

C.V. Hints & Tips

Writing a good CV (curriculum vitae in full) is an essential element of a successful job search. Your CV is your personal advertisement. It should be designed to make employers sit up and take notice of your skills and what you have to offer.

It is said that a CV gets no more than 30 seconds attention. In that time you need to gain interest and leave a clear concise image of quality, professionalism and of your likely benefit to the reader and their organisation.

While it is important to avoid a standardised approach it is not appropriate for your CV to be a form of unstructured free expression that somehow portrays you in a unique way. You should consider both content and presentation, which are equally important as a poorly presented CV may simply not get read. Writing an effective CV takes time and may require several drafts.

Ground rules

- The most important thing to remember is that the primary purpose of your CV is to get you interviews for the jobs you're interested in.
- Your CV is your personal advertisement - its message must be clear and easily understood.
- Don't expect potential employers to read between the lines or infer what isn't said.
- First impressions count
 - * Use plenty of space, with wide margins. Visual appearance is important, and CVs should always be typed.
 - * Try to keep to two pages and use good quality A4 paper and a clear professional typeface.
- Avoid the use of "I". Try to use action orientated words such as: improved, successfully, achieved, maintained.
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations.

Content

- Include your name, address and, if appropriate, both home and mobile phone numbers on the front page. Other personal details, including your age or date of birth, marital status etc should normally be positioned at the end of your CV.
- Include a profile if you are sure that it adds to the CV. Clichés and generalisations rarely add value, and can detract.
- Explain any significant gaps in employment – otherwise potential employers will assume the worst.
- Always detail your experience in reverse order. Potential employers are more interested in where you are now than where you were 10 years ago.
 - * Don't be too modest. Potential employers need to know how good you are, and if you don't tell them, no-one else will.
 - * If you have any difficulty in describing your job, imagine you are leaving notes for stand-in who will have to take your place for a few weeks.
 - * State the title of each job you have held and clarify any ambiguities. Add the name of each company and, unless it's very well known, what they do and their size e.g. turnover.
 - * Try, wherever possible, to substantiate your work experience with specific achievements.
- Give your highest or most relevant qualification first and with the most detail. Include dates and institutions. Mention any professional examinations passed.

- List any professional courses you have attended, both internal and external, naming any major centres of excellence.
- Highlight your languages and be specific about your level of proficiency: fluent, conversational, basic, and whether spoken or written.
- Avoid:
 - * Height, weight or state of health
 - * Religious or political beliefs
 - * Too many personal details (e.g. children's names)
 - * Photographs
 - * Elaborate presentation (e.g. binders or coloured paper)
 - * Copies of references or qualifications
 - * Referees names
 - * Salary details
 - * Reasons for leaving jobs
 - * Exaggeration, distortion or untruths.

C.V. Check-List

Is it...

- Brief
- Well laid out
- Original
- Believable
- Interesting
- Factual
- Individual
- Easy to read
- Relevant

For more detailed guidance download [Writing Your C.V.](#)