



## Candidate Advice – Your CV

Your CV is a personal document, which will market your skills to potential employers. It should be brief and factual, outlining your career history to date and should be geared to the kind of position that you are looking for.

The aim of your CV is to convince a potential employer that they should invite you for interview because you have all the skills that are required to do the job.

If your CV does not grab the readers' attention immediately then your chances of an interview are greatly reduced.

A CV is a personal document, and should not be written by an agency or CV writing service. A professional looking CV will take time to write, and there is no right or wrong layout, but if you follow the guidelines in the sections below you should be able to produce a document of a high enough standard to get you the interviews you want.

Your CV needs to be well organised with a layout that is easy to read. Head the different sections in bold type and use bullet points and spaces to help the reader find specific information quickly.

Your CV should be typed and well presented. It should be concise and factual and no longer than 2 or 3 pages. You may have a great deal of work experience that you need to expand upon, however try to keep this as brief as possible. There is a danger that, if it is too long, it may not be read.

Do not leave gaps between employment dates, if you have taken time out of work make this clear.

### Personal Profile

You should always start with personal details:

Name

Address

Telephone number

Date of birth

It is also sometimes appropriate to state your nationality, and always say whether a work permit is required or held.

Some people state their marital status on their CV, however this is optional.

### Education

Your Education and Qualifications should come next.

Put your schooling in reverse chronological order, If you studied at University give the dates and the course attended. Then give information about your degree and where it was studied.

'A' levels and 'S' Levels, if appropriate, should be listed by subject and grade. If your grades are not very good, you may prefer simply to list the subjects, but the obvious assumption will be made. You do not normally need to list 'O' Levels or GCSE's by subject or grade; the number and the fact that English and Maths are included should suffice.

Include in this section any other relevant qualifications, training courses, or professional memberships. (Obviously if these were gained after university or your other schooling they should come first).

Next a short summary of your main attributes or achievements can be added. Make this no more than four or five sentences long, highlighting your strengths and your key skills related to the position or area that you are applying for.

## **Skills**

Make a list or table of your skills, stating how much experience you have in each area and include any training you have done. If your skills match those required by the employer, your chances of being invited for interview will be greatly increased by advertising your skills in this way. The employer will be scanning over many CV's, so your skills will be immediately obvious to them, and this should encourage them to look at your CV in more detail.

## **Previous Employment**

Again list these in reverse chronological order with your current position first. Include dates and duration of employment. Give examples of your experience and demonstrate all your skills by highlighting the achievements and contributions you have made by using them. Detail what you have accomplished and how.

If you have considerable work experience, highlight promotions, positions of responsibility, management experience, and give some indication of the relevance of these to the positions for which you are applying.

Try and add what you have learned from your previous positions of employment and who you have benefited. Interpersonal skills should also be detailed, together with examples of teamwork and initiative. These areas are becoming increasingly important when it comes to potential employers differentiating between you and other candidates.

## **Hobbies and Interests**

These are not always considered very important on a CV. However they can be used to demonstrate personal qualities, not always visible in descriptions of work experience. Most companies, for example, are looking for evidence of commitment, motivation, initiative, the ability to work with others, and to set and achieve goals. A common mistake, when designing a CV is to give a list of all the activities in which you participate, without giving any idea of the level of involvement, or without organising the material. It is a good idea to begin your description of your activities by mentioning those which involve commitment or responsibility to others, for example any team activity, active membership of clubs or societies. Remember the point of this section is not to list badly all the things you have done, but to show the skills and abilities you have used and how the experience has benefited you.

## **Other Skills & Achievements**

Add to this section any other skills you have which you think may enhance your chances of getting the job you want. Perhaps mention whether you have a driving license, or if you are a non-smoker. Other skills which are becoming increasingly more sort-after in the IT industry today are a specific knowledge of foreign languages. State your level of competency of the language, basic, good or fluent. Don't over estimate your level, for example, a GCSE or O level in French would give you only a basic understanding.

## References

There is great debate as to whether references should be included in CV's prior to interviewing, therefore it is entirely up to you whether you include them or not. (Obviously if the employer states references must be included with your CV, then it would be advisable to add them).

If you do wish to include references, you should have two, one of whom should be an employer and the other, someone who can give you a more personal reference (this can also be a previous employer if suitable). Always check with your referees before giving their names. If you prefer, you could simply state that references can be supplied on request.

Below are the main points you should take from this guide.

### Create your CV to be:

**Accurate** – tell the truth.

**Relevant** – relate your achievements to the position or area to which you are applying.

**Positive** – emphasise the things you are good at.

**Interesting** – Grab the reader's attention with your CV's content and layout.