

Organising Information in your CV

All the information in CVs is organised under headings. This is so the details are clear and easy to read. The main type of CV is chronological - it gives the information in date order, the most recent first then working backwards.

A CV will, however, begin with the following:

- Name; • Telephone number (including day contact numbers);
- Address; • E-mail address.

These details can be listed without a heading and are often presented at the top, centre of the first page.

Other headings follow and include:

- Personal profile; • Training;
- Key skills; • Personal details;
- Career summary or employment history; • References.
- Education;

Personal profile

It is common now for a CV to include a personal profile. This is a statement of no more than two or three sentences that you can use to sell yourself by summarising your relevant skills and personal attributes. The personal profile is also an opportunity for you to highlight your career aim.

"A qualified and experienced Production Manager with effective interpersonal skills and problem-solving capabilities. Being a confident individual I possess highly developed organisational and planning skills, a keen eye for detail and handle pressure with ease."

After reading your profile an employer should want to find more evidence of your suitability for the job. You can do this in the next section - Key Skills.

Key skills

List in bullet points between 4 and 8 of your key skills that are relevant to the particular job. The types of skills that can be listed are, for example:

- excellent communication skills both written and oral
- working to deadlines

- able to relate well to people eg customers, colleagues, senior managers
- computer literate eg Word, Excel, Powerpoint.

Career summary

Start with your most recent or present job. Give the dates (year or month and year) of employment, name of company and county if relevant. For example:

2004 - Present Apex Bakeries, Edinburgh

Now give your job title and a brief description of your skills and achievements. Concentrate on your most important responsibilities, activities etc. Highlight your successes within each role. When describing your current job use the 'present tense'.

If you have had many jobs, give the details of the most recent and most relevant, and summarise the rest.

If you have had limited work experience, include details of holiday jobs, temporary work and voluntary work.

Education

Give details of educational institutions attended and qualifications gained.

As with your employment history, the most recent institution should be detailed first.

For example:

2000 - 2002 Carron Valley College

HND Motor Vehicle Engineering

1995 - 2000 Falkirk High School

Higher Grade: Maths C

Standard Grade: Maths 2

Physics C

Physics 2

Technological Studies C

Graphical Communication 3

English 3

Geography 4

Training

This can include training whilst in employment which is designed for personal development in the workplace. For example:

2006 Chartered Institute of Marketing

Diploma in Marketing

2003 SVQ Level 3 in Business Administration

Note: The Education and Training sections can be merged. It is also worth noting that the Education and Training details can be placed before your Employment History if a recent qualification is more relevant than your work experience.

Personal details

These can include:

- interests – leisure activities
- driving licence - state if full, current and clean.

Note: There is no need to quote your marital status and whether or not you have children as these are not relevant to your ability to do the job. It is not necessary to include your date of birth as legislation has made it illegal for employers to select, on the basis of age.

References

Some people choose to put names and addresses of referees on their CVs. Referees are usually tutors and/or employers. You can use a minister of religion or a police officer but not family or friends. It is not essential to list referees at this stage and may not be appropriate if, for example you want to use one CV to apply for different types of jobs for which you can give different references. If you do put referees make sure you check with them first that they are willing to give you a reference. Alternatively, you might also consider putting "excellent references available on request".

Additional headings

If needed, these can include:

- Achievements - won an award or represented your country in sport;
- Other relevant information - details of year out to travel, voluntary work or an ability to speak another language if not already detailed etc.

If including these headings place them before your Personal Details.

Deciding what to put on your CV

When there is a job advertisement, read it very carefully and list the requirements - job title, experience, qualifications required, and specific skills. Then research as much information as possible about the company.

List your best examples of how you meet these requirements. Be sure to include soft skills like friendly, reliable and hard-working.