



Writing a Good CV

In a competitive market, graduates need a good CV to succeed in securing a job. Your CV is an advert for you, an opportunity to sell yourself to potential employers. Your CV is the first step in the recruitment process so it has to be right!

Personal Details

Make sure your name appears at the top and is in larger font than the rest of your CV so it stands out. Beneath this include your home address and contact information. Don't include a novelty email address – it doesn't sound very professional. Pick a good font for your CV – one that is easy to read but stands out from the usual Times New Roman or Arial.

Career Aim/Personal Statement

Make sure this isn't too vague or generic. Keep it brief (3 or 4 lines maximum). Demonstrate your career focus and perhaps evidence of 2 or 3 main strengths and where they were developed.

Education and Qualifications

Start with your most recent education. University qualifications will be of more interest to an employer than what you did at school so devote more space to this. Include the dates, name of university, degree title e.g. BA (Hons) Philosophy and the grade you are expecting or have achieved. Include any modules you studied that are relevant to the job application in addition to your thesis/dissertation research or project work. Time spent abroad or work placements attended as part of your course should be mentioned.

For school education, include dates, name of school/college and A-Levels or GCSEs or equivalent qualifications studied with grades. Unless specified, it's not normally necessary to list every subject studied. The number of passes achieved is enough but state the grade you got for Mathematics and English.

Work Experience

The work experience section of your CV or Resume is where recruiters will focus most of their attention. You must include the dates of your employment, the job title you held and the name of the employer. Employers are realistic about the fact that students and recent grads have only done part-time and summer jobs that may not relate to the career you want to pursue, however, employers will still expect you to be able to show the responsibilities and skills you got out of your work experience.

The most common way of presenting work experience is to do it in reverse chronological order (most recent first). However if you have very relevant experience in the career field you are applying to, e.g. an internship with a company you may wish to include this first under a separate heading such as '**Relevant Work Experience**'

and list less relevant jobs under '**Other Work Experience**'. This will immediately show an employer that you have taken the initiative to gain knowledge of the sector and have experience of that work environment.

Target your CV to the specific job advertised – read over the terminology used and the skills mentioned in the advert and where appropriate use these words in your CV. Back up your claims – avoid writing bland content, if you have 'good communication skills' demonstrate how you have used them effectively to get something done. Identify the contribution you made – rather than just stating a list of duties you had, think about ways of demonstrating success in a particular role. Mention your achievements at work and any concrete results you achieved (in measurable terms). For example, rather than writing, 'designed company website' you could say, 'designed company website which increased company's overall product sale by 50 percent'

Specialist Experience

List any specialist experience and/or qualifications that are relevant to the job role under specially designed sections. For example, researchers may provide the sections 'Research' or 'Research Interests'

Activities/Interests/Positions of Responsibility

These are all relevant sections to include because they demonstrate that you are motivated to pursue other activities and are a well-rounded individual. Positions of responsibility and achievements can be extra-curricular, for example, significant involvement in the Student Union, organising events in a social or sporting club, spearheading charity fundraising at school or university etc. Stating your interests doesn't mean just writing a list. Try to indicate your level of involvement and what you gain from the activity.

Additional Information

Languages – mention any language skills and your proficiency.

Skills – skills in this section include anything vocational that has not appeared elsewhere on your CV, for example IT skills and driving licence (list the software packages and applications you use and your level of competency for each) Any certificates you have such as First Aid or Health and Safety for example, should be listed in this section.

References/Referees

If you don't have space on your CV, a simple 'References available on request' is acceptable. If you do not have space, it is very common to give the details of two referees: one academic and one employer. Give their names, position, address, phone numbers and email addresses. Always ask for their permission first and remember to keep them updated on your aspirations and progress.