

How to Write an Effective CV

What is a CV and why do I need a CV?

Your CV is the first impression you give to a potential employer. It details your experience, range of skills and suitability for a specific role. Whether the application is speculative or for a specific vacancy, most employers will want you to show your skills on paper. A winning CV should be tailored to the role you are applying for, in order to make a positive first impression and get you through to the interview stage.

How do I write a CV?

There are many templates of CV but please remember that your CV is supposed to be about you – create your own version rather than copying someone else's or simply sticking to a template.

Starting points

Before you start, remember the basics:

- A standard CV should generally not exceed two sides of A4
- Make sure that the layout is clear and that relevant information is easy to access using bullet points and short sentences
- Think about use of blank space; this can make it easier to pick out important information
- Use a clear font - usually Arial or Calibri, 10 or 12 point
- Do not include the title "Curriculum Vitae" but do make sure your name is highlighted in bold type at the top of the page
- It is important to check your spelling and grammar. Have a read through to spot any errors and ask a friend, family member or careers professional to check it for you
- You do not need to provide personal information such as your date of birth, nationality, gender or marital status.

What should I include in my CV?

Each time you apply for a job you need to check the advertisement, job and person specification to see what skills and attributes the employer is looking for. It is also important to research the company. It is crucial that your CV is targeted to the role and the organisation. In other words, you need a different CV for each role you apply for.

You may wish to consider including some, or all, of the following sections in your CV. Please note that these elements are included for guidance only. It is up to you to choose what you put in your CV - if in doubt, speak to the Careers+ Team.

Personal information

This should be a brief section at the top of the page which includes your name, telephone number, and email address (ensuring this is suitable: for example "myname123@..." is probably better than "littlediva@...") Also include a link to your LinkedIn profile. If applicable to the role, include links to your website or online portfolio.

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Personal profile

This section is your chance to make a pitch for the role. It should not exceed a couple of sentences or three or four lines of text. Highlight what you are doing now, for example, 'I am a current second year student studying English' and the technical and transferable skills and experience you have that relate to the role or industry you are applying for. Finally, explain what you are now seeking, for example 'Now seeking an editorial placement to support my career ambition to work in publishing', ensuring that this relates to the role you are applying for.

Skills

This is a short bullet pointed summary (no more than 5 or 6) of key skills relevant to the role you are applying for developed through work, study or extra-curricular activity. Along with a relevant example to illustrate each one - remember that skills are transferable!

Education

It is conventional to list your most recent qualifications first. You may not need to include every qualification you have; for example, you do not have to list all of your GCSEs; it will suffice to say "8 GCSEs including Mathematics and English". If you are applying for a job relating to your degree, you could list relevant modules studied at University and information about dissertations and projects.

Experience

Rather than "Work Experience", think about an "Experience" or "Employment" section, which can also include any unpaid or voluntary work that you have done. List your jobs starting with the most recent first. If you have been working for a long time, you may not have to list all of your experience; remember to keep it relevant to the job which you are applying for. Rather than focusing on duties, think about key responsibilities and achievements within that role. Show evidence of transferable skills that you have demonstrated.

If you have relevant employment experience, it may make sense to split your Employment Section into two and have a 'Relevant Experience' and 'Other Experience', so that your important relevant experience stands out on your CV. You could also list your relevant experience before your education and qualifications.

Interests and Achievements

This is your chance to show that you are a well-rounded person with interests outside of your work or study. You do not need to list these if you prefer not to, but if you choose to have an interests section, make sure that they are unique interests that show what you have contributed: the skills you have used, and what you have achieved.

Referees

It is fine to write 'References - Available upon request' unless requested by the employer, and always make sure to ask for the referee's permission.

Need more help? Go to the [Careers+ website](http://www.careers.bcu.ac.uk) to find contact details for your dedicated Careers+ team
www.careers.bcu.ac.uk