



# CV Advice: How to write a good CV

## Why is a good CV important?

Your CV delivers the first impression of you to an employer, allowing them to make a decision as to whether you are a suitable candidate for the role they are looking to fill. Your CV tells an employer who you are, what experience you have and what transferrable skills you have. Your CV needs to present the very best version of you, **don't give an employer any reason to rule you out based on the presentation of your CV.**

## What makes a strong CV?

**Text only:** Your Facebook profile photo should remain on social media. Do not include a photograph on your CV, let the words do the talking!

**Don't overcrowd the page:** Keep the layout of your CV clear, with plenty of white space around the information to ensure it is easy to read and employers can identify the information they are looking for, without having to wade through a mass of text.

**Short and sweet:** Avoid long paragraphs with lengthy sentences. Use bullet points and short sentences to keep the information relevant, to the point and easy to read. The length of a CV should always be relevant to the experience of the individual and the level of the position you are applying for. For an entry level/trainee position, keep your CV one to two pages in length.

**Simple design:** Steer clear of WordArt and ClipArt! Keep your CV to text only, always use black font and no extravagant font styles. For an easy to read, professional design, we recommend using Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman in size 11pt.

**Check and check again:** Poor grammar, spelling and punctuation can turn a great CV in to a sweeping fail. Always use the Spellcheck function in Microsoft Word to check for errors, ensuring your dictionary is set to English (United Kingdom) and not English (United States). Where possible, print a copy of your CV to proof read it, the human eye can often glance over mistakes on a computer screen. Before you send your CV anywhere, always ask for a second opinion from somebody with good literacy skills and professional experience.

## What should I include?

**Personal details:** Always check that your email address is appropriate for professional use and if you feel it is not, please create a new account. Ensure you have included accurate contact details including: full name, telephone number, email address and home address. Always provide two forms of contact to ensure the best chance of a prospective employer being able to reach you. Your address is important to allow employers to understand the distance you would need to travel to reach their premises, without this, you may be automatically ruled out of the running.

**Personal profile:** This is a short, introductory paragraph to sell yourself to a prospective employer and tell them why you should be considered for the role. Make sure you include the following: who you are, what you have to offer and what you're looking for.

**Work experience:** Always include the work experience you have (if any) that is relevant to the role you are applying for. List your work experience in reverse chronological order, with your most recent work experience first. You should include the following: job title, company, time in position and key responsibilities and achievements.

**Education:** Follow your work experience with your education history, from GCSE upwards. List your academic achievements in reverse chronological order, with the most recent achievement first. Always include the following: qualification type (e.g. GCSE, AS Level, A-Level etc.), date achieved, grade awarded and place of study.

**References:** At the end of your CV, include the following statement: 'References available upon request'. Employers will often request one or two references prior to offering you a position, however the type of reference required will vary depending on the requirements of the employer. Therefore, allowing the employer to request the referee contact details will allow you to select your referee to best suit their requirements.

**Additional information:** It is a good idea to include any additional information which may be favourable by an employer. This could include: full UK driving licence, spoken languages and existing notice periods. This additional information will allow an employer to understand more about you and your current position to greater inform their selection process.

**Top tip:** *Order your experience and achievements with the strongest area first. For example, if you have limited work experience but a strong academic record, always list your education history before your work experience.*