

## Writing your CV

*We regard your CV as your personal sales tool and your passport to a new career or job. It is therefore very important to get it right as your prospective employer will initially be judging you on your CV and its layout alone.*

### Content of your CV

There are no universal formats or rules about writing your CV but the following information should be considered:-

**Personal:** Name, address, telephone nos, date of birth and nationality.

**Profile:** This will outline a summary of your strengths and achievements to date (optional)

**Technical Skill Set:** Best in list format, relevant to your current skills and in the order of strongest skill first. (Place at the end if this is an extensive list, e.g. IT contractor)

**Career History:** Put in reverse chronological order with dates (including month and year), company name along with a brief summary of what the company does and job title. Talk about the technical environment you worked in and include your achievements in addition to your responsibilities. Huge paragraphs of text generally will not get read, so keep them concise and relevant, try to use bullet points with the most important first.

**Education:** Reverse chronological order, dates followed by name of establishment, followed by qualifications and grades achieved (Secondary and Further Education only). This may go before your career history if you have recently finished your education and don't have much work experience.

**Professional Training Courses Obtained:** Give one liner of course title and dates attended together with any qualification gained (e.g. MCSE, AAT, IPD, FPC, ACA, IPM)

**Hobbies and Interests:** This is optional and dependent on available space. Again it should be restricted to just 2 to 3 lines.

**Referees:** Names and addresses of two suitable referees, recent employers or, academic if you have only recently left education, or should you wish to 'provide on request' then please state this on your CV.

### How should I present my CV?

Once you have identified the key information to be included in your CV - and decided on the most important elements - you need to write and organise your points. Here are some general rules to follow:

- Make your CV simple and as clear as possible. That means keeping descriptions brief, factual and to the point.
- Your CV should be ideally no longer than two sides in length.
- Use active verbs that describe your skills, abilities and achievements. For example, "I can contribute/have experience in organising/am trained in..." Use such verbs at the beginning of each sentence (managed, developed, created, co-ordinated, etc.) to make them even more powerful.
- Use a clear and logical format.
- Since your personal career history, achievements and academic credentials are unique, the way you organise and express them may be equally unique. Whatever your choice, make sure that you highlight your strongest points. Also use clear headings, simple language and adequate margins and line spacing.
- Please ensure there are no gaps in your CV or explain reasons for any gaps in employment.
- Reasons for leaving – it is a good idea to state your reasons for leaving each role, e.g. redundancy, relocation, career progression. This is particularly useful if you have carried out a number of contract or temporary roles.

## **Dos**

- Do make it clear and easy to read.
- Do pay attention to presentation. It must be a well produced business like document. Use either 11 or 12 point type size.
- Do make sure that your CV highlights the skills relevant to the jobs you are applying for.
- Do make it waffle free and relevant.
- Do include the month and year for each major entry under education and career history.
- Do try to keep it to between two and three pages.
- Do explain any gaps in education and experience.
- Do spell check and proof read.

## **Don'ts**

- Do not use patterned or coloured paper.
- Do not add your photograph - employers will judge the person, not the body.
- Do not use fancy graphic images, type styles or symbols (unless you're applying for a graphics job).
- Do not include non-essential information such as the occupation of your partner, the names of your children, your passport or NI number, etc.

## **Accuracy of information**

- Several recent surveys have concluded that there is a high percentage of CVs containing false information, e.g. incorrect educational qualifications and dates of employment.
- This will be checked or found out at reference stage.
- If you have falsified information to obtain a position you are likely to be asked to leave.
- Honesty is the best policy!

## **Should I tailor my CV for different jobs?**

Yes, matching your skills and experience to the employer's needs will improve your success in securing an interview. What aspects of your education, experience and skills are most attractive to an employer? Remember, a CV is like a personal brochure. It must promote your strengths and aptitudes and demonstrate the benefits you can bring to the employer's organisation. That means tailoring your CV to a specific position wherever possible. It means finding out as much as you can about the company and the requirements of the role. Above all, it means thinking like an employer - What are they looking for? What key elements did they ask for in the job description? How specifically are you suited for this particular role and organisation? Always be honest and accurate in your information.