

WRITING A CV

Your CV is a very important tool which highlights your skills and experience to potential employers, allowing them to decide whether or not to invite you for interview. You may be perfect for the job but unless you can persuade them of that on paper, you are never going to get the chance to prove it to them in person. It's therefore extremely important that you spend the time to get it right.

The following guidelines on how to present your CV should ensure that you maximise its potential.

PERSONAL DETAILS

- Your name should always head the CV. There is no need to label your CV as 'Curriculum Vitae'.
- Contact details should be listed including home address, home telephone number, mobile number and email address. Make sure that your email address sounds professional.
- Nationality and Visa Status (if relevant) should also be provided.
- There is no legal requirement to provide your Date of Birth, however this is a matter of personal choice.
- There is no need to mention your sex, religious beliefs or marital status.

PROFILE

- This section should give a brief overview of your key skills and attributes which are relevant to the role you are applying for. It should act as a hook, encouraging the employer to read on.
- Key achievements can be detailed but should always be quantified.
- Be honest and factual. Do not make claims that you cannot substantiate.
- Use bullet points to create short punchy statements.

EDUCATION

- All qualifications should be listed here including school, college, university and any work related training.
- These should be listed in reverse chronological order with the most recent qualification first.
- You should list the dates of study (year only), name of awarding institute and qualification obtained.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- List your employment details in reverse chronological order with most recent employer first.
- You should provide dates of employment (months and years), employers name and your job title(s) with a brief outline of your duties and responsibilities.
- Specific projects worked on can be noted although you should always try to quantify these in terms of size / cost.
- Make sure you highlight your experience which is relevant to the role you are applying for.
- Use bullet points for maximum effect.
- Be honest and factual. Do not make claims that you cannot substantiate.
- It is best not to list reasons for leaving employers on your CV. This is usually covered at interview stage.
- Any gaps in employment should always be given an explanation.
- Do not provide current salary details.

SKILLS

- Highlight details of any technical competencies within your industry sector.
- Computer skills / packages should also be listed.
- You can also detail any competency in foreign languages.
- Driving licence details can be provided if relevant to the role you are applying for.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Details of any professional memberships should be listed here.

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

- This is a good opportunity to show interests that may be relevant to the employer / position.
- Keep irrelevant information to a minimum.

REFEREES

- Details of two referees should be provided including their name, position, relation to you and correct contact details. At least one of these should be work related.
- Always ask the referees approval before giving their details to a potential employer.
- Make sure the referee will give you a glowing reference. Do not just put someone forward because they are your boss. It's better to put someone forward with less authority who will talk positively about you.
- If you are not happy with referees being contacted prior to an offer of employment being accepted, you should state this on your CV.
- If providing references extends your CV to more than two pages, simply state that references are available on request.
- If you know a referee is going to be contacted by an employer, make sure that you provide them with details of the position and what is required of you, in order that they can be prepared and do you justice.

GENERAL

- Avoid writing in the first person. It's much better to start sentences with verbs.
- Always use positive language.
- Make sure your CV is word processed. Microsoft Word is the widely accepted standard.
- Use a plain black font (Arial or Times New Roman) and a sensible size of text (headings in 12pt and main body of text in 10pt). Use the same style of font throughout the CV and also for any covering letter.
- CV's on average should be a maximum of 3 to 4 pages in length. Keep it relevant and specific with a focus on quality rather than quantity.

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- Use a precise and clear format, allowing spacing between paragraphs and adequate margins. The headings for the above sections can be used in bold to clearly segment your CV.
- Pictures on CV's are a definite no.
- Your CV should flow and be grammatically correct with no spelling mistakes. Use spellcheck and then read and re-read. If possible ask a family member to also check it.
- If you are printing your CV, make sure you use good quality white paper (minimum 100gsm).
- All employers have different requirements, so expect to adjust your CV to highlight your suitability for particular jobs.
- Remember to review and update your CV on a regular basis.
- Make sure you re-read your CV before any interview.

If you require any further guidance on writing a CV, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Good luck!