

Creating a CV

Introduction

Remember your CV is part of the package that should include a good covering letter or an appropriate e-mail message. Please use a sensible and appropriate e-mail address for your job search activities and check for messages regularly.

An effective CV is focussed and will create a first impression when received by a prospective employer.

If you take your CV to an Employment Agency be prepared to possibly have an informal interview, register and possibly take a test (data entry for example).

Do be prepared with proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK, National Insurance Number (if you do not have this see Jobcentre Plus leaflet Applying for a National Insurance number), bank details and contact details of two referees who have given permission for you to use their name.

I've never had a CV, why do I need a CV now?

- This can be the first step in the recruitment process so it is worth checking your CV thoroughly each time you use it to keep it targeted and keep a copy. A CV is also required for a speculative application and should be sent with a covering letter or e-mail message.
- Your CV should be honest as inconsistencies will show up; if you have particular problems seek advice.
- The next step could be an online application, a telephone interview, a group interview, an informal interview, a formal interview or a company application form. The choice depends on the recruitment process used by the employer.
- A CV can help you focus on your skills and identify areas of employment available to you and may highlight training needs. It can also be a useful tool for completing application forms.
- Check your CV each time you use it and make changes as necessary. Save a copy of each CV with the name of the employer you have used it for; this will help you prepare for an interview.

Guide to creating a CV

- CV is Latin for 'Course of life' it is not your life story. The standard advice is to keep it to two pages (three pages is considered acceptable for some senior level executives and very technical staff).
- Your CV is a personal document reflecting your skills, abilities and achievements and must be something that you are comfortable with and reflects who you are and what you can offer a potential employer.
- SECURITY – When using public access computers, only save your CV to a floppy disc or your own data storage device to secure your personal information. Do not save it to any other areas on the computer, it will be deleted or worse still your personal information could be accessed by anyone. Do not add your National Insurance Number to your CV; only give it on a company application form if requested. You can inform an employer that you have a National Insurance Number and relevant documents in a covering letter or e-mail if requested.
- If you feel able to produce a CV yourself you might wish to start using Microsoft Word with headings such as Personal Profile, Key Skills, Employment History, Education & Training and Additional Information.
- There are many books and templates giving advice on how to construct a CV.
- If you want to produce your own CV and have limited computer skills you can use an appropriate template from a CV Builder.
www.cvbuilder-advice-resources.co.uk



Presentation

- A CV needs to be well presented on paper and possibly even better as an e-mail attachment.
- A size 12 font using something like Trebuchet MS, Ariel or Verdana throughout reduces lost space with the use of enlarged headings. The use of bold is just as effective. Italics can be hard to read if sent as an e-mail attachment.
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors. It can detract from the content of the document to see spelling and grammar errors highlighted on the screen. Check that your Word Document is set to English UK unless applying to an American company.
- Avoid including unnecessary information and remember you have limited space to create an impression.
- Some information might be better presented in a covering letter or disclosure statement.

Problem Areas

- How far do I go back in employment history is a common question and this will depend on your experience. One view is to go back no more than 10 years but this should not be at the expense of excluding vital experience not demonstrated elsewhere on your CV
- Experience has shown that some employment agencies ask for exact employment dates even if there has been a substantial career break. It is possible to block together several temporary positions or contracts especially if they have been in the same employment sector. This allows space to focus on skills and experience required for the position that you are applying for.

- Looking back can take you to areas of your past personal life that you would rather not re-visit. If this is the case it can be useful to create a list of previous positions and work out the dates so you have this for future reference and only need focus on the duties and responsibilities of the position you are applying for.
- Gaps in employment history are common to people returning to work for a variety of reasons such as after raising a family, periods of illness, time spent in prison or having returned to education. This needs to be explained and if you have completed any training courses or voluntary work during this time to improve your skills include this information. NACRO offers advice and guidance for ex-offenders which is available online and we can help you put this into practice. www.nacro.org.uk/publications/

For impartial advice ask for a professional review but remember that there is no such thing as a perfect CV. If the CV is well constructed and you still fail to make progress then it is worth looking at your skills and what jobs you are aiming for. This could highlight training needs or the need to gain experience through voluntary work.