Having thought about who you are, what you have to offer, create your story, everyone loves a story!

As to asking why, well if you keep asking why to each answer you give, you should get a clearer idea as to your reason.

The video below illustrates this rather nicely

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4eQ_hzQMJM

Creating My Story

The secret to standing out in today's marketplace is to impress employers with the unique and authentic you



When and where are you contributing to your story?

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- In Person – interview, cold calling, and accidental meetings which may start happening again.
- On Paper – CV, cover letter, email
- Online – social media including LinkedIn

You are also contributing to your brand in your choice of clothes, through Facebook and other social media, photos, your email address and voice mail. Have you checked your Voicemail recently? Ensure it is short and professional sounding.

So now you know a bit more about who you are and what you want. you can create a CV

Curriculum Vitae

- Personal Details
- Personal Statement
- Key Skills
- Education
- Work History
- Interests
- References



Why the bridge?

Your CV is a marketing tool, showcasing your skills/experiences. Hopefully the previous exercise helped you focus on them. Now look at what organisations need and create the bridge. So not only will you research yourself but also organisations. All this should help you stand out and get noticed.

As I am sure many of you are aware these are the headings for a CV. Let's look at them individually.

Personal Statement

I have always been passionate about software and computing. My three years of study at Unitec, including extensive practical assignments, have strongly confirmed information technology as the career choice for me. My curiosity, tenacity and friendly nature are assets I would bring to the work. I also have experience in project management and strong organizational and administrative skills.

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Keep this to 2-3 sentences, outlining the key things you bring. Think of it from the employers perspective.

Personal Statement

“Aiming to reduce global warming through sustainable energy production and consumption, and reducing the “risk of human extinction” by “making life multi-planetary” and setting up a human colony on Mars.”

Elon Musk

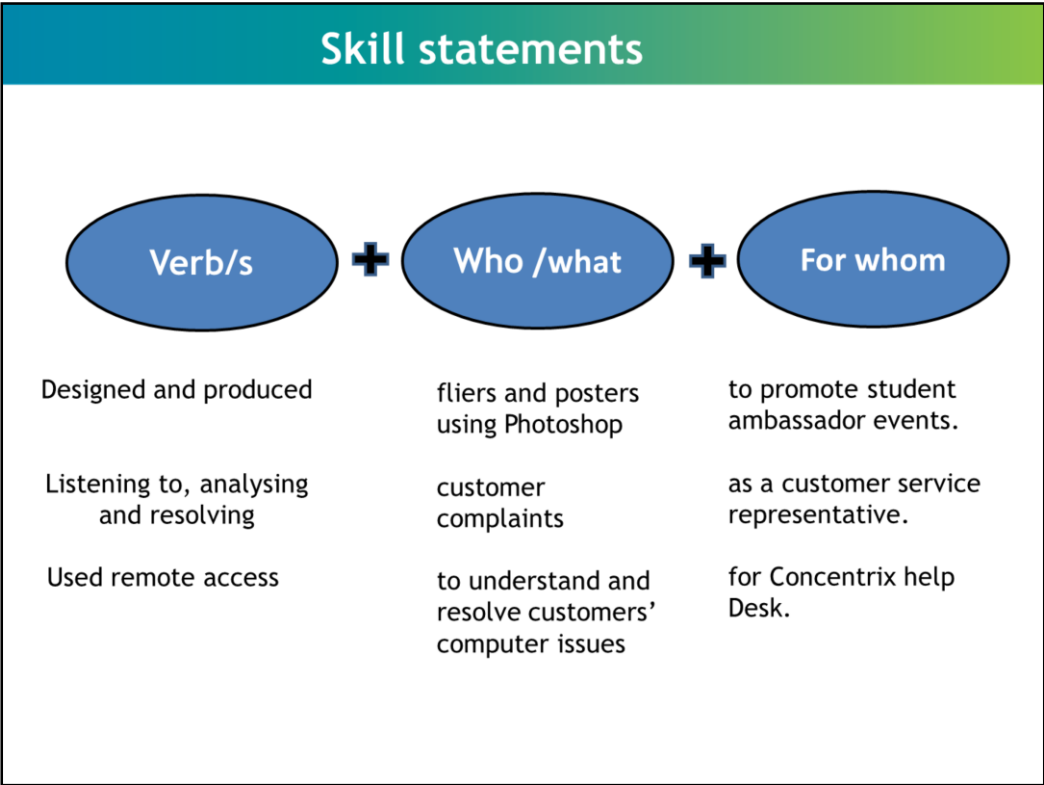
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This one is quite aspirational!

