



prospect **us**^{*}
RECRUITMENT

The Ultimate CV Guide

What to write in your CV

One of the first hurdles to face when you're compiling your CV is knowing exactly what information to include, particularly if you've worked in several different jobs.

The best way around this is to put together a 'master copy' of your CV that includes absolutely everything – all the jobs you've ever worked, your education and qualifications, positions of responsibility you've held, and transferable skills (backed up with evidence). You can then start to put together different versions of your CV, tailored to suit the specific role you're applying for.

How to tailor your CV for different jobs

Rather than sending the same CV to different employers, tailoring your CV for every new job you apply to will show that you've taken the time to understand what the role in question is about. If you're making a career change, make sure you emphasise your transferable skills. It might be tempting to include everything for every role you apply for, but bear in mind that you've got to make a strong impression in a very short space of time.

Using the right kind of language

Think about achieving the right tone – again, this is something that you can adapt depending on the specific job you're applying for. On the whole though, you should aim to sound professional and clear, but not overly formal. If you need to refer to yourself, use the first person ('I achieved...') rather than the third person (referring to yourself by your name). Focus on facts and figures as much as you can, rather than broad statements, and try to avoid 'buzz words', technical jargon or abbreviations.

In the same way, try and be as specific as possible about terms you may take for granted – for example, your job title. 'Office Manager' can mean a huge number of different things, and cover a wide range of different duties, so it's worth breaking down exactly what the job involved in a series of brief bullet points.

The importance of being honest in your CV

Be careful you don't overstep the line between promoting your achievements and exaggerating them, let alone fabricating information. It's important to be completely honest about even apparently minor issues, like your salary or your exact job title – if a prospective employer finds out the truth, then the consequences will massively outweigh any benefit you might get from being economical with the truth.

Make sure all dates are accurate (to the month if possible), and account for any significant gaps in your employment history.

Extra top tips!

- Keep your CV 1 – 2 pages in length.
- Keep the document in Microsoft Word as this is the most accessible format for all.
- Include a short profile explaining what you have done and what you are looking to do next.
- Use bullet points to keep it clear, concise and specific.
- Highlight any relevant key achievements in each of your roles.

What not to do when writing a CV

Now let's look at some examples of what to avoid when you're putting your CV together. Even the strongest candidate for a post can be badly let down by a badly formatted or written CV, so it's essential to make sure you steer clear of these common errors:

- Poor spelling, punctuation and grammar – make sure you run a full spellcheck on your CV before sending it to employers, or better still, ask a friend to proofread it.
- Overusing 'flashy' graphics, exclamation marks, italics, and bright colours. Rather than making your CV stand out, these will make it seem unprofessional.
- The same applies to including pictures of yourself – employers are interested in what you can do, not what you look like.
- Make sure you don't list your jobs in chronological order, with your current position last.
- Avoid making vague or subjective statements without evidence to back them up. (For example: 'I'm a great person to work with.' Great in what way? According to who?)
- Similarly, avoid irrelevant or overly personal details.
- Don't put your educational qualifications in front of your employment history. Don't forget to include dates or locations.
- Above all, don't exaggerate or fabricate information.
- Do not include your:
 - age
 - date of birth
 - marital status
 - nationality

The Ultimate CV Template

The format and layout of your CV is just as important as the content. Your CV should be clear, concise and easy to read for your prospective employer. Remember, this is the first chance to impress them and the overall look of your CV will be the first thing they notice. A muddled, chaotic CV will be a lot harder to read than one that flows nicely.

Below is a structure that we often recommend which you can take away and use as your very own template. Just fill in the blanks! We always suggest to create your CV in Microsoft Word as this is the most accessible format for all.

It's important to make sure you put the most relevant information at the very start of your CV (after your contact details). Your current or most recent job should be listed first, followed by your previous employment history.

Name:

Email:

Phone Number:

LinkedIn profile:

Personal profile: (one paragraph summarising your qualifications, experience and skills, as well as the kind of organisation / role you are looking for)

Employment history:

(list each role separately, in the following format)

Role 1

- Organisation name
- Date(s) you worked there
- Job title
- Brief outline of the organisation (one sentence)
- Brief overview of your role
- Outline of relevant duties (4-5 bullet points)

Role 2

- Organisation name
- Date(s) you worked there
- Job title
- Brief outline of the organisation (one sentence)
- Brief overview of your role
- Outline of relevant duties (4-5 bullet points)

Role 3

- Organisation name
- Date(s) you worked there
- Job title
- Brief outline of the organisation (one sentence)
- Brief overview of your role
- Outline of relevant duties (4-5 bullet points)

Insert more roles as needed

Education and achievements

(list each item separately, in the following format)

- Qualification name, grade, date and location
- Date(s) qualification achieved
- Any relevant other experience or skills (e.g. voluntary positions, IT skills)

Now that you have added your content, it's time to get a little creative with the formatting. You can experiment in Microsoft word to make your CV look even more professional. Choose a clear and professional font (keep it the same the whole way through!), try making headings bold so that they stand out, use bullet points to keep it specific and try to keep your CV to 1 – 2 pages in length.

Extra tips:

- Poor spelling, punctuation and grammar can let the best candidate down – make sure you run a full spell-check on your CV before sending it to employers, or better still ask a friend to proofread it.
- Overusing 'flashy' graphics, exclamation marks, italics, and bright colours. Rather than making your CV stand out, these will make it seem unprofessional.
- The same applies to including pictures of yourself – employers are interested in what you can do, not what you look like.

Do not include your:

- o age
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- o nationality

[Download Word version of this template here.](#)