

## **Writing an effective CV & Cover Letter**



**Student Counselling**  
**(021) 460 3237 District Six**  
**(021) 959 6182 Bellville**

Author: Katlego Nhlapo  
Editor: Leanie Brits  
Designer: Marzetha Laubscher



**Cape Peninsula**  
**University of Technology**  
creating futures

# Writing a Compelling Curriculum Vitae

A CV which stands for Curriculum Vitae serves as a self-promotion tool, showcasing your experience, skills, and qualifications to potential employers. It is a tool you use to make a positive first impression and stand out amongst other applicants. This booklet will provide you with a step-by-step guide on how to write an attention-grabbing CV.

## 1. UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF A CV:

Before getting into the writing process, it is crucial to understand the purpose of a CV. Unlike a resume that is shorter, a CV includes more comprehensive information about your academic background, research publications, certifications, and any other relevant details. Its purpose is to provide a detailed overview of your professional qualifications.

## 2. CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT:

The format of your CV is critical in presenting the information effectively. The most common format is a chronological CV, which lists your experience in reverse chronological order. However, if you lack substantial work history, a functional CV, highlighting your skills and achievements, might be more suitable.

*Note: A standard CV should not be longer than two to three pages. However this does not apply to all job seekers. This means that a three-to-four-page CV might be needed for those in high-level roles or for people with years of experience.*

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR CV?

### 1. Personal Information and Contact Details:

Begin your CV with your personal information, including:

-your full name

- contact details

- And professional summary

The professional summary is a short paragraph that highlights your key skills and experiences. Make sure to tailor this section to suit the job you are applying for, emphasizing relevant expertise and career goals.

## **2. Education and Qualifications:**

Provide a detailed description of your educational background, including the institutions you attended, degrees earned, dates, and relevant coursework or projects. Include any additional certifications or qualifications that are relevant to the position you are seeking. Be sure to include any honors or awards received during your academic journey.

## **3. Professional Experience:**

Your work experience section is the most vital aspect in showcasing your past roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Begin with your most recent position and work backward, including company names, job titles, dates, and a description of your duties. Use action verbs and evaluate your achievements wherever possible, emphasizing the impact you made in each role.

## **4. Skills and Competencies:**

In this section, highlight your key skills; practical and soft, relevant to the job you are applying for. Ensure that your skills align with the requirements mentioned in the job description. This means that you need to read the job description thoroughly. Include proficiency in specific tools, languages, or software that is important to your field of industry.

## **5. Additional Sections:**

Depending on your background and the job you are pursuing, consider including additional sections such as research experience, publications, presentations, awards, volunteer work, or professional memberships. These sections help to provide a more comprehensive picture of your expertise and dedication.

## **6. Format and Structure:**

Your CV should be well-organized, easy to read, and visually appealing. Choose a clear font and use headings and bullet points to break up your content. Ensure consistency in formatting, including dates, indentation, and font style. Avoid lengthy paragraphs, and instead, use concise bullet points to convey information effectively.

## **ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOU:**

### **1. Proofread and Edit:**

Once you have completed your CV, proofread it thoroughly to check for grammatical errors, typos, and inconsistencies. It may also be helpful to have someone else review it for feedback. Ensure that your CV is tailored for each job application, highlighting the most relevant information.

### **2. Update Regularly:**

Finally, remember that your CV is a living document. Regularly update it to reflect your most recent accomplishments, skills, or changes in your career. This ensures that you are always prepared for new opportunities without having to scramble to update your CV at the last minute.

## **CONCLUSION**

Creating a compelling CV is crucial in increasing your chances of securing employment. By following these guidelines, you can create a CV that effectively represents your skills, experiences, and qualifications. Remember to always tailor your CV to each job application and regularly update it to maintain its relevance and accuracy. Good luck with your job search!

