

# C.V WRITING.

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## 1: WHAT IS A CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)?

Curriculum Vitae (CV) is an outline of a person's educational and professional history, usually prepared for job applications; another name for a CV is a résumé.

Your CV is a mini-advert of you. It should show you in a positive light and make employers want to give you the job. A CV is often an employer's first impression of you. Spend some time getting it right and it will improve your chances of success. CVs are usually short and to the point – no longer than two sides of A4 for a new graduate.

A CV is the most flexible and convenient way to make applications. It conveys your personal details in the way that presents you in the best possible light. A CV is a marketing document in which you are marketing something: yourself!

You need to "sell" your skills, abilities, qualifications and experience to employers. It can be used to make multiple applications to employers in a specific career area. For this reason, many large graduate recruiters will not accept CVs and instead use their own application form.

An application form is designed to bring out the essential information and personal qualities that the employer requires and does not allow you to gloss over your weaker points as a CV does. In addition, the time needed to fill out these forms is seen as a reflection of your commitment to the career.

There is no "one best way" to construct a CV; it is your document and can be structured as you wish within the basic framework below. It can be on paper or on-line.

## YOU NEED TO WORK OUT YOUR CV WELL!

Often selectors read CVs outside working hours. They may have a pile of 50 CVs from which to select five interviewees. It's evening and they would rather be with friends or family. If your CV is hard work to read: unclear, badly laid out and containing irrelevant information, they will just move on to the next CV.

Treat the selector like a child eating a meal. Chop your CV up into easily digestible fragments (bullets, short paragraphs and note form) and give it a clear logical layout, with just the relevant information to make it easy for the selector to read. If you do this, you will have a much greater chance of an interview.

### **When should a CV be used?**

1. When an employer asks for applications to be received in this format.
2. When an employer simply states "apply to ..." without specifying the format.
3. When making speculative applications.

## **2: FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS HR MANAGERS SEARCH FOR ON YOUR CV;**

A 2012 research conducted by Ladders, a career service firm, found out that recruiters took approximately six seconds to scan through CVs. The time may vary depending on the pressure and number of applications coming the HR's way but the bottom line is your CV can get a very short time on the HR's desk.

The focus of this study, however, was not so much on time but on what the recruiters zeroed their attention in once they got hold of your CV. The information might give you a rough idea on what to do for your CV pass the scrutiny of the HR. And knowing how HRs think and react to applications will give you a head start.

### **1. Layout of the CV;**

According to Petronila, HR Honda motor cycles "The layout is important in that it makes the format appealing or not," "It must be well-outlined to include your personal profile, qualifications and experience and what the person really wants as part of his career goals"

"That is one of the first things that comes to the HR's sight once he encounters your CV," observes Martin, HR Consultant, and Corporate Staffing Services. "This will determine whether he will show interest in your CV or not. Are your details all over the place? Your organization in the CV, it is assumed, gives an idea of what kind of person you are," he says.

## **2. Your Career Profile and Qualifications;**

Regarding career profile, Ms. Petronila says: “I prefer to see a CV that from the very onset tells me what kind of profession the person belongs to.”

“This is the main reason we ask people to highlight their qualifications first. Is it a diploma, a degree or any other certification? Job descriptions are usually very specific and stating your qualifications clearly in the CV makes the work easier.

“Jobs that are very particular might demand for an all-rounded skilled individual for example some accounting jobs are very specific, asking for a full accountant with a B.com and CPA-K, and three years’ experience; that is where I will be looking.

## **3. Do You Match the Job Specifications?**

“A HR usually makes a mental note on what job was advertised and the key requirements,” discloses Ms. Petronila. “For example, if I’m looking specifically for a person in logistics, I’ll be scanning for the same qualifications and experience. If you instead highlight skills in purchases and supplies, chances are that I’ll overlook your CV,” she says.

“However, there are jobs that are flexible—those which look for related skill sets for example if the advertisement is looking for mechanical engineering or related field, my mind will be adjusted and as

I scan the CV, I will be looking for related skills and fields as well,” she divulges.

