



How to write a CV and Covering Letter

What is CV?

Curriculum Vitae, which is latin for 'Path of Life' is an outline of a person's educational and professional history.

We use a CV to apply for jobs for both full/part time or work experience placements. Your CV shows all of your strong points so that employers can see quickly and easily whether you have something to offer them.

Remember - your CV is an employer's first impression of you and will hopefully lead onto an interview. You must make every word count!

Some employers may spend as little as 45 seconds skimming a CV before branding it "not of interest", "maybe" or "of interest".

When should a CV be used?

When an employer asks for applications to be received in this format.

When an employer simply states "apply to ..." without specifying the format.

When making speculative applications (when writing to an employer who has not advertised a vacancy but who you hope may have one).

What makes a good CV?

There is no single "correct" way to write and present a CV but the following general rules apply:

1. It is printed and not hand-written.
2. It is no longer than two sides of A4 paper. Each page should be on a separate sheet of paper.
3. A covering letter is sent with it.
4. It is positive and shows your strong points.
5. It is relevant to the job you are applying for.
6. It is targeted on the specific job or career area for which you are applying and brings out the relevant skills you have to offer.

7. It is carefully and clearly laid out.

8. It is informative but concise. Your CV should be carefully and clearly laid out - not too cramped but not with large empty spaces either. Use typefaces for headings and important information

9. It is accurate in content, spelling and grammar. If you mention attention to detail as a skill, make sure your spelling and grammar is perfect!

10. If your CV gets you regular interviews, it's a good CV! The bottom line is that if it's producing results don't change it too much but if it's not, keep changing it until it does.



Southam
College

Information you should include on your CV

Personal details

Normally these would be your name, address, telephone numbers (home and mobile) and email address.

Personal profile

Your personal profile should be a brief statement of your main selling points.

Example: I am a hardworking, loyal, honest person with excellent communication skills. I am able to work alone or as part of a team. I am willing to learn and take on new challenges and I have a flexible approach to work.

Key skills and achievements

List any other additional skills, achievements or certificates you have (4 or 5 bullet points). This can include things you have done outside school (Duke of Edinburgh, Army cadets, fundraising activities etc). Ensure your personal skills are directly related to the type of work you are applying for e.g good communication skills – Retail.

Education and qualifications

List the secondary schools you have attended with the relevant dates. List the GCSE subjects that you are taking with predicted grades.

Employment/Work History

This should include part time jobs and any work experience you may have done - paid or voluntary. Name the company with the dates you worked there and list the duties/responsibilities you were given and any training you received.

Interests/Additional Information

- Rather than list just your hobbies, target this section by including anything that you are doing or have done that is relevant to the position you are applying for.
- Any evidence of leadership is important to mention: captain or coach of a sports team, course representative, chair of a student society, scout leader.
- Anything showing evidence of employability skills such as team working, organising, planning, persuading, negotiating etc.

References

You can either give two references, usually an educational reference and a personal reference (remember to ask permission before forwarding another person's personal details), or you can put "references available on request".

The order and the emphasis will depend on what you are applying for and what you have to offer.

Will one generic CV do?

If you are applying for more than one type of work, you should have a different CV tailored to each career area, highlighting different aspects of your skills and experience.

Choose a professional e-mail address

One survey found that 76% of CVs with unprofessional email addresses are ignored. Here are some (modified) email addresses that you should NOT emulate!

- demented_bovine@gnumail.com
- so_kiss_me@hotmail.com
- platypus_mcdandruff@gnumail.com
- busty-beth@gnumail.com

Spelling and grammar mistakes

Applicants sending CVs and letters without spelling mistakes are 61% more likely to get a reply and 26% more likely to get an interview. In the age of the spell checker, there is no excuse for spelling mistakes.

Set your spell checker to UK English

Other turnoffs include:

- misspelling the name of the company or the addressee,
- not having a reply address on the CV
- trying to be amusing.
- Using lower case i for the personal pronoun: "i have excellent attention to detail"

A N Other

Welsh Road West, Southam.CV47 0JW

07125 162123

another@hotmail.com

PERSONAL PROFILE

My main focus is to develop a career in engineering. I am a practical person that enjoys problem solving. I am hardworking, reliable, polite, friendly and outgoing. I enjoy taking on new challenges and learning new skills.

