

HOT TIPS III - CV Writing

- **The basics**

Name - usually at the top of the page and in a slightly larger print size than the rest of the document. Contact details - include actual address for correspondence, mobile phone and email address. Highly personalised answerphone messages and email addresses - would you share these with your Granny? If not, they won't be acceptable to employers either.

- **Profile**

Some employers like these. Can give a flavour of your enthusiasm and personality as well as summarising relevant experience and career aims. Should be a mixture of facts and skills, but KEEP IT SHORT. If it helps, think of a sort of 'banner headline'.

- **Content**

Work out the order of headings that suits you and the job/areas of work you are applying for. The main sections you should include are: Education - Most recent first. Name of institution, dates, degree/qualification studied, grade obtained/anticipated. Here, you need to tell people something about the style of course (e.g. Modular) and a little bit of detail. In most situations, not necessary to list all modules taken; just enough to give a flavour of your particular degree. Dissertations/independent study modules are good examples of project management, so include them as a separate item.

'A' levels, GCSEs etc. Keep this information to a minimum.

Work Experience/Relevant Employment - again, usually most recent first, although if you have relevant experience and other experience, list the relevant work first. List company, period of time there (rough timescale will be fine) and your job title. List duties/responsibilities briefly and try to use 'action' words - see 'Hot tips for Action words' leaflet.

Skills - see 'Hot tips for Transferable Skills' leaflet. More and more employers expect to see a section like this on graduate-level CVs. Try to arrange the skills you possess in the right order for the job/career area. For example, you might feel that your team skills are your strongest attribute, but follow the job advert if it lists communication skills first.

Hobbies/Interests - yes, still an important section even now. It gives the employer a sense of your personality so make it seem real. "Reading, cycling and going to the cinema" won't win friends and influence people. Say something about what you do "My first love is music. I listen to a wide range of styles and have played bass guitar in several unsuccessful bands" is enjoyable to read, so this character is likely to be enjoyable to interview.

References - most employers would like to see these on a CV. SEEK PERMISSION FIRST, then quote name, designation (Personal Tutor, Line Manager etc.), full address, telephone and email address (if you have permission to use these).

Your CV should be:

- NEAT - in terms of layout, typeface (Arial or other 'sans serif' fonts look good). Use margins and sub-headings for ease of reading
- LOGICAL - in terms of content. Reverse chronological order - most recent first - for Education and Work Experience
- CLEAR - don't use jargon or abbreviations. Point size 10 minimum.
- CONCISE - two sides of A4 should be sufficient (never double-sided)
- DEMONSTRATE QUALITY - once produced, do not fold into small envelope. Use A4 cheap envelopes but good quality white/cream paper for the actual document (Covering Letters should be on the same paper).
- COMPETENCE-BASED - demonstrate your skills wherever possible, using a range of examples from work, academic study and interests.
- TARGETED - have your ideal jobs/employers in mind when creating your CV and design the document accordingly. If you want to keep the document wide-ranging, can use a convincing Covering Letter to do the targeting for you.
- CHECKED - by friends/academics/Careers staff as appropriate. Do not rely on automated spell checkers. "Ability to meet deadlines while maintaining composure" is funny, but attention to detail is a skill expected by all employers. Careers staff do not have time to check grammar, syntax and so on, so do make sure you get someone else to help with these aspects of the document.

If you would like some help with the design of your final document, the Careers Centre has a wide range of real CVs for you to look at.