

How to create an effective CV

A CV is a kind of advertisement showing your achievements, experience, hobbies, interests, qualifications and skills.

Many job advertisements ask for a CV although some will ask for an application form to be completed instead. Application forms ask for the same information as a CV contains.

CV is an abbreviation of Curriculum Vitae which is an ancient Latin phrase meaning 'course of life'. In the USA the term Resume is used instead.

Format

There isn't one single format but a CV must be:

- maximum of 2 sides of A4
- in 11 or 12 point font size
- easy-to-read layout in different sections with headings in bold or underlined
- written in formal language with no slang or other language an employer may not understand
- be accurate in spelling and grammar – double-check it

It should have sections covering:

- name, postal address, e-mail and telephone contact details **N.B.** Don't include your social media as there may be stuff on there you don't want the employer to see
- personal profile describing yourself in two or three lines
- education history starting with secondary school right up to the present – include the years you attended
- qualifications and grades achieved
- work-experience while at school/college including part-time jobs or volunteering – include the name of the organisation(s) and date(s) worked there
- skills not covered by the education section e.g. you're a good communicator, creative, leader, organiser, team-player
- hobbies and interests that show more about your character – try to choose ones which relate to the job advertised

Get started by using our CV template by visiting: <https://www.letsdobusiness.org.uk/>

How to write a strong Covering Letter

Employers lots of applications for job so make your CV or application form stand out from the crowd by sending a brief but strong covering letter which highlights why the job interests you and why you're a great fit for it. It should show you've really analysed the job description and researched the organisation. If you think of your CV as a 20 second advertisement, your covering letter is a 5 second snippet that must pack a punch. Your covering letter should be different for every job application as it must fit that job.

The letter should be no more than 1 side of A4 and must be in formal, business format with:

- your full postal address top right corner
- the name of the person to apply to and the organisation name and address on the left opposite your address but a couple of lines lower
- the date you write the letter on the right a few lines under your address

It should start with *Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs* plus the organisation contact's family name e.g. Robinson – never start with their first name. If there isn't a named contact, start with Dear Sir or Madam. Put a comma after this and go down to the next line and write a simple statement like *Please find enclosed my CV as I am applying for the XXXX job.*

Then start a new paragraph where you start to demonstrate you've analysed the job and matched yourself to it. Start this with a strong statement like *The job really interests me because it involves...*

Start a new paragraph with something like: *I believe I am a good match for the job as I am.....* and then highlight information from your CV to match yourself with requirements and terms used in the job description.

The next paragraph should explain why you would like to work for that organisation and show you've researched what it's about. If its website describes career paths then you could show ambition by saying you'd like to develop a career with them and progress to one of the higher jobs in due course. End the letter with a statement like: *I hope my application interests you and would welcome the chance to discuss the job at an interview. I look forward to hearing from you.*

If you've written to a named contact, sign off with 'Yours sincerely' and your first and family names. If your letter started with 'Dear Sir or Madam', then sign-off 'Yours faithfully' and your first and family name.

Check your letter for spelling and grammar accuracy at least once. Don't forget to send your CV with it whether that's by post or e-mail as requested by the organisation.

The National Careers Service provides more detailed information and guidance on applying for jobs, Cv's and Covering letters here: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>