

CV ADVICE

There are some dos and don'ts when building a CV. If you haven't done one for some time you may have questions. These could be about what to include, how to word your CV and how to lay it out.

Your CV and covering letter is your chance to show an employer the best of what you've got. It's about selling your skills and experience, and showing them you're the right person for the job.

How you write your CV and covering letter is up to you, but there are some basic rules to follow if you want to create the best impression.

CV advice section by section

Follow the guidelines below to make sure you've included all the important information an employer may need.

Your personal details

You should include your name, address and contact details. It's up to you whether you include your age, marital status and nationality. Recruiters should be able to make a decision about your skills and abilities without this information.

Your personal profile

Your personal profile should summarise your:

- skills and qualities
- work background and achievements
- career aims.

It should only be a few lines and must grab the reader's attention. Try to avoid terms that a lot of candidates use, such as 'reliable', 'hard working', 'team player', 'good communication skills' etc. These general terms are heard very often and often they don't help an employer to build up a picture of you.

For example, if the job involves working with people, try to highlight relevant, specific people skills such

as: negotiating, dealing with demanding customers, presentation skills, handling conflict, or showing empathy.

These help the reader build up more of a picture than saying you're a good team-worker and an effective communicator. However, be brief – you can highlight examples of your skills in later sections.

When you're summarising your career aims, think about the employer you are sending the CV to. It will hit home with employers if your career aims sound exactly like the kind of opportunities they currently have.

Employment history and work experience

If you've been working for a while, you could put your employment history first.

If you don't have much work experience, you might like to highlight your education and training.

In this section you should start with your present or most recent job and work backwards. You should include employer, the dates you worked for them, job title and your main duties. Provide more detail on the relevant jobs you've had and give examples of the skills you used and what you achieved. Use bullet pointed lists.

Try to relate your skills and experience to the job description or what you think the employer is looking for, if you're sending your CV on spec. Also include any relevant temporary work and volunteering experience.

Avoid unexplained gaps in your employment history. If you had time out travelling, job seeking, volunteering or caring for a relative, include this along with details of what you've learned.



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Education and training

Start with your most recent qualifications and work back to the ones you got at school.

Using bullet points or a table include:

- the university, college or school you went to
- the dates the qualifications were awarded and any grades
- any work-related courses, if they're relevant.

Interests and achievements

You can include hobbies, interests and achievements that are relevant to the job.

For example, if you're involved in any clubs or societies this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. Try to avoid putting activities like cooking or reading, as these activities are too general and widespread to be of interest to an employer. Make them specific and interesting!

Additional information

You can include this section if you need to add anything else that's relevant.

Such as explaining that a gap in your employment history was due to travel or family reasons. You could also include other relevant skills here, such as if you have a driving licence or can speak any foreign languages.

References

At least one referee should be work-related. Or, if you haven't worked for a while, you could use another responsible person who has known you for some time.

You can list your referees on your CV or just put 'references available on request'. If you decide to include their details you should state the relationship of each referee to you – for example 'John Turner, line manager'.

Still need help with your CV?

Register with Better Prospects today and we can advise you on your CV.

Call us today on 01494 433346 or send us your details via our website www.betterprospects.com or email us am.jobs@betterprospects.com