

Job Search

success with your job search

CVAC is a specialist independent CV and career advice site, we work only with accounting staff who are looking for specialists to assist them with their CV, job search or career advice.

Recruitment is a major cost for most organisations, taking into account agency and social media fees, staffing, advertising and other overheads. Sourcing candidates with the relevant experience, skill set and culture fit can be a struggle for HR and hiring managers.

Since companies invest time, money and other resources in recruitment, hiring in an efficient manner and getting the job done is important.

In the following pages you will find advice and guidance on how to look for work and find the job you deserve.

Getting organised

When you have decided to look for another job, take your time and plan your strategy. The first thing to do is check that your CV is up to date and is an accurate reflection of your work history. To help you find the job you deserve, contact CVAC to make sure that you have the best possible CV.

If your experience is sector-specific (eg, legal, retail, advertising etc) and you wish to stay within the sector, identify the companies that you want to work for. If you are happy to consider other sectors, shortlist the companies that you would like to work for. If you're not sure yet, think about what you are looking for in your next job.

Define your priorities. Typically, candidates look for the following:

- Career development opportunities
- Culture
- Location
- Reputation
- Salary and benefits
- Sector
- Systems

It's OK if you are not ambitious, career-oriented or seeking promotion. Not all organisations are looking for candidates seeking career development opportunities.

Take your time and be patient – it can take several weeks to find the right job. CVAC can help by offering advice and guidance on how to look for work, how to apply, and how to get that all-important interview.



Company websites

Most large companies use an internal recruitment team to source candidates and advertise jobs on their corporate websites, other sites and social media. You can apply directly to companies via their websites and, even if they aren't offering an appropriate job for you now, most have the facility to apply speculatively. Check your application for spelling and grammatical errors, and check again before hitting the "send" button.

Recruitment agencies

Before registering with an agency, follow CVAC's advice below, to make sure that the consultants will work with you in a professional manner.

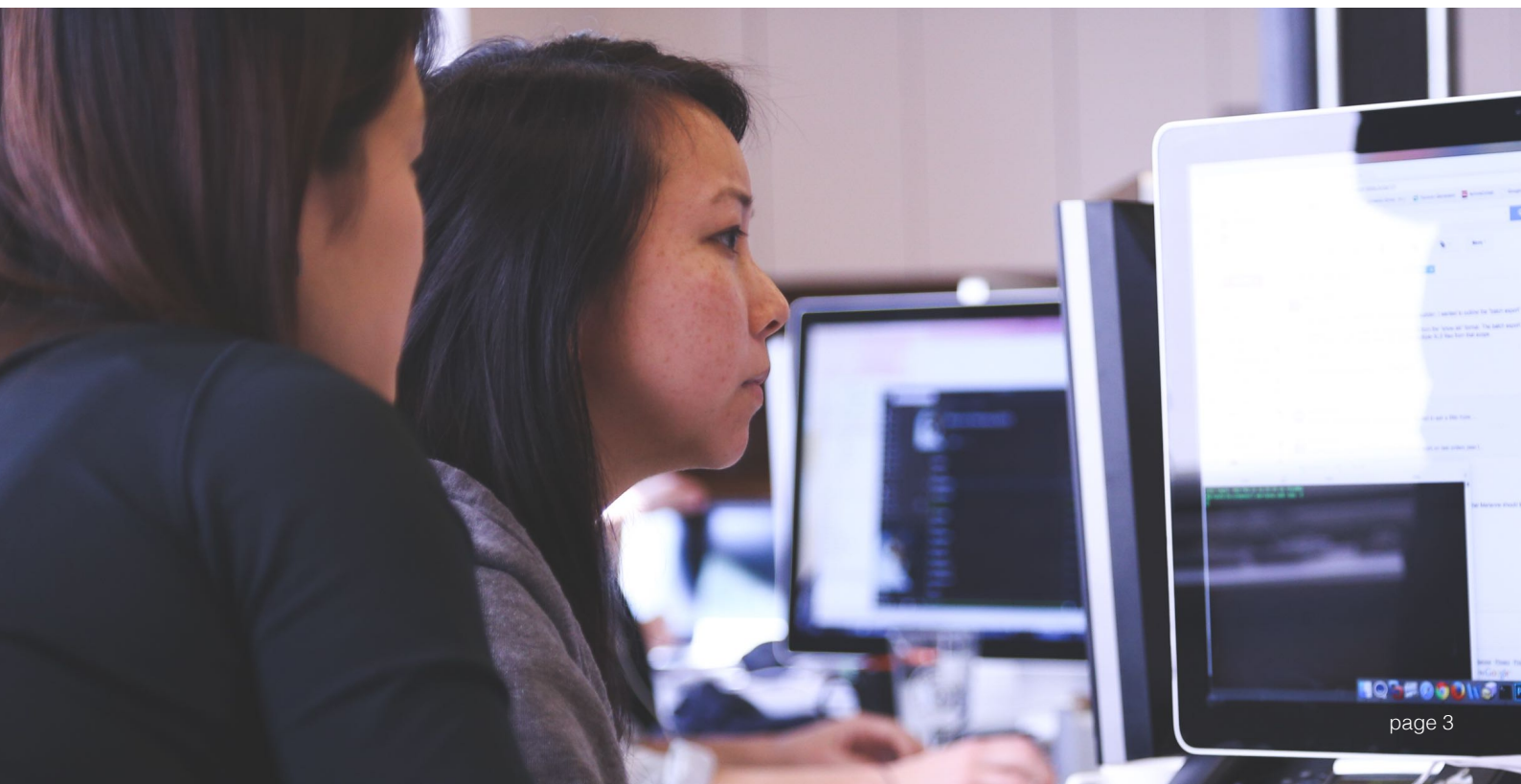
Check the agency's website to see if it is a member of the REC, APSCO or similar. Members of these organisations will abide by their codes of professional practice.

