

HOW TO WRITE A PROFESSIONAL CV

Content

Essential information to include:

- Your full **contact details** including address, a professional sounding email address and working/current telephone number (make sure you also have a sensible voicemail!).
- **Education** section – detail your qualifications (including current qualification i.e. BSc (Hons) Computer Science), plus place of study, course title and dates. Include module information where appropriate.
- **Employment History** section – detail your work history as well as work experience and voluntary work, including job title, name of organisation, dates and main duties/responsibilities.
- **Professional Skills** – document your skills (both technical and non-technical), stating your level of expertise i.e. Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced or by using adjectives i.e. excellent communication skills. Tip – enhance your Skills Profile by stating where you have developed/used these skills effectively.
- A **References** section – state “references available upon request”.

Value adding information to include:

- An **‘Achievements’** or **‘Awards’** or **‘Projects’** or **‘Portfolio’** section (the title is up to you) – here you could include details of projects you have participated in or your greatest achievements, both personal and professional. If you have created any websites or games, add details here.
- A **‘Profile’** – a short statement that summarises your core strengths, experience or expertise. Only include this if you have something impressive to say, that will make you stand out (position at the top).
- An **‘Interests’** section – include this if you feel you can add value to your CV by telling an employer a bit more about you. Click [here](#) for a good example. Avoid using generic entries such as socialising with friends.

Format

- Create your CV using **Word**.
- Present your CV over **no more than two pages**. If you do not have enough content to fill 2 pages, display your CV over one page.
- Ensure you use **consistent font types and sizing** – this aids the structure of your CV.
- Use **professional alignment** of text (eg use of tabs and not the space bar for aligning text) – ensure your CV is aesthetically pleasing.
- Use a **sensible layout** of sections (ordering) – ensure your CV flows well and that the most valuable sections appear on the first page.

- Ensure your full **name** appears of **both pages** – in case the printed pages become detached.
- Ensure information within each section appears in **reverse chronological order** i.e. most recent information first.
- Ensure your CV is **absent** of large areas of **white space** – this can be resolved by displaying bullet points/lists as columns.

Spelling & Grammar

- It is essential that you **check the spelling and grammar** of your CV. Employers could disregard you immediately based on poor spelling and grammar. Also ensure your CV **reads well**, that you have written in **correct English**.

Things to Avoid

- Do not add 'Curriculum Vitae' to the top your CV.
- Do not add any personal details that do not promote equal opportunities i.e. date of birth, gender, race, religion, sexual preferences.
- Do not add a photo.
- Do not use logos or pictures for organisations or societies that you may have worked for/been member of.

Tips

- ✓ Take a look at sample CVs online to get some ideas on how your CV should look (Google “CV template”).
- ✓ A CV should be two pages long, do not confuse a CV with a resume which is only one page long.
- ✓ Remember to sell yourself; your aim is to jump off the page so ensure you comprehensively cover everything that makes you an asset to any company.
- ✓ Avoid repetition of content.
- ✓ Use convincing adjectives like ‘confident’, ‘strong’, ‘excellent’, ‘keen’. See below for further examples.
- ✓ Express your enthusiasm, drive and desire for a challenge!
- ✓ When supplying referees, use your Personal Tutor as your academic referee. It is professional etiquette to ask other individuals i.e. your line manager, if they would agree to be your referee before you pass on their contact details.

Action Words for CVs and Applications (verbs)

Using active, positive words (these are normally verbs) in a CV or an application form can increase its impact and make a stronger impression on potential employers. In addition to stating what you did, use action words to articulate what you have **achieved** through employment, academia or in your personal life.

For example, rather than writing:

*"For my team project, I **had to** carry out some user requirements. This **involved** analysing what the client needed from the software. A database **was used** to keep track of data collected. This project was **finished** on time and was awarded a 2.1 grade."*

You should instead write:

*"**Devised** a study of user requirements for an airline booking software as part of my team project. **Conducted significant research** and **created** a database to **analyse** and **interpret** this material. **Completed** this project two weeks ahead of schedule and **achieved** a 1st grade."*

Examples of words to use:

Achieved	Created	Liaised	Promoted
Administered	Designed	Managed	Recommended
Advised	Developed	Monitored	Represented
Analysed	Devised	Negotiated	Researched
Budgeted	Diagnosed	Organised	Sold
Calculated	Discovered	Performed	Solved
Completed	Evaluated	Persuaded	Supervised
Conducted	Evaluated	Planned	Taught
Controlled	Explained	Presented	Tested
Co-ordinated	Instructed	Prioritised	Trained

Describing Words for CVs and Applications (adjectives)

Using powerful language to add weight to your skills and abilities is also an effective way of demonstrating the level of your ability. Adding examples adds even further conviction.

For example, rather than writing:

- Communication skills
- Team working skills
- Analytical skills

You could instead write:

- Strong communication skills: able to convey information and share ideas in a timely and professional manner, this skill has been essential when communicating with clients.
- Effective team working skills: able to work efficiently and effectively with others as demonstrated throughout an excellent team project result. Strong leadership were also proven through the understanding of others' skills set and the division of work.
- Proficient analytical skills: proven ability to analyse problems or data, and to determine sound solutions to the success of projects.

Examples of words to use:

Able

Accomplished

Attentive

Capable

Confident

Conscientious

Consistent

Determined

Diligent

Dynamic

Effective

Efficient

Energetic

Enterprising

Enthusiastic

Hard-working

Industrious

Loyal

Methodical

Motivated

Organised

Passionate

Persistent

Professional

Proficient

Reliable

Self-starter

Skilful

Strong

Studios

Successful

Trustworthy