According to Ms. Caroline, HR Crown Beverages, what a HR seeks from your CV depends on the requirement of the job advertised. “It may be pegged on the academic qualifications; the salary expectations or the number of years of experience asked for,” she says. “That may be precisely what I would look for in one instance.”

## **4. Pinpoint CVs**

“Blind applications are misadvised, apply specifically for that particular job advertised and make sure your CV is tailored in that direction. I should read it and get a clear picture of what job it is targeted at,” says Ms. Petronila.

Mr. Martin advises: "Have a CV that is easy to understand; a simple but clear CV. It should have the name, personal details, academic background and other relevant information clearly spelt out. Avoid boxes, many colours and plenty of designs. Remember, I have just 20 seconds.

### **3: TIPS TO MAKING YOUR CV STAND OUT FROM OTHERS.**

#### **1. Study the job advertisement;**

When you look at the classifieds section of a newspaper, or read a jobs notice board or email, make sure you read the advertisement carefully. Decide what aspects of your personality, qualifications, skills and experience you can offer to this new job/career. Write these down in a list and use strong "action words" - for example: I am organized, efficient, and hard-working; I have managed and coordinated events and people. I studied and achieved personal and professional excellence and completed a degree in ..."

#### **2. Be precise;**

Be precise. Don't overdo things by presenting everything about yourself that you can think of. Nobody expects or even wants that – so don't.

A CV should be personal, but it is not a biography. Nor is it a paragraph, or even a novel, in which you tell the story of your professional life! Leave out personal information that is not relevant to the position.

#### **3. Tell the truth;**

Be truthful. By being so, you show confidence in yourself and your achievements - this is especially useful when it comes to sitting through an interview. You cannot speak further about your experience as a nuclear scientist if you barely passed science at school!

#### **4. Avoid making mistakes;**

A few don'ts: Don't lie, exaggerate, and make promises you cannot live up to, justify, grovel, or be a "boot licker".

## **5. Not the same all the time;**

Your CV should be tailor-made. Therefore, when applying for different jobs with basically the same CV, you should nevertheless adapt it to each particular position: variations on your theme.

## **6. Don't give up;**

Use your CV to get over the doorstep and into the interview. There you will have ample opportunity to elaborate on your achievements.

Most importantly, DONT GET DISCOURAGED! For every 100 CVs you send out you may get only 10 interviews, and for every ten interviews only one job - the right one is out there waiting for you. Stay determined and focused and you'll soon be sprinting up that corporate ladder.

## **TIPS ON PRESENTATION**

- When summing up, use bullets.
- Phrase your CV in positive language.
- It helps if you write short, active sentences and avoid too many adjectives.
- Start with your best achievements that match the crucial job requirements. Don't tell the employer how they can help you but rather point out how you can help them.
- Emphasize your business related experience, the wider the better. If you have good working relationships with experts in the field, check with them if you may use them as your references.
- Ask for advice before sending your CV. Get someone you know in a related field to read it. Be prepared to revise your text.
- Test your CV by applying for several positions, on your level, but also a bit higher up the ladder. That's how you really get to know the market and your worth

#### 4: CURRICULUM VITAE CHECKLIST: CONTENTS.

The following is some of the information that can be included in your curriculum vitae. The elements that you include will depend on what you are applying for, so be sure to incorporate the most relevant information to support your candidacy in your CV.

- Personal details Contact information
- Brief biography
- Undergraduate education
- Graduate education
- Scholarships
- Training
- Study abroad
- Dissertations
- Theses
- Bibliography
- Research experience
- Graduate fieldwork
- Employment history
- Teaching experience
- Publications
- Presentations and lectures
- Exhibitions
- Awards and honors
- Grants, fellowships, and assistantships
- Technical, computer, and language skills
- Professional licenses and certifications
- Memberships

One survey of employers found that the following aspects were most looked for:

45%	<b>Previous related work experience, Volunteering, Part-time work.</b>
35%	<b>Qualifications &amp; skills</b>
25%	<b>Easy to read</b>
16%	<b>Accomplishments</b>
14%	<b>Spelling &amp; grammar</b>
9%	<b>Education</b> (these were not just graduate recruiters or this score would be much higher!)
9%	<b>Intangibles:</b> individuality/desire to succeed.
3%	<b>Clear objective</b>
2%	<b>Keywords added</b>
1%	<b>Contact information</b>
1%	<b>Personal experiences</b>
1%	<b>Computer skills</b>



## **Personal details.**

Normally these would be your name, address, date of birth (although with age discrimination laws now in force this isn't essential), telephone number and email.

