

CV

Your CV is the first chance to impress a potential employer and get you that all important face-to-face interview — getting it right can be career changing.

Your CV is a snapshot of you. Most employers will not spend a huge amount of time looking at your CV, so you need to ensure that you capture their attention by making your content **RELEVANT** and **ENGAGING**.

Consider whether your content is specific to the job in question, whether your writing is interesting, whether it clearly represents you and your skillset, and whether you yourself would want to read the document!

It is a marketing document designed to illustrate and showcase your specific and relevant 'offer' to the job to which you are applying, so be sure to pay close attention to the requirements of the role.

Relevance — if the information isn't relevant to the position, then don't include it in your CV.

Impact — think about how you present your information – the layout of the document, choice of font, categorisation, etc. If you were to hold it at arms-length, what is the first thing that you see? Is it content that markets you most effectively and the information you would want to see first?

Professionalism — your CV should demonstrate your professionalism, not just through its content but also through the *way* that your content is written and presented. Pay particular attention to spelling and grammar.

Key considerations

- Take time out to reflect on your current offer — what have you done that is relevant to the job that you are applying to and where would this information ideally sit within your CV?
- Avoid being generic. Be specific to what you have done/can do and evidence this
- Always consider your audience — does it meet their needs and is the document engaging?
- Typically, your CV should be no more than two sides of A4
- Pay particular attention to your spelling and grammar. Spelling mistakes will immediately undermine your professionalism
- It is up to you whether you write in the first or third person (although don't jump between the two). Writing in the first person can make your CV more personal (although potentially more wordy); writing in the third person will make the CV more succinct and immediate
- Use bullet points — large blocks of text can be offputting and make it more difficult for the reader to see immediately what you have to offer

- Be consistent in how you present your information. If, in your education section, you have the date on the left-hand side of the page, the degree title on the right-hand side and institution name underneath this, then in your experience section you should do the same, although instead of the degree title, have your job title and instead of the institution name, have the employer name
- Be consistent with your choice of font and font size. If you choose to have a larger font size for your headings, ensure this is the same throughout
- If you are applying to an advertised job that requires you to send a CV, pay particular attention to the job's 'essential requirements', as this is the information that you must detail and evidence in your CV
- Present the information in your CV in order of importance — whatever markets you most effectively should come first. Your first page has far more impact, so this is where all of your key information should sit, enabling the reader to see it immediately. Don't hide key information away on the second page of your CV
- Think carefully about how you categorise your information. The reader will be guided by your headings, so you need to be sure they are specific and immediately obvious, e.g. instead of using headings such as 'Employment' and 'Key skills', you could use 'Clinical experience' or 'Nursing skills'
- It is your document, so you determine the look, style and content of your CV. Take pride in how you are representing yourself; be sure you are doing yourself and your personal brand justice.

Typical CV sections

Personal Details

- Use your name as a heading; don't have 'Curriculum vitae', as it should be fairly obvious what the document is
- Use a larger font for your name to create impact
- Include your contact details — address, email address, contact number
- If you are on LinkedIn, you may also choose to include a link to your profile
- You do not have to include information such as your date of birth, gender, health, or marital status.

Personal profile/professional profile

- Optional
- A well-written personal profile can be a valuable way to sell yourself in a few introductory lines
- If you find it difficult to write a profile, then don't include one. It is better not to have one, than to have a poorly written one
- Typically, your profile should be approximately three sentences:
 - Introduce your current situation
 - Highlight your specific area of expertise/interest and provide a brief example
 - Inform the reader why you are sending them your CV.

Nursing student example:

Enthusiastic and motivated newly qualified adult nursing graduate. Clinical placements include A&E, surgery, and acute medical and rehabilitative care. Good interpersonal skills with the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams and communicate on many levels. Commitment to high standards of care and continued professional development. Now seeking nursing post in general medicine.

- Make your personal profile specific and non-generic. When you read it back, you should recognise yourself within it.

Typically, the two sections above would come first on your CV. What comes next is up to you although will be determined by the requirements of the job that you are applying to and the amount of experience that you have. The headings below are examples — always choose headings that best reflect your experience and relate to the job in question.

Summary of achievements

- You may wish to include a headline list of key professional achievements demonstrating your experience and skills.

Education

- Reverse chronological order — most recent first
- Include the dates of study, the subject studied, place of study as well as degree classification
- Main focus should be on most recent study. The amount of detail that you go into is up to you, e.g. projects/modules/dissertation title and a brief synopsis may be included
- Provide limited information on pre-university education — a maximum of a couple of lines detailing GCSEs/A levels/BTECs. If space is of a premium, then don't include this information
- Someone who is recently qualified is likely to give more space to his or her education section due to not having as much work-based experience. Someone who has been a nurse for many years will give far more space to his or her experience/employment section
- Only detail formal education in this section, i.e. university/school. Detail short specific work-based training elsewhere.

Nursing employment/nursing experience/placement experience

- Choose a heading that best suits your experience
- Detail your experiences in reverse chronological order — most recent first
- Include dates, job title and place of employment
- Be specific, don't just describe what you did, write about the process and the skills that you developed
- Use action words/action verbs to help effectively illustrate the skills that you have developed and to demonstrate the specifics of the job
- Ensure that you are relating your experiences to the job to which you are applying. Refer to any essential requirements and evidence them.

