

CV Tips for Professionals

As a professional taking your next step up the career ladder, you will no doubt already have a CV. Beware depending on it though. Times change. Your skills and experiences change. And your CV must change for each job you apply for.

Most employers will spend around five seconds glancing over a CV before deciding if it is relevant or not. So make sure yours stands out, for all the right reasons, by following these simple guidelines.

CV Sections

Personal Details

- Name
- Address
- Home and mobile number. Put a personal voicemail on your mobile, not just the factory setting. Employers like to hear your professional telephone manner and know they are leaving messages for the right person
- e-mail address if you have one
- You don't need to include your date of birth or nationality

Personal Statement

- About five lines on who you are, what you have to offer and what you're aiming for in a career
- Describe work skills, such as highly organised, ability to work in a team or alone, motivated by a challenge
- Optimise your personal statement (and the rest of your CV) with key words and phrases that the employer is asking for in the job description

Work Experience

- Starting with your most recent first, and using up to three examples
- Include the start and finish dates (month and year), company name and job title
- If you are still employed put 'current' as the end date for the first role you list
- If you are nervous about naming the company that you work for, describe it generically instead (ie. leading electricity supplier)
- Describe your roles with three or four bullet-pointed achievements or contributions, not just listing your job description
- Use assertive and positive language, such as 'developed', 'organised' or 'achieved'

- Explain any long gaps in your work record, ie. medical treatment, caring for children, extended travel
- Give information about voluntary work in the same way as paid work

Qualifications

- These should be in reverse chronological order, most recent first
- Generally list your highest qualification, degree or similar (as previous qualifications are thereby assumed) but you can include educational details from O-level/GCSE level on
- Include the date you gained the qualification, the location, the name of the qualification and the grade you received

Other Information

- Include any languages you speak other than English
- List any relevant awards and membership of professional bodies
- Any courses you've completed: health and safety, first aid, fire warden training
- Hobbies and interests. Avoid vague and passive interests like socialising with friends, golf or watching TV. Try to include things that are challenging and interesting, or leave them out completely
- List if you can drive and have your own transportation
- Any other achievements or skills which don't fit elsewhere

References

- Give two references, at least one of which should be a past employer
- List their name, job title and contact details
- Get your referees' permission before using their details

Remember...

- ✓ Keep your CV short, ideally two pages
- ✓ Make sure your name is on both pages
- ✓ Keep it easy to read, with a clear font and simple layout
- ✓ Use bullet points
- ✓ Emphasise headings and key points with bold text or a slightly larger font
- ✓ Consider using a slightly tinted/coloured paper to help your CV stand out. Any colour should be subtle and the text should still be easily readable
- ✓ Check all spelling and grammar. Ask a friend or relative to double-check it too
- ✓ Include your social media information IF you think it is a positive reflection of you. Employers may look you up online so be sure to spring-clean your posts!
- ✓ Send your CV with a covering letter, clearly stating what job you're applying for

Please don't do this...

- ✓ Use unusual, small or coloured fonts (unless colour helps you because you are visually impaired)
- ✓ Use italics and underlined text, these can be difficult to read
- ✓ Make untrue statements or claims
- ✓ Include photographs
- ✓ Include your date of birth, nationality or marital status
- ✓ Write 'References available on request'
- ✓ Use emoticons or funny faces
- ✓ List 'jokey' email addresses