

CV Guidance for Applicants

Writing a CV - General Guidance and What to Include

When applying for a job, your CV is your ultimate selling tool. If you want to be selected for interview, this is your opportunity to showcase your skills and experience.

You will need to be both succinct and creative to stand out and get across the right information.

Tailor the information within your CV to the role you are applying for, rather than sending a generic portfolio of your background. Therefore your skills, knowledge and experience should relate to the requirements of the post as outlined within the advert, job description and person specification.

A CV should cover the following, though not necessarily in the same order:

- Personal Details
- Profile
- Key Skills
- Employment History/ Experience
- Qualifications/ Education
- Voluntary work (where applicable)
- Hobbies/ Interests and Achievements (if relevant)
- Additional information (if needed)
- References

Personal Details

Include your name, address and contact details. You don't need to include your age, marital status or nationality. Recruiting managers can make a decision about your skills and abilities without this information.

Make sure your email address sounds professional. You could also add a link to a professional social media site like [LinkedIn](#) but make sure that your profile is up to date and shows you in a positive light.

Profile

A profile is a vital part of your CV; a short opening summary outlining your background, career goals, personal qualities and the skills you offer. This is a mini-advert for you and is an opportunity to be bold and positive about yourself.

Ideally it should be no more than 100 words; aim to keep this short as you can go into more detail in your supporting statement.

Key Skills

Highlight all the key skills and competences that demonstrate why you are the right person for the post.

Employment History and Experience

List the names of your employers, the dates you were employed, your job title and main duties. Start with your current or most recent job, work experience or voluntary placement and work backwards. All the dates should match up.

If there are any gaps, make sure you include the reasons e.g. if you had time out for travelling, volunteering, children or caring for a relative.

Where your previous experience is relevant to the role you're applying for, make sure you highlight your achievements and where possible, the impact that you had.

If you have limited work experience, focus on your education, training and any voluntary work undertaken.

Qualifications/ Education and Training

Start with your most recent qualifications and work backwards. Some jobs may however only ask for evidence of specific or relevant qualifications.

Use bullet points or a table and include the following details:

- university, college or school
- qualifications awarded, the dates and the grades or levels achieved
- any work-related courses, where relevant

Voluntary Work (where relevant and applicable)

You may not be able to cover all the required skills through your employment and so you may wish to include details of any voluntary work, where you have developed some key transferable skills; e.g. the Secretary of a club, a Scout Leader, or the Treasurer at a church etc.

Interests and Achievements (relevant)

Include any particular hobbies, interests and achievements that are relevant to the job or can demonstrate specific skills.

Being part of a football team or similar demonstrates your ability to work in a team, an interest in researching family history shows you have an eye for detail and like problem solving. If you're involved in any clubs or societies, this can show that you enjoy meeting new people.

Additional Information (include if needed)

You may include this section if you need to add any additional information that is relevant to the role e.g. a clean driving licence, ability to speak any foreign languages, qualified First Aider etc.

If you need to explain any gaps in your employment history then this can also be further explained here.

References

References should usually include details of your current employer and your most recent employer. At least one referee should be work-related.

If you haven't worked for a while, you could ask someone who has known you for a number of years to provide a character reference. You should state your relationship to each referee.

Always ask people if they are happy to give you a reference, before you put their name and contact details forward.

You may alternatively wish to state: references available upon request on your CV. However, please note you will still need to include reference details on the LCC CV Short Form. This information will be retained and will only be shared with the recruiting manager, if you are shortlisted for interview.

10 Top Tips for Writing a Good CV

When trying to make your CV stand out; don't forget the basics...

1. **The right length** – Generally a CV should be no longer than 2 sides of A4 paper so make it short and sharp, highlighting the main 'head lines'. Any specific examples of knowledge, skills and experience gained should be included within the supporting statement.

2. **Tailor it** – Avoid sending the same CV to lots of organisations or use it for different jobs in the same organisation.

Each job role is unique and therefore your CV should be tailored for each application, in accordance with the requirements of the post.

Your knowledge, skills and experience should reflect what the organisation is looking for and match what is needed to be successful in the post advertised.

3. **Include a profile** - Don't assume that the recruiting manager will clearly see how your experience relates to the post.

Include a short opening paragraph in your CV to highlight why you are the best person for the job. This should also be reflected in your supporting statement as well as providing further examples and evidence in more detail.

4. **Don't leave gaps** – If you have been unemployed for a while, explain the reasons for this and try to put a positive spin on it by highlighting what skills you may have gained during this time? E.g. did you further develop any soft skills such as teamwork or communication?

5. **Keep it current and updated** – You should always keep your CV up to date whether you are looking for a job or not. It's easy to forget some of the key skills and specific examples of experiences you have gained, if you don't record it.

6. **Spelling and grammar** – A tidy, well written CV shows you're professional, thorough and care about how you come across.

Always thoroughly check your spelling and grammar and ask someone else to read your CV before you send it. Spellcheckers can miss things, like the difference between 'ceiling' and 'sealing'.

7. **Be honest** – Don't be tempted to lie or over - exaggerate, it could land you in trouble when references are checked. You may also get caught out at interview when you suddenly can't answer questions on the knowledge you claim to know, according to your CV.

8. **Add statistics where possible** – Back up your achievements with numbers and statistics, where possible. This provides additional weight to your evidence and makes it easier to sell yourself.

Rather than just saying that you ‘increased’ something, say by how much, i.e. by 70% over a 6 month period. This demonstrates how you added value to the organisation and can also show that you are driven by results.

9. **Presentation** – Take time to make your CV look presentable. Don’t include so much information that it makes it look cluttered.

Use bullet points, short sentences and leave space around the text so that it stands out and is easy to read.

Use **bold** text instead of underlined and try not to use too many CAPITALS unless you need to, as they are not as easy to read. Left hand justified text is also easier on the eye than full justified text.

Use a standard font such as Arial or Times New Roman and don’t be tempted to make the font size too small to try and fit more text on the page.

Fancy borders and formatting can take the focus away from the important part – the content.

10. **Terminology and language** – Use simple, plain and positive English language with clear and concise content. Write your CV in the First person using ‘I’ statements.

Key words can be important; however don’t use them unless you can explain it when asked at interview.

Use ‘action’ words to describe what you did in your job such as: ‘achieved’, ‘designed’, ‘established’, ‘supervised’, ‘coordinated’, ‘created’, ‘transformed’ etc.

Supporting Statements

General Guidance and What to Include

We request that you also send a '**supporting statement**' with your CV. The word limit will depend on the level of the post and will be specified within the advert.

Your supporting statement is the most crucial part of your application; it is an extension of your CV. This is quite similar to a covering letter and gives you the opportunity to expand on your skills, experience and qualifications and really 'sell yourself'.

It should demonstrate that you meet the person specification for the post, by providing further evidence and examples to confirm that you are the right person for the job.

It is also your opportunity to explain why you want the job, your interest and attraction to the organisation.

Top Tips:

- Make sure you tailor your responses to the role you're applying for.
- Structure your supporting statement clearly.
- You may wish to list each of the criteria outlined for the post and briefly explain how your skills and experience match these requirements.
- If there are a few requirements that you don't meet, acknowledge these and highlight any transferrable skills that can be applied to address the gap(s). This will give confidence to the recruiting manager that you are honest, can learn on the job and pick up new skills quickly.

To summarise: make it as easy as possible for the reader to see that you are keen to work for the organisation, enthusiastic about the job and can demonstrate all the required skills and qualities in order to be successful.