Most organisations have a preferred supplier list (PSL), which means that they normally work with three or four agencies. We suggest that you register with a maximum of three specialist accounting recruitment agencies. A professional recruiter will want to meet with you either in person or via Skype or FaceTime.

Before contacting a consultant, research the agency. Take a look at its website, including news, blogs, testimonials and consultants' profiles. Log into LinkedIn and look at the profiles of the business and the consultant. Ask around to see if anyone has experience of working with them.

Contact the recruiter and send an up-to-date CV. Once you have agreed a time to meet with the consultant, ensure that the date, time and location are in your calendar and also written down. Plan your route and allow plenty of time to travel, in order to arrive ten minutes before the meeting. If asked to bring documents, get these ready the night before and take the originals plus a hard copy of your CV.

Allow up to 60 minutes for the meeting with the consultant; investing time now will pay dividends in the long run.



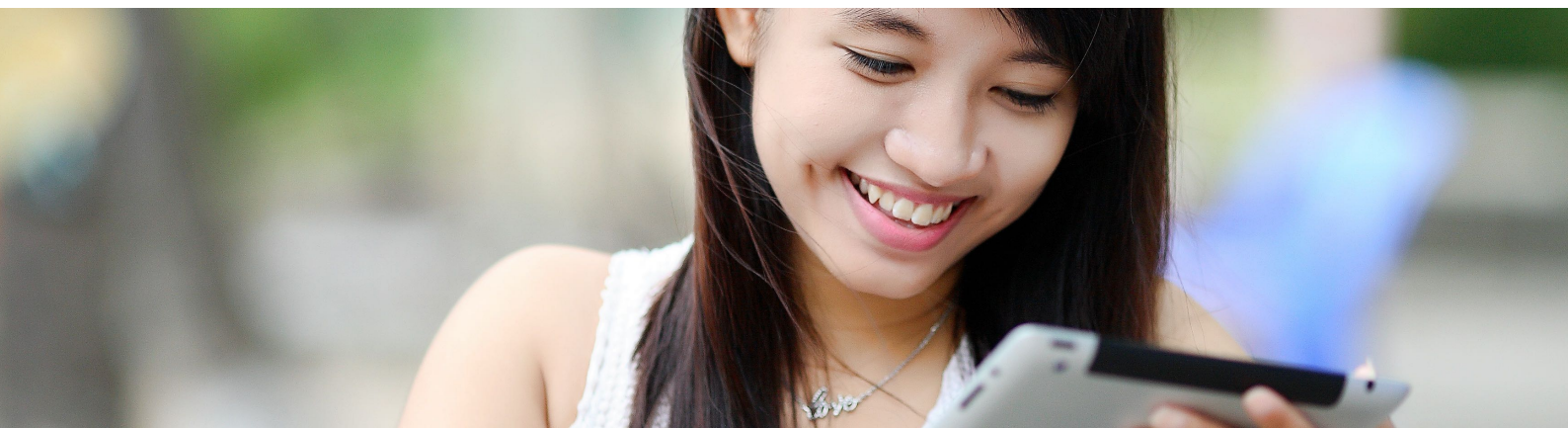
Job boards

Register with relevant online job boards – preferably those specific to accounting, plus at least one general site. Check your application for spelling and grammatical errors, and check again before completing the application. Ensure that you set alerts so that you receive regular updates.

If you are a member of a professional organisation or accounting body, check whether there is a careers section on their website. If so, register. Check your application for spelling and grammatical errors, and check again before completing the application. Again, ensure that you set alerts so that you receive regular updates.

Networking

Let your friends, former colleagues and professional connections know that you are looking for a new job.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is used by recruitment consultants and, increasingly, in-house recruiters to search for candidates. You need to have a professional profile that consultants and in-house recruiters can see.

Remember LinkedIn is not Facebook! Your profile (including your photo) should be a professional reflection of you and your career. If you don't have an account with LinkedIn, create one.

Ensure that your profile reflects your work history, experience, technical skills and accomplishments. Write it in the first person and showcase your professional ability and achievements. List the companies that you have worked for and an overview of your responsibilities.

Check for spelling and grammatical errors, check again and, as a final check, ask someone to proof-read it.

Link with organisations that you would like to work for and with their relevant hiring manager. This way, you will receive vacancy updates from the company.

Finally, make your profile public and ask friends, former colleagues and professional connections for recommendations.

Cover email

Remember that if you apply for a job via email, that is the first thing the HR professional or line manager will see and read.

Never leave the subject line blank. Use it to encourage the reader to read further. Don't just put the job number/reference or title; instead type something like "Experienced Credit Controller applying for the Credit Control role, reference 12345"

Always use a salutation at the beginning of the email. Try not to be too formal and if you know the person's first name, use it; eg, Dear John.

The opening paragraph of your email is important; it needs to hook the reader. Then you can go on to talk about your skills and attributes, while being concise.

Keep your email short, focusing on key points that are relevant to the job you are applying for. Aim for a maximum of three paragraphs; two is better.

