

Preparing your CV

A good CV is essential when looking for work, especially when there are high volumes of candidates applying for the same job, but what should it contain?

There is no model template, and each sector may require greater emphasis on certain sections of your CV, such as qualifications or work experience, but in general, your CV should be neat and clear enough for a recruiter to scan and understand it quickly. Additionally, it should be easy to appraise your key skills and work experience to determine whether you're appropriate for the role.

Not sure where to start? Here are some basic rules you should follow when writing a CV.

What information should I include on my CV?

Personal Details: It may sound obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people forget to include their name, email, contact phone number and address. Make sure these are clearly marked at the top of your CV.

Personal Statement: Although optional, many jobseekers choose to include a personal statement in their CV as it's a good opportunity to tell an employer about your suitability for the job.

Keep it short and sweet and be sure to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment to the role and the company.

Work Experience: This section includes any work experience that you have in the field you are applying for. When listing these work experiences include your job title, time in the post, responsibilities and the name of your organisation. Remember to list your most recent role first.

Achievements: List relevant skills and achievements from previous jobs, giving clear examples of how you would apply these to the new role.

Education: List formal qualifications and any training and development undertaken, either independently or during previous periods of employment.

Hobbies and Interests: Only include if the skills or teamwork concerned are relevant for the job. There is no point listing that you're sociable or that you enjoy going to the cinema for the sake of it.

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

How to present your CV

Remember, your CV is a reflection of yourself, so it's important that it's well laid out and looks professional.

- Keep it short enough to read quickly and ideally no more than two sides of A4
- Choose a clear, professional font to ensure that your CV can be easily read
- Be clearly laid out in a logical order, with sufficient spacing and clear section headings (work experience, education)
- Avoid typing mistakes at all costs. A simple spell check is not enough: ask someone else to proof read your finished CV
- Order your experience and education into reverse chronological order to highlight your most recent experience and achievements

Once you're happy with how your CV looks, make sure you're happy with the content. And highlight that you're the right match for the job by outlining:

- Specific skills you have to offer the employer
- Experience you have in the specific field
- Appropriate personal qualities for the role
- An understanding of the job requirements

