

How to write a cv

Your CV represents you. It is your first impression and the only way for you to let prospective employers know just how good you are. Added to this, it will usually be competing against many other CVs. You might be the perfect person for the job, but if your CV is not up to scratch, you'll be passed by.

Getting it right is crucial

When sending your CV, unless told not to you should include a covering letter. In this letter you should explain which vacancy you are applying for, where you have seen the vacancy advertised and an overview of why you should be considered. But don't just repeat all the information that's in your CV.

If you are sending a speculative CV, write a short note explaining what kind of position you are interested in.

You should structure your CV by writing a list of important headings. These should include:

- ▲ Your name, date of birth, address, telephone number (evening and daytime)
- ▲ Academic qualifications (e.g. GCSE's, A levels, Degree etc)
- ▲ Vocational qualifications (e.g. HGV driving license or Microsoft Certified Engineer etc.)
- ▲ Work history (starting with the most recent and working backwards)
- ▲ Other major achievements (e.g. charity work or climbing Mt. Everest)
- ▲ Hobbies and interests.

Once you have got your content you need to arrange it into a cohesive structure. Take a look at the example structure we suggest.

Depending on the type of job you are applying for it may be necessary to emphasise different sections of your CV, so don't expect to use the same CV for every job you apply for. You should edit it and refine the way it looks for different job applications.

For example, if applying for a job where your academic reference is important, list your qualifications and grades. If your field of work is less formal, a summary of qualifications and any vocational training that you have received may be more relevant.

Finally, be concise. The people you are sending your CV to are probably very busy. Always restrict it to a maximum of 2 sheets of A4. This does not mean that you have to leave things out, but it does require you to be brief and to the point. A long CV may seem impressive but unnecessary waffle will only annoy the people you are trying to impress.

Before sending:

Ensure it is always typed and contains no spelling mistakes. Take the time to produce a document that is both easy to read and professional looking. Tempting as it might be, avoid the use of gimmicks, elaborate typefaces and fancy designs just to get noticed.

Use clean white paper and never give the impression that this is one of many CVs that you have photocopied and sent out. A photocopied CV, like a circular, will normally end up in the bin.

Find out the right person to send the CV to. If it goes to the wrong person it may just end up in the bin.

A CV is a confidential document, so post it or email it. Don't fax it unless it's very urgent and you are specifically asked to.

And remember:

Don't be disheartened if the first CV you send out doesn't get you far. As with most stages of getting a job, there is some luck involved. So follow our advice and be persistent.

Good luck!!