

CV Editing

This Learning Note will give you the tools to look at your CV pragmatically and constructively to get the most out of your applications.

We focus on 9 sections:

1. Overall Impression
2. Name and Contact Details
3. Personal Statement
4. Education Details
5. Work Experience
6. Voluntary Experience
7. Professional/Personal Development –Skills/Licences/Qualifications/Professional Body Membership
8. Interests
9. References

Following these sections will not give the “perfect CV” as that is near impossible; each recruitment and recruiter is slightly different. Following these sections will give you the tools to show you meet the Selection Criteria and also impress a potential employer.

What is your CV aim?

Recruiters want your CV to answer three things:

1. Can they do the job? - Do they meet the Selection Criteria (competence and aptitude)?
2. Will they do the job? - Do they have the motivation for this role (motivation)?
3. Will they fit in to the organisation? - What will they bring to the role (initiative and additional benefit)?

These three questions will normally be answered within 60 seconds! A recruiter we know told us they take no longer than 6 seconds to decide if it is worth reading further!!!

Let's get started on the 9 Sections

1. Overall Impression

First impressions are vital to a good CV.

Your CV needs to be:

- Obviously yours: Include your name and the name of the organisation you are submitting it to (if applicable) in the header/footer
- 2 sides of A4 maximum
- Font size 12 maximum (size 10 minimum)
- Grammatically correct: Read it; Spell Check it; Ask a friend or family member to do the same
- Aesthetically pleasing:
 - Not too much or too little white space
 - Professional Fonts and Styles only
 - No Photos or Graphics (unless absolutely indispensable)
- Tailored for each application – more on that later
- Up to date: re-visit your CV every application or two months, keeping it relevant and fresh.

2. Name and Contact Details

Make sure we know it is your CV and how to get hold of you easily.

- Use your **Full Name** as the Title. **Not** Curriculum Vitae, CV or Application
- Contact details need to be clear. Include a:
 - Landline Number: Make sure a message could be taken, and importantly, passed on to you
 - Mobile Number: Have a clear answerphone message – Not a ‘comedic’ one
 - Postal Address: Ensure you (or somebody) is checking your mail
 - Email Address: Make sure this is professional and clear and not ‘comedic’ e.g. bigblondejohn@... An ‘Out-Of-Office’ may be good if you are on holiday or not contactable by phone, make it clear and informative of available dates.

Do **not** include:

- Date of birth, ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, a **photo of yourself**, your National Insurance number, work permit number (you should include eligibility to work if appropriate) or any other unnecessary personal data - These information will be gathered where needed and through equal opportunities or detail request forms.

3. Personal Statement

A few sentences at the top of your CV that:

- Is an opportunity to pick out buzz words from the job description or organisational strategic aims/vision and reflect them in your CV. Be sure to keep this concise and relevant
- Articulates why you fit the role, be innovative and exciting, “an honest graduate desperate for a career in environment management” is a bit bland and predictable
- Make sure this section is applicable to the role/organisation you are applying for
- Set a 70 word limit to ensure that the statement doesn’t get too big

- Remember! Making these little changes will boost your CV & help you get a job. –

Let’s get to the next steps:

4. Education Details

Be concise and stick to the relevant grades, courses and projects that are relevant for the role.

- Write your Education in reverse chronological order
- Education and Work experience are both important on your CV. For different roles you will have more relevant experiences from either of your experiences. You will need to make your own judgement on what is relevant to the selection criteria
- Your degree and the grade are very important. Spend time on selecting only the relevant modules, projects and experiences you have from your degree. You may also like to select high scoring or interesting modules that you feel comfortable talking about at the interview stage and that show some of your transferable skills
- Elaborate on your Dissertation or Thesis (within reason), it is quite possibly the most thorough and skill building piece of work you have ever done
- Concentrate on your academic achievements

Do **not** include:

- A full list of all your modules and all the grades
- Every school you ever attended (no infants and primary schools!)
- The full addresses of your schools (just the town or city)
- Do not list articles you studied or books you read – that’s just boring

5. Work Experience

This is vital; all roles you have been involved in no matter how small have developed transferable skills.

- Use reverse chronological order and include start and finish dates (mm/yy is fine for your CV)
- Explain all gaps in employment and note what you were doing in this time (e.g. seasonal work etc.)
- Expand on the jobs using a two tiered approach
 - 1st Include basic information about your role so a lazy (or busy!) recruiter can understand what the job entailed and what you achieved – usually bullet points.
 - 2nd Provide a more detailed description if the recruiter wants to learn more about it – usually in prose of 3 or 4 lines
- Pick out relevant duties/responsibilities/skills/knowledge/behaviours that apply to the job you are applying for
- Group similar jobs together to cut down space – this can be utilised for jobs in retail sector or catering that are not directly related to the role but still have duties/responsibilities/skills that are relevant

6. Voluntary Experience

Voluntary work can be as relevant if not more relevant for some dependent on work experiences, treat your voluntary experience as you would work. There are a few things to consider such as if you have helped at an old people's home, this demonstrates your caring personality; Ability to feed your family on a budget shows your planning and financial skills. Identify your skills and highlight them while considering:

- That you will want to keep volunteer experiences separate to your Work experience as the two are different and should not be confused
- That you need to make the most of your experiences, talk them up and be very positive, outlining your role using “I” not “we”

7. Professional/Personal Development –Skills/Licences/Qualifications/Professional Body Membership

It is important to consider what you have done outside of education, work and volunteering such as,

- non University, College or School qualifications
- Practical licences – e.g. driving licence (own transport?), Eco-School Assessor
- Additional skills/qualifications relevant to the job
- IT, technical and language competence and skills (if appropriate)
- Show a commitment to lifelong learning

Make sure all are quantifiable and you can provide some kind of evidence for them.

8. Interests

- Include some (otherwise you might appear boring) but not too many (otherwise you might appear too busy to work)!
- Make sure they are real ones – you might get caught out at the interview when they ask you about that strong interest in fly fishing that you have!
- Be aware that they might be a talking point at the interview and could really make you stand out and/or provide common ground with a potential employer
- Make sure you qualify/quantify them. If you say you enjoy walking, for example, then include a bit of when and where (not a complete history but a bit of meat on the bones)
- Note that if you are applying for an environmental role you may not want to mention you have a hugely carbon munching hobby!

9. References

Write ‘references available on request’:

- To be honest there are only two good reasons to include full contact details:
 - The referee might be friends or work in the same organisation that you are applying to
 - The referee is a sector celebrity – someone like Jonathon Porritt
- Referees should be one academic and one work (preferably last employer)
- Make sure your referees are contactable. Academics often go a-researching over the summer and are rarely in the department. This could severely delay starting a new job as the employer will want satisfactory references before you can start.

Well done you have gone through your CV noting all 9 sections!