



CV WRITING GUIDE

How do I write a good CV?

Unfortunately there is no simple answer to that question, so here we outline CV best practice. By following these points, your CV will stand out to potential employers.

THE BASIC LAYOUT

Every employer wants to see the basics on your CV, so the easiest way to write one is to break it down into clear and easy to understand sections.

1. Contact details
2. Personal Statement
3. Work Experience and Achievements
4. Education
5. Hobbies and interests
6. References

CONTACT DETAILS

Right at the top of your CV should be section 1: your contact details. Basic information such as your full name, address, contact number and e-mail address. Now that all sounds obvious but one thing to remember is that you need to make sure you have a sensible e-mail address listed. That funny e-mail account you set up when you were younger is all well and good but employers will instantly get a bad perception of you over it. Don't forget a CV is often only scanned over for a few seconds and you need to make it stand out. Have a LinkedIn account? Then include the URL, its another way of showing your professional side.

Handy Hint: include a 'Header'. By including a 'Header' with your name and email address on each page, prospective employers can quickly find your info!

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The single most important part of your CV, and the one thing that you should spend time writing. What you write here will give the employer an overview of who you are and allows you to inject a bit of personality into your CV. Its also important to remember



that this is your chance to tailor your CV for a specific role you are applying for. To write a good personal statement you should cover who you are, what you can offer the each employer individually and what your career goals are.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This section is often where a CV goes wrong, there are a few things to remember when completing it. Firstly list your roles should be in reverse chronological order, in other words your current role first then work backwards. You do not need to go into detail on every single job, but make sure you spend time when listing your last role, you include the job title, dates of employment, location, roles and responsibilities and any achievements you had while working there. Achievements are important they allow an employer to see what you can bring to a role, so whether its the fact you broke a sales record or did something that brought praise from your superiors: make sure to write it down. If you're proud of what you achieved, then make sure an employer knows about it. Remember make sure it's relevant if you list it, an employer doesn't need to know what your roles and responsibilities were for a part time job when you were 18 UNLESS its relevant to the role your applying for.

EDUCATION

Similar to the previous section, list it in reverse chronological order. State the school/ university name, dates of education and the subjects you completed. If you completed a course or degree which is relevant to the role then list some of the relevant modules that were included.

**Handy Hint: for GCSEs, its often best to present it like this:
9 A*-C Grade GCSEs, including English & Maths**

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Why do you need this section? Well it helps you stand out from the crowd- your Unique Selling Point. An employer can learn a lot about your personality from what you do in your own time, this might just be the connection that you have with a recruiter that helps them remember who you are.

REFERENCES

Make sure you have two references although it is not always necessary to list them on a CV. Simply writing ' references available on request' is acceptable as long as you can produce the details when required. When choosing your references make sure the first is your previous employer, the second could be another previous employer, a university tutor or simply a character reference from a professional. Remember, most employers will not accept a generic email host, for example '@hotmail.com'.



A FEW HOUSEKEEPING RULES OF CV WRITING

There are other things to take into account when building your CV.

- Spell check! Never send a CV that hasn't been spell checked, a recruiter will simply discard a CV which has a lot of spelling mistakes.
- Gaps in your CV. If you went travelling, or had a child then list it. Having someone who has had life experiences is often looked upon better than someone with big unexplained gaps.
- TWO PAGE MAXIMUM! This can't be stressed enough, if your CV is more than two pages long it will often be discarded by recruiters. The simple fact is they don't have time to read a four or five page CV when there may be a large number of applicants to go through.
- Pictures. It is personal preference whether or not you include a picture of yourself on your CV but the common rule is not to. If you really want to make sure it is a professional head shot and not a picture of you out on a night out. Again, it's all about making those positive first impressions.
- An up to date CV is important. If you have gained a new skill then list it, career goals changed? Then adjust it as necessary, don't make the mistake of sending a CV which might miss something important that you have recently done.

Your CV is ultimately your first chance to make an impression and secure an interview. The clearer and carefully planned out your CV is, the quicker a role will become available to you.

