

Writing An Effective CV

Purpose of a CV

The purpose of a CV is to provide a potential employer with a snapshot of your skills, experience and education, in order to assess your ability to perform a role within their organisation. Whilst a well-written CV will not normally secure you a job, it will almost certainly help towards securing an interview. Some interviewers will also use the CV as a script for the interview itself, asking questions relating to points of interest or reservation.

CV writing rules

Firstly there really are only a few hard and fast rules as far as a CV is concerned, and despite what some experts say, each interviewer is different and will have their own preferred style.

The idea is to put across relevant information in a positive, concise and structured format that is easy to understand and compare against the requirements of the job function.

Generally however, a CV must contain your name, contact details (home, mobile, email and home address), your previous employment in reverse chronological order, your education and personal details, (such as marital status and driving licence etc).

Content

Before starting your CV, it is advisable to plan how it will be structured in order to get all of the information across in an easy-to-understand, flowing document.

Start with your name and contact details. Potential employers want to be able to see this information immediately. You then need to decide what is the most important information you wish to communicate in the next section. For example, if the job you are applying for is heavily focussed on educational background, then this information is important and should be prominently positioned on the front page of the CV. If the focus of the role is weighted towards particular experience or skills, consider having this information in the most prominent position, perhaps in a bullet point format, or summary.

Next, you need to detail your employment history. Ensure the dates of employment are accurate and your job title is clearly stated along with the name of your employer. Try to be concise about your job function, and make particular reference to any notable achievements and clarify how this benefited the organisation. For example, achievements could be related to how you made or saved the company money, or perhaps how you were able to implement a particularly good idea, which helped the company.

The secret here is to demonstrate to the employer your *features* (skills, attributes) and your *benefits* (how you use your features to the benefit of the employer/organisation).

Towards the end of the document you can add any additional information such as personal details, additional non-work related information such as hobbies and of course referee details if you wish.

Language

Be sure to use language which is positive and engaging. The use of action verbs such as “achieved” and “developed” convey a positive image. Be sure to check the spelling and punctuation is correct and finally read the CV through carefully before sending it out, or better still get someone else to proof read it for you.