

## CV ADVICE:

CVs are an essential tool in the job searching process and everyone should know how to construct one. But many people don't know the difference between a good CV and a great CV and this could be the deciding factor in securing an interview for your dream job.

After reading this section, you will know:

- How to create a CV that stands out in the crowd
- The best format to follow
- What to include and what to exclude in your CV
- Importance of tailoring your CV to your audience

### **The format of a winning CV:**

- Any single version of the CV should aim to cover 2 pages and no more than 3.
- CV preparation can be organised to provide you with a database of skills, experience and achievements from which you should select material to reflect the requirements of the specific job role.
- A CV should begin with a short summary of who you are. Make sure that this is objective and avoid all the subjective cliches such as 'excellent self-starter', 'good team player', 'natural leader and good communicator'. These qualities can be demonstrated through your tangible achievements which follow in the CV.
- The opening statement can be tailored to pick up on the key features of a given job description.
- Remember that your CV will form part of the script for the interviewer's questions.
- Do not allow gaps or unclear explanations to take up the precious time allotted to you so, try to neatly match their requirements.

### **Illustrate your achievements:**

- It is not sufficient to simply state the posts and responsibilities that you have held. It is vital to illustrate how well you have carried out this work through your list of achievements.
- How does an achievement differ from responsibility? An achievement is a statement of how you have added value to an organisation.
- You can include hobbies and interests that are relevant to the job. For example, if you're involved in any clubs or societies this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. Try to avoid putting activities like cooking or reading, as these activities are too general and widespread to be of interest to an employer. Make them specific and interesting.

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## **Make sure to sell yourself:**

- Always express your skills and qualities in the present tense - you may not be using them right now but you still have these facilities.
- Positive features need to jump off the page.
- Be objective. Get someone independent to look at your CV when you have completed it - not a friend or family member. Be prepared to refine it a number of times until it is right.
- Do not forget your skills outside of work. There may be something that you do in your personal time that has a direct bearing on your suitability for a particular post.
- A CV should also give some idea of your future potential. If you are presently studying for an additional qualification, say so.

## **Functional and chronological CVs:**

- The most widely accepted style is the chronological CV.
- Career history is presented as a series of appointments with the achievements listed against each one.
- Presented in reverse date order, with the most recent appointment first. You should include employer, the dates you worked for them, job title and your main duties. Provide more detail on the relevant jobs you've had and give examples of the skills you used and what you achieved.
- More space can be allocated to the more recent positions, since these are where your most important achievements are usually found.

## **References:**

- At least one referee should be work-related. Or, if you haven't worked for a while, you could use another responsible person who has known you for some time. You can list your referees on your CV or just put 'references available on request'. If you decide to include their details you should state the relationship of each referee to you.

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## **Do's:**

- A good covering letter should always accompany your CV.
- Keep the layout and design legible, consistent and easy to follow, with good clear headings, large easy-to-read typeface.
- Use a confident tone and positive language.
- Use bullet points rather than full sentences as it can help minimise word usage.
- List your professional and higher education qualifications.
- Show recent vocational training.
- Include genuine foreign language skills.
- Include your unusual interests.
- Add a note of any publications and/or external positions you hold.
- Make sure your CV is always up to date.

## **Don't:**

- List every training course you have ever attended.
- Put down mundane interests.
- Include present salary details.

## **Avoid:**

- Unexplained gaps in your employment history. If you had time out travelling, job seeking, volunteering or caring for a relative, include this along with details of what you've learned.