

# How To Make Your CV Stand Out

Knowing your USP will make writing a CV and cover letter and preparing for an interview much easier.

To find out what your USP is, break down what you can offer into three categories: qualifications, experience and skills.

For each one work out what makes you stand out. If you know that other candidates will all have PhDs, write enough detail about yours to show why your research interests are more attractive.

## Qualifications

These are usually listed with the highest and most recent first.

DO NOT include too much, if you have a PhD, no need to go back to GCSEs and A levels.

Be specific: where and when did you get your qualification? Who was your supervisor? Give grades (especially if they are impressive!)

Remember to include any professional qualifications relevant to the job you're applying for. (see article on getting professional qualifications)

## Experience

What is your work experience? Any activity you have done in the world of work in the past.

An academic jobseeker usually lists three sorts of experience: research, teaching and administration/managerial. Other jobs have different sorts of experience that need to be prioritised.

Present them in chronological order, the most recent first. Give details of where and when you fulfilled this role.

## Skills

Defining your skills can be difficult for jobseekers used to thinking about qualifications and experience. But in today's job market selling your skills is vital.

A range of skills you may have include:

- Communication (personal/face to face AND in writing)
- Planning/time management
- Information gathering
- Teamwork/interpersonal skills
- Management/leadership
- IT skills
- Language skills

But it's not enough to say you have these skills. You have to demonstrate that you have them by  
GIVING EXAMPLES

- What exactly have you done?
- What were the outcomes?
- How did you achieve success?

So, to illustrate that you have good teamwork skills you might say:

'In my last position, I was one of five fellows in a research centre. The fellows all worked together to plan and run a large three-day conference, to showcase our own research outputs but also to network with others and provide a forum for international scholars in our field to present their work. Our team completed our organisation of the conference ahead of schedule, the event ran successfully with all of us involved during the three days and we had positive feedback from the delegates and speakers.'

Then you can take these attributes (qualifications, knowledge, skills) that make up your own career profile and tailor these to each individual job advert (see article on Four easy ways to fit your CV to the job advert)