Skills exercise!



Many students come to us with a list of skills, so be aware that one skill has lots of possibilities, just choose one example for your tailored CV. However, that list is a great starting place for writing key skills.



This is the most important part of your CV. Did you know people spend about 7 seconds reading your CV? And this is the place where most of the decisions are made. As mentioned, a good way to write your skills is to make a list of them, then explain how you have used them and where. Skills may come from volunteering or community activities. These ones are often called transferable skills and are taken with you from one job or situation to another. So think widely. Most importantly have evidence to support your skills.

In these times you may have to think more widely if you are looking into other areas to find a job. Go through again all the jobs, education volunteering etc that you have done and ask yourself what skills did I gain/use?

Our handout on Moodle will help further with CVs. You are also welcome to email me emorris@unitec.ac.nz. Please do mention how we met, and supply your student id number.

Top 10 Employability Skills

1. Work Ethic
2. Verbal Communication Skills
3. Energy and Enthusiasm
4. Analytical and Critical Thinking
5. Problem Solving
6. Team Work
7. Interpersonal Skills
8. Written Communication Skills
9. Self-management
10. Initiative and enterprise

Employability Skills Survey 2015 Executive Summary (n.d.)
https://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/careers/pdf/reports/2015-employability-skills-survey-executive-summary.pdf

This may be 5 years old but is still relevant today. Think about how you can demonstrate these to an employer. For instance, interpersonal skills, by the way you talk on the phone, or initiative and enterprise by calling the employer to ask about opportunities rather than looking at advertisements.

Education, Employment & Interests

Education

Bachelor of Applied Science

current

Unitec Institute of Technology, Mt Albert

Employment

Job Title

April – Oct 2013

Organisation Name, location

Assisted with ...

Developed ...

Handled ...

Performed ...

Interests

Beekeeping

Reading industry articles

Member of local rugby team

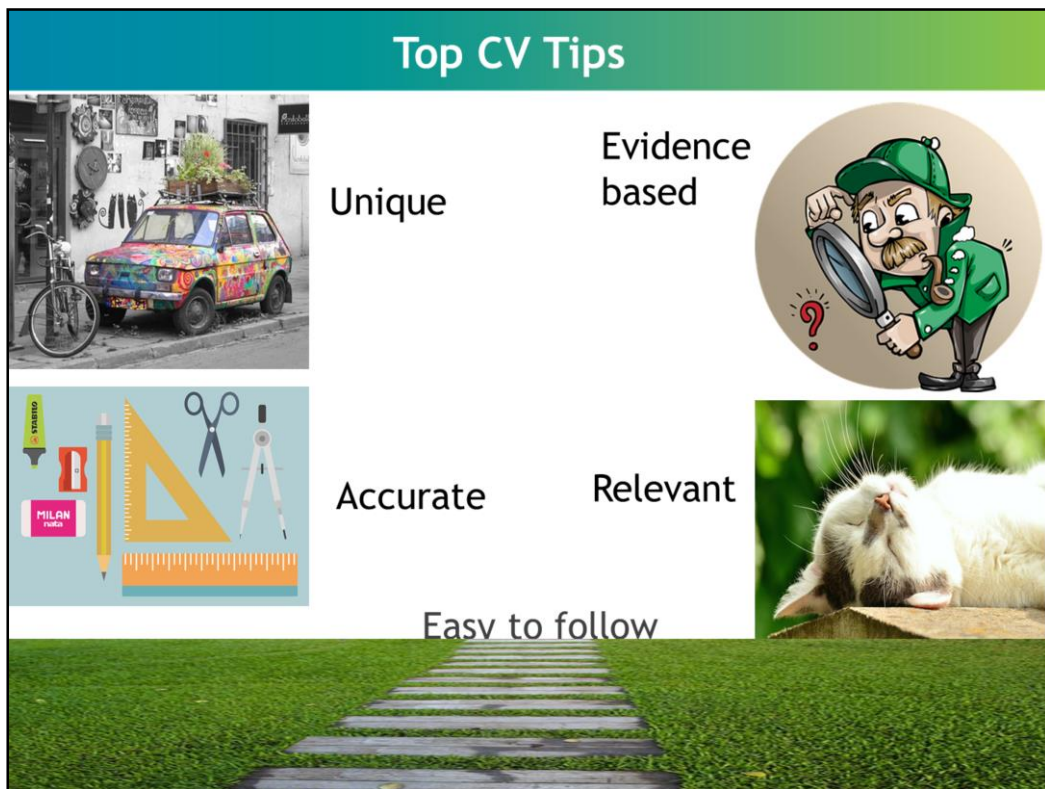
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Layout is important, so do keep things neat, check for spacing, as you can see mine is not that good here! On purpose!

