

How to Write a Good CV

Often your CV will be the first impression you will make on a company. Here is an indication on how to present a good CV. A strong well constructed CV can be the difference between obtaining an interview or not.

Taking some time on the wording and construction of a good CV is worth the effort.

Structure

Start with your personal details. Full name, date of birth and contact details including all useable telephone numbers. Avoid details such as religious affiliation, children's names etc...

Educational history and professional qualifications should follow, including name of institutions and dates attended in reverse order – university before school results. List grades and passes attained. (These details will matter more if you have recently entered the job market, than if for example you left full time education 20 years ago).

Include computer skills and (genuine) foreign language skills and any other recent training/development that is relevant to the role applied for.

The most widely accepted style of employment record is the **chronological CV** in which career history is presented in reverse date order starting with most recent. Achievements and responsibilities should be listed against each role. Emphasis the more recent employment.

A Functional CV can sometimes be more appropriate, for example if you have held a number of unrelated jobs. This presentation emphasizes key skills which can be grouped together under suitable headings. Career progression and the nature of jobs held can be unclear with this type of CV.

Leave hobbies and interests to last – keep this section short. References can simply be 'Available on Request'. Current salary details should not be included. A good cover letter should always accompany your CV.

Your CV and cover letter should combine to create a picture of you and your career-to-date and illustrate why you are different from the competition! Following this advice should get you on the shortlist.

General Tips

- Your CV should be laser-printed in black ink using a plain type face, on good quality A4 white/cream paper. Decorative borders are not necessary, nor are photographs of yourself.
- If applying by post, your CV and cover letter should be submitted in a suitable quality envelope, clearly addressed. If applying by email, time should be taken designing and

- formatting to ensure your details read clearly. Sending a copy to yourself is a good way of checking it before sending to an employer.
- Your CV should ideally cover no more than three pages and never more than four. Aim to ensure the content is clear, structured, concise and relevant. Using bullet points rather than full sentences can help minimise word usage.
 - A basic CV may need tailoring with each job application to best suit the requirements of the role applied for.
 - The completed CV needs to be checked carefully for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes – which always leave a poor impression – and to ensure that it makes sense. Ask an ‘independent’ party to review the whole document before it is put into use.
 - Remember when writing and structuring your CV that it is essentially a marketing document on you and that a potential employer will use the details provided to form interview questions. It should be clear and easy to read. Gaps in career history should be explained avoiding the temptation to coverup.

If you would like any further advice on your CV, please contact us.