

Preparing your CV

Don't worry too much about whether to follow a functional, skills-based, or chronological format. Instead focus on finding the most effective way to showcase the assets that make you a strong candidate. By following simple guidelines, you will give yourself the best opportunity to shine.

What is the employer looking for?

Write down a description of the person the employer is looking for and use this as a blue-print for this particular CV. The more effectively you show a clear match between the skills required and those you possess, the more likely you are to succeed.

Be honest

If you find it difficult to match your own experience with the requirements of the role, perhaps it is not the right job for you.

A CV is there to help structure an interview, and providing inaccurate information will only lead to problems further down the line. According to research, 86% of interviewers think that CVs are not completely truthful. Employers are likely to check the validity of information on your CV if you are offered the role, through various sources including

Referees

You may also be asked to produce work that indicates you can complete the tasks required, make sure you tell the truth as it will save you in the long term.

You may also be asked to produce work that indicates you can complete

Highlight your skills and attributes

If a recruiter has to search through your CV to find strong evidence of where you have proven yourself against their criteria, then you are severely limiting your chances. Ensure you draw attention to your key skills and attributes in a precise and clear format.

Describe key responsibilities and achievements

Although the job description and/or advert will highlight the technical skills required for a particular role, underlining key achievements will provide the opportunity to show how you can add value and distinguish yourself from other candidates.

Relevant information should always go first

If the information contained within your CV demonstrates your suitability for a role and enhances your chances of being selected. So always include it closest to the top!. The beginning of your CV should act as a hook and will impact their initial perception of you.

Include recent and relevant training

Including recent and relevant training will highlight your commitment to professional development and could make the difference between you and other candidates with a similar background.

Professional memberships and qualifications

Memberships to professional and academic bodies should always be included, this includes the likes of CIMA, ACA< ACCA, CIM, the Law Society or CIPD . Personal ones should be avoided, leave for the interview if necessary!

Referees

These can be stated as 'available on request', however providing the details of individuals willing to speak on your behalf sends out a great message. If your issue is that you are worried about potential employers contacting referees before the appropriate time, state that you do not want them to be approached until you have given permission.

Be contactable

Have all your contact details easily available on page one. Include your name, address, phone (with an alternative number, if available) e-mail and LinkedIn address.

Keep it short

Your CV should be no more than two pages – remember quality over quantity. Don't waste space talking about why you left prior roles, as this is sure to feature in the interview. Provide enough information to tempt recruiters but leave them wanting more.

The Format look and feel

Almost all roles now require a degree of computer literacy. Demonstrate that you understand the principles of presentation and ensure there are no spelling or grammar mistakes in. Use a universal font such as Arial or Times New Roman and print with black ink onto a quality white A4 paper (minimum 100gsm).