

How To Write A CV

In this digital day and age, there's nothing like a beautifully presented CV on crisp paper to impress a prospective employer. Here's how to do it.

Length

First things first; CV should never be more than two sides of A4 paper. Fitting everything in can be a challenge, but it also ensures you tailor your application specifically to each job you apply for, highlighting relevant information and omitting anything irrelevant.

Font and design

There is some scope to show off your creativity here, but remember the most important thing is to showcase your skills. If it is a beautifully designed creative masterpiece, but no one can read it or work out what the important bits are it is not going to help you to get your foot in the door.

Language

Keep it simple rather than spouting business-speak. Avoid using acronyms or technical terminology as the person who looks at your CV first may not be familiar with it. In other words, explain your role and responsibilities as you would to an outsider who has no industry knowledge. You will come across as a better communicator if you stick to plain English that everyone can understand. Don't forget to proof-read for spelling and grammar and ask someone else – preferably outside your industry – to read it too.

Photos

Hairdressing is such a visual creative industry, so you may want to include a photograph to give a snapshot of who you are, but beware: many employers avoid using photographs in order to comply with equal opportunities legislation. If they really want to see what you look like they'll probably browse the Facebook for pictures.

Honesty

It can be tempting to embellish when it comes to CVs and this is particularly the case when it comes to job titles and qualifications. The unanimous advice is not to mess with the truth as these facts are easily checked out by potential employers. Anyone who's watched *The Apprentice* will know that candidates who lie on their CVs are found out and don't progress as there's a question mark over their integrity.

Career gaps

Declare any career breaks but try and give positive reasons for taking them. These may include taking time out to bring up children or taking a year out to travel after an intensive educational or work phase in your life but if candidates are truthful, they generally will get credit for this by recruiters. If you conceal facts, they may well be uncovered at a later date.

Layout

1. Personal details belong at the top of the CV: full name and contact details, including home a sensible email address and mobile number. There's no need to put date of birth. It's a good idea to put your name and contact details on the footer of page two, in case they get separated.

2. A brief personal statement or career objective comes next and should set out in one sentence your current skills proposition and what you want to achieve in your next role.
3. Short skills summary, which should consist of your unique selling proposition (USP) – the skills and strengths that fit you for the advertised role. You can list these skills either in bullet points or in three or four short sentences. List responsibilities and achievements, such as details of financial budget you have charge of or team size. Make sure you back up any assertion with quantifiable evidence, such as: “I introduced a Colour Club which brought in XXX more clients”.
4. **Work History:** present this in reverse chronological order, detailing name of employer, your job title and dates worked – the month and year should be enough. You can also include any relevant work experience, such as volunteering at a fashion show or styling the hair for a charity event.
5. **Education:** List in reverse chronological order educational institutions attended and period of study alongside qualifications and grades achieved. Don't forget to include extra occupational training, professional qualifications and any teams you have been included in, as well as any awards you have been nominated for or won. It's acceptable to summarise qualifications if they are numerous, very dated or you are selling yourself chiefly on experience.
6. **Additional skills:** A useful heading for flagging up added value you could offer an organisation or skills that are not included in your earlier USP section. Are you an expert in technology, is customer service your forte, do you speak other languages?
7. Hobbies and interests: this section is not always necessary and can look like a lonely hearts ad if not written well. It is your chance to bring some personality to the document but only include if you have genuine interests which you can talk about that are relevant to the role – for example art, fashion or photography.
8. **References:** Include two including your manager from your current job and your previous job or a tutor, if you've graduated recently. If you think you may get a poor reference or are worried your current employer will discover you are job seeking, state 'References supplied upon request'. This means they won't be approached until you have a job offer, at which point you can have a discussion with your future employer.

Candidates can summarise where necessary in order to save space, such as ancient qualifications, but do list any that are important to the job separately.