## **Education and qualifications**

Your degree subject and university, plus A levels and GCSEs or equivalents. Mention grades unless poor!

## **Work experience**

- Use action words such as developed, planned and organized.
- Even work in a shop, bar or restaurant will involve working, providing a quality service to customers, and dealing tactfully with complaints.  
Don't mention the routine, non-people tasks (cleaning the tables) unless you are applying for a casual summer job in a restaurant or similar.
- Try to relate the skills to the job. A finance job will involve numeracy, analytical and problem solving skills so focus on these, whereas for a marketing role you would place a bit more emphasis on persuading and negotiating skills.
- All of my work experiences have involved working within a team-based culture. This involved planning, organisation, coordination and commitment e.g., in retail, this ensured daily sales targets were met, a fair distribution of tasks and effective communication amongst all staff members.

## **Interests and achievements**

- Keep this section short and to the point. As you grow older, your employment record will take precedence and interests will typically diminish greatly in length and importance.
- Bullets can be used to separate interests into different types: sporting, creative etc.
- Don't use the old boring clichés here: "socializing with friends".
- Don't put many passive, solitary hobbies (reading, watching TV, stamp collecting) or you may be perceived as lacking people skills. If you do put these, then say what you read or watched: "I particularly enjoy Dickens, for the vivid insights"

- Show a range of interests to avoid coming across as narrow: if everything centres on sport they may wonder if you could hold a conversation with a client who wasn't interested in sport.
- Hobbies that are a little out of the ordinary can help you to stand out from the crowd: skydiving or mountaineering can show a sense of wanting to stretch yourself and an ability to rely on yourself in demanding situations
- Any interests relevant to the job are worth mentioning: current affairs if you wish to be a journalist; a fantasy share portfolio such as Bull bearings if you want to work in finance.
- Any evidence of leadership is important to mention: captain or coach of a sports team, course representative, chair of a student society, scout leader: "As captain of the school cricket team, I had to set a positive example, motivate and coach players and think on my feet when making bowling and field position changes, often in tense situations"
- Anything showing evidence of employability skills such as team working, organizing, planning, persuading, negotiating, etc.

## **Skills**

The usual ones to mention are languages (good conversational French, basic Spanish), computing (e.g. "good working knowledge of MS Access and Excel, plus basic web page design skills" and driving ("full current clean driving license").

If you are a mature candidate or have lots of relevant skills to offer, a skills-based CV may work for you.

## **References**

- Many employers don't check references at the application stage so unless the vacancy specifically requests referees it's fine to omit this section completely if you are running short of space or to say "References are available on request."
- Normally two referees are sufficient: one academic (perhaps your tutor or a project supervisor) and one from an employer (perhaps your last part-time or vacation job).



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.

A personal profile at the start of the CV can work for jobs in competitive industries such as the media or advertising, to help you to stand out from the crowd. If used, it needs to be original and well written. Don't just use the usual hackneyed expressions, like "I am an excellent communicator who works well in a team..... "

You will also need a Covering Letter to accompany your CV.

"If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first four hours sharpening the axe." – Abraham Lincoln

## 5: CV FORMATS.

The answer to the question 'which format should I use?' is the format that suits your aims and shows you in the best light.

Different CV formats contain mainly the same information but worded in a different way, in different sections and in a different order. These might seem like small changes to make to your CV, but when employers have hundreds to sort through, every little improvement helps.

You can use different CV formats to:

- Draw attention to your strengths.
- Target a specific job.
- Get across your career aims – to change career or get promotion, for example.

Bear in mind that in all CV formats the personal details, personal profile and qualifications sections remain the same. It's your work history and achievements that change in each format.

