What is a CV?

A **CV** (also known as a Curriculum Vitae, or résumé), is a written overview of your skills, education, and work experience. They may be used for a variety of reasons, however, the most common of these is to send to prospective employers when looking for a new job. It is your opportunity to tell an employer the positive things about your skills, character and experience that will help them decide whether they'd like to interview you or hire you.

A CV typically includes seven main sections:

- 1. Contact Details
- 2. Personal Profile
- 3. Skills & Achievements
- 4. Work History
- 5. Education & Training
- 6. Hobbies & Interests
- 7. References

1. Contact Details

This should be at the top of your CV, the name large enough to stand-out from the other contact details (size 14), but not so large that it shouts at an employer. It is up to you whether you would like to provide your full address or if you would rather put just the town and postcode. It is also important to remember your email address needs to be professional and clear:

Any Name

112 Any Drive, Any Town, Any County, AN30 1AB
Telephone: 00000 000 000 or Mobile: 07000 000 000
Email: anyname@anyname.com

2. Personal Profile

This is an introduction to **who you are** (relevant personal qualities), **what you're offering** (relevant background or qualifications), and **what you're looking for**. Aim to say why you're suitable in one short and succinct paragraph.

- This paragraph should be individually tweaked to match each opportunity you apply for.
- Try to write in the third person or avoid personal pronouns completely. After all, you're writing a CV about *your* skills and experience. This also helps you avoid repeating yourself with 'I did this' and 'I did that'. (This applies to your whole CV)

- It is acceptable to keep sentences short / fragmented.
- Personal qualities are things that you are naturally good at, your characteristics or personality traits. (See examples on the next page)

Able	Accurate	Adaptable	Ambitious
Analytical	Articulate	Assertive	Calm
Capable	Caring	Cheerful	Confident
Conscientious	Creative	Curious	Customer
Decisive	Dedicated	Dependable	Determined
Diligent	Driven	Dynamic	Efficient
Energetic	Enthusiastic	Experienced	Fit
Flexible	Friendly	Genuine	Sense of
Healthy	Honest	Imaginative	Independent
Innovative	Inventive	Knowledgeable	Logical
Loyal	Methodical	Motivated	Multi-Lingual
Open-minded	Optimistic	Outgoing	Patient
People	Perceptive	Personable	Persuasive
Positive	Practical	Proficient	Punctual
Qualified	Quick-thinking	Reliable	Resourceful
Responsible	Sensible	Sensitive	Sincere
Skilled	Supportive	Tactful	Thoughtful
Trustworthy	Understanding	Versatile	Willing

Example Personal Profiles

1. An approachable, friendly person who has two years' retail experience working within high-street stores. A dynamic, enthusiastic person for whom excellent levels of customer care are a priority. Looking for a customer service focused apprenticeship to further career prospects.

2. A determined, methodical individual with two-and-a-half-years' work experience within cleaning and customer service. A patient person, someone who is always looking to help others as appropriate. An out-going personality, who is willing and keen to learn new skills and undertake any training required.

3. An award-winning recent school leaver, with a range of past voluntary work experience. A highly motivated and task focused individual. Meticulous, detailed, and precise in application to work. Reliable and able to build strong working relationships. Ambitious and seeking a proactive, progressive company, that would offer long-term career prospects and an opportunity for professional development.

4. A friendly individual with one years' experience of working with the public in a variety of work settings. Articulate, with lots of common sense, offers integrity, and a professional attitude to work. A practical person with a preference for hands-on learning, looking for a chance to train while working.

5. An honest, reliable individual who can offer a range of practical skills. Highly motivated, with a calm, positive attitude. A friendly disposition aids strong customer and peer relationships alike. Willing to work flexibly and undertake training necessary.

6. A self-motivated and dynamic individual, confident with leading and inspiring others. Proven track record of remaining calm under pressure and quick-thinking during debates. Looking for an opportunity to apply skills within a work environment whilst continuing own learning.

3. Skills and Achievements

It is important that this section of your CV is tailored to the type of work you are applying for. The skills needed to be a chef are completely different to those needed to be a nurse and it is important that you consider what an employer needs to know about you. You should present on your CV the skills you have that are matched to those that an employer has listed within the personal specification or job advert. Presenting skills that are generic are unlikely to secure an interview; employers want to see you have paid attention! You should 'tweak' this section for each opportunity to meet the employer's specific requirements.

Where possible you should back up your skills, with an example of an achievement that demonstrates it. This will really make your CV stand out!

Transferable Skills (with some examples of achievements):

- **Communication**: feedback from work placements has commended communication skills stating that 'customers responded well due to your calm, friendly and transparent communication'
- **Use of IT**: level 2 qualified within ICT with strong proficiency with Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher
- **Numeracy:** GSCE grade 6 in Maths with practical experience helping with bookkeeping for family business/on young enterprise project.
- **Working with others:** always involved in team sports, teamworking has become second nature to ensure the best possible result.
- **Problem solving:** happy to suggest possible solutions when things aren't working well. Helped set up a virtual craft session during COVID restrictions. Or, recently worked to solve an error in a computer programming code.

