

# How to write a CV



CAREER  
STUDIO

## What is a CV?

A CV is a personal marketing document that is used to sell yourself to prospective employers. It is a summary of your education, skills and experience and is used by employers to assess your suitability for the role.

If you want a chance of being shortlisted for an interview, you need to make a lasting first impression. The average employer takes around 30 seconds to scan a CV and make a judgement on whether you are what they are looking for.

Connect your CV to the job specification, giving a clear indication of your experiences and potential to ensure that you show the employer that you are right for the job.

## How long should my CV be?

There are no specific rules on CV length, although two pages is the usual length. A one-page CV is acceptable if you are applying for voluntary or part-time work. It is better to have a good, concise one-page CV than a two-page CV that contains irrelevant information. A two-page CV is perfect to showcase your degree/skills/knowledge for placements or graduate jobs.

## What should I include in my CV?

Although there is no one-size-fits-all, your CV should be clearly formatted and short enough for the employer to scan through quickly. It is important to tailor your CV to the role you are applying for. Think about who is going to be reading your CV and make it easy for them to read it and navigate their way around it, using clear headings and formatting.

## Do I need to include my address on my CV?

The job search process has changed significantly, more jobs are being advertised online and on company websites. Here is some more information on the pros and cons of including your address:

<https://www.careeraddict.com/cv-address>

**Personal Summary** should be short and concise and gives an idea of your current position, something about you and what you are looking for. Use short sentences, positive language and keep to just a few lines. Define who you are. Where possible reference your skills and provide further information later on in

your CV ensure to back them up. Explain what you are looking for and tailor each CV to the specific role.

**Education:** Always list your education in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

**University:** When you graduate you will be a qualified professional. The practical training and learning you have gained in your degree are likely to be the most relevant pieces of information to the job you are applying for.

Include:

- The degree title and some information about a few modules you have taken that you think particularly relate to the job, alongside some information describing what you did/learnt in the module
- Information about any relevant projects, exhibitions or subject related activities you have participated in throughout your studies

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**College/FE:** Add in details of your pre-uni studies – A levels, Foundation courses, BTEC, Access, etc.

**School:** Finally, you should put details of your high school. There's no need to list your GCSEs or grades. Summarise the information, for example '9 GCSEs, including English and mathematics'.

**Professional qualifications:** If you have spent time in the workplace, have specific industry qualifications you have gained alongside your degree or have any professional qualifications; you could add these in at an appropriate point.

**Relevant skills:** Target the job you are applying for. Read the job description/person specification and look for the skills that are required for the role. An employer is looking for strong transferable

employability skills (skills that are developed in one area of your life which can be transferred to another). Common transferable skills include teamwork, communication, problem solving, leadership and supervising. Provide two or three strong examples of when you utilised these skills and competencies.

### **Employment/Placement/Voluntary work:**

Include information about any employment you have undertaken. If you have relevant work experience you might want to create a separate heading entitled Experience or Relevant Experience and move this to the front page of your CV under the personal summary section. Include dates, name of organisation, job title and a couple of examples of your duties. Always list your employment in reverse chronological order (most recent first).

**Interests and achievements:** This section is where the employer can get to know you, the person. You don't always need to include interests but mentioning relevant ones could back up your skills and help you stand out from the crowd. It can also give you something to talk about at an interview. It doesn't need to be long and detailed, but just give a flavour of your interests out of the workplace.

If you can drive, add that in here. If you have won any awards, done any fundraising, played any sports, are a member of a society, add these too. Can you read/write/speak other languages? Employers are increasingly interested in employing multilingual staff. Don't worry if you just have a basic understanding, there may be an opportunity to improve this at work.

**References:** It is not necessary to include references on your CV – unless the application instructions specifically ask for them. An alternative is to write 'References available on request'. It is important that you have the names and contact details of two people you have chosen (and asked) to be a referee should an employer ask for reference information.

### **Top Tips**

1. Generally, two sides of A4.
2. Make sure your CV is unique, don't over rely on a template.
3. Use confident, positive and affirmative language throughout.
4. Keep typefaces and font sizes consistent.
5. Use a legible font size, aim for 10-12 point.
6. Use bullet points to help your information stand out.
7. Check for spelling / grammatical errors – get your CV proof-read by one of the Career Coaches before submitting.
8. Try and avoid the use of the first person "I".
9. Target your CV to the job you are applying for.

### **How can I get further support?**

Further resources and examples of CV's can be found at the following websites:

- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv>
- <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/how-to-write-a-cv/>
- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-hunting-tools-downloads>

You can receive peer to peer career support from our Career Coaches via our Digital Career Studio.

To get in touch you can:

- Email [careers@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:careers@staffs.ac.uk)
- Telephone 01782 294991
- Or ask a question on our online chat at [www.staffs.ac.uk/careers](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/careers).

Other leaflets in this series:

How to write a cover letter

Interview advice

Available online at [www.staffs.ac.uk](http://www.staffs.ac.uk)  
or from the Career Studio