



The perfect CV for Investment Banking

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[Ferdinand Petra](#) is giving you his insights on how to build a perfect CV to apply for Investment Banks - *Extended version of the post made recently on [eFinancialCareers](#)*

1. Introduction

The CV is the cornerstone of your application to any internship / full-time job in Investment Banking or any other industry. You need to think about a CV as a photo taken by a professional photographer. It only shows the parts of you which are the most attractive to the viewer. In the case of Investment Banking, it needs to reflect the fact that you know the codes used in bankers' CV and that you can demonstrate you have the skills required in Investment Banking ("IB").

As [Ferdinand Petra](#) usually tells his students: "it is great to show you have a lot of creativity in you but you need to show first in a CV that you have the skillset required in IB: attention to details, teamwork, hardworking, presentation skills..."

2. What a CV has to be?

* Easy to read: logical structure, clear, concise and well formatted (min. 9pts font)

* Be positive: highlight the skills required for an IB position

* Demonstrate and quantify your successes/achievements /results (work or non-work related)

- * Add numbers: % increase in sales that you generated, number of hours...
- * Be concrete: everyone should be able to understand what you write
- * Attracts reader's interest: your personality, what differentiates you from others (mostly in the "other" section)
- * Maximum 1 page long

Be careful as well with typos, format, and style:

- * Read all your applications three times and run a spellcheck before you send anything out (spelling, punctuation, grammar)!
- * Use a classical CV template (Feel free to [contact me](#) if you wish a European or US template)
- * Format needs to be consistent (e.g. bold, alignment, numbers format)
- * Do not hesitate to use bold, capital letter, italic to emphasize (not too much)
- * Never use "I" but action verb in the past tense (e.g. "Developed")
- * Write numbers only in letters or only in number format
- * No picture / no funky email (prefer firstname.lastname@email.com)
- * Check proper formatting when converted to .pdf

3. Personal information

Only include your last and first name (same font size as the titles of your CV), email and phone number using the international format (e.g. +33 6 12 34 56 68 for French cellphone). Do not include any photo, your age or your mailing address. In fact, your future employer does not need your mailing address except to send you your work contract and, in this case, (s)he will ask you for it. Regarding the link to your LinkedIn profile, only do it if you have a very common name.

4. Education

Indicate for each of your schools, its name, location, and if it is not well known, a ranking through a known provider (e.g. Financial Time, QS ranking...). This line has to be in bold. The line below has to be in italic and will be the title of your diploma. Only include the year of beginning and end of study (not the months).

For your current school, do not indicate "current" but write down the year of end of study. This information is extremely important to know whether you are eligible for certain type of internship programs (e.g. summer internship).

Below the title of your degree, indicate your GPA but most importantly your ranking if you have it. You need to put in bracket, for example, after your GPA, “Top 5%” or “Top 10%”. You can as well indicate if you belong to the “Dean’s list”.

You can, below the GPA, include some courses relevant to IB but only 3-4 max. You can, at the end of this section, include your qualifications if any (CFA ...). I do not believe including your GMAT makes sense except if the score is stellar. As [Ferdinand Petra](#) tells his students: “you are not applying to an MBA”

5. Work Experience

Put the month-year of beginning of your internship and below the number of months (e.g. “June 2012 – and below - (6 months)”)

For each internship, the first line (in bold) is the name of the company, what it does (i.e. sector) and a quantification of the size of the business (e.g. sales, number of employees) except if the company is very well known

The next line (in italic) has to be your internship or full-time job title (e.g. M&A intern). It does not have to be the exact title that was on your job contract but it has to be clear enough so that a reader can guess what you have done without reading your bullet points describing your experience.

The location has to be put on the far right. Usually the country is enough. You do not need to put country and city.

Below these two first lines, only include achievement-based bullet points:

- * Use action verbs in the past simple only
- * Max 1.5 lines for each bullet point (ideally only 1 line). Use the STAR method to fill in each bullet point
- * For each bullet point, the recruiter has directly to know which skill you have proven
- * No job description (i.e. the recruiter wants to read what you have specifically done and not a general description of the role)
- * More bullet points for more relevant and/or recent experience

Don’t include here the research done with your school (put it in the next section)

6. Extra-curricular experience

This section can also be called “Additional Information” or Extra-curricular activities and/or Leadership experience. The structure of this section should be the same as the one for Professional Experience. Instead, of company name, you include the name of association in which you have been involved. In the same way, you need to specify the size (e.g. budget, number of students involved) and the area in which the association is involved.

This section is a great occasion to show your interest in Finance (e.g. Finance club, Trading) and/or to demonstrate your leadership skills. You can as well show your involvement in community or charity work.

Only include experiences where you had an active role (e.g. VP communication, President). It is not worth mentioning “member of the Finance club” as it does not show any real involvement. [Ferdinand Petra](#) always tells his students that “participating in a club usually means sending an email to be in the mailing list and does not demonstrate any commitment”.

7. Language & IT skills

Make it simple for language: write on one line all the languages in which you are either native, fluent, or intermediate (write the level of proficiency in brackets). There is no need to include a language for which you only have a basic knowledge.

Be careful on the level of expertise you mention: you may be tested during interviews.

For IT skills, there are two ways of doing it. If you have no specific IT skills, you can not mention this section or only write Microsoft Office. You can add here any programming language if relevant to the position you are applying for (e.g. Python for structuring position). Do not mention here the fact that you know how to use Datastream, Factset or any other database – it only takes a few hours to know how to use them.

8. Interests

This part is much more important than most people think. In fact, any recruiter will look at your CV with 2 angles: 80% will be devoted to finding out whether you have the right skillset for the job and 20% will be devoted to finding out whether you are a person with whom they would like to work:

* Show to the reader that they can talk to you about other things than Finance

* Show you are a « fun » person to work with

This section is the occasion to check the 20% part. Make it appealing and interesting to the reader. The recruiters are as well looking for your taste for competition and/or resilience in a given activity. Therefore, for every sport, activity you mention, put in brackets the length of practice and the length of competition if relevant.

Last point: only include what you feel comfortable and happy to talk about. This last statement is not only true for this section but as well for the whole CV. Remember that your CV will be the starting point of discussion during your interview: do not lead the interviewer where you do not want to go!

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