



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

BBS Careers

The Birmingham Business School Careers guide to writing your CV



What is a CV? When is it used?

A CV is a document that gives you a chance to show a prospective employer that you have the right skills, experience and attitude for the role and company. Submitting a CV is typically the first step in the application process. You must make the best first impression in a competitive job market.

You will most likely need a CV for many different things. It could be for part-time roles, volunteer positions, internships, placements, graduate roles and many more. Make sure that you keep updating your CV as you go.

Keep your CV accurate and ready to impress by reading our CV guide. Remember, a CV is unique to you and your situation. [Book an appointment with BBS Careers](#) for tailored advice for your CV.

CV Review Undergraduate: bbs-careers-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk

CV Review Postgraduates & MBA: bbs-careers-pg@contacts.bham.ac.uk

CV Sections

Personal Details:

Personal details include your full name, email address and mobile number so employers can contact you. If you have an up-to-date LinkedIn profile, include the link below your contact details. Your email address should be appropriate and professional. We advise using your University email to keep all your application responses and confirmations in one place.

Personal Profile:

A personal profile is a statement, around 3 to 4 lines long, at the beginning of your CV that is an introduction to you. It gives the reader a quick overview of who you are, your skills and experience and future career ambitions. A personal profile section is optional in the UK. You do not have to include one. If you are unsure, contact the BBS Careers team!

There are some great examples online of how to write a personal profile:

- [Bright Network: How to write an outstanding personal profile for your graduate CV](#)[LinkedIn Article: How to Write an Attention-Grabbing CV Profile Statement?](#)

Education:

Your Education section should include your past academic experience, with the most recent one first. Specifically, with your University degree, write a point of any key modules of interest and why they stood out to you. Also, if you performed well in a module and attained a high grade, mention that too!

You may want to point out any positions of responsibility you have had whilst in education. An example would be, Head Girl at Sixth Form or a Student Ambassador at the University.

A-Level and GCSE grades (or equivalent) do not need to explain in full. Instead, we recommend summarising them, for example, 2 As and 2 Bs. The exception is if you know an employer wants or would be impressed with a subject you studied. Example: 2 As and 2 Bs (with As in Maths and English).

Employment History and Work Experience:

This part of your CV is where you can show why you have the right skills to be a successful candidate for the role you are applying for, so make the most of it! For each new experience, include your job title, company name, how long you were with the organisation, and your top responsibilities.

Employers will expect to see bullet points under each experience talking through what you did and the impact you had. It is a great way to break up the text making it clearer to read and your points concise.

A great approach to use when structuring your points is using the Verb, Action, Result method.

For example, 'Analysed social media data and provided insight into customer preferences for the sales team, which increased sales by 15%.'

Use numbers to quantify and qualify your experience. Think about demonstrating how many data sets you analysed, how many people attended your presentation or event, how many sales you generated etc.

Finally, with the points you are making, avoid simply listing the duties within the roles. Instead, make a point of the skills you gained and any achievements. For example, if you had a part-time job within retail and worked as part of a team to increase sales or meet and excel against KPIs, be sure to mention this!

Interests and Achievements:

Space on your CV is precious. You need to include relevant interests that will capture attention. Instead of listing generic interests, such as walking the dog, travelling or reading, think about something more specific to you. For example, have you always enjoyed writing or journaling and now have an online blog or write in the student newspaper Redbrick? These will be things that the employer might pick up on and want to discuss at the interview as it positively separates you from other candidates!

Skills

Here you want to list your hard skills such as; any languages you speak, if you have a driving licence, training you have had etc. Avoid exaggerating your skills. Avoid listing that you are fluent in French if you have not spoken it since your GCSE exam! Do not worry if this section is short – it is for most people.

References

You do not need to list references at this stage. We advise that you leave this section out.

Optional Sections

You might decide that your CV would benefit from some additional sections not covered above. These include Extra-Curricular Activities and Volunteering. You may also split out experience so you can combine relevant experience on page 1 of your CV. An example could be Marketing Experience and Additional Experience.

This guide contains general advice and guidance. Book in with the BBS Careers team when starting to put your CV together, and we can help you tailor your CV. You can contact us directly at bbs-careers-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk or book in via Careers Connect.

CV FAQs

1. How long should my CV be?

Your CV should not be longer than two pages (each side of an A4). Some employers specify their requirements and ask for a one-page CV. Check this before applying.

2. Should I tailor my CV for each application?

You do not need to start from scratch with each application that you make. However, make sure you tailor your CV to each application. Look at the skills listed in the job description. Be sure to incorporate those into your CV where possible.

3. What should I include in my CV?

The key subheadings for your CV should be a personal profile, your education, past employment/work experience, achievements/interests and skills.

4. What if I do not have any work experience or past employment to put on my CV?

Highlight other past activities and experiences that may help portray any sought-after soft skills you possess. Examples could be your academic degree, extra-curricular activities such as volunteering or being a member of a society. You can build your skills by undertaking activities on campus that boost your employability!

5. How should I format my CV?

List your experience and accomplishments from most recent to oldest. Your formatting needs to be clear, professional and easy to read. We have example CV templates you can access by contacting the BBS Careers team.

6. Can I use images/colours/different fonts on my CV?

We do not recommend that you include photographs on your CV. Keep colours, different fonts or graphics to keep this to a minimum. Some companies may ask for a creative CV. Book an appointment with the BBS Careers team if you need help.

7. How do I know what skills are relevant for the skills section?

The skills section at the end of your CV should include testable skills. Include things such as languages you speak, if you have a driving licence etc.

Transferable skills belong in your Education and Employment sections. Include things such as good communication, effective teamwork, adaptability and evidence of how you developed those skills along with the impact.

CVs are personal. No two people's CVs will be the same. Book an appointment with the BBS Careers team to talk about creating your CV and what to include!