

CVS EXPLAINED

A **CV** is a short, factual document that you use to market yourself to employers or organisations. Often accompanied by a Cover Letter – which provides the narrative around the facts – these two documents form an ‘application’ for a vacancy. Refer to our Cover Letter guidance for more information.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CV

- Chronological – great basic format for listing all your paid and voluntary work experience.
- Skills-based – useful for drawing attention to relevant skills if you are still building up work experience.
- Academic – focuses on academic achievements, teaching experience and research publications, and can be longer than the usual one or two pages.

SECTIONS TO INCLUDE

Contact details

Include your name, telephone number, and email address. Add your LinkedIn URL if you have one.

Personal profile

You may want to include a short summary statement at the top, highlighting your specific strengths and unique qualities.

Education

List your current course, plus your previous qualifications, with the name and place of study. **Include dates.** If you have space, offer further detail about specifically relevant modules that you’ve studied, your dissertation topic, and any academic achievements.

Work experience

List your work experiences in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. Describe your duties using a brief list of bullet points. Where possible, include industry-specific language, action words, and measurable metrics.

Additional headings

Add a ‘Professional Development’ section to list extra learning and development that you’ve undertaken, show your commitment to your chosen field or sector, and demonstrate your readiness to make the transition from student to professional. It can be worth including ‘Languages’ or ‘IT Skills’ sections to offer greater detail.

Skills

Some employers value technical or scientific skills above all others, so – if this is relevant – include these skills near the top of your CV.

Interests and achievements

Briefly list extra-curricular activities to show your broader strengths and qualities e.g. sports, societies, clubs, groups, and volunteering.

References

You don’t need to list your referees on your CV. However, you do need to have contact names ready, so keep in touch with your personal tutor, lecturers, past employers, and past supervisors – i.e. the people who can vouch for you.

TOP TIPS

- Update your CV (and LinkedIn profile!) regularly, and tailor the CV to every job you apply for.
- Choose a simple format and layout, and limit yourself to one or two different fonts.
- Remember to use short, punchy bullet points for maximum impact. Try the Power Verbs Generator on CareerHub+, to generate energetic and professional language for your CV and applications
- Accuracy is essential. Minimise mistakes by proofreading your document before submission
- Too much content? Let us help you streamline your CV into two pages or less – attend our drop-in sessions, information about which is overleaf.

BLIND CV RECRUITMENT

Blind recruitment is sometimes used by employers to make recruitment as inclusive and unbiased as possible. If you are requested to provide a blind CV, you must ensure you remove any details that the employer asks you to, which is usually any information that may reveal details about your identity. For example, if your email address contains your name, you must remove it as this may reveal your gender. You may need to remove the dates of your education, as this could reveal your age. Some organisations may even request that you remove your place of study and your interests.

COUNTRY SPECIFICATIONS

Depending on where you are applying for work, the look, content, and format of your CV may change in line with a country’s requirements. For example, a CV with a photograph of the candidate is frowned upon in the UK, but in the United Arab Emirates it is completely acceptable. In Singapore, they expect to see the full contact details of your references, whereas in the UK we only provide this information in the final stages of recruitment.

To navigate international CVs there are plenty of resources online offering advice such as:

- Goinglobal – essex.ac.uk/student/careers/advice-for-working-and-studying-abroad
- TopCV – topcv.co.uk/career-advice/international-cv-differences
- GlobalGraduates – globalgraduates.com/articles/cv-advice-applying-for-jobs-internationally

APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS

Many large organisations use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) as part of their screening process. Ensure your CV gets past this stage by following our top tips.

- Include keywords that are found in the person specification such as certain skills and attributes and qualifications needed.
- Format your CV correctly using font size no smaller than 10 points and at least half inch margins – keep away from tabular style CVs, and avoid using images and custom fonts.
- Submit your CV as a word document and avoid PDFs.

Try using our free CV feedback tool to optimise your CV for ATS software. Upload your current CV to get instant, detailed feedback.

essex.careercentre.me/cv360.

TYPES OF CV

The most common type of CV requested from employers are skills-based and chronological CVs. However, you may want to amend these slightly, or adopt a completely different style entirely for different industries or sectors. For job applications within design and marketing you may be requested to submit a Creative CV. For customer facing roles some employers may request a Video CV. For legal roles or positions in teaching you may have to adopt a unique style of writing or editing that highlights certain aspects of your professional and academic experience. Check out the below online resources to explore different types of CV:

- prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/creative-cvs
- targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/information-technology/tips-graduate-technical-cv-template-and-advice
- prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/law-sector/writing-a-legal-cv-and-cover-letter
- prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/create-a-great-video-cv
- prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/example-cvs

FURTHER SUPPORT

For more information, advice and support with CVs, email careersinfo@essex.ac.uk or visit careerhub.essex.ac.uk to book an event or 1-1 appointment.