CV Writing Tips

This guide is mainly for second language users of English tailoring their CVs to UK and international employers, but most of the tips are universal.

Many candidates may find themselves in a position where they are applying for a job in Poland but dealing with a recruiter or HR department in another country, or applying abroad for opportunities. Whilst the employer should adapt themselves to the market sometimes it is good to know what they are used to.

Your CV is a vital document. It will follow a similar structure and it is essential to tailor it to the job or employer.

Name, professional title and contact details

The first part of your CV, positioned at the top of the page, should contain your name, title and contact details. You don't need to write CV or Curriculum Vitae as this is obvious. Treat your name as the title.

Your email address and phone number are essential. It is not necessary to add your exact address at this stage. You can write your town. A link to an up-to-date LinkedIn profile is a good idea.

Example

Forename Surname | Title
Location: Town / City
Phone: 12345
Email: name@example.com

Personal profile

A personal profile, also known as a personal statement, career objective and professional profile, is a useful way for you to summarise your qualities that match the role. Write only a few sentences and tailor it to the job.

Who are you?
What can you offer the company? - …. years of experience in …..
What are your career goals? - I'm looking for a job as a ….with …. responsibilities, for a company in the …... sector

Experience and employment history

This section will include your relevant work experience, with the most recent first. Include the dates you worked there month/years, your job titles, the name of the organisation. In the next line you could add a link to the company's website and a very short description.

Then add bullet-points with your key responsibilities, skills and achievements, and bolster each point with powerful action verbs and add figures to show evidence of success. Avoid long nouns and keep each point to one or maximum 3 lines. Ten bullet points should be enough.

If you have a job history dating 10 years or more. Then jobs more than 10 years old can can just have the company and job title.

Here's an example of how to lay out each position of employment on your CV:

mmm yyyy – mmm yyyy
Company Name, Location
Role Title

Outline
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Key responsibilities
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Key achievements/projects
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Education and qualifications
Your education history should be in reverse chronological order. Include the name of the institutions and the dates you attended, then your qualifications and grades.

- Institution name – Dates attended (from – to)
  Qualification/subject – Grade
  If you have a degree, you can list a few of the most relevant modules, assignments or projects.

- For professionals that have professional certificates, you can write your qualifications in this way:

- Qualification, grade – Institution – Year

- Additional sections
- There is a range of additional sections that can strengthen your CV and highlight your skills. Here are just a few you can include if you have space:

- Key skills: If you're writing a functional CV you can create a key skills section underneath your personal profile. You should aim to detail four to five abilities at most.

- Hobbies and interests: You can add interests that add value to your application.

- References: It's not essential. You can write on request.

- Formatting and spacing guidelines
- Most recruiters use recruitment software so try to keep your CV formatted simply so they can work with your text i.e. not over-formatted with boxes and sections.

Some formatting tips
- Length: The standard length of a CV is two pages or maximum three. Anything longer and you could lose the recruiter's interest.
- Headings: Each section must be introduced by a bold heading.
- Font type: Most employers will receive your CV in a digital format, so choose a clear font like Calibri or Arial.
- Font size and page margins: The body of your CV should be between 10 and 12 point font, and your headings between 14 and 18 points. Keep your page margins around 2.5cm. White space shows clarity and professionalism.
- Proofreading and consistency: Use a spell checker - gmail has one, and a style checker like Grammarly.
- Tailoring your CV: adapt your CV for each application.
- Saving the file: a pdf is standard.

What not to include
In the UK equality legislation is strictly enforced so the below are unnecessary -
- A picture
- Age and date of birth
- Marital status