

Writing a CV

Your CV should be easy to read with reasonable space between each section, and no more than two pages long. You may wonder how to fit everything into 2 pages but you can free up space by leaving certain things out or by being brief about others that are less important.

Personal Details

Start with your personal details; your name, address and contact details. It's up to you whether you include your age, marital status and nationality – it's not essential.

Your CV shouldn't be your life story but should be tailored for the job you're applying for, focusing on the parts that are important. Look at the job description or the person specification and think about what the job involves, and what the employer is asking for. Take some time to find out about the main activities of the employer.

Personal Profile

Underneath your personal details, your 'Personal Profile' outlines your:

- skills and qualities
- work background and achievements.

It should only be a few lines but must spark the reader's interest. For example, if the job involves working with people, you could say you're a good team-worker and an effective communicator. Be brief – you can highlight examples of your skills in later sections.

Education and work experience

This part of your CV depends on your background and the type of job you're applying for. Some jobs require experience, while for others your qualifications are more important. If you've been working for a while, put your employment history first; if you're younger and don't have much work experience, focus on your education and training.

Employment history

Start with your present or most recent job and work backwards, using bullet points. Include:

- each employer
- the dates you worked for them
- the job title
- your main duties

Employers want to see how your experience will be useful to them, so be brief about jobs that are totally different from the one you're applying for. Relevant jobs should be listed in more detail, showing not only your main duties and responsibilities but giving examples of the skills you used and what you achieved. This is the information the employer uses when deciding whether to interview you or not. Your employment history shows your experience and suitability for the job. Include useful information but leave out anything that's not relevant.

Relate your skills and experience to the job description and what the employer is looking for. Also include any relevant temporary or unpaid work. Avoid unexplained gaps in your employment history, as employers may think you have something to hide! You can provide reasons for them further on where necessary.

Education and training

Start with your most recent study and go back to the qualifications you got at school. Using bullet points or a table include:

- the university, college or school you went to
- the dates the qualifications were awarded and any grades
- any other courses, if they're relevant.

Hobbies and interests

Some employers like to read about your interests, as it can give them an idea of your strengths and what you'd be like to work alongside. As with your employment history, it should be relevant in some way to the job. For example, if you're involved in any clubs or societies this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. People often put on their CV that they enjoy cooking or reading, but these activities are too general and widespread to be of interest to an employer.

Additional information

If you need to add anything else that's relevant, such as a gap in your employment history for travel or family reasons, you could include a further section titled 'Additional Information' after your interests to explain this.

References

Finally, you should state that references are available if required, although you don't need to include referees' contact details on the CV. At least one referee should be work-related; or if you haven't worked for a while, some other responsible person who has known you for quite a while.