



## Guidelines for creating your cv

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The following is a short guide with the key points to follow when creating a CV, including some more specific advice aimed at refugees and asylum seekers.

It is also highly recommended that you read through the Prospects website at: [www.prospects.ac.uk/cv\\_content.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/cv_content.htm) for more detailed guidelines on the appropriate structure, formatting and content of CVs.

### What is a CV?

The purpose of a CV is to provide a prospective employer with a summary of your key skills and experience that are relevant to the job or volunteer position you are applying for. CVs are often used when applying for voluntary work. Some paid positions may also require you to submit a CV, but for many paid jobs you will need to submit an application form instead.

Your CV is a chance to 'sell yourself' to a future employer. Remember that the employer has never met you before so does not know anything about you. By sending a copy of your CV, you are trying to convince him / her to invite you for an interview. It is important to include any information that will show the employer that you have the skills and experience required for the job. Don't be too modest there may be some things you have achieved that you think are unimportant, but that are actually extremely relevant.

Your CV should be well organised, concise and clear. Employers can be very busy so they will often read your CV quickly, looking for key words and information that show you are the best person for the job. A CV should be a maximum of two pages, which means you will need to think carefully about what to include and what to leave out. There is no need to list all of your skills or every job you have ever done, just include information which is relevant to the particular position you are applying for.

Ask someone to read through your CV before you submit it. Providing enough information, but not too much, is a difficult balance to achieve. It is a good idea to ask for a second opinion if you are not sure. It is also highly recommended that someone checks your CV for errors in grammar, spelling and formatting. Employers do not usually have time to read CVs which contain these kinds of mistakes.

You may need to make regular changes to your CV. Each time you apply for a new role you will need to look through your CV and make any necessary changes so that your new CV is relevant to the job and employer you are applying to.

### **CV focus**

Chronological or skills-based CVs are most suited to applying for paid or voluntary roles in primary and secondary schools. Visit the Prospects website at [http://www.prospects.ac.uk/example\\_cvs.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/example_cvs.htm) to learn more about the difference between these CV types and to see examples of each.

### **Spelling and grammar**

A CV with spelling or grammatical errors reflects poorly on the applicant. It will often result in the employer not inviting the candidate for interview. Mistakes on a CV give the impression that the applicant does not pay attention to detail, and is not interested enough in the role to spend sufficient time on the application to ensure it looks professional. Check your CV carefully to make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Have an adviser or someone else fluent in English check the CV a second time. Here are some things to look out for:

- Use capital letters appropriately.
- Use British, not American English spelling (e.g. use 'organised', not 'organized').
- Be consistent in your use of tenses(e.g. 'working' or 'worked').
- Ensure you have the correct translation of course titles or organisation names.
- Do not use 'etc.'

## Formatting

Your CV should be a maximum of 2 pages. Always keep the formatting in your CV consistent. Here are some tips:

- Use a simple black font (for example, Times New Roman, Tahoma, Arial, Helvetica or Verdana) size 11 or 12 and print your CV on white paper.
- Bullet points should be consistent in style and font size and should be lined up throughout the entire document.
- Check that the spacing between sections is consistent.
- Do not use any background images, borders or colours.

## Vocabulary and positive phrasing

Show pride in what you have achieved by not being too modest when writing about your skills and experience. Enhance your statements by including positive adjectives and adverbs. Avoid using the word 'good' too often. When writing about challenges you have faced, focus on how you have overcome them and what you have gained. Here are a few examples for phrases to use on your CV:

- Developed positive relationships with ...
- Successfully managed ...
- Gained invaluable experience ...

It is also important to avoid clichés, which are words or phrases that have been overused, especially on CV's. These phrases which you should try not to use include:

- Excellent communication skills
- Strong work ethic
- Personable presenter
- Detail-orientated
- Great team player

Think carefully about the words you choose to use on your CV since you have only 2 pages to make a positive impression and provide most relevant information about your skills and experience.

