# Episode 6

## Tailor your CV to beat the Bots

**Slide 1:** Mini-Series: Own your CV brought to you by the UCT Careers Service. Episode 6: Tailor your CV to beat the Bots.

**Slide 2: Introduction**

In this episode we are going to look at the trend towards using software to screen CVs and what you need to do, to beat the bots!

When applying for a job, it is more and more common these days that your CV will be filtered by some form of software or programme before being seen by human eyes.

These are often referred to as Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), and it's really critical to understand how they work and what you need to do to ensure that your CV makes it through this first screening.

**Slide 3: Applicant Tracking Systems**

Let's look at how these systems work.

ATS are designed to search your CV for key words, terms, titles, experience, qualifications and skills. These are taken from the job description.

The results of this electronic scan are used to score applications, and recruiters then focus on only those candidates who are ranked as a good match.

So it's up to you to write your CV for each application in such a way that the ATS scores it well!

**Slide 4:** Here is an example of the key words and terms that could be taken from a job advert.

**Slide 5: Designing your CV for an ATS**

When your CV gets loaded into an ATS, the text gets broken up and analysed so that the automated search, filtering and ranking can begin.

If your CV is in a complex format, the text might get scrambled and you may be passed over - even if you are a good candidate.

**Slide 6: Format**

These are the important things to remember when constructing your CV:

- Do not use tables, columns, graphs, images or headers and footers
- Use standard, explanatory headings separating sections
- Sequence activities in reverse-chronological order with clear dates in consistent format eg. December 2019 – February 2020
- Use one simple font all in the same size
- Stick to simple bullet points and use only for sub-points
- Submit in the requested format

**Slide 7: Style and content**

It's not only about how you put it together, but also what you include:

- Only include relevant points and keep them concise
- Leave off any roles or experiences not applicable
- Give more words and space to most relevant activities and achievements
- Try to include measurable results and quantifiable evidence
- Use action words
- Use simple, note-style language
- Write out terms in full and also include acronyms eg. Bachelor of Arts (BA)

**Slide 8: Tailor every application**

To score well in an ATS screening, you need to adapt your CV to the role that you're applying to.

The simplest way to do this is to take the job description and highlight what you believe are the key qualifications, skills and experiences required.

**Slide 9: Tailoring your CV**

When compiling your CV for each application you should:

- Use exactly the terms (and acronyms) from the job advert e.g. Fluent French, Report writing, Computer-Aided Design (CAD)
- Include a Core Competencies or Skills section
- Place key words or terms 2-3 times in your CV – these are commonly tasks or skills e.g. Relationship-building, Content development, Social media marketing
- Reiterate key words in various sections e.g. Data analysis can go under Core Skills and within Work Experience wherever it was performed

**Slide 10: Testing**

Once you have checked your CV thoroughly to make sure there are no errors or typos, you can test its ATS compatibility.

Here are some ways to do this:

- Save it as a plain text file and read it thoroughly to make sure things have not disappeared or become disorganised
- Copy and paste the job advert and your CV into a free ATS resume scan, offered by sites such as Jobscan.co

**Slide 11:** Thank you for tuning into episode 6 of Mini-Series: Own your CV brought to you by the UCT Careers Service.