KEY SKILLS

Excellent communication skills
Good eye for detail
Good team player
Excellent IT Skills (Windows 10)

EDUCATION

Southam College (September 2011 – June 2015)

| | | |
|--------|---------------------|-------|
| GCSE'S | English | B |
| | Mathematics | B |
| | Science | BB |
| | Engineering | A |
| | PE | B |
| | Art | C |
| BTEC | ICT | MERIT |
| BTEC | Business | PASS |
| | Religious Education | D |

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

CO-OP – SOUTHAM (JULY 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015)

Sales Assistant – I worked on Saturdays and Wednesday evening. My main responsibilities were to serve customers, replenish stock and to ensure the shop floor was tidy. I have experience of working behind the checkout and dealing with money

THE BOWLING GREEN - SOUTHAM (JUNE 2015 – AUG 2015)

Glass Collector – I worked Saturday evenings and Sunday Lunchtimes. My main duties involved collecting empty glasses and ensuring the tables were cleared and cleaned after the customer had finished their drinks.

INTERESTS

I am a member of the young engineers after school club, where I have been involved with build the school go-cart. I enjoy watching motorsport and regularly attend local racing tracks. I playing and watching football. I support Coventry City and I have been playing football with Southam Utd since the age of 8.

REFERENCES

I M Leader

Head of Year 11, Southam College, Welsh Road West, Southam, CV47 0JW

01926 812560

Write a covering letter

In the days when you would have applied for a job by post, your cover letter would have been your first chance to 'wow' the employer. Nowadays it's much more common to apply for jobs online or by email.

Just like a CV, a good cover letter is essential when looking for work, especially as most employers spend approximately half a minute casting an eye over each job application.

With this in mind, you have to make sure that your cover letter makes enough of an impression in those 30 seconds to make the reader want to learn more about you. But what should it contain?

Building upon the information in your CV, a cover letter should state in no uncertain terms why this company should hire you. Everything it includes should encourage the recruiter to give your CV the attention it deserves.

The covering letter should be typed and always sent with your CV.

Research

Before you sit down to write your cover letter, do some research on the company and the job you're applying for. Things to know include what the company does, their competitors and where they're placed in the market. Not only will carrying out this research give you the knowledge you require to tailor your cover letter and CV to the style of the company, it also demonstrates that you've a real interest in the role and the company itself.

How to present your cover letter

Nothing's more frustrating for recruiters than attempting to read an illegible document. A typed document in an easy-to-read font will ensure the recruiter can scan your cover letter easily.

How to create your covering letter

- Write your address in the top right hand corner.
- If you give your mobile number or e-mail address make sure it is professional and appropriate for the employer.
- It may sound obvious, but when writing a cover letter you should always try to address the letter to the person handling job applications. This is usually listed in the job advert. If you're unsure of the right contact, don't be afraid to call the company to ask for a name. After all, there's no harm in showing initiative.
- It should state either the type of job or the job title you are applying for.
- Keep it short.
- Hand write your signature.
- Use a good sized envelope if sending in the post.

What to include in your covering letter

Opening the letter

The opening paragraph should be short and to the point and explain why it is that you're writing.

Example: 'I would like to be considered for the position of 'IT Manager'.

It is also useful to include where you found the ad i.e as advertised on indeed.co.uk or, if someone referred you to the contact, mention their name in this section.

Second paragraph

Why are you suitable for the job? Briefly describe your professional and academic qualifications that are relevant to the role and ensure you refer to each of the skills listed in the job description.

Third paragraph

Here's your opportunity to emphasise what you can do for the company. Outline your career goal (make it relevant to the position you're applying for) and expand on pertinent points in your CV.

Fourth paragraph

Here's where you reiterate your interest in the role and why you would be the right fit for the role.

Closing the letter

Sign off your cover letter with 'Yours sincerely/faithfully' and your name.

Finally . . .

If you're applying to a number of similar positions, then it's tempting to keep using the same cover letter. However, it's best to change your letter slightly for each position. Don't forget to update the company, job, and contact information – if Mr. Smith is addressed as Mrs. Jones then your application form could end up in the bin!

Most importantly, you should always include your contact details. You might already have this information on your CV, but there's no harm doubling up.