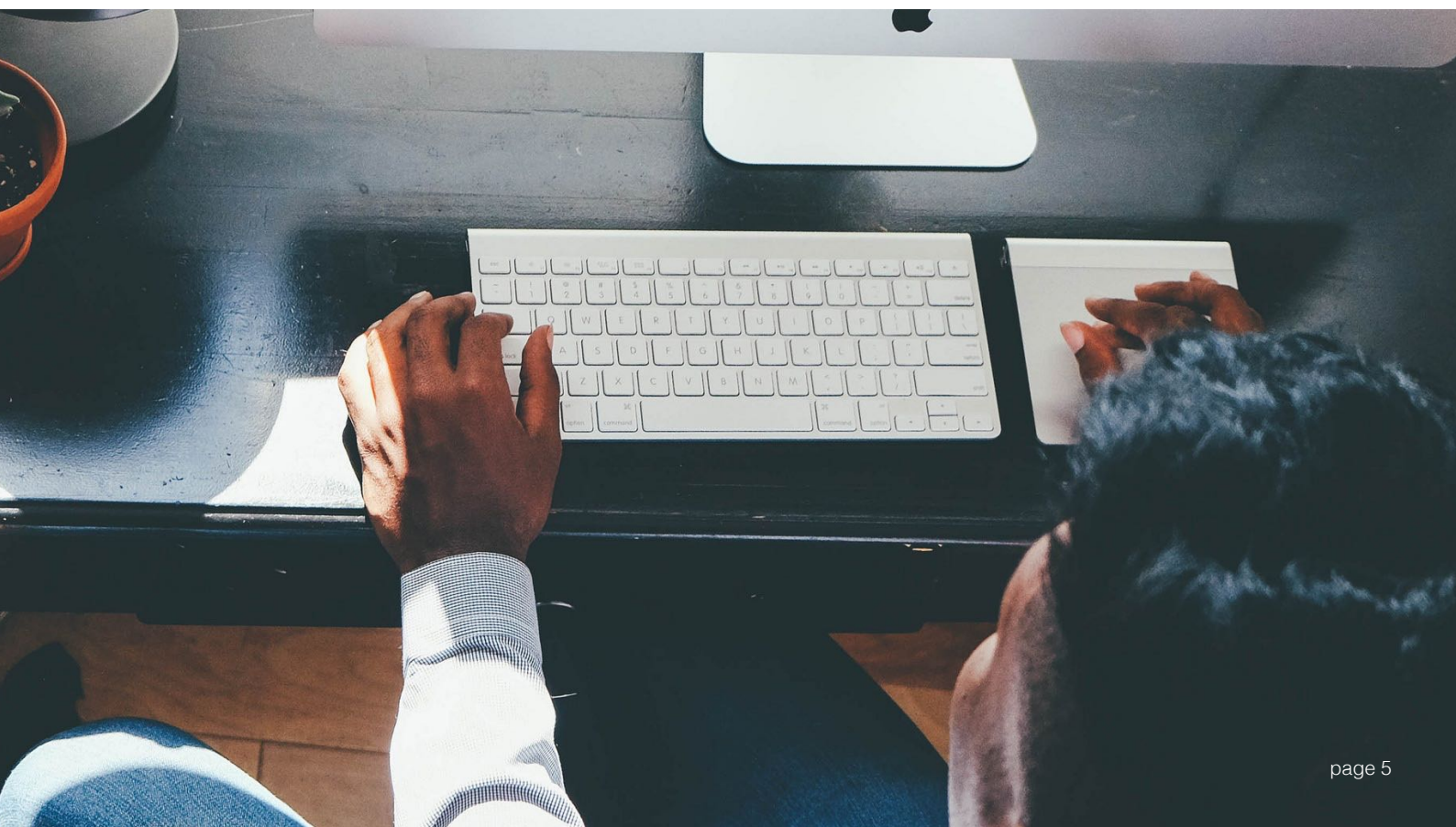
Use plain styling and text on a plain white background and don't use emoticons.

Sign off with "Yours sincerely" or similar, followed by your name.

If the company has asked you to attach a CV, remember to attach it. You will be surprised at the number of emails that should have attachments, but don't!

Check for spelling and grammatical errors, check again and, as a final check, ask someone else to proof-read it. Don't rely on spell checker – remember that a simple typing or grammatical error might result in a rejection!

One final check: read the email, ensure that your CV is attached and then send. Keep a copy for reference.