Consider your education, stick to the ones most relevant to the job you are applying for.

Employment, start with your present job and go backwards – reverse chronological order. As to which jobs to include, the rule of thumb is focus on the last 10 years. However in IT some recruiters might say 5. Then it comes down to thinking what is relevant for the employer.

I think interests are important, giving a picture of the whole person. Write a brief list of approx. 2 - 4 points. Include any interesting sporting, cultural or creative interests which may help you stand out from other candidates or show transferrable skills



Make It Easy

Think about the person reading your document. Is it quick and easy to read?
 Use bullet points
 Be concise

Be Relevant

Review and rearrange your CV for each opportunity
 Include skills and experience relevant to the specific role/organisation, no fluff
 Put the most important skills for the job at the top

Be Unique

Outline what “value-add” you are bringing to the role/organisation
 Communicate your Personal Brand to grab attention and Stand Out

Be Evidence Based

Provide evidence for your skills statements
 Only include statements that can be supported with experience/evidence
 Use verbs when describing your skills to create action/evidence based statements

Be Accurate

Make your statements specific, quantifying when you can and be prepared to talk about every statement in your CV at an interview
 Double check your spelling and grammar or ask someone to do it for you

Cover Letters - The Nuts and Bolts

Ensure a professional looking cover letter or email

Text

The Quick Brown
Fox Jumps Over
The Lazy Dog.
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz0123456789[]{}"/\<>?

g

Layout



Spacing



Size



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Cover Letters - The Format

- Paragraph One Why you are writing?
- Paragraph Two Why you?
- Paragraph Three Why them?
- Paragraph Four Closing Statement



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Important tips in cover letter writing:

- Dear...
- One page
- Stick to the point
- Build a bridge between you and the employer
- Match key words with those of the employer
- Narrative format rather than bullet points
- Proof read, proof read, proof read

2nd Paragraph - why you example

- Highlight what you have to offer them
- Describe your knowledge, experience, skills and strengths that relate to the role
- Use information about the job, course or organisation you have researched to do this

"Through my study, I have gained a strong understanding of software engineering, networking and cloud computing which I believe will benefit me when working alongside your specialist staff....."

Some further suggestions for the most important paragraph

3rd Paragraph – Why them example

Highlight why you are interested in them as an organisation ... be specific – show you have done the research ...

"With cyber security attack being so prevalent today and the chances of organisations being at risk high, I am excited to see that EY supports their clients' from strategy to execution and believe my experience would fit well with EY's vision of Building a Better Working World."

This is where you create that bridge between you and them. If applying to an advertised role use the words from the advert.

Types of interview



No doubt most of you will have had an interview, probably face to face. However, now in the world of Covid-19 they may be over the phone or on your computer using Skype or Zoom. Luckily many of us are getting plenty of experience though chatting with family or friends and in class. So what are some of the things you have noticed that you should take into consideration? What is happening behind you? Is there too much light? Do you have family in the next room, or animals who may interrupt. How close or far are you from the camera? Try and check these things before you start the conversation. Now cafes are open and less social distancing is occurring more interviews will probably take place over coffee and may even include a presentation. However, online is likely to remain a strong presence.

