

Guide to writing a CV

The purpose of a CV is to introduce a candidate to potential employers by providing a summary of educational qualifications, any professional experience and relevant skills and achievements.

There is no set format for a CV and information can be presented in a number of different styles and varieties, however the CV download available at this page is typical of a standard layout. There is a [free CV template section](#) at Monster.com with several different templates to get you started.

Regardless of the style of a CV one of the most important aspects is to make sure that it **flows logically**, is **crisp and clear** and is **error-free**.

There are many websites available to help you construct your CV and effectively convey information about yourself. [Cvtips.com](#) has some great pointers on how to write your first CV and [Monster.com](#) offer detailed, comprehensive advice. Other useful websites for graduate CVs include [Prospects.ac.uk](#) and the [Graduate recruitment bureau](#).

Tailoring the CV to the application

The CV is the only thing that an employer will look at when deciding to offer you and interview and, when faced with a large number of applications, it may only have 30 seconds to make an impression before it is accepted or rejected. It is therefore extremely important to individually tailor your CV to different applications, in order to best highlight your qualities in relation to the advertised post.

The fundamental principles of tailoring your CV are:

- Make sure every part of your CV directly relates to the current job application.
- Use the same descriptions for skills, experience, and qualifications as on the job ad or application guidelines.
- Always cover the essential job skills, qualifications, and experience in your CV- e.g. Leadership skills, excellent communication, knowledge of Microsoft Excel etc...
- Ensure that everything in your work history is clearly relevant to the job application.

Some quick tips

Here are some quick tips that we feel are the most important in writing an effective CV...

Do:

- Put your name as the title (rather than Curriculum Vitae).
- A personal summary of 4-5 lines is a great way to sum up who you are and the skills that you can bring to a role.

- Use simple language without overbearing words or technical terms.
- As much as possible use bullet points as they are easy to read and immediately draw out key pieces of information.
- Expand any abbreviations.
- Update your CV every time you have achieved something in your professional life.
- Accompany the CV with a complimentary covering letter.
- Include the contact details of your two, most recent/ relevant references.

Do not:

- Include any spelling/grammar mistakes.
- Use the wrong writing style - always ask yourself - 'what does the person who will read this letter want?'
- Write more than two pages. You should focus on your most important and relevant experience.
- 'Inflate' your achievements and/or qualifications or skills.
- Attach photograph, unless specifically requested.
- Use long paragraphs- bullet points are much more effective in highlighting key information.
- Use unsuitable or unclear headings
- Include personal information such as date of birth, sex, ethnicity, marital status etc... You are not required to disclose this information.