Before you start: Five basic principles for a good CV

1. Concentrate on the essentials

- Employers generally spend less than one minute reading a CV before deciding to reject it, or to shortlist it for detailed consideration. If you fail to make the right impact, you missed your chance.
- If applying for an advertised vacancy, always ensure that you comply with any application process entirely. The vacancy notice might specify: how to apply (CV, application form, online application), the length and/or format of the CV, whether a covering letter is required, etc.
- Be brief: two A4 pages are usually more than enough, irrespective of your education or experience. Do not exceed three pages. If you hold a degree, include your secondary school qualifications only if relevant to the job in question.
- Is your work experience limited? Describe your education and training first; highlight volunteering activities and placements or traineeships.

2. Be clear and concise

- Use short sentences. Avoid clichés. Concentrate on the relevant aspects of your training and work experience.
- Give specific examples. Quantify your achievements.
- Update your CV as your experience develops. Don't hesitate to remove old information if it does not add value for the position.

3. Always adapt your CV to suit the post you are applying for

- Highlight your strengths according to the needs of the employer and focus on the skills that match the job.
- Do not include work experience or training which is not relevant to the application.
- Explain any breaks in your studies or career giving examples of any transferable skills you might have learned during your break.
- Before sending your CV to an employer, check again that it corresponds to the required profile.
- Do not artificially inflate your CV; if you do, you are likely to be found out at the interview.

4. Pay attention to the presentation of your CV

- Present your skills and competences clearly and logically, so that your advantages stand out.
- Put the most relevant information first.
- Pay attention to spelling and punctuation.
- Print your CV on white paper (unless you are asked to send it electronically).
- Retain the suggested font and layout.

5. Check your CV once you have filled it in

- Correct any spelling mistakes, and ensure the layout is clear and logical.
- Have someone else re-read your CV so that you are sure the content is clear and easy to understand.
- Do not forget to write a cover letter.

All CV headings/fields are optional. Remove any fields left empty.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Replace with First name(s) Surname(s)

If you have more than one first name, start with the one you usually use. Example:

John Smith

Insert picture only if required.

Replace with house number, street name, city, postcode, country

Choose the postal address at which you can be contacted quickly. Example:

32 Reading Rd., Birmingham B26 3QJ, United Kingdom

Replace with telephone number Replace with mobile number

Choose the number at which you can be contacted quickly, most likely your mobile phone. Example:

+44 7871 330 1234

Separate groups of digits in accordance to national convention, to ensure your telephone number is easy to read. Example: +<CountryCode> <AreaCode> <LocalNumber>

State e-mail address

Choose the e-mail address at which you can be contacted quickly, preferably your personal e-mail address. Avoid fancy or silly addresses. Example:

John.smith@hotmail.com

State personal website(s)

Be sure it is relevant to the position and it does not hinder your application. Example:

www.sample.com

Replace with type of IM service / Replace with messaging account(s)

Be sure it is relevant to the position and it does not hinder your application. Example:

AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) john.smith

Sex Enter sex | Date of birth dd/mm/yyyy | Nationality Enter nationality/-ies

Complete only if required. Check local legal provisions regarding data such as sex, age, nationality, etc. on a CV. Example:

Sex Male | Date of birth 01/04/1973 | Nationality Spanish

JOB APPLIED FOR
POSITION
PREFERRED JOB
STUDIES APPLIED FOR
PERSONAL STATEMENT
Delete non relevant headings.

Replace with job applied for / position / preferred job / studies applied for / personal statement

This heading gives an immediate overview of the purpose of your application. Delete non relevant headings in the left column. Examples:

JOB APPLIED FOR

Human Resources Assistant (ref. 562/2013)

POSITION

Car painter

PREFERRED JOB

Customer Service Representative or Clerical Support

STUDIES APPLIED FOR

Postgraduate Applied Economics

PERSONAL STATEMENT

A graduate with strong communication and organisational skills gained in nursing, now seeking to move into HR as a trainee manager

Use ‘Personal statement’ only if you have a clear idea of what job you wish to apply for. Focus on your core strengths and achievements related to the job, rather than past duties. A few sentences are enough (max. 50 words). Avoid generic statements such as ‘Looking for a challenging opportunity’, etc.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Focus on the work experience that gives added weight to your application.
- Add separate entries for each experience. Start with the most recent.
- If your work experience is limited:
  - describe your education and training first;
  - mention volunteering or (paid/unpaid) work placements which provide evidence of work experience.
- If you are applying for a position you have no prior experience of, underline skills gained from previous jobs relevant for the position. For example if you apply for a managerial position but have never worked as manager, emphasise that your previous position involved significant responsibility and decision-making duties (delegation, coordination, training staff, etc.)

