

WHAT IS A CV?

A CV or curriculum vitae is an outline of your education and/or professional history. A good CV will tell a prospective employer quickly and concisely about your qualifications and experience and so demonstrate your suitability for a job.

DO I NEED A CV?

The answer to this is YES.

Having a CV will increase your prospects of getting the job that you want. If you have one prepared in advance, you are in a position to respond quickly whenever the ideal job comes along. Many advertised vacancies ask you to 'please write enclosing a CV to...'

HOW WILL HAVING A CV HELP ME FIND A JOB?

The main purpose of a CV is to get you an interview. It should contain just enough information to show your suitability when you respond to a job advert. Recruitment agencies will often ask you for a CV so they can submit it to companies who are looking for your skills. Your CV can also act as a memory jogger for you when completing application forms.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE TO WRITE MY CV?

Spend some time thinking through the details carefully because the more time you spend preparing your CV, the more success it will bring you.

Start by jotting down notes about previous jobs and experience. This should include the purpose of your job and your responsibilities.

Write down the dates you started and finished each job. If you had spells of unemployment include these too, noting what you did with your time – you may have been travelling or working voluntarily. It is important that there are no unexplained gaps.

Once you have all the information, you must decide which points are most important. Keep sentences short or use bullet points. Use the headings shown in the example. This way your information will be organised, easy to read and interesting.

You must be honest and accurate with your information. Often the interviewer will use your CV as the basis of your interview for references.

HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MY CV?

The way you present your CV can say a lot about you. It's often the first impression a prospective employer will have of you, so take time to lay it out clearly and check there are no spelling mistakes or errors. Try to keep your CV simple, clear and no longer than two sides in length.

Wherever possible, arrange to have your CV produced on a word processor as it will look much more professional. If you don't have direct access to a word processor, look in the Yellow Pages under secretarial and typing services to find a local company who can do it for you. It's likely that your CV will be photocopied at some point, so black printing on white paper is recommended.

If you are applying for a job requiring specific skills, you are advised to tailor your CV to the position. The relevance of the information you provide will determine if you are asked to attend an interview. Sending a few tailored CV's rather than hundreds of general ones will produce far greater success and save on postage!

Don't forget to keep your CV up-to-date. Remember, each new skill you learn and increased experience will improve your value to further employers.

SHOULD I SEND ANYTHING WITH MY CV?

Yes! Always accompany it with a covering letter.

The letter should

- Be a maximum of one page
- Be addressed to a person by name rather than Dear Sir. This way, it should land on the right desk
- State the job you are applying for and where you saw it advertised.
- Say why you want the job and what you can offer the employer
- Use bullets to highlight any skills and experience you think of particular relevance to the job
- Include any extra, relevant information which is not covered on your CV
- State where the recipient can contact you for further information
- Finally end on a positive note! Say that you look forward to speaking to them in the near future.

GOOD LUCK!