- ***Assisted in new approaches to wound management in surgery, including...***
- ***Liaised with occupational therapists and social services in the transition of elderly patients from wards to home care. This involved...***
- ***Accurately completed pre-operative assessments and checklist in surgery ward.***

- ***Participated in multidisciplinary team meetings with nursing staff and healthcare professionals in the planning and delivery of patient care. This led to...***
- ***Demonstrated high standards of cleanliness and adherence to infection control procedures.***

Nursing skills/key skills

This section allows you to demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the job. Choose some of the key skills that the job demands and use these as headings for this section. You can then briefly evidence how you have the skill in place.

Typical skills to demonstrate could include:

- Verbal/written communication
- Empathy
- Observation skills
- Organisational skills
- Flexibility
- Attention to detail
- Teamwork
- Leadership.

Communication

- ***Confident communicator verbally and in written form. Can communicate effectively with patients, carers, families and other healthcare professionals. Ability to write reports, undertake assessments, complete patient, and ward documentation.***

Organisation and planning

- ***Excellent time management and organisational capabilities with proven ability to work under pressure in busy ward environments.***

Continuing professional development/additional training

- Use this section to detail any training courses attended including the dates, course provider and qualification achieved
- You can also detail information such as conferences attended/presented at, as well as publications/articles to which you may have contributed.

Additional employment

- You may have undertaken employment in a non-healthcare setting. You can detail this under an 'Additional employment' heading. If you choose to do this, focus on the transferable skills gained, e.g. teamwork, communication, problem-solving, project management, leadership, customer care, as opposed to the specifics of the position(s)
- It may be useful to include this section if you are new to the role/don't have a huge amount of experience/are recently qualified.

Interests and achievements/additional Information

- This allows you to give a little more detail about yourself

- If possible, focus on interests and achievements that have some relevance to the profession, e.g. language skills.

Referees available upon request

- Include this statement at the end of your CV. If you have space, you may choose to include their contact details — name, job title, address, email, telephone — ensure you get their permission before doing so.

Example action words

Ability	Created	Forecast
Achieved	Decreased	Formed
Acquired	Defined	Formulated
Administered	Demonstrated	Generated
Advised	Designed	Guided
Analysed	Determined	Implemented
Anticipated	Developed	Improved
Appointed	Devised	Improvised
Appraised	Directed	Increased
Approved	Documented	Initiated
Arranged	Doubled	Initiative
Attained	Edited	Inspired
Assessed	Effected	Inspected
Audited	Effective	Instigated
Augmented	Efficient	Instructed
Averted	Eliminated	Integrated
Avoided	Employed	Interpreted
Built	Enforced	Interviewed
Captured	Engineered	Introduced
Centralised	Enhanced	Invented
Combined	Ensured	Investigated
Completed	Enthusiastic	Lead
Composed	Established	Liaised
Conceived	Estimated	Lightened
Controlled	Evaluated	Launched
Converted	Exceeded	Maintained
Co-ordinated	Executed	Managed
Corrected	Excellent	Marketed
Counselled	Extracted	Modernised

Monitored	Provided	Sufficient
Negotiated	Published	Simplified
Obtained	Purchased	Solved
Operated	Recommended	Specified
Opportunity	Recruited	Staffed
Ordered	Rectified	Standardised
Organised	Re-designed	Stimulated
Originated	Reduced	Streamlined
Performed	Regulated	Supervised
Perseverance	Rejected	Supported
Pioneered	Related	Surpassed
Planned	Remedied	Surveyed
Positioned	Re-organised	Taught
Positive	Researched	Terminated
Practical	Resilient	Tested
Prepared	Resolved	Thorough
Presented	Re-vamped	Tightened
Prevented	Revised	Traded
Prioritised	Re-vitalised	Trained
Processed	Saved	Translated
Procured	Scheduled	Tripled
Proficient	Secured	Utilised
Promoted	Selected	Vitalised
Proved	Self	

Cover letter

You would normally send a cover Letter to accompany your CV. This should be an introduction to your CV. It should not detail everything that is in your CV but highlight some of the key skills/experiences/achievements that you have to offer.

Key considerations

- Address your cover letter to a named person. Avoid 'Dear sir/madam'
- It should look like a letter — have your contact details in the top right corner, the person's details that you are sending it to slightly lower on the left-hand side and date the letter
- Keep your style consistent — use the same font/font size etc as your CV
- If addressed to a named person, sign off 'Yours sincerely'; if addressed 'Dear sir/madam' (try not to!), sign off 'Yours faithfully'
- Your cover Letter should be no more than one side of A4 and should be well written, succinct and to the point
- Follow a four-paragraph structure and make it interesting!

First paragraph

- Tell the reader your current situation, why you are writing to them, the job that you are applying to and where you saw it advertised.

Second paragraph

- Write about two or three of your key achievements/experiences or skills that are relevant to the job
- For example, 'As detailed in my CV, I have five years of experience working as... at... . As part of this role I have been able to develop a number of skills withi ...'. Be specific
- Try and relate these experiences to the role and its essential requirements.

Third paragraph

- Talk about why you want to work for the specific organisation/service/ward/company
- Show an understanding of what the job involves, what they do as a team, how they work and why you would be a good fit
- Massage their ego — tell them how great you think they are!

Fourth paragraph

- A prompt for action
- Thank them for their time and inform them when you are available for interview/to meet/to continue the conversation.

