

CV Tips for Graduates

Fresh out of university and looking for your first step onto the career ladder? Worried that you may not have a great deal of experience to offer? Fear not!

From your academic qualifications to the commitment and work ethic it has taken to gain your degree, you have very many skills and abilities to positively present to potential employers. And that's exactly the purpose of your CV.

Most employers will spend around five seconds glancing over a CV before deciding if it is relevant or not. So make sure yours stands out, for all the right reasons, by following these simple guidelines.

CV Sections

Personal Details

- Name
- Address
- Home and mobile number. Put a personal voicemail on your mobile, not just the factory setting. Employers like to hear your professional telephone manner and know they are leaving messages for the right person
- e-mail address if you have one
- You don't need to include your date of birth or nationality

Personal Statement

- About five lines on who you are, what you have to offer and what you're aiming for in a career
- This should be tweaked to match the job description every time you apply for a different job

Work Experience

- If you do have any work experience, list it, starting with the most recent first
- Include the dates (month and year) you began and finished the job, company name, job title and your main responsibilities
- Most people have done some 'work' even if they didn't get paid for it. Have you undertaken any work placements as part of your course? Done any volunteering? Helped with a university open day or event?

- If not, you may prefer to title this section 'Skills'. Then include anything relevant to the role you're applying for. For example: IT skills (naming specific programs), problem solving, communication skills, friendly and presentable

Qualifications

- Start with your most recent qualifications and work back
- Include the date you gained the qualification (degree or similar) and include educational details from GCSE level onwards
- Include the date you gained the qualification, the location, the name of the qualification and the grade you received
- If you don't have your grades yet put 'pending'
- Course work, major assignments, team projects or your dissertation may be relevant to a role and will demonstrate your wider knowledge of the subject

Other Information

- Include any languages you speak other than English
- Any courses you've studied outside of school/university time
- Hobbies and interests. Avoid anything too vague like socialising with friends or going to the cinema. Try to include things that are challenging and interesting
- List if you can drive and have your own transport
- Any other achievements or skills which don't fit elsewhere... have you spent any time travelling since university? Where did you go? For how long? What did you gain from it?

References

- It is usual to give two references
- They can be family friends, teachers, or past employers, but not family members
- List their name, job title and contact details
- Get your referees' permission before using their details

Remember...

- ✓ Keep your CV short, ideally two pages
- ✓ Make sure your name is on both pages
- ✓ Keep it easy to read, with a clear font and simple layout
- ✓ Use bullet points
- ✓ Emphasise headings and key points with bold text or a slightly larger font
- ✓ Consider using a slightly tinted/coloured paper to help your CV stand out. Any colour should be subtle and the text should still be easily readable
- ✓ Check all spelling and grammar. Ask a friend or relative to double-check it too
- ✓ Include your social media information IF you think it is a positive reflection of you. Employers may look you up online so be sure to spring-clean your posts!

- ✓ Send your CV with a covering letter, clearly stating what job or work experience you're looking for

Please don't do this...

- Use unusual, small or coloured fonts
(unless colour helps you because you are visually impaired)
- Use italics and underlined text, these can be difficult to read
- Make untrue statements or claims
- Include photographs
- Include your date of birth or nationality
- Write 'References available on request'
- Use emoticons or funny faces
- List 'jokey' email addresses