How To Write A Good CV

Your first task is to work out what you need to include in your CV. A CV is a record of your qualifications (education and on-the-job training), work experience and skills.

It should be written in report style (i.e. bullet points, short sentences and small paragraphs) NOT in essay style with long sections of prose.

Writing a good CV is tricky: the message must be right but so must its appearance.

Your CV should persuade employers that you are the right person for the job and that they should offer you an interview.

There are many companies and websites offering advice on writing a good CV. Some will even write one for you. But it is possible to write an excellent CV yourself.

Here's some key points to consider.

- Include your personal details - name, address, phone number and email. People often forget them! Do not include your age or a photograph unless specifically asked to do so.
- When you write your employment history and education details put your most recent achievements first.
- Make the length of your CV relative to your work experience: if you have many years experience in a wide range of roles, you can justify a long CV. Academic CVs are usually at least 4-5 pages long, whereas CVs tailored to the private sector should be only 2.
- You can sound professional without using jargon or 'management-speak'. Keep your writing clear, direct and focused. Remember that the person looking at your CV might not be an expert in your field.
- Try to write your CV using as few words as possible - this way you'll keep to the point and avoid waffle. You can say more in your cover letter and application form, there's no need to go into depth in a CV.
- Use 'doing' words on your CV such as 'developed' or 'organised'. This makes you sounds active and not passive.
- Don't talk about your social life unless your activities display an important skill such as leadership or teamwork.
- Give the addresses of two referees; one should preferably be your current employer. (see article on how to choose referees)
- Most importantly, proofread your CV. There should be no spelling, punctuation or grammar errors: unprofessional CVs are rejected. If you find editing your own work difficult, get a friend to read your CV.
- Once you have finished it, show it to as many people as possible: your supervisor/mentor, colleagues, even your family and friends. Their first impressions will help you to improve your CV