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How to Write the Perfect CV

Many job adverts will request that you submit a CV as part of the application process. Having a CV ready that can be quickly updated is important for any new job seeker.

This guide will get you started...

What is a CV?

CV comes from the Latin word curriculum vitae which stands for 'course of life'. It is a short document that summarises your education, skills and experience, which relate to a role you want to apply for.

Do all CVs follow the same format?

No, there are different CV styles, depending on the role and the stage you're at, but there are certain things that employers will always expect you to include (see the checklist).

Who looks at a CV?

It depends on the size of the organisation. It could be just one person, for example, the company owner if it's a small company, or it could start with HR and go to multiple people in a larger company. Many employers now remove personal information that could be used to unfairly advantage or disadvantage you.

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Contact details

Full name, mobile number and email address.

Profile / personal statement

A short paragraph, setting out your main skills and attributes.

Education and qualifications

Including type and grades (if you have not yet taken your exams, you can include predicted grades).

Work or volunteering experience

Details of any paid or unpaid employment or experiences and a short summary of tasks completed.

Skills and achievements

For example, IT packages you can use, any languages you speak.

Interests and hobbies

This section is useful if you don't have much work experience.

References

You may be asked to provide two referees that can provide a personal or professional reference.

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What should I include in my profile / personal statement?

It should be a concise statement (around 100 words) that sums up who you are, what you hope to do and helps you to sound like the right person for the job.

You could include:

Why you are suitable for, or interested in the role / industry.

A sentence or two about any work / volunteering experience.

Any skills, attributes or significant achievements that are relevant.

Any academic qualifications that are relevant to the role.

How can I make my CV relevant to the role I am applying for?

Look at the job advert and refer to the job description, person specification and company details. Think about how your skills and experience match what the employer is looking for. Make sure you highlight any relevant qualifications, training or experience you have.

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Should my CV be the same for everything I apply for?

PRO TIPS

No, try to tailor some of the sections of your CV so that it is relevant to the role you're applying for.

For example, in the interests section, you could say that you enjoy gaming if you're applying for a role in that industry. You should also make sure your profile statement is relevant to the role you're applying for.

Make sure there are no spelling/grammar mistakes.

Ask someone to proofread your CV.
Use active words to highlight your skills and strengths, for example: planned, organised, created.

Personalise your CV to the employer by linking it with words used in the advert and job description.
Make sure your email is professional.

Include a cover letter with your CV.

Don't lie or exaggerate. Don't include your home address if you're uploading your CV online.

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Use your name as the title

Use a professional font consistently that is easy to read and make sure the size is between 10 and 12

Put your profile statement at the top



Use clear spacing and bullet points for lists

Use section headings that stand out

Include any voluntary or unpaid work

Include references or say references available on request