

CREATING/UPDATING YOUR CV

Writing a CV can be a stressful task, especially if you're starting from scratch!

There's no one-size-fits-all solution for the perfect CV, it should always be clearly formatted and short enough for a recruiter to scan quickly – and most importantly – tailored to the role you're applying for.

So where do you start?

All CVs should contain the following:

1. Personal details

Make sure to include your name, email, contact phone number and address. To avoid any awkward moments, make sure these are clearly presented at the top of your CV. 'Curriculum Vitae' is an unnecessary title – your name is not. Please note that that you are not required to include your date of birth or relationship status on your CV.

2. Personal statement

As the first thing that's shown on your CV, a personal statement is an essential part of making yourself stand out from the crowd. It explains who you are, what you're offering, and what you're looking for. Aim to prove why you're suitable in one short and succinct paragraph.

3. Skills Profile

A skills profile at the start of your CV will very quickly highlight your key skills and attributes to a recruiter. This should be reviewed and amended to reflect the role you are applying.

4. Work experience & Achievements

This section should include all of your relevant work experience, listed with the most recent first. Include your job title, the name of the organisation, time in post, and your key responsibilities. This is your chance to show how your previous experience has given you the skills needed to make you a suitable candidate. List all of your relevant skills and achievements (backing them up with examples), and make it clear how you would apply these to the new role.

5. Education

Your educational experience and achievements should be listed here, along with dates, the type of qualification and/or the grade you achieved – although the specific parts of education that you include in your CV will depend on your individual situation. For example, if you have more educational achievements than work experience, placing an emphasis on this section is a good idea.

6. Hobbies and interests

You don't always need to include hobbies and interests in your CV, but mentioning relevant ones could back up your skills and help you to stand out from the crowd – not to mention give you something to talk about at an interview. Just don't say you enjoy socialising with friends just for the sake of including something. If it's not going to add value, leave it out.

Any extra information, such as reasons for a career change or reasons for gaps in career history should also be included as required.

What words should I include in my CV?

Figuring out what words to use on your CV can be tough – especially when you’re trying to fit a lot of skills and experience into a short document.

Appropriate keywords for your CV could include:

- Accurate
- Adaptable
- Confident
- Hard-working
- Innovative
- Pro-active
- Reliable
- Responsible

In addition to using the right words, you should also back up your attributes up with genuine accomplishments. Not only will you stand out from others with identical skills, you’ll also be able to prove your suitability more effectively.

After all, anyone can say they’re hard-working – but not everyone can prove it.

How should I present my CV?

Your CV is the first thing an employer will see when hiring for a vacancy, and how it looks at first glance will be the reason they decide to read it in more detail. Even if your skills match the role perfectly, a messy and confusing CV probably won’t even get a second look.

To ensure you’re presenting yourself (and your skills) in the best light, you should always:

- Keep it short and succinct – two sides of A4 will almost always suffice but don’t worry if it goes over the two pages.
- Choose a clear, professional font to ensure that your CV can be easily read (leave Comic Sans and Word Art back in the 1990s where they belong)
- Lay it out in a logical order, with sufficient spacing and clear section headings (e.g. Work experience, Education)
- Order your experience and education in reverse chronological order to highlight your most recent experience and achievements
- Check your grammar and spelling thoroughly

Last few things...

Once you’ve put together your CV – don’t assume it’s finished. Every job is different and tailoring your CV accordingly is vital to standing out. Edit it in line with the job description whenever you make an application, and you’ll be able to ensure it matches the specifications every time.

Highlight that you’re the right match for the job by outlining:

- The specific skills you have to offer the employer
- Relevant accomplishments and achievements
- The work and educational experience you have in their field
- Personal qualities that will make you right for the role
- An understanding of the job requirements