

QUICK GUIDE TO A GREAT CV

apply
yourself

BE PREPARED



Read the person specification and job description thoroughly. Don't have one? Find a job description on Prospects.ac.uk or search for previous examples on the Internet – eg, WikiJobs or The Student Room.

Gather together your 'information bank' – all the details you might want to include in your CV.

Think about how you will tailor the content to fit the job description and the company. Identify the 'key words' used by the employer to reflect in your CV.

GET STARTED



Choose your headings wisely. Only 30 seconds to impress – what do you think they need to know first? There's no set template – it's your personal advert. There is no correct or incorrect order for sections. However, you may wish to check on the internet for any industry-specific requirements.

Get their attention and leave them interested enough to want to find out more.

Highlight achievements within your academic life, work experience and extra-curricular activities.

Provide evidence of your skills – don't just list duties you have undertaken, responsibilities you have had or courses you have completed. Show what you have gained and have to offer.

Demonstrate the impact you have had in previous roles – use persuasive and positive language. 'What value do you add to an organisation?' Conversely, phrases such as 'I think that I...' may imply that you are not convinced about your own abilities – so you may not convince the employer.

PRESENTATION



Have a clear style. Use a clean and easy to read font – no smaller than 11 point.

Be concise and use short snappy statements that catch the reader's attention.

No unnecessary details (eg, date of birth, marital status, national insurance number).

Break it up with headings and subheadings.

Use bullet points.

No more than 2 sides – keep it concise. (There are a small number of exceptions to this rule – for example academic CVs. CN staff can provide you with more information about this.)

Double check your spelling and grammar.

THINGS TO REMEMBER



Sending the same CV to several employers is no longer acceptable – always tailor it to suit the role and company.

Only say things you can back up – use your course, work experience, interests and achievements for evidence.

Never exaggerate or lie – you will be found out!

Keep it clear, concise and to the point.

Never undersell yourself – this is your personal advert. Make sure it gets you through to the interview.

Put in the effort for maximum success. Using online templates or stealing a friend's CV just won't get you the job you deserve.

Save and send your CV as a PDF to ensure that the employer receives it in the format you intended.

PLAN YOUR WINNING CV...

CONTACT DETAILS

Your address, telephone number, email, can run across the page to save space. Include your LinkedIn profile if you have one. You don't need to include your date of birth, gender, marital status or nationality.

PERSONAL PROFILE

How will you convey who you are, what you have and where you want to be in a short personal profile statement? Give it a go...

EDUCATION

Think of the really pertinent aspects of your education. You need to draw attention to relevant modules, projects, specialist skills. How will you make them stand out? Have a go here...

KEY SKILLS

Got your job description at the ready? Jot down the key skills you have which you think the employer is looking for. Provide some evidence to support them using active and positive language.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Think about the role – what work experience do you have that you think is most relevant? How will you group your work experience to make the most relevant stand out? (for example 'Customer services' or 'Laboratory skills') What did you achieve? What value did you add to the organisation? You might consider using 'Relevant experience' and 'Other experience'.

INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Only use the ones which demonstrate you have the skills that are required for the job, show your level of involvement and/or any responsibility they entail. Make a start on identifying some things you can use in this section...

REFERENCES

Though you don't need to name them on your CV at this point remember to approach people to get their permission to be contacted. Jot down one academic and one work related referee you can ask here.

1.

2.

FURTHER HELP

- Book a careers appointment at:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers
- Go to our Canvas pages for help with applying for vacancies, interviews, assessment centres and psychometric tests:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careerscanva
- Ask a careers question, or send your CV, covering letter, application or personal statement and receive feedback from a careers adviser:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/contact
- Have an upcoming interview or assessment centre? Request a practice interview at:
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/practiceinterview