

Four Easy CV Writing Steps

Once you have written a basic CV you then need to tailor it to each job you apply for. There's nothing employers hate more than receiving a generic CV where the applicant has made no attempt to think about the particular job.

So, never send out a generic CV. Always use your CV to tell an employer 'I want the job YOU are advertising' (and no one else's!)

You can tailor your CV by highlighting the your qualifications, skills and experience that are mentioned in the job description and person specification. You have to show that you are the candidate who mostly closely fits what the employer is looking for.

And remember: the employer might look at hundreds of CVs, spending only a few seconds on each. Guide their attention to the most important parts of your CV. (see article on how to lay out an academic CV)

Here's 4 easy steps to tailoring your CV to a particular job:

1. Get hold of the person specification for the post you're interested in applying for. These can often be found online. For example, when an advert is placed on jobs.ac.uk there is usually a link to the person specification in the body of the advert. Print it out if necessary.
2. What are the **essential** criteria listed? There will be between 5 and 20 and you must demonstrate that you fulfil them because this is the employer's wish-list: their ideal candidate. And you want to show them that you are that candidate.
3. Make sure your CV shows that you meet the essential criteria. Once you have a list of the criteria, check through your CV. Have you demonstrated that you have the qualifications, knowledge or skills to meet them all? The person specification shows you which aspects of your career history are most relevant.
4. If any of the essential criteria are missing or not obvious, you'll need to re-write your CV. It is vital that every one of those criteria is met or your CV will end up in the 'discard' pile.

There will be a list of **desirable** criteria too, and the more of those that you meet the better. Go through the same process to see whether you can match your CV to those.

What do I do if I want to apply for a job but do not fulfil all the essential criteria?

You can still apply for the job, but many of your competitors will have met a complete set of desirable criteria. If in doubt, email or telephone the informal contact (usually listed in the job advert) and express your interest in the post and your willingness to develop the qualification/knowledge/skill if hired and asking if it still worth you applying.