Replace with dates (from - to)
Example:
September 2007 - Present

Replace with occupation or position held
Examples:

Maintenance technician / Receptionist / Ice Hockey Volunteer Coach

Replace with employer's name and locality (if relevant, full address and website)
Example:

Anderson and Dobbs Ltd., 12 Highland Road, Edinburgh EH3 4AB, United Kingdom

Indicate telephone, fax, e-mail or Internet address only if required. Example:

Tel.: (44-31) 123 45 67 - Fax (44-31) 123 45 68 - E-mail: J.Robinson@andes.co.uk
http://www.anderdobbs.co.uk

- Replace with main activities and responsibilities

Examples:

- maintenance of computers
- relations with suppliers
- coaching a junior Ice Hockey team (10 hours/week)

If necessary, quantify your responsibilities (percentage of working time, length of time spent on each occupation, etc.).

Business or sector Replace with type of business or sector

Use only if required. Examples:

Business or sector Transport and logistics / Auditing / Manufacturer of motor vehicle parts

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Add separate entries for each course. Start from the most recent.

Replace with dates (from - to)
Example:
September 2004 - June 2007

Replace with qualification awarded
Example:

National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2: Bakery Service

Avoid using abbreviations on their own (e.g. NVQ).

Replace with EQF level if relevant
Example:
EQF level 3

Replace with name and locality of education or training organisation (if relevant, country)
Example:

South Wales Technical College, Cardiff

- Replace with a list of principal subjects covered or skills acquired

Examples:

General

- English, Welsh, Mathematics, Spanish
- physical education

Occupational

- occupational techniques (making of standard breads, fancy breads, cakes and pastries)
- science applied to food and equipment (microbiology, biochemistry, hygiene)
- occupational technology (basic principles, hygiene and safety)
- knowledge of business and its economic, legal and social context.

Focus on the occupational skills which would be an asset if you were appointed.

PERSONAL SKILLS

Remove any fields left empty.

Mother tongue(s)

Replace with mother tongue(s)

Example:

English

Do not overestimate your level, which may be checked if you are interviewed!

Other language(s)

UNDERSTANDING		SPEAKING		WRITING
Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	
Example: C1	Example: C1	Example: B2	Example: B2	Example: B1
Replace with name of language certificate. Enter level if known. Example: Certificado de Español: Lengua y Uso				
Example: B2	Example: B2	Example: B1	Example: B1	Example: A2
Replace with name of language certificate. Enter level if known. Example: Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF) B1				

Replace with language
Example:
Spanish

Replace with language
Example:
French

Levels: A1/2: Basic user - B1/2: Independent user - C1/2 Proficient user
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

When describing your personal skills:

- Use simple words and clear, unambiguous language.
- Avoid jargon and clichés (e.g. I am a team player) without context-based evidence of skills.
- Be succinct: take time to understand what skills are important for the position you are applying for.
- Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminars, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.).

Communication skills

Replace with your communication skills. Specify in what context they were acquired.

Examples:

- good communication skills gained through my experience as sales manager
- excellent contact skills with children gained through my experience as ice hockey volunteer coach

Organisational / managerial skills

Replace with your organisational / managerial skills. Specify in what context they were acquired.

Examples:

- leadership (currently responsible for a team of 10 people)
- good organisational skills gained as secretary of the History Society, responsible for booking speakers and promoting events
- good team-leading skills gained as ice hockey volunteer coach

Job-related skills

Replace with any job-related skills not listed elsewhere. Specify in what context they were acquired.

Examples:

- good command of quality control processes (currently responsible for quality audit)
- mentoring skills (as senior nurse, I was responsible for the training and induction of new nursing staff)

Computer skills

Replace with your computer skills. Specify in what context they were acquired.

Examples:

- good command of office suite (word processor, spread sheet, presentation software)
- good command of photo editing software gained as an amateur photographer

Other skills

Replace with other relevant skills

Use only if these bring added value to your application and have not been already mentioned. Specify in what context they were acquired. Example:

- first aid: certified in providing first aid, as part of my scuba diving training

Just mentioning personal interests such as reading, walking, cinema, etc. does not bring any added value. On the contrary, giving examples of activities undertaken would suggest an outgoing, proactive individual who likes to help others:

- reading: passionate reader, I help younger pupils with reading difficulties twice a week
- mountaineering: experienced climber, active member of the local Hiking and Climbing club

Driving licence

Replace with driving licence category/-ies.

Example:

- B

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Publications
Presentations
Projects
Conferences
Seminars
Honours and awards
Memberships
References

Replace with relevant publications, presentations, projects, conferences, seminars, honours and awards, memberships, references.

Remove headings not relevant in the left column. Examples:

Publication

- How to write a successful CV, New Associated Publishers, London, 2002.

Where appropriate, provide a brief description; specify the type of document (article, report, presentation, etc.).

Project

- Devon new public library. Principal architect in charge of design, production, bidding and construction supervision (2008-2012).

Membership

- Member of the University's Film-Making Society

References

Unless the vacancy specifically requests referees, write "References are available on request."

ANNEXES

Replace with list of documents annexed to your CV (copies of degrees and qualifications, testimonial of employment or work placement, publications or research).

Examples:

- copy of degree in engineering
- Europass Language Passport
- testimonial of employment (Anderson and Dobbs)

Attach only documents relevant to the position.

Do not attach long documents such as publications; better list them under 'Additional information' with a hyperlink if relevant.