



## **Writing a CV**

What makes a good CV? A good CV is the one that gets you the interview for the job you want, a good CV is one that shows a potential employer you know how to do the job. So a good CV must highlight your skills, experience and education and you must know what to put in and what to leave out to highlight your application to the best advantage.

This guide is designed to help you put together the best CV that will attract attention, give a good impression to potential employers and present your skills and experience in a clear and concise manner.

### **The starting point**

Your CV has to grab the attention of the employer who may have 100 CV to look through and only one position to fill. Your CV must show you have:

- The skills needed for the job
- The experience needed for the job
- The right personal qualities for the job
- A clear understanding of the job and its requirements

However your CV needs to be kept simple and should be:

- Ideally no more than two A4 pages in length
- Laid out clearly with section headings and the information in a logical order
- Kept relevant – your CV needs to answer the employer's main questions. That you can do the job and that you will be an asset to their team.

## The language of your CV

When describing yourself and your achievements you need to be careful with the language you use. Below are some phrases and words you could use in your CV – this is not a complete list by any means but should give you an idea of the sort of tone you should be aiming for with your CV.

### Positive personality traits and characteristics:

Adaptable	Accurate	Confident
Enthusiastic	Efficient	Flexible
Friendly	Hardworking	Motivated
Organised	Professional	Punctual
Responsible	Reliable	Team Player
Willing to learn		

### Positive words to describe responsibilities & achievements:

Achieved	Completed	Co-ordinated
Demonstrated	Expanded	Evaluated
Generated	Implemented	Managed
Negotiated	Organised	Represented
Trained		

### Describing your strengths:

Skilled at...	Very/extremely good/exceptional at...	Adept at...
An expert in...	Competent in...	Familiar with...
Qualified to...		

Employers want to employ people who can increase their company's efficiency and fit in with their existing team, causing as little disruption as possible to their day-to-day operation. Your CV should highlight that you will be able to fit in as quickly as possible and that your joining the team will not cause any unnecessary problems or disruption for the employer.

## **Problem areas:**

Below is a quick guide on how to overcome some of the common problem areas on a CV:

*“My CV is really long”*

An employer will be more interested in your recent experience and activities. Recent activity should be detailed – everything else you can summarise. Make sure your CV is highlighting the skills most relevant to the job your applying for.

*“I have had gaps between employment”*

If you have gaps in your work history that include voluntary work, education & training, travel or any other relevant experience then you should highlight these as part of your skills. If this is not the case using the year of employment on your CV instead of the month will cover short gaps in employment history.

*“I’ve have had a lot of jobs”*

You should concentrate on giving details of your most recent jobs; anything 10 – 15 years ago (or a period of frequent job change) can be condensed together as ‘various’

*“I’m changing my career”*

If your planning on a change in career direction you should make this clear at the start of the CV using the heading ‘career objective’. This section should be placed on your CV before your employment history, and try and explain why you wish to move you career in this direction. Make sure you are highlighting skills relevant to your career.

*“My last job was a step backwards in my career”*

This is a common problem for most people these days. The solution is not to draw attention to it. Highlight you achievements and abilities in a different section and summarise the rest of your employment details.

*“I’m overqualified”*

Qualifications in excess of what is required for the job can be discreetly mentioned in the education section of your CV. You should emphasise the practical skills and experience you have that are relevant to the job. The main focus of your CV should be you experience and skills rather than your education.

*“I don’t have a lot of qualifications”*

Focus on highlighting what you do have. Place emphasis on your practical experience and skills, for many employers your hands on experience is often considered more valuable than theoretical knowledge.

If you are really having problems with your lack of qualifications then you could also consider taking further training. Housing Support may be able to help you with your training needs.

*“Most of my previous jobs have all been alike”*

Emphasis your main achievements and skills and summarise your career history. The key skills section of your CV should be where you highlight all of the abilities and achievements you have gained during you career.

*“My work history is complicated”*

You should start by summarising the areas you have worked in under a ‘profile’ heading at the top of the CV. Organise your skills and experience into groupings based on the areas you worked in (i.e. sales). If you have an extremely large range of skill and experience concentrate on those that are most relevant to the job your applying for.

Template:

Full Name  
Address (including postcode)  
Telephone number  
Email

**Personal Profile (or career objective)**

This section should cover a brief description of you – your career goals, personal qualities, strengths, experience and skills.

**Key Skills**

In this section you should highlight your main skills – highlighting the ones relevant to the job you are applying for.

**Employment History**

Starting from your most recent/current position and working back over. Make sure you give the dates of employment and a brief job description.

**Education (including training)**

You should start this section with your most recent, highest or relevant qualification. You should give the name of the education/training institute where you gained the qualification and the dates you studied with them. There is no need to go any further back than secondary school.

**Professional Training**

You should include this section if you have gained any professional training at work, specifying the skill or qualification gained.

**Personal Details**

This section is for your personal details: date of birth, nationality, married or single and if you hold a clean driving license. Then you should give a brief summary of your interests and hobbies.

**References**

You should put two references here; make sure you include a contact name, full address and contact number.

Your CV should be printed on good quality white or cream A4 paper in black ink. Make sure you use a clear font and that there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes. You should never correct a mistake by crossing out or whiting out a mistake. First impressions count so if there are mistakes your best to print off a clean copy.

**CV Checklist:**

- Is the layout & style of the CV clear and easy to read?
- Are the relevant points emphasised?
- Have you highlighted you achievements and skills?
- Can the employer find key information easily or do you have to search the CV?
- Is the CV professional looking and well presented?