

cv advice

Your CV should be a document that demonstrates your compatibility for a particular job and company. It should clearly show how your profile matches the employer's need, in a focused and well-structured manner. The CV is a unique selling document, which is an opportunity to make you stand out. The person reading your CV will normally be the person who wrote the job description or advertisement, so if your CV is focused on the information they provided, they will be more likely to shortlist you. The care you take to target, articulate and prioritise your experiences also demonstrates effective written communication skills. The employer will probably scan rather than thoroughly read your CV, so it is vital that the layout makes it easy to navigate. Make sure that your CV gives the reader strong visual signals about how the CV should be read.

general points

- Use a sensible font, such as 11 or 12, and do not be tempted to cram in more text in a smaller font.
- Use basic headings to engage the employer, such as, 'career history' or 'relevant skills & experience'.
- Keep the CV concise, avoiding large blocks of text that will not be read.
- Split information into individual focused bullet points.
- Start sentences with competency-based words that stress the skill, quality or attribute you are presenting.
- CVs should be a maximum of two pages.
- Ensure to check spelling and grammar, and ask a third party to read through the final version.
- In the main, graphics and gimmicks are always to be avoided.
- Using tables and charts can make a CV look cluttered and detract from the information given.
- Try to use a consistent style and format not indulging in over the top underlining and capitals.
- Try a different or larger font for headings and use bold for emphasis.

cv structure

The CV should generally be divided into the following sections: personal details, personality profile, experience and career history, interests, and references.

personal details

This section should always contain the following information, generally in the order as given: full name, current address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address. Other information that should be included in this section: date of birth (although now not mandatory since recent age discrimination legislation), nationality and marital status.

personality profile

If you use a profile in your CV, take care to keep it brief, three to four lines is ample. Use the profile to communicate your career focus and current aims as well as maybe a few of your key strengths. This part of your CV is likely to change with every

application, as you will want to tailor the profile to reflect a company's ethos and values. Make the personality profile relevant to the vacancy and the employer.

career history (experience)

List all of your jobs or experience with precise dates and clear job titles, in reverse chronological order. Focus on your responsibilities and achievements in each role, and illustrations of where skills were used or deployed. Financial information and numerical information also helps to inspire confidence in your CV (turnovers, number of staff, square footages, like-on-like sales increases, etc). Attempt to use terminology relevant to the post that you are applying for or that demonstrates commercial awareness. Bullet points can be employed in this section to order your responsibilities and achievements of each individual role. This section should also demonstrate your key skills and how they relate in a positive way to the role that you are applying for.

additional information

This is a relevant section to include as it can be used to demonstrate that you are motivated to pursue other activities and take the initiative to develop your involvements and skills. Other skills, such as languages and computer skills should be included in this section.

interests

This section communicates information to the employer to give them greater insight to your general personality. Try and make it interesting and again applicable to the role and company you are targeting. Avoid clichés, such as: 'reading', 'going out with friends', 'socialising' and 'travelling'. Attempt to be more specific. For example, do not use 'sports'. Instead, list the sports and any achievements within them.

references

You should give two referees, which is the norm, one academic and one work related. Ensure to give the referees' phone numbers and email addresses, and make sure to ask their permission prior to adding them to your CV. If you are running out of space by the time you reach the 'references' section, remember that referees' details are not explicitly requested, and it is acceptable to state, 'references available on request'.

executive cv advice

Executive CVs differ from other CVs, as the whole CV should focus on quantifiable achievements. The CV should not only be aimed at stressing your unique selling points, but should remain audience-focused, whilst communicating that you understand the employer's requirements and that you are qualified to meet those expectations.

Demonstrating to an employer what you did and what you achieved in each position is far more important than the scope of your responsibilities. Concentrate on clearly specifying: what you did, accomplishments and results achieved. Try to provide quantifiable evidence where possible when backing up your points.