Generic cover letter

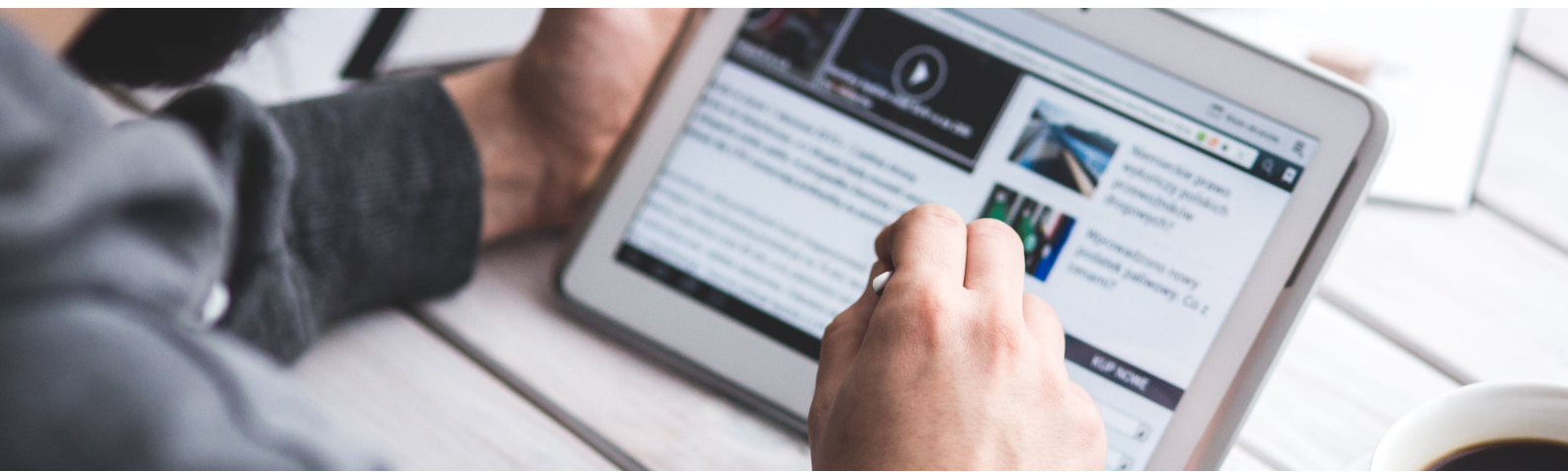
Write a generic cover letter that you can customise for each application.

Use a plain font like Avenir, Century Gothic, Ariel or Helvetica.

Up-to-date contact information should include: phone numbers including dialling code, email address and postal address (inc full post code).

Keep your text to one page, divided into paragraphs.

Check for spelling and grammatical errors, check again and, as a final check, ask someone to proof-read it.



Specific cover letter

Address the relevant person.

Always use a salutation at the beginning of the letter. Try not to be too formal and if you know the person's first name, use it; eg, Dear John.

Include a subject heading in bold after the salutation, giving job title, reference and, if relevant, where you saw the vacancy advertised.

Show that you have researched the company; eg, finance systems, growth, office move, merger, new products etc (look at trade sites and the company website for details).

Highlight a couple of work achievements that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

If you are applying for a sector-specific role, highlight your experience. This could include systems specific to your sector, or relevant compliance.

Check for spelling and errors, check again and, as a final check, ask someone to proof-read it.

Don't forget to include your CV!

Print on plain white A4 paper and, if you can, print the address label with the relevant details. Ensure that you pay sufficient postage!

Phones

Does your outgoing voicemail message on your mobile and landline sound professional? If not, record a new, clear and professional outgoing voicemail – and make sure that there is room for messages in your voicemail box.

Return calls within 24 hours.

Emails

Use a professional email address; eg, firstnamelastname@ or something very similar. Don't forget to create a professional email signature.

Proof-read and spell check every message before hitting send. Respond to emails within 24 hours.

Social media

HR and recruitment professionals will look at your profile on Facebook and on other social media. Take time to review your profile, posts and pictures, and remove or amend anything that may cause concern. Set your accounts to private.

References

Some businesses perform detailed pre-employment checks after they have offered a job to a candidate. These can include ID checks, previous employment (normally five years), proof of address, verification of academic and professional qualifications, criminal record check and credit check.

Please note that some businesses do not carry out such detailed checks, whilst others will perform just a few of these. However, all employers will carry out ID and employment reference checks.

The company is required to obtain your permission to start pre-employment checks and store the information on its database. At some stage of the selection process you will be asked to sign and date a document that authorises the company to commence these checks, normally after you have accepted the appointment and have resigned from your current job.

Prepare a list of employment references going back five years, making sure that their contact details are accurate and up to date. Include name (first and last), job title, full company name and address (including post code), email address and phone number (including dialling code if relevant). Remember that line managers will forward reference requests to HR, so make sure that the relevant HR person is listed.

Most companies have strict policies on references, and will typically confirm your name, job title, dates of employment (month and year) and salary information.

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Email info@cvac.eu
Web www.cvac.eu
Phone 020 3637 7930