- **Working to deadlines:** 100% track record of completing assigned tasks and activities to deadline.
- **Leadership:** being on the school council required strong leadership skills to lead by example and inspire others to achieve positive changes for the students represented.
- **Negotiating:** debate club honed this ability to negotiate by presenting clear and reasoned information and listening actively.
- **Motivating people:** proven past success motivating others as a peer mentor within school.

People Skills

An ability to motivate and inspire others	Explaining things to people
Dealing with queries or complaints	Selling / persuading /negotiating
Assertiveness and the ability to represent the interests of others	An understanding of body language and other forms of non-verbal communication
Relating to people from all backgrounds	Being supportive to people
An ability to develop good relationships with people from all backgrounds	Patience and tact, when handling difficult situations
An ability to inspire confidence and trust	Encouraging people to talk and actively listening to them.

Information and Data Skills

Keeping accurate records	Cash handling and till operation
Making accurate measurements or calculations	Following written instructions or diagrams
Stock control	Key board skills
Working out costs and budgeting	IT skills including Microsoft Word and Excel
Advance CAD design experience	Computer programming

Practical Skills

General repair and building work	Keyboard skills
Loading and unloading of goods	Painting and decorating
Mending and repairing equipment	Assembly work
Hygiene operations and use of cleaning equipment	Handling materials or equipment with precision and speed
General warehouse duties	Health and Safety at work awareness
Food and beverage service	Food preparation/catering
Bar work	Basic food health and hygiene awareness
Awareness of first aid	Diagnosing faults and testing equipment
Merchandising	Manual handling

4. Work History

It is useful for you to find out what the main responsibilities are for the job that you are applying for. If you have carried out the same or similar duties within previous job roles it is important that these are given priority and highlighted.

You can use Explore careers | National Careers Service to help you identify the responsibilities of different job roles. Or use the 'Example Key Responsibility' leaflet.

Be sure to use a consistent format throughout the section to clearly identify your past: job title, employer name, dates of employment and job responsibilities. A bulleted list can help to make information stand out. Start with your most recent job/ work experience/ volunteer placement and work backwards. (See example below)

Café Coffee   **April 2021 - Present**
Catering Assistant (volunteer)
- cleaning the kitchen floors and walls, fridges, ovens and work surfaces
- helping to unload deliveries, unpacking and storing food safely
- operating the dish and glass washing machines
- cleaning pots, pans and other equipment by hand
- using equipment such as electric mixers, chipping machines, knives and cutters
- rotating stock and checking use-by dates

5. Education and Training (refer to 'Example CV' handouts to help with layout)

You should include the date the qualification was awarded, where you studied, what the qualification was eg. GCSEs, A Level, NVQ, BTEC etc. and your grade.

6. Interests and Hobbies

This section allows you to show that you are an individual who is rounded, grounded, with a full life outside of work/study. Some interviewers will pick up on this section during interview so it is important not to exaggerate, if it appears that you have been misleading in this section it will call into question the rest of your CV.

Active and social interests are always positive and can also be used to further demonstrate skills and qualities such as teamworking, physical fitness, being driven or caring etc.

Good examples can include: Enjoys cycling for both pleasure and into work; has a passion for baking - recently baked cakes for a MacMillan Coffee Morning Event; plays football for a local team at weekends; regularly sings in a local choir; or, takes pleasure in creating craft presents for friends and family.

Avoid interests that may cause the employer concern regarding your ability to turn up at work! Such as: Enjoys clubbing and drinks with friends in the evenings and at weekends; is passionate about all forms of extreme sporting activities; is a regular at a local pub etc.

7. References

There is no need to provide reference details on a CV, simply state:
References are available on request.

It is important however that you have two referees available, either past employers, placement providers, academic or suitable personal references which could include a neighbour or family friend who you have known a long time but are not related to.

Remember employers initially scan a CV for 30 seconds so, your information needs to stand out!

Format
Use the example CVs to help you with your format. There is no one right way to write a CV but these will help guide you to produce something that it clear any easy for employers to scan.

Headings
These should all be in bold (font size 11, or 12). Do not use any boarders, underlining, page breaks etc. When uploading CVs to websites or when companies use internal software any unnecessary formatting can cause problems with how CV's are auto scanned etc.

Fonts
We recommend that you use Arial or Calibri as the font for your CV, they are recognised business fonts that are clear and easy to read. The font size should be 14 for your name and 11, or 12 thereafter. Any smaller and it becomes more too difficult for an employer to read comfortably.

Finally…

Don't forget to check your spelling and grammar!

Get someone you trust to check it over for you. Otherwise, if there are a lot of mistakes the employer may believe that you don't really care.

Remember this is your CV, use the examples and information provided to help you but you do want your CV to sound like you!

Next steps

Now you have used your CV to apply for a job, it's time to start preparing for an interview. Use our 'Interview Advice' leaflet to help you.