---

# Student Counsellor CV Sample

/Keith Thompson/20 Example Street, Example City/01255  
987654321/kthompson1985@examplemail.com

## Professional Summary

A suitably qualified and registered counsellor, I have been working with secondary school age students for a number of years and have plenty of experience providing services to other age groups, too. With a background in an educational setting, from my time as a teaching assistant, I am now a dedicated student counsellor who is well versed in helping students to overcome issues such as stress, exam worry, bullying and helping with their ongoing educational opportunities. Having worked for a number of years in a successful school, I am now looking for a new challenge which will cause me to spread my professional wings.

## Core Qualifications

Certificate in Counselling Skills accredited by the National Counselling Society (NCS).

## Professional Qualifications

- Disclosure and Barring Service cleared.
- Registered with the Professional Standards Authority in Health and Social Care
- Diploma in Working with Children and Adolescents from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

## Academic Qualifications

A levels: Psychology (B) and Sociology (D) A3 levels: English (A) and History (C) Seven GCSEs at good grades

## Key Skills

- The proven ability to encourage clients to talk about their feelings, especially younger ones.
- Good skills with assisting clients to see things more clearly or in a different light.
- Aptitude for building a relationship of trust based on mutual respect.

## Work Experience

School Counsellor – Leicester, September 2011 - Present

- Responsible for conducting all counselling work in the school and liaising with heads of year directly.
- Developed good working relationships with bodies outside of the school, including social services and the police.
- Conducted all work under the relevant child protection and disclosure regulations.

Volunteer Student Counsellor – Rugby, September 2010 - July 2011

- Helped students at key stage 3 to deal with any emotional problems they faced at school including strategies for dealing with homework.
- Developed an updated anti-bullying policy for the school along with students, teaching staff and parent governors.
- Responsible for organising all confidential student records.

## References

References available on request. Just one of the many examples available to use, this student counsellor CV sample provides great advice into the best way of presenting a polished CV. You might also like to use our tools and CV builder, also available through this site.

## Writing an effective Cover Letter

A cover letter leaves a lasting impact when applying for a job. It acts as a powerful tool to exhibit your personality, underscore your qualifications, and showcase your genuine enthusiasm for the position. This section will guide you through the steps of creating a cover letter that captures employers' attention and secures coveted interviews.

### 1. GRASP THE PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER:

Understanding the purpose of a cover letter is important before beginning the writing process. Its primary function is to introduce yourself, articulate your interest in the job, and highlight your skills and experiences. The cover letter sets the stage for your application and provides an opportunity to stand out from the competition.

### 2. CONDUCT COMPANY AND POSITION RESEARCH:

Devote time to thoroughly research the company you're applying to, as well as the specific job role. This allows you to tailor your cover letter to align with the company's values, mission, and requirements. Demonstrating this knowledge showcases your enthusiasm and commitment to the prospective employer.

### 3. STRUCTURE AND FORMAT:

An effectively structured cover letter ensures a logical reading experience for the hiring manager. **Consider the following format:**

- **Header:** Include your contact information and the date.
- **Salutation:** Whenever possible, address the recipient by name; if unavailable, use a professional greeting such as "Dear Hiring Manager." During your research process you can find out who will be reading the job application documents.



- **Introduction:** Begin with a compelling opening sentence that conveys your excitement and briefly introduces yourself. Remember to keep it brief.
- **Body:** Focus on separate paragraphs that emphasize your relevant qualifications, experiences, and achievements. Employ bullet points or subheadings for clarity and ease of reading.
- **Conclusion:** Reiterate your interest in the position, express gratitude for the opportunity, and provide your contact information.

#### **4. HIGHLIGHT RELEVANT SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

The body of your cover letter presents an opportunity to showcase why you are an ideal match for the job. Utilize specific examples to underscore how your skills and accomplishments align with the requirements outlined in the job description. Rather than duplicating information from your resume or CV, expand upon those points to offer additional context.

#### **5. PERSONALIZE AND CUSTOMIZE:**

Customizing your cover letter to suit the specific job and company is crucial. Employ language and phrases that resonate with the organization. Address the unique needs of the role and elucidate why you possess the unique qualities necessary to fulfill those requirements.

#### **6. INFUSE PERSONALITY:**

Maintaining a professional tone is important, but do not hesitate to inject your personality into the cover letter. Adding a personal touch helps the hiring manager connect with you on a more human level. Showcase your passion, enthusiasm, and authentic interest in the company.



