

Writing Your CV

Layout

There is a basic structure to a CV which will provide your prospective employer every chance to understand you, your background, skill set and career history at a glance.

- 1) **Personal Details:** Head the CV with your full name, full address, telephone number, mobile phone number and e-mail address.
- 2) **Personal Profile:** Follow this with a short paragraph describing yourself and your career objectives. Refer to yourself in the 3rd person.
- 3) **Education:** List your qualifications and education history, most recent first e.g. E.g. Bristol University, BA (Hons) History, 2:1
- 4) **Career History:** This is your opportunity to describe your career so far to the potential employer, and outline your career successes and achievements. List your experiences beginning with the most recent first, using the following format:
 - Name of your employer, job title and dates of employment.
 - Concise description of what your role involved
 - What you achieved in the position e.g. targets hit or exceeded, major accounts won, how you compared to your peer group, how you progressed in the company and if you were promoted and so on. Have Achievements as a sub-header with bullet points outlining these key achievements.

➤ Remember you are looking to describe the progression of your career. It is crucial to place emphasis on you most recent employment and try to avoid repetition of roles and duties.
- 5) **Skills:** List experience of computer software packages such as Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Sage, and any foreign language skills.
- 6) **Interests:** This gives the prospective employer an insight into who you are as a person and will often be brought up as a good discussion starter. Pick things you are genuinely interested in (and can back up). If relevant, draw upon interests where you have had to show leadership or organisational skills those which involve an element of working well in a team (sports & extra-curricular responsibilities or for example).

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General tips

You only have a limited time to showcase your skills and capture the reader's attention so it's important that you follow some basic principles; and remember that your CV is your personal marketing tool, so make sure you sell yourself!

Length

- Keep your CV short and concise - no more than two pages of A4. Include summaries of your employment and education, rather than over detailing. Use bullet points rather than bulks of text - so that potential employers can quickly see how they may benefit from employing you.

Language

- Use formal, well-written language, no abbreviations or slang.

Format

- Use a professional font such as Times New Roman or Calibri, of a sensible size, ideally 10 or 11, and stick to black in colour.
- Make sure that your formatting is consistent (bold, italic, spacing, etc.) and that the overall picture is that your CV provides is a professional and polished one.

Content

- There is no need to include your photo, your salary history, the reason you left your previous position (unless you have had a particularly high number of jobs).
- Do not elaborate your educational qualifications or work history, although it might seem tempting. Many employers carry out reference checks and if you are caught lying you can risk losing your job and damaging your reputation.
- Make sure your CV is tailored to the industry you are looking to get into. E.g. if you are looking to get into Sales or Recruitment draw upon any experience you have that will demonstrate the characteristics and attributes of a successful individual in that space such as tenacity, drive, work ethic, people skills, strong communication etc.

Proof read

- Make sure that you spell check and proof read your CV and ask a friend or family member to do the same. Clients are unforgiving of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in such an important document.