

## Applications & Interviews

### C.V.s

[www.staffs.ac.uk/careers/cvs](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/careers/cvs)

#### “What’s a Curriculum Vitae?”



A CV is normally a short (usually no more than 2 sides of A4) document which gives the reader a summary of your

education, working life and achievements. Rather than reading like a history book, it should be targeted at specific posts or career areas, highlighting your relevant skills and experience. If you are targeting employers outside the UK, look up your chosen country in *The Global Resume*, available at the Careers Service.

There are no rules about CV writing. What follows are some guidelines which are generally useful; however, some applicants break all the rules and still get interviews. The important thing is that your CV shows what you have to offer in the best possible light, and that you feel happy with it.

#### What should be in a CV?

##### Personal details

Name, address, telephone / mobile number, email address.

##### Education and qualifications

This section needs to include details of your education and qualifications gained so far. It is not **usual** to include exams you have failed. This should be in reverse chronological order with your most recent qualification first (i.e. what you are studying now – put the start and end date, even if the end date is some time in the future). Give dates, place studied, exams passed and results. If you include grades given against modules provide a key, e.g.:

#### Key: D = distinction, M = merit, P = pass

You should not list every single qualification – a summary of degree modules, GCSEs, and so on, will suffice. Highlight your best or most relevant work.

#### Work experience (paid and unpaid)

This section should include details of dates, employers and job titles of the work you have done so far, starting with the most recent. Try and give details of your responsibilities and the relevant skills you gained. (You could do this by including a brief breakdown of responsibilities under the job title, e.g. *dealing with the general public, monitoring health and safety, ordering stock, managing a checkout*. Don't forget to use 'management language', e.g. filling shelves is stock control, using a till is dealing with cash and payments, etc.)

You may **not** want to include all your jobs if you have had lots of very short term, unskilled jobs or if you have a long work history. It is OK to provide a summary – e.g. *2004 – 2005: Worked in a variety of temporary posts while studying. These included retail, catering and administration. My key achievements were...*

You may want to make a feature of work experience which is relevant. If so, you could split this section in two; e.g. *Relevant Work Experience* and *Additional Work Experience*.

#### Skills / other qualifications

If you have not covered this, draw out the skills you have developed through your education, study and other activities. List skills which are relevant to the post for which you are applying, and offer evidence as to how you have demonstrated these skills. Include here details of e.g. language

and IT skills and whether you hold a full clean driving licence. You could also include if appropriate details of prizes and awards won, significant achievements, periods of extended travel.

**Interests and Activities**

Include something here which preferably shows that you are a more rounded person, who takes an active interest in life. If you are not involved in any organised activities you will need to include things like: socialising with friends, reading, going to the cinema/theatre, walking, sightseeing, sports (something which implies physical activity). But remember, don't lie as they may quiz you on this.

**Referees**

Usually an academic one and a work one. You can either put their name, address, telephone number and Email address or the sentence *The names and addresses of referees are available on request.*

**Getting started**



It is a good idea to begin by simply jotting down rough details under the main headings already highlighted.

Get the facts together first, school / college / university attended, dates, names, qualifications, titles, levels, jobs done, employers name, dates, etc. Roughly list other achievements, minor triumphs, positions held, things won for effort, activities taken part in, hobbies and interests.

Then put these into a rough layout, using the headings outlined above. Don't forget to put education and work experience in reverse chronological order.

This is your bare bones CV. Now look at it and decide how to develop it so that it shows that you have the skills and knowledge needed for the job being chased. Add in detail. Expand on statements to show the relevance of your achievements.

Then once you have the information sorted start to lay it out neatly so that when it is held at arms length it looks neat, with straight edges to the various columns.

You may want to look at examples of others before doing this.

Examples are available in the Careers Service in a range of formats.

Then type it out and get it checked by someone else. You can bring it to the Careers Service and get it checked by an Adviser.

**Positive language**

Some of us feel almost literally "lost for words" when trying to make an application. Try using some of these action words and phrases to make a punchy CV.

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| achievement           | use my initiative     |
| constructed           | problem solving       |
| conducted             | adaptable             |
| presented             | work to deadlines     |
| interviewed           | analysing             |
| increased             | team worker           |
| participated in       | raised money for      |
| reported              | organised             |
| produced              | managed               |
| developed skills in   | was chosen to         |
| opened my eyes to     | successfully          |
| made me               | keen to               |
| determined            | have experience of    |
| reinforced my view    | travelled             |
| supervise             | independently         |
| training people       | self disciplined      |
| inspecting            | creative              |
| preparing             | negotiating           |
| dealing with stock    | advising              |
| acting as interpreter | taking responsibility |
| represented           | I set up              |
| actively involved in  | I was congratulated   |
| corresponding with    | on                    |
| assisting with        | took on the challenge |
| commercial            | energetic             |
| awareness             | supportive            |
| co-ordinating         | enthusiastic          |
| liaising with         | attentive             |
| assertive             | was invited to        |
| efficient             | acting appropriately  |
| co-operative          | planning              |

### **CV Tips**

- Keep it short, 2 sides of A4 maximum
- Make it easy to read quickly – use bullet points and headings, not long paragraphs of waffle
- Use simple, direct language
  - No corrections, spelling or grammar mistakes
  - Use a simple layout
- Send originals, not photocopies
- List your achievements clearly and succinctly
  - Be positive
- Match the style and format to the type of business being canvassed, (eg. law - formal, art and design - designed for visual impact)

### **MOST IMPORTANT**

Match your skills and achievements to those needed in the job you are applying for.

#### **More help:**

Pick up the free AGCAS booklet, *Making Applications*, and look at the file on written applications - both in the Careers Service.

Prospects Website:

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/Cvwriting>

Careers website:

[www.staffs.ac.uk/careers](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/careers)