How do you prepare for an interview?

- Research the company & people
- Know your CV & the job requirements
- Create questions & practice
- Know where to go
- Practice again
- Believe in yourself and relax



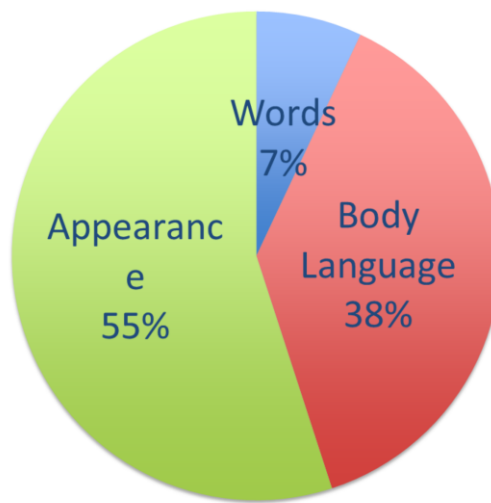
Like cooking a meal it is essential you have all the key ingredients ready for an interview. Find out about the company, what is there in the media about them that you can mention in the interview? Do you know anyone you could talk to beforehand? Have they told you who will interview you? Look them up on LinkedIn. While you are online check your social media presence. If you haven't googled yourself, now might be a good time.

Go through your CV again and know what the job requires of you and create questions from the job description, then practice. Out loud is best.

Knowing where to go. This will become more important as we return to life outside our homes.

Keep practicing – this will enable you to feel more relaxed on the day.

On the day - first impressions



This comes from Albert Mehrabian in 1967, and is still relevant today. Appearance is important so ensure you are well groomed, even if you are online

Clothes are generally a step up from everyday. Think about the industry/company and job you are interviewing for. You could even enquire what their dress code is beforehand. Sure it is a little different online, however do dress professionally as this often makes us carry ourselves better.

Body language is important. The one advantage online is you see how you look. So as with face to face, ensure you are sitting up straight, arms folded looks defensive, so hands relaxed in your lap. Keep good eye contact. Smile.

Think about the pace and clarity of speech. It is alright to pause and think of what to say.

As mentioned a bit earlier, some extra things to consider online-

Be prepared – make sure your workspace is set up, you’ve got something to write notes on

Phone/online etiquette – can you hear well?, where is your camera?

Check light and noise levels

Possibly no hand shake – and what’s the alternative online – be ready for that brief “shooting the breeze” introduction

Interview – 10 common questions via Seek

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What interests you about the job?
3. What did you like and/or dislike about your current/previous job?
4. Why are you leaving?
5. What do you know about our company?
6. Why do you want to work for us?
7. What are your strong points?
8. What are your weak points?
9. What have you learned from your mistakes?
10. How much do you think this position pays?

<https://www.seek.co.nz/career-advice/common-interview-questions-and-how-to-answer-them> Retrieved 16 March 2020

Here are some common interview questions. So see if you can buddy up with someone and have a go! Remember only talk for about 2 minutes.

Almost guaranteed to be the first question, *Tell me about yourself*. This is your sales pitch, so sell yourself, your skills and strengths. How will you add value. Show your uniqueness and be memorable.

For most people these are difficult questions to answer if you have not prepared them. Outline a clear structure for each and identify any achievements and specific examples you can mention to back up what you say.

