



how to write
the perfect

diamond
recruitment group

The aim of a CV

Imagine you're the employer for a moment. You have 150 CVs on your desk and from them you have to choose just a handful to interview further. What are you looking for? How do you decide?

As the applicant, your aim is to clearly show that you are the right person for the job, so your CV should demonstrate that you have:

- the specific skills needed for the job;
- the right sort of experience;
- the right personal qualities;
- an understanding of the specific requirements of the job.

But you must also keep it simple. It should be:

- short - ideally no more than two A4 pages;
- clear - typewritten and laid out with wide margins, section headings and information in logical order. Use bullet points rather than complete sentences so as it does not get too wordy;
- relevant - address the employer's two main questions: whether you can do the job and whether you will fit in.

Creating an impression

The look of the CV is important. If in doubt, keep it simple. Go for plain white or cream, good quality (100 gsm weight), A4 paper. Choose a clear typeface and don't be tempted to use anything but black ink! Avoid all these: gimmicks, photocopies, spelling and grammatical mistakes, alterations and changes. Never cross out or whiteout a mistake - always print off a clean copy.

Choosing your words

Take care with the language you use, because words convey more than their literal meaning. This is easy to do when describing yourself but harder when describing your achievements. The lists on the next page indicate the sort of words and phrases you should aim for when you talk about yourself, your skills and your achievements. They are not exhaustive lists, but guidance on the tone you should aim for.

Positive Characteristics

Adaptable

Friendly

Responsible

Accurate

Hardworking

Reliable

Confident

Innovative

Smart

These words are examples of personal attributes often seen as positive and useful in the workplace. Choose those that suit you best:

Positive Words

Achieved

Formulated

Planned

Broadened

Generated

Represented

Completed

Implemented

Shaped

These are examples of positive, active words that you can use to describe your responsibilities and achievements:

Some Problems You Might Encounter

Often, you can overcome problems by emphasising some sections of your CV and playing down others. These are some of the most common problems, and how to tackle them.

My CV would fill 4 pages, at least

Highlight the skills most relevant to the job you are applying for. Detail your recent experience and summarise everything else - your recent activities are more interesting to an employer than what you did years ago.

I've had a lot of jobs

Condense your employment record and focus on the skills you have achieved through your experience. Only give details of your most recent and most relevant positions and lump together jobs done 10 or 15 years ago, or in a period when you changed job frequently, as 'various'.

I'm changing careers

Use a heading, 'career objective', at the head of your CV to make your new direction clear. Pick out your skills, qualities and achievements that are most appropriate to your career and emphasise these.

I've had gaps between jobs

If the gaps include voluntary work, training or relevant experience - travel, for example - put these down as part of your skills, qualifications and experience. Otherwise, giving the year of employment only rather than month and year, will cover short gaps.

Most of the jobs I've done have been very much the same

Solution: concentrate on your key skills and achievements and simply summarise your actual career history. Pay particular attention to the Key Skills section on your CV as a place to bring together all of the achievements and abilities learned over the course of your career.

Some Problems You Might Encounter

I'm overqualified for the job I want

Emphasise the relevant practical skills and experience that you have for the job. Focus attention on your Key Skills section, and choose the skills that fit the job you are applying for. 'Excess' qualifications can be discreetly mentioned in the education section. Highlight, instead, any relevant on-the-job training you have had.

I don't have many qualifications

Concentrate on what you do have. Emphasise your practical skills and experience: these are often more valuable to an employer than theoretical knowledge anyway.

If your lack of qualifications is becoming a serious handicap to your progress, consider applying for further training. This can, increasingly, be undertaken in the workplace without the need to go back to full-time education for two or three years. You may also find that your existing experience can be counted towards a qualification.

CV Checklist

When you have written your CV, check the following points.

Is the layout clear?

Do the relevant points stand out?

Is the language clear and understandable?

Are your skills and achievements emphasised?

Can the employer see the key points at a glance, or does the information have to be searched for and guessed at?

Is the document free of qualifying words such as fairly, usually and hopefully?

Is it well presented, smart and professional looking?

Your CV is a marketing tool for you. The better it is, the more chance you've got of succeeding. Be sure to communicate exactly what you've got to offer and what your extra skills and experience can bring to employers. With a good CV, highlighting your experience and professionalism, finding a suitable position will never be easier.

Curriculum Vitae Sample

Personal Details

Name

Home Telephone

Mobile

Email

Driving License

Home Address

House Name or Number

Street Name

Town/City

County

Country

Postcode

Personal Profile/Statement

Education And Qualifications

University/Further Education:

Dates From-To:

Exams/ Qualifications/Results

Grammar/High School:

Dates From-To:

Exams/Qualifications/Results

Other Qualifications:

Dates From-To:

Curriculum Vitae Sample

Employment History

Dates From-To

Employer/Company

Position

Key Duties/Responsibilities

Dates From-To

Employer/Company

Position

Key Duties/Responsibilities

Dates From-To

Employer/Company

Position

Key Duties/Responsibilities

Skills Profile

Interests and Achievements

Additional Information

Referee 1

Name

Position

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Referee 2

Name

Position

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Recruitment Network Belfast	028 9055 8000
Recruitment Network Ballymena	028 2563 2223
Recruitment Network Coleraine	028 7032 7373
Recruitment Network Newry	028 3025 7804
Recruitment Network Portadown	028 3835 3363

IT	028 9055 8080
Care (24hrs)	028 9027 9242
Technical	028 9055 8050
Accountancy	028 9055 8020
Sales and Marketing	028 9051 2100
Education	028 9055 8000
