

A Guide to writing your curriculum vitae

When applying for jobs, your CV is your ultimate selling tool. If you want to be selected for interview, this is your opportunity to showcase your skills and experience. It can be challenging to get through this first hurdle as employers hiring often receive hundreds of applications for each job advertisement. Have this in your mind when preparing your CV as you'll need to be both succinct and relevant to grab their attention.

What to include on your CV

Employers do not have time to read long CVs so aim for two A4 pages and include only what's really necessary to get you the job.

A sensible way to order your CV is as follows:

- Name and contact details
- Personal statement (if using one)
- Career history
- Education, qualifications & training
- Additional skills

Name and contact details

Always put your name and contact details first so employers can easily find your email address and phone numbers.

Ensure that your email address is appropriate for business use. If necessary, set up a new address for your job search. Jokey addresses such as jonnie loves cake@hotmail.com are fine for personal use but may put some employers off.

You can include links to your social media profiles here as long as they are appropriate. See our [10 Step Guide to Managing your Social Media Presence](#) for more information.

Personal details such as your age, nationality, or marital status are not necessary and should not be included.

Personal statement

Personal statements are not mandatory and opinion about their usefulness is divided. If you do include one it should be a short statement or 'summary of experience' and include relevant information about your experience and skills in relation to the job.

Most employers prefer candidates to write in the first person and you should try to avoid using cliché statements which have largely become meaningless to employers, such as 'I am a results driven, hard-working individual who thrives under pressure'.

Career history

Start with your most recent job, work experience or voluntary placement and work your way back. List the name of the employer, your job title and the dates you were employed (ensuring that the dates are correct as these will be checked at reference stage!).

How much information you put about each role will depend on how relevant it is to your application and how long you were there for. As a general rule you should include more

information about your most recent relevant roles and include two or three key achievements (*don't forget that this is a chance to sell yourself, so don't be too modest*).

Don't worry if you have a lack of work experience as there are plenty of other ways to show you have the right skills and abilities. Voluntary work, taking part in clubs or societies, work experience, organising events, travelling, and raising a family are all examples of activities in which you develop various skills and abilities.

Employers like CVs which are easy to read at speed as they often receive hundreds of them at a time. A good way to do this is to use bullet points rather than paragraphs of text. List your key responsibilities and, where relevant, any key achievements and successes.

If there are any gaps, make sure you can explain them with a simple one line sentence such as 'career break to raise my family' or 'travelling throughout Europe'. If you have periods where you have been unemployed, state this but also include any work experience or voluntary work you undertook during this period.

Don't worry about including reasons for leaving employment at this stage. Employers can always check these with you at interview stage.

Education, qualifications & training

List your education (school, college or university), qualifications and training. Some roles will require specific qualifications, so make sure you include these. Include relevant work-related training but you do not need to include every single course you've ever attended as this will take up too much space.

Additional Skills

At the end of your CV you can include anything that does not fall into one of the categories above. Examples include whether you hold a particular driving licence, speak another language, or your IT skills. Only include details that are relevant to the role you are applying for.

Rather than provide details about referees at this stage, simply state 'References available upon request'.

Don't forget the basics...

Layout and font

Highlight titles and main headings in bold. Use a standard font such as Arial or Times New Roman and don't be tempted to make the font size small to fit more on the page. It must be easy to read. A simple border can look smart but fancy borders and formatting can take the focus away from the content.

Spelling and grammar

Use plain English with clear and concise content. Don't use 'text speak' or jargon and if using acronyms or abbreviations ensure that you explain what they mean. Always thoroughly check your spelling and grammar and ask someone else to read your CV before you send it. Nothing looks more unprofessional than a CV with lots of errors.