

CV WRITING

HOW TO WRITE THE PERFECT CV

In today's competitive job market, employers and recruiters are becoming increasingly intolerant towards badly written CVs. Nowadays, many employers base their decisions to interview or reject a candidate on the strength of the CV. Your CV is your tool of achievement, therefore it is the most important and potentially lucrative marketing material you are ever likely to create, so it is vital that it is written in way to maximise numerous opportunities, by delivering exactly what it's designed for - securing an interview.

CV STYLE AND FORMAT

NO MORE THAN 2 PAGES

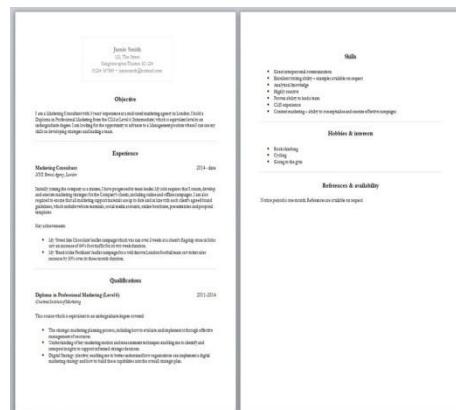
Recruiters don't have a great deal of time, so they only spend a few seconds looking at each CV. They are seeking a short, precise summary of your experience and qualifications that provides enough detail to convince them that you are a good candidate.

It is best to use a formal, basic template that is easy to read and follow if you are going for a professional role. Here is a good example/basic CV template that you can download and use;

[insert link for template here] [LINK 1]

For positions that have an element of creativity, it may be appropriate to be more elaborate with the format, such as adding a decorative border or using an unusual font.

Each section of the CV should be presented under a separate heading. This makes it easier for the recruiter to find the information they need. An example of this is shown here;



PERSONAL DETAILS

When it comes to your personal information, there are some details that MUST be included, such as the following:

- Your name
- Your email address
- Your telephone number(s)

You may also want to include, if relevant:

- Full clean driving license
- Your website address
- your LinkedIn or Twitter accounts (if they are professionally presented)

Unless directly specified, you should NOT include details such as your date of birth/age, race/nationality, gender, religion, marital status or orientation, the number of children you have, disabilities or mention pregnancy or parenthood. Under the Equality Act 2010 whilst employers are not legally allowed to discriminate against the above mentioned grounds, you don't want to give them the opportunity to think so either.

OBJECTIVE/SUMMARY

Your objective is a brief summary that lets the recruiter know what you offer, and what you are looking for. Ideally, it should be around 4-5 lines (a short paragraph) and the key to the objective is to be informative and to-the-point. A good way of writing this part of your CV is to read the job description of the job you are applying for, and spell out how you meet the specification. Do NOT copy the job description. Instead, pick out the relevant points and rephrase them. This would represent a very strong, objective summary, which would most likely land the candidate an interview (subject to the rest of the CV being acceptable).

WORK EXPERIENCE/EMPLOYMENT HISTORY AND QUALIFICATIONS

The work experience section tells prospective employers who you have worked for in the past. Your recent /current position must also be included. It should be presented in chronological order, starting with the most recent/current position, with a short list of duties you upheld there.

Academic qualifications should be listed from highest to lowest, for example; if you have G.C.S.E's, A levels, BA, BSc, or MSc, you would list MSc at the top, followed by the BSc, BA, then the A levels and lastly the G.C.S.E's. Listing your G.C.S.E's is not always necessary if you have higher level qualifications (such as Undergraduate or Postgraduate), depending on how much space you have. Exceptional grades such as First class (Hons) and Distinctions are worth mentioning, as it is a personal achievement.

SKILLS

Skills are usually divided into hard and soft skills, although you don't need to label them as such. Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured. In other words, they are quantifiable. An example of this could be certain/specific qualifications you have gained or a foreign language. Hard skills include the specific knowledge and abilities required for the job.

Soft skills are an important set of skills that are not specifically measurable and difficult to quantify. These skills cannot be taught in a classroom or measured on paper. They are crucial to your job search and to your overall career. Some examples of soft skills can include verbal and written communication, analytical thinking and leadership. To mention soft skills is essential, as it helps facilitate human connections, and are key to building relationships. Below is a list of commonly used soft skills:

- Communication
- Presentation
- Creativity and innovation
- Interviewing
- Selling
- Influence/persuasion
- Teamwork
- Management
- Leadership
- Handling difficult people/situations
- Networking
- Negotiation
- Timekeeping
- Organisation and multitasking :
- Prioritising
- Mentoring and coaching
- Learning
- Self awareness
- Self confidence
- Emotion management
- Stress management
- Patience
- Resilience

The list above is an example of some buzzwords you can use, however if you create a long list of your soft skills an employer may ignore this section, or worse still they may view your application as disingenuous, or perhaps even arrogant, so the best way of incorporating your soft skills into your CV is to:

1. Read through the job description and pick out the relevant soft skills required to the role.
2. Incorporate brief examples of how you have demonstrated those relevant skills.
3. Mention (if appropriate) particular skills that you possess that are fundamental to the role.

HOBBIES/INTERESTS AND REFERENCES

Hobbies and interests is one of the last sections of your CV. This can be 1-2 lines to show the employer a part of your personality. Ideally it is good to list 3-5 hobbies and it is best to avoid adding anything negative or too quirky at this stage, so stick to activities such as:

- Sports and fitness activities
- Outdoor activities such as walking or hiking
- Creative activities such as painting
- musical activities or accolades such as playing an instrument
- Reading

Drinking, socialising and partying are some examples of what you should NEVER include, as it could appear as unprofessional.

Employers do not usually ask for references before they have seen your CV, so it is not always necessary to mention the details of your referees. It is best to simply write "*References Available Upon Request*" at this stage.

ADDITIONAL THINGS TO REMEMBER

You can add more sections to your CV (ideally keeping to a 2 page limit), depending on how relevant the sections are to the job role. Voluntary work you have undertaken and any rewards or recognitions can be added separately too.

As most vacancies require you to submit your CV online or via email, it could be worthwhile to mention any relevant keywords as it can maximise your opportunity for exposure. For example, if the job requires you to have a CIM qualification, make sure your CV includes the keyword "CIM" and "Chartered Institute of Marketing" as the recruiter may search for either.