## **Content**

Name and contact information should be at the top of the front page and should include the name, address, telephone number(s) and email. Do not include the heading 'CV' or 'Curriculum Vitae', birthday/age, marital status, religion or nationality.

You must include the following sections in your CV:

### **Personal profile**

This is a brief description of who you are (e.g. Overseas qualified Secondary Maths Teacher), a few of your key skills or experience (relevant to the job) and what you are looking to achieve.

- Length should be one paragraph, approximately 2-6 lines of text. If you include a Key Skills section on your CV then keep your Personal Profile short.
- This is a good place to add any languages you speak or write in addition to English.
- You will need to change the personal profile of your CV each time you apply for a job. Think about the skills and experience required for the position you are applying for, and write your description of yourself to show that you have these characteristics.
- Include the full title of the role you wish to apply for.

### **Key Skills and Achievements (This section is optional)**

This section is generally included in skills-based CVs and involves a list of skills and experience you have that are most relevant to the job you are applying for.

- You might list things like communication, language, ICT, leadership or managerial skills. For each skill list provide a brief example of where you gained the skill or how you have used it successfully.
- Make sure the skills or achievements listed are relevant to the job you are applying for.
- Include about 4-6 bullet points.
- If you include a Key Skills section then your Personal Profile can be quite short, about 2 or 3 sentences.

## Experience

Here you can provide details of your relevant work and voluntary experience, outlining the responsibilities you had and the skills you were required to use.

- For each entry include dates worked, position, name and location (city and/or country) of the organisation and details of responsibilities and skills required.
- Always give full details of any overseas teaching experience you have including the position held, name of the school, responsibilities, year groups or ages taught, subject(s) and any extra-curricular activities or leadership roles.

## Positions of Responsibility (This section is optional)

Here you can include supervisory or leadership positions if they are relevant and if you have space on your CV.

## Education and Qualifications

In this section list any professional, university or college qualifications:

- Include date, provider and title of qualifications and training courses.
- Ensure the qualification has been translated correctly.
- It is also advisable in most cases to include the NARIC equivalent, if known.
- Only include school qualifications that are relevant (e.g. Secondary school Maths and English qualifications for Teaching Assistant positions).

## References

The employer will want to contact your references in order to find out about your character, work ethic and reliability. At some point you will need to provide the names of usually two people who can provide a reference for you.

- On your CV it is okay to write 'Available on request'.
- If you are asked for references try to use a recent UK employer or course instructor (preferably for longer term training courses such as a

degree, teacher training, ESOL or other course). If you have done some volunteering ask your supervisor or the Headteacher to provide a reference. For voluntary work you can also use a character reference, which is anyone who knows you well and can confirm that you are reliable, honest and trustworthy.

## Interests

In this section you can show the employer that you are a well-rounded person or highlight additional skills that are less relevant to the job.

- Include more interesting or relevant interests such as the type of subjects you enjoy reading about or any interesting hobbies or additional skills you have, such as sports or cultural activities.
- Do not include general interests such as spending time with friends or watching TV.

## Explaining gaps in your CV

- Gaps of less than 6 months can sometimes be addressed by only including the year(s) and not months in the Experience and Education sections of a CV.
- Longer gaps can be explained by listing any voluntary work or training, including English language learning completed during this time or responsibilities you had, such as raising children.
- If the asylum process has taken more than one year, then you might write 'Relocating to the UK – not allowed to work on arrival until (DATE)' or 'Career break (due to forced migration and subsequent resettlement) / (due to a sudden change in family circumstances)'.
- If you have had to leave the UK and have not worked during the time away you might write 'Overseas travel'.
- Try to think about any skills you have used during this time period and describe how you were productive and keeping your skills up-to-date during the gap in your employment.
- Remember that gaps can always be explained in greater detail during the interview process so it is better to include only a very brief description to explain gaps on the CV.

## Further information

Prospects <http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers.htm>

An excellent resource for further advice on CVs, covering letters and interview skills.

