

Career Advice

How to write a good CV

A professional CV can occasionally itself secure you a job, especially if you are applying for temporary work. At the very least, a good CV will ensure you promote yourself to your best advantage and help secure interview.

How to write a good CV? What CV layout should I use? There is no single way to construct a CV; it is your document and can be structured and presented as you wish within the basic framework set out below.

What information should a CV include?

- Personal details. Most CVs start with these but take care to avoid superfluous details, such as religious affiliation, children's names and so on.
- Education and qualifications. Take care to include the names of institutions and dates attended in reverse order; university before school results.
- Work experience. The most widely accepted style of employment record is the chronological CV. Career history is presented in reverse date order starting with most recent. Achievements and responsibilities are listed against each role. More emphasis/information should be put on more recent jobs
- A functional CV can sometimes be more appropriate, for example if you have held a number of unrelated jobs. This presentation emphasises key skills which can be grouped together under suitable headings. However, career progression and the nature of jobs held can be unclear with this type of CV.
- Skills. Include computer skills and (genuine) foreign language skills and any other recent training/development that is relevant to the role applied for.
- Hobbies and Interests. Keep this section short.
- References. These can simply be 'Available on request'.

The order in which you present these, and the emphasis which you give to each one will depend on what you are applying for and what you have to offer.

General Tips

Your CV should be laser-printed in black ink using a plain typeface, on good quality A4 white/cream paper. Decorative borders are not necessary, nor are photographs of yourself.

- A good CV should ideally cover no more than two pages and never more than three. Aim to ensure the content is clear, structured, concise and relevant. Using bullet points rather than full sentences can help minimise word usage.
- There is no reason to include your reasons for leaving each job on your CV but be prepared to answer these questions in your interview.
- The completed CV needs to be checked carefully for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes and to ensure that it makes sense. Ask an independent party to review the whole document before it is sent out.
- Remember when writing and structuring your CV that it is essentially marketing you and that a potential employer will use the details provided to form interview questions. It should be clear and easy to read. Gaps in career history should be explained and falsehoods and inaccuracies avoided at all costs.
- Current salary details should not be included
- A good covering letter should always accompany your CV.

So now you know how to write a good CV, good luck with your job hunt