

## CV WRITING TIPS

Recruiters are trained professionals who can dissect and form instant opinions about a person just by scanning over a CV. Even a simple factor like a poorly presented CV can jeopardise the job seekers' chances of getting a job. Recruiters can use a CV to sense whether you are organised, logical and concise, so it is very important to get the simple things right and double check if your CV is structured, balanced, neat, visually appealing and flows consistently.

**Form a clear and powerful opening statement which will help you carry a focused message throughout your CV about your skills and strengths.**

It is so easy to forget, but make sure you spell and grammar check your CV before saving the final copy. It's always a good idea to have someone proof-read to check for any errors you may have missed yourself.

**Never refer to salary in your CV or covering letter. This information can be disclosed when the time is right, either during your interview or negotiated through a job offer.**

Structure your CV into relevant sections, the following writing tips are standard section formats which are most commonly used. Use these as a guide to help you deliver a structured and focused CV that will identify you as a professional applicant.

### TITLE

Display your full name in bold or capitals at the top your CV so that it stands out, it is often a common error to write Curriculum Vitae as the heading, there is no need for this as it is just stating the obvious!

Be sure to include your address, telephone number and email address, so that any prospective employers are able to contact you – it sounds funny, but without your contact details your CV is useless!

### OBJECTIVE / SUMMARY

What's the difference between an objective and a summary?

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An **objective** is a statement which defines and outlines the position you are looking for. In general, recent graduates and entry-level job seekers with a lack of work experience should use an objective to state where they want to be.

#### **Advantages:**

- The recruiter is able to instantly assess your skills and experiences, and very quickly match you with suitable jobs.
- Demonstrates that you are focussed and committed to a particular field.
- Supports your qualifications focuses your career goals.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Writing a specific objective can prevent you from being considered for other potential positions within the company.
  - A broadly-stated objective can be meaningless, and makes you seem unfocussed.
  - If applying for a job where the objective does not match, it raises a question mark over your commitment to the job you are applying for.
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A **summary** is used by professionals and executives who want to summarise and communicate their career field through an effective demonstration of previous career experiences.

Spend some time and thought when writing your summary. This is effectively the condensed version of your CV which sums up and clarifies your skills and experiences into one paragraph. The summary should contain relevant keywords of your main skills, keeping in mind, that this may be the only part that a recruiter will read before progressing with an interview.

**As with writing an objective, consider who is going to be reading your CV. If you reach the right person with the right story, then more often than not you will be invited to interview.**

## **EDUCATION**

The positioning and importance of your Education section over your Employment experience depends on the level of your relevant experience since leaving education and the relevance of education to your targeted job.

If you are a recent graduate, without much work experience, then it would be preferable to section your education first. If you have gained several years work experience since finishing your education, then place it vice versa.

Your qualifications should be in reverse chronological order, where your highest qualification being placed at the top of the section. The detail you need to put for each qualification depends on their relevance to your career ambitions, and the amount of experience you have gained. For example, if you are a recent graduate with little or no experience, your most recent qualification(s) should be the main focal point and bulk of your CV. As well as your degree title and dates, you should list the relevant core subjects, details about your research project and practical work skills.

However, if it has been a few years since you qualified, and you have gained relevant work experience since, then you can trim the details of your qualifications, as this will no longer be the focal point of your CV.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Your Employment section should clearly define, demonstrate and communicate to the reader, that you possess the skills, abilities, knowledge and experience that will enable you to excel in the position you are applying for.

This is more often the most important part of your CV, as this will be of most interest to prospective employers who are looking for the specific skill set in order to perform well in the position.

The structure of this section should again be in reverse chronological order, with your most recent experience placed first.

As with the rest of your CV, the employment section should be written as a third party (using an active voice by eliminating personal pronouns, such as; 'I', 'me', 'we', and removing 'the', 'an', 'a'). This will command a more persuasive, and professional manner by streamlining informal phrases.

Compose authoritative statements about your skills, experience and achievements. Start a sentence with compelling action verbs that illustrate a decisive action on your part, followed by a positive benefit to the company.



A CV is essentially a sales document, which sells yourself as a person to a prospective employer. Highlight your accomplishments to gain interest from the reader, and then answer their question by stating how your accomplishments have added benefits to your previous employers. This is a classic case of an Action-Benefit statement – a strong and clear description of your action, resulting in a tangible and measurable benefit to your organisation.

**Action:** A specific action you took when faced with a situation, problem or opportunity that enabled you to achieve a positive result.

**Benefit:** The positive result or benefit to the organisation, such as an increase in revenue, a reduction in costs, streamlined processes / systems, or improved moral.

Use solid examples of how you used your skills to solve problems or create opportunities, and emphasize those relevant skills to the job you are seeking.

## TRAINING COURSES

Sometimes you might go on 'another' training course with your employer, without realising that they may be complementing to your growing list of skills, and therefore should be used in your CV to support your skills and experience.

These courses may highlight for prospective employers any special skills or knowledge that you possess which might give you an edge over the competition.

List the training courses that you feel are important and are relevant and have contributed to your career development. Don't forget to list in reverse chronological order!

Make sure you don't get carried away, and fill up your CV document with a list of courses! Trim it down to a short, manageable list.

If you only have a 1 or 2 items which you feel are important, you can always list them under your Education section, and rename the title to 'Education & Training'.

## PUBLICATIONS

If you have written, co-authored, or contributed to any articles, papers, books, or stories, it is always a good idea to provide a selective list these under its own section. These will demonstrate to the prospective employer that you have expertise in your career field, and have proved writing, research and communication skills. These tend to be associated with post-doctorate graduates where their qualification has been focused around ground breaking research.

A list of publications should be presented in a CV in reverse chronological order. Include the title of the paper, article or book, the name of the publication, name and location of the book publisher, any applicable co-authors and the date of publication.



## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

This is usually a section where you can provide additional information about your extracurricular activities demonstrating you have a well-balanced professional life.

These are optional, however it is helpful for the reader to gain an understanding of you as an individual. Common details such as Date of birth, Nationality, Driving Licence and Marital status can be used.

Adding your leisure interests can be a benefit to your CV, listing any sporting interests / participation, hobbies, achievements. You never know, if the prospective employer has the same leisure interest as you, they may relate to you and want to interview to find out more!

## **REFERENCES**

This is an optional section, and is no longer common practice to provide in your CV. If you do decide to include this section on your CV, all you need to state is 'Supplied upon Request'. This simply says that you can provide references, and prompts the recruiter to contact you for further information – this way, you will be given the opportunity to decide who should contact referees and when.

It is recommended that you do not put your referee's details under this section. There is usually no need for any recruiter to take up references at this stage unless they request them in the application details. References are normally taken later in the recruitment process.

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**When writing your CV, Be Positive! Do NOT have any negative comments or feelings in your CV. Make sure you emphasize a positive, can-do attitude which will shine through and dazzle the recruiter!**

