



Writing a CV

What is a CV?

A CV is a short list of facts about you and your work history, skills, qualifications and experience. A good CV is essential when looking for work and it is worth spending time getting it right so it sells you to an employer.

Your CV should:

- be neat, typed if possible and to the best standard you can achieve in content and layout
- be short, 2 sides of a sheet of A4 paper is normally enough
- be positive, it should emphasise your achievements, strengths, successes, and
- make a good impression. This means presenting the facts about yourself in a positive way.

How to use your CV

Send your CV with a covering letter or email asking companies if they have any current or future vacancies.

Use your CV to help you remember all the dates and information you need each time you need to fill in an application form.

When applying for jobs by phone it can help if you are asked to give more information about previous jobs.

Having your CV with you while you're waiting to be called in to an interview can help refresh your memory. You can also leave a copy with the interviewer if they do not already have one.

Recruitment agencies may sometimes ask to see your CV before you can register with them.

What to include

There is no set format – how you present your CV is up to you. However, you should include at least the following:

- your name
- your address
- your phone number
- your e-mail address (if you have one), and
- your career history

Put your most recent job first and include dates. Employers will be more interested in what you have done recently. Emphasise the skills and experience you have gained across those jobs (for example, skills in dealing with customers or communication skills).

You don't need to include your date of birth

Laws on discrimination mean that you don't need to put your age or date of birth on your CV.

Here are some examples of what you may want to include:

A personal profile

This is a short statement at the beginning of your CV to sell yourself – your skills, experience and personal qualities. You could include positive words such as “competent”, “adaptable”, and “conscientious”.

Tailor the statement to the requirements of each job that you apply for, so that you make it clear to the employer that you’re right for the job.

Achievements

Mention things you did well in your past jobs which could be relevant to the job you’re applying for.

Qualifications and training

Include any qualifications and training from previous jobs (for example, training in health and safety or a certificate in food hygiene). Put the most recent first and include any qualifications that you got from school or college.

Interests

These can support your application if your hobbies and leisure activities highlight responsibilities and skills that are relevant to the job you’re applying for. Perhaps you belong to a club or a society which you organise activities for, or you use leadership skills or teamwork.

Other information

If there are gaps in your CV it can be helpful to include this. If you had a career break because you were caring for children or elderly relatives, make this a positive thing and think about the skills you used doing this. If the job you’re applying for is different from what you’ve done in the past, explain why you’re interested in the new type of work.

References

It’s good to have two or more people who can provide a work or personal reference. Ideally, one should be your most recent employer. If you haven’t worked for a while it could be someone who has known you for a long time. It should be someone who can comment on your qualities in relation to the job. You should ask the person to agree to this beforehand.

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