



Quick Guide to A GREAT CV

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 'keywords' 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 extracurricular 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 abilities – so you may not convince the employer.

PRESENTATION

- Have a clear style. Use a clean and easy-to-read – 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 two 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.

FURTHER HELP

Attend a CV Top Tips workshop to get advice on CV structure and content: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/workshops

Use CV Checker to get instant feedback on the first draft of your CV. Make some amendments based on the comments and re-upload it to get more tips: www.vmock.com/bham

If you would like more help with drafting your CV, attend a twilight drop-in session during the Autumn and Spring Terms in the Student Hub: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/workshops

When you are happy with your CV and need help with tailoring it to your ideal graduate job, send in the job description with your CV to careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk for feedback.

For further information access our webpages www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/cv

PLAN YOUR WINNING CV



CONTACT DETAILS

Your address, telephone number and 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...

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'.

Relevant experience...

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 here...

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...

