



## Writing a CV

Creating a strong CV is one of the most important steps in landing the job you want. It's your first impression, a snapshot of your skills, experience, and potential, that helps employers decide whether to invite you for an interview.

Whether you're updating an old version or starting from scratch, this checklist will help you build a clear, professional and tailored CV.

### CV Checklist

#### Before You Start

- Review your current CV draft alongside this checklist
- Make sure each section is complete, clear, and relevant
- Always tailor your CV to the job description - never send a generic version

#### Formatting Tips

- Keep the layout clean and consistent
- Use a readable font size (11 or 12 is standard)
- Avoid overly complex designs as some software may struggle to read them
- Double-check formatting after saving or converting your file

## Essential CV Sections

**1. Personal Details** - Your personal information is key as it's how an employer will get in touch with you. Give them a few ways to contact you:

Include:

- Full name
- Email address
- Phone number

Optional:

- LinkedIn profile (if you have one)
- Online portfolio or blog (if you have one)
- Home address (not essential)



**2. Personal Statement** - This is your chance to give a little background about yourself.

- Start with a strong statement - write 3 to 4 lines summarising who you are, what you offer and what you are looking for
- Focus on your most relevant skills and experience
- Keep it focused - imagine you only have 10 seconds to impress

**3. Skills** - Use this section as an opportunity to stand out from the crowd. What skills do you have that make you the best person for this role?

- List your skills specific to the job applied for and specifically mention the skills detailed in the job profile
- Sell your skills by using positive describing words
- Give specific examples from previous roles to show you know what the job is about

**4. Achievements** – If you have been recognised for great work, then this is the place to mention it.

- List any notable awards, achievements or nominations from a previous job or education
- Showcase how you've added value: saved money, led projects, improved processes
- Prioritise the most relevant and impressive achievements
- If you're early in your career, include achievements from studies or volunteering
- Be prepared to elaborate on this at interview

**5. Work History** – a key part of a CV is showing off your experience. Employers like to see both paid and unpaid roles.

- List jobs in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Include job title, company name, and dates of employment
- Use bullet points to describe key duties and responsibilities
- If you're new to the workforce, include volunteering or relevant life experience

**6. Education & Qualifications** – this is about showing that you meet the criteria in the job profile.

- If the job profile asks for specific qualifications or certificates, mention these first
- Include qualifications, course names, institutions, and dates
- If you're still studying or recently graduated, place this section near the top
- As your career progresses, this section can be moved lower down

**7. Additional information** – when reading your application, an employer wants to get a full picture of you as a person.

- If you volunteer, you can include a few lines on any volunteering role(s)
- You might want to highlight if you play sport or have specific hobbies
- Be prepared to elaborate on this at interview

## Final Checks

### ✔ Spell Check

- Run a spell check using Word, Google Docs, or another tool
- Typos can suggest poor attention to detail or lack of interest

### ✔ Grammar Check

- Make sure the sentences are grammatically correct and well written
- Use tools such as Grammarly (a free AI writing assistant) for a second opinion
- Don't blindly accept all suggestions, but pick and choose what's helpful

### ✔ Sense Check

- Read your CV aloud to make sure it makes sense
- Ask a friend or family member to review it
- Make sure it's clear to someone outside your industry or area of work

## What to Leave Out

- ✗ Nationality or date of birth (not required under UK Equality Act 2010)
- ✗ Profile photo (not standard in the UK)
- ✗ Reference details (just write "References available upon request")
- ✗ Clichés (e.g., "hardworking team player")
- ✗ Lies (even small ones can backfire)