

WRITING YOUR CV

CVs should be short and clear (or direct and to the point) – remember it is your personal marketing document and your way to get your foot through the door. Above all – check for mistakes!

Your CV needs to do three things:

- Detail your experience
- Create a good first impression
- Get you an interview

Presentation

- Double check all dates of qualifications and employment including month and year and account for all gaps over 6 weeks
- Make it easy to read by using bullets, tabs and bold text
- Check for spelling and grammar - use a dictionary, not just the spell-check on your computer
- Choose an easy-to-read font like Arial or Times New Roman
- Keep to the point, aim to produce two pages and never more than three
- List your achievements within each role
- It is sometimes an advantage to produce a separate addendum sheet giving examples of the breadth of projects you have worked on.
- You don't need to put reasons for leaving each job but be ready to answer the question at interview
- Decorative borders or photographs of yourself are not necessary.
- Always use "I" rather than the third party
- Don't include salary details

Your personal details

Don't forget to include the following information:

- Name, address and contact phone numbers (home, work, mobile)
- Marital status
- Date of birth
- Nationality, and visa details if applicable
- E-mail address

Education

Start with the most recent and work backwards. Remember to include all your qualifications, with grades and dates. If you have a lot of work experience, the education section doesn't need to be quite so detailed - for example, simply state how many GCSEs you have rather than list all the subjects and grades.

Professional qualifications and skills

List all your professional qualifications and relevant courses you have attended. It's also a good idea to state your knowledge of IT systems, as well as any foreign languages you speak and your level of fluency.

Employment history

Start with your current or most recent job. Include your job title and briefly describe your responsibilities, duties and main achievements. State the name of the company and, if it's not well-known, the nature of its business. If you have extensive experience, keep your earlier jobs brief - it's your most recent role the interviewer will be most interested in.

If you've taken time out - for example to travel or to bring up children - include this. Interviewers don't like to see gaps. If you've temped for a long time, or have changed jobs frequently, you should explain why.

Interests and hobbies

These tell an interviewer a bit more about your personality, so they are important to include.

References or referees

You can either provide the details of referees or choose to say: 'References available on request'.

Tailoring your CV for each interview

If you can match your skills and experience to the employer's needs, your chances of securing an interview will be improved.

Ask yourself:

- What are they looking for?
- What key elements did they ask for in the job description?
- How specifically are you suited for this particular role and organisation?
- Write a short personal profile, highlighting your personal attributes and strengths