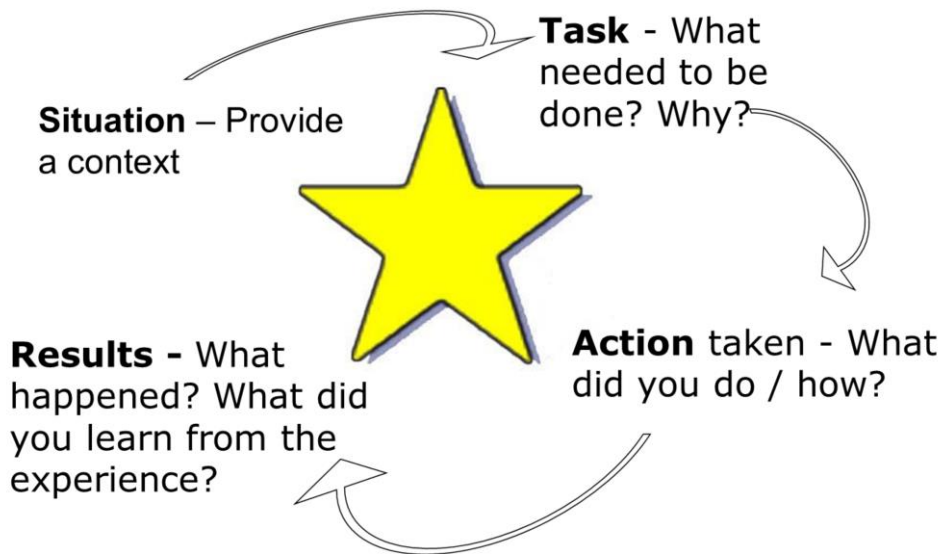
Here is the above link again

<https://www.seek.co.nz/career-advice/common-interview-questions-and-how-to-answer-them>

And another useful one

<https://www.seek.co.nz/employer/market-insights/the-top-5-interview-questions-to-ask-candidates>

S T A R questions



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These questions usually come later in the interview. Generally, if you have done something in the past you can do it again.

Example STAR questions via Seek

1. At times you will be asked to do many things at once. How do you prioritise your tasks?
2. Have you ever worked in a role where priorities and goals have changed frequently, what were they and how did you ensure you were successful in that environment?
3. Can you share with me some constructive feedback you've received and how you've used that feedback to change the way you work?
4. Tell me about a time when you've given a team member feedback? How did you approach it and what was the outcome?
5. Tell me about a project or idea that was implemented or executed upon successfully because of your efforts?

<https://www.seek.co.nz/employer/hiring-advice/the-top-5-behavioural-interview-questions-to-ask-candidates> - Retrieved 16 March 2020

Here are some typical ones to practice. Remember you can draw on all your life, so if you have a volunteer job or are involved in your community maybe you have examples from that. If you have not had the satiation try to come up with what you *would* do. The idea is to prove to the employer you would manage the situation.

Here is the link from Seek on how to answer these

<https://www.seek.co.nz/employer/market-insights/the-top-5-situational-interview-questions-to-ask-candidates>

Ask the interviewer?

- Your chance to find out more about the role and organisation and if it is the right fit for you
- Demonstrate your interest in the employer
- Learn from the interviewer's experiences
- Ensure the interviewer has no reservations about you

Example questions:

- Can you describe a typical day in this role?
- Is there an induction and training programme?
- Can you tell me about the team I will be working with?
- What have you enjoyed most about working here?
- Can you tell me about your plans for growth (tip: do your research, mention a specific trend, product etc...)
- What is the next step in the process?
- What do you think are the upcoming trends in your field?

At the end of the interview they should ask you if you have any questions, so here are a few to get you thinking.

End of the interview

- Two way conversation
- Don't ask about salary
- If you are keen on the job, politely say so
- Thank them for their time
- Ask what happens next



Interviews are a two way conversation, you both want to get to know each other. Moodle also has links to our interview preparation handouts.

Don't ask about salary. If they ask you, have a range to offer them say \$60 – 65K.

Thank them for their time. Then send them a thank you email. This is an opportunity to add something you may have thought of or **briefly** say why you are keen on the position

After the interview congratulate yourself on your effort. If you don't hear from them after a week, contact them to see where they are in the process.

If you are unsuccessful, consider it practice. Ask for feedback, but don't be disappointed if you don't get any.



Appointment: 0800 10 75 10

CV Drop-In

Mt Albert: L1 Te Puna, 11am-1pm Monday – Friday
Waitakere: Student Central, 11.30am -1.30pm Mondays

career@unitec.ac.nz

<https://careers.unitec.ac.nz/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/uniteccareer>

 <https://moodle.unitec.ac.nz/> (Career Development)

Here are some more contact details.

Thank you for your time and if you have not completed the feedback form please find it on your Moodle page.

As mentioned you can also contact me emorris@unitec.ac.nz. Please say how we met and supply your id number. Thanks.