## **7. PROOFREAD AND REVISE:**

Grammatical errors and typos can undermine the credibility of your application. Ensure your cover letter is flawless by meticulously proofreading it. Consider seeking assistance from trusted individuals to catch any mistakes you may have overlooked.

## **8. SEEK FEEDBACK:**

Before sending out your cover letter, request feedback from reliable sources. They can provide valuable insights, suggest improvements, and identify areas that may require further clarification.

## **LET'S PRACTICE!!**

*This worksheet will assist you to gather the necessary information to create a cover letter. Once you have answered all the following questions, put the information in letter format.*

### **Preparation**

1. Based on the job advertisement key words and what you know about the job, what is the company looking for in a candidate? (What experience, results, skills, approach, and abilities do they need?)

2. To whom are you sending the letter?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company, Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Opening paragraph

1. What is the exact job title? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How did you discover the job available? (e.g. job board, internet, etc)
3. Why are you interested in this particular job and company?

### Middle paragraph

1. What do you have that matches the company's requirements and needs?  
(Experience, education, results, skills, approach, abilities)

2. Determine the three to five areas that are the highest priority to the company.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3. Create a few short statements that include key words from the job description. Use power verbs. Show impact and scope.

### Closing paragraph

- I. What do you expect after you send the CV? (An interview, a phone call, an email, etc.)

- II. What is the person expecting you to send? (e.g. A CV, letter of interest, salary requirements, references)
- III. What next steps will you take after sending your CV? (e.g. call, email, visit)

### **Contact information**

What is your phone and email?

### **CONCLUSION**

Developing an exceptional cover letter can significantly amplify your chances of grabbing the attention of potential employers. By following the step-by-step guide outlined in this booklet you will be well-prepared to write a compelling cover letter that sets you apart from the competition. Remember, your cover letter serves as a personal marketing tool, so invest the effort to tailor it for each application and allow your true potential to shine through. Good luck!

### **FURTHER ASSISTANCE**

#### **Counselling services:**

#### **Cape Peninsula University of Technology Student Counselling:**

Student Counselling: (021) 460-3237 (District Six Campus)

Student Counselling: (021) 959-6182 (Bellville Campus)

Student Counselling: (021) 680-1501/1574 (Mowbray Campus)

Student Counselling: (021) 864-5201/5206 (Wellington Campus)

## REFERENCES

Jirjees, A. Y. How to create curriculum vitae (CV).

Business News Daily. (2020). How to Write a Great Cover Letter. Retrieved from <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7377-sample-cover-letter.html>

Singh, P., & Jeswani, S. First Impression Is the Last Impression: How A Smart CV is Built?.

Schrager, S. (2021). Tips for Writing Effective CVs and Cover Letters. *Family Practice Management*, 28(5), 4-5.

The Balance Careers. (2021). How to Write a Cover Letter: Step-by-Step Tips. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-2060169>

Harvard Business Review. (2014). How to Write a Cover Letter. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2014/02/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>

Indeed Career Guide. (2021). Cover Letter Format & Sample for Job Applications. Retrieved from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/cover-letter-format-samples>

University of California, San Francisco. (n.d.). Cover Letters. Retrieved from <https://career.ucsf.edu/grad-students/postdocs/career-planning/writing-cv-and-cover-letter/cover-letters>



You could also get more information on Student Counselling's web page at <http://www.cput.ac.za/students/life/counselling>, Student Counselling's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CPUTStudentCounselling/?ref=bookmarks>, or YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHYVbGx128VFuvcVTcXObLg>.

*The electronic content created and distributed by CPUT's Department of Student Counselling is intended for educational purposes only and not intended for diagnosis, advice, treatment, therapy, assessment or any other. The content is not intended to replace professional counselling services offered by the Department. CPUT's Department of Student Counselling will not be held liable for misuse or misinterpretation of content to any user or third party that arise from the use of the electronic content. All content uploaded on CPUT platforms represents the opinion of the particular presenter/s and/or authors.*