

YOUR CV

The aim of your CV is to get you to an interview. How? You must stand out from the crowd and impress the reader enough to want to invest in you further. - A CV is 'chameleon', meaning that it should be adapted and adjusted to suit each specific job application.

Competition is fierce and so recruiters usually take between 10-20 seconds to review a CV before deciding on whether or not they wish to read further.

Creating a CV that's easy to read is the first step; if recruiters cannot easily identify different sections they're more likely to stop reading- you need to do the work so they don't have to.

Each individual and CV application is different, so we always recommend making a 1:1 appointment with a campus careers consultant to get personalised support and feedback.

Reverse chronological order means displaying something in an order that shows your most recent achievements first and your later achievements should follow.

A reverse chronological CV is broken down into sections with key headings;

- Personal Details (no heading needed)
- Personal Profile (no heading needed & optional)
- Key Skills (optional - consider a skills based CV)
- Education
- Work Experience
- Achievements and Interests
- Languages and References

Keep reading for more information on each section and check out **NU Careers Online/NU Careers app** for our CV builder!



Remember! A CV should highlight relevant experience and achievements, be clear and easy to read and locate information and most importantly, should provide clear evidence of your achievements, skills and knowledge.

Your CV- Common Questions

How long should a CV be?

The maximum standard length of a UK graduate CV is no more than two A4 sides.

What about the font?

Your CV must look clean, neat and readable, so stay clear of unusual font styles. Try Verdana, Arial or Calibri and avoid using colour.

Stick to between 10-12 size font.

Should I include my photo on my CV?

You are not required to include a photo on your CV and this is not UK standard practice. The only time you should include a photo on your CV is for an acting or modelling role.

How should I save my CV?

PDF is best, as it means there is no risk of alternation or misalignment if using different software. Don't forget to use Word when writing it up, as it has a spelling and grammar checker!

CV Language- How should I write in a CV?

Your CV is a professional document so ensure that this image is reflected in your writing; refrain from using slang, abbreviations or words that may come across as inappropriate in your writing.

Should I use bullet points?

Yes! Bullet points allow you to make short and helpful points in the limited space available. If it seems like there is too much writing, the reader may not read it at all!

What counts as 'work experience'?

Employers want to know what experience you have had, whether it was part-time, full-time, voluntary/unpaid. Remember to emphasise experiences most related to the job description that you are applying for and less detail for work that is not relevant.

What style CV should I choose?

It depends on you and the job - talk to your Careers Consultant for more help,

How do I translate my non-UK qualifications into UK ones?

Qualifications can mean different things from country to country, so try and look up the equivalent results online or alternatively, you should offer a clear indication of your result as a percentage or a 'grade out of..'

Do I need to mention my nationality and work permit status on my CV?

You do not need to mention your nationality on a CV for a role within the UK. However, the employer may ask you to confirm whether or not you have permission to work in the UK at the recruitment stage.

What is the best layout for my CV?

Your CV should be in reverse chronological order- meaning that you should display the information with the most recent achievements first and work your way back for each section.

Your CV- Explained



Personal Details

The only personal details that you need to provide are; your full name (no nicknames), home address, (a professional i.e. sensible) email address, mobile number and if you want, a LinkedIn profile. This should sit along the top of your CV and remember, you don't need to write "Curriculum Vitae" or "CV" on your CV, it is pretty self-explanatory! It may sound silly, but a simple mistype could lead to an employer not being able to get in touch with you, so check before you send!

Personal Profile

This is not required on all CV's but the general advice is that; if you want to tell the reader something before they actually read your CV, or perhaps to entice them to read it in the first place, including a personal profile is a good idea. But be aware, recruiters often complain of poor profiles so don't fall into this trap. If the statement sounds like it could be about anyone else at all, then it isn't tailored and specific enough to you. If you are a typical graduate student with a little or no work experience under your belt, then we don't suggest including a personal profile.

If however you want to include a personal profile, this section is usually around 4-6 lines long (approx. 100 words, no more than 200). Your profile should highlight key attributes to help you stand out from the crowd. It is your opportunity to show your specific achievements, details of what you can bring to a role and reasons as to why you would make the ideal candidate for the role that you are applying for.

Key Skills

Again, this section is not necessary but you may find it useful to include if you have certain skills that you wish to showcase for a specific role e.g. an IT role may require multiple software and hardware skills, which could be listed in this section as it is an attractive and essential quality to have.

Alternatively, if you have little or no work experience, key skills are a great way to showcase your abilities. But it no good just listing them. Ask you Careers Consultant about using the STAR method!

Your CV- Explained

Education

When listing your education, you need to start out with the most recent academic qualifications first and work your way back. If you haven't completed your qualification yet, you can include your predicted results (just don't forget to state that it is a prediction). You will need to include details of; the date/year achieved, the place of education, type of qualification and grade obtained.- And don't forget to convert your grades if necessary.

Work Experience

Your work experience details should be written in reverse order, starting with your most recent experience and ending with your oldest work experience. You will need to include; the date/time period worked, job title, name of the organisation. Under each job title, you will need to write key information about your experience and key responsibilities when working within that role.

Remember, pay more attention to the relevant work experience you have for the role, and keep non-relevant descriptions to a minimum.

Use bullet points to list the key responsibilities you had; usually 6 is about right. It is important to consider the competencies and key skills that the target employer is looking for and use this section to demonstrate how you have already achieved them.

Don't forget to provide evidence! - For example, if you were responsible for selling something, how many sales did you make? If you managed a team, how many people? (there is a big difference between a team of 2 or 10!). If your role directly resulted in an increase of customer satisfaction, can you provide a statistic that proves this? If you worked in a retail or hospitality environment it is likely that you had some sort of target to achieve; tell the reader what the target was, who set it, and confirm you achieved, or even exceeded it. Providing evidence will make your CV persuasive to an employer!

Your CV- Explained

Achievements & Interests

If you have limited work experience this section can be crucial in helping you stand out and indeed graduate recruiters in particular, are keen to see a wide range of extracurricular activities undertaken (things you do in your spare time outside of work and studies).

This section should highlight more than just 'I enjoy reading/playing sports', as this doesn't really tell an employer an awful lot about you or additional key skills you might have. Likewise, although employers are keen to see you are sociable and will get on with your future colleagues, the fact that you like going out with your friends also does not indicate other relevant key skills you may have. Similarly, travelling in itself is not really enough to write on a CV; after all, who doesn't like going on holiday!

Rather, you need to consider what activities you have undertaken outside of work and studies that demonstrate the key skills an employer is looking for. For example, as treasurer of a university society, you may have had to manage a budget, liaise with stakeholders and plan marketing activities. You might be able to indicate how effective you were as treasurer by telling the reader how much sponsorship money you collected etc.

Languages

If you speak multiple languages make sure to include this section as it may give you a competitive edge. List languages by level of ability e.g. basic, intermediate or fluent and be realistic, a few common phrases doesn't make you a basic speaker of a language!

References

Although you are no longer required to put 'References available upon request', as it is common knowledge that an employer will likely ask for this, it is important to know what they are and when to give them. A reference is usually provided by a previous manager or an academic leader (someone who knows you well), who will 'vouch for you'. Remember to ask for their permission before offering their details for references.