These are 5 different types of CV formats;

1. Performance CV
2. Functional CV
3. Targeted CV
4. Student / graduate CV
5. Alternative CV

### **5.1: WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE CV FORMAT?**

A performance CV is the most popular type of CV. It highlights job titles and company names, starting with your most recent job and work backwards. However, you begin with an 'Achievements' section, which highlights impressive achievements that can make you stand out from other candidates. Under each job title you list your responsibilities in the role.

#### **WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS?**

You might like to use a performance CV if:

- You want to highlight your career progression.
- Your present or last employer is well-known by the company you're applying to.
- You want to stay in the same line of work.

#### **Is it suitable for me?**

This style of CV might not be suitable for you if:

- You've got gaps in your work history.
- You want to change your type of job.
- The relevant experience you're trying to emphasize was some time ago – it might not stand out.
- You've worked in lots of different jobs and you want your CV to look more focused.

## Example of Performance CV

### NAME

32 Any Street, Nairobi, B1 8AB  
077915577788333  
0121 345 6789333  
[steve@email.com](mailto:steve@email.com)

### PERSONAL PROFILE

An organized, confident and motivated PA with ten years' experience. Communicates confidently and effectively at all levels and uses initiative to meet the highest standards. Always striving to go the extra mile in order to achieve the set goal. Seeking new challenges and additional responsibility to progress my career.

Achievements from voluntary work are still relevant because they highlight leadership skills.

Drawing attention to ten years working as a PA immediately tells the reader Steve has a wealth of experience.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Promoted to the role of PA to the General Manager whilst at Johnson's Packaging
- Completed the Girl guiding UK Adult Leadership scheme to become a Guide Leader
- Completed the Birmingham half Marathon, raising £5,000 for charity.

Promotions show you've been trusted with additional responsibility.

Stephen has created an achievements section, which is the special section you include on Performance CVs. You can use this section to highlight impressive achievements in and out of work.

### EXPERIENCE

#### Nairobi Royal Hospital Medical Secretary 2005-2013.

- Providing secretarial and administrative support to a consultant and a team of junior doctors
- Summarizing all incoming correspondence into patients' medical records
- Arranging meetings, managing diary, dealing with appointment requests
- Actioning all GP referrals, liaising with other internal and external hospital departments
- Audio typing and copy typing of clinic letters and operating lists
- Clinical coding of all incoming patient correspondence.

#### Nairobi City Council Secretary 2002-2005

- Provided secretarial support to a manager of busy education department
- Drafted and typed letters and other documents
- Updated records using computer database and spreadsheet software
- Administered all incoming and outgoing post
- Ensured all filing systems were up to date.

Job title, company name and dates are all included with responsibilities in bullet points.

#### Johnson's Packaging PA/Administrative Assistant 1999-2002

- Supervised administrative staff and delegated tasks
- Audio typing and copy typing of documents

- Managed general manager's diary
- Organized travel arrangements for international travel.

## **QUALIFICATIONS;**

First Aid at work qualification;

Nairobi College of Further Education 1998  
CLAIT 1998

Adult Centre 1989  
NVQ levels 1-4 in Business and Administration

Murang'a County Secondary School 1975 – 1986 & 1975 – 1980  
3 O Levels Grade B  
CSE English Grade 1

## **INTERESTS.**

Girl Guides, Assistant Leader – assisting in the running of a local Girl Guides group.  
Sports – swimming, running and general keep fit.

## **REFERENCES.**

You may provide or indicate; Available on request.

On Performance CVs the Qualifications section is below the Experience section. This draws more attention to the professional experience he's gained.

## 5.2: WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL CV FORMAT?

A functional CV is a skills-based CV format. This format can be useful if you're looking for a career change. This is because they focus on your transferable skills and experience, rather than job titles, companies, and how long ago you got the experience.

In a functional CV you promote your skills and achievements in three to six 'functional headings'. For example, if you're applying for work in a retail role then headings could include 'customer service' and 'sales' – both key skills for any retail role.

Functional CVs are similar to targeted CVs, in that they focus on your skills, but on a functional CV you choose the title of the three to six skill headings. On a targeted CV the headings are always 'abilities' and 'achievements'. Therefore, functional CVs can be effective at highlighting your unique combination of skills.

### WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE AND WHAT SHOULD I LEAVE OUT?

Under each sub-heading you include more details about your relevant skills and experience. You might have got this experience from paid work, voluntary work or education. Any experience that you feel isn't relevant can be left out.

### WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS?

You might consider using a functional CV if:

- You want to change to a broad, new area of work, and show your relevant transferable skills and experience.
- You've got gaps in your employment history.
- You've had a lot of jobs and you want to describe the experience you've got as a whole.
- You want to highlight skills you've gained in previous jobs but that you don't use in your current or most recent job.

### Drawbacks with functional CVs can include:

- It's one of the more unusual formats – some employers might not be familiar with it

- If you've worked for well-known employers or you've had a lot of promotions they will be on the second page, so not as noticeable
- Setting alarm bells ringing for employers – some may feel a skills-based CV format is an attempt to hide something (such as gaps in your work history)

## EXAMPLE OF FUNCTIONAL CV;

**Derrick Otieno**  
 14 Any Street  
 Nairobi, NG2 3GD  
 Telephone: 07792 313456733  
[derrick425@email.com](mailto:derrick425@email.com)

This style of CV moves the focus away from individual job roles. It highlights transferable skills, which are explained under headings. This makes it clear to potential employers what Otieno could bring to a job.

### PROFILE.

Considerable experience in the education sector both as an English teacher and Head of Department. A proven record of supporting, coaching and training staff and students to achieve goals. An effective communicator with good project management and analytical skills.

This section can be used to highlight experience from recent jobs but also less recent jobs that may not be as prominent on a Performance CV.

### Leading, Coaching and Mentoring;

- Leadership qualities and the ability to manage challenging behaviour effectively
- Mentoring various members of staff through Initial Teacher Training and their first line management posts; coaching, developing and supporting staff with personal issues and work problems
- Providing ongoing pastoral care to students
- Decision making regarding teaching methods, design of the school curriculum, departmental budgets and staff recruitment.

### Communication;

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate subject material to students of mixed abilities and backgrounds
- Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with fellow professionals and parents.

Otieno can change the section headings for each job, selecting the most appropriate.

### Project Management;

- Designed and implemented a new school intranet site.
- Initiated pilot project with local connection Service, providing help and support with careers guidance and work experience placements for students
- Organizing and supervising after-school activities including educational visits, sporting events and school productions.



## EXPERIENCE;

2008-2012	Trent Secondary School Head Department	English Teacher
2005-2008	City of Kisumu Secondary School	English Teacher
2003-2005	Stone crest Upper School	English Teacher

This section still shows details of the job title, company name and dates but it's less prominent than on a Performance CV.

## TRAINING.

- Coaching in the Workplace Certificate.
- Various line management training including: setting objectives and conducting appraisals; team leadership; motivating staff; recruitment and selection; assertiveness at work
- Sector-related learning and development – equality and diversity; child protection
- First aid qualifications
- Various IT training courses including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet and email.

## QUALIFICATIONS.

- Bachelor of Education (B/Ed) degree (2:1) – University of Kabianga (2003)
- 3 A Levels – English Language (B), English Literature (B), French (B)
- 8 GCSEs Grade A to C.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Full, clean driving license.
- Language skills – fluent in French, conversational Spanish.

## INTERESTS

- Sports – taking part in a range of sports and outdoor pursuits including canoeing, rock climbing and diving.
- Fundraising coordinator for local children's charity.

## REFERENCES;

You may provide or write Available on request.

### 5.3: WHAT IS A TARGETED CV FORMAT?

A targeted CV is a skills-based CV format. This format can be useful if you're looking for a career change. This is because it focuses on your transferable skills and experience, rather than job titles, companies, and how long ago you got the experience.

It's called a targeted CV because you use it to aim for a specific type of job. You only include details that are relevant to the job you're applying for. These are listed in two separate sections: abilities and achievements.

A targeted CV is similar to a functional CV, in that it focuses on skills rather than job roles. However, on a targeted CV you use the headings 'abilities' and 'achievements' rather than creating three to six individual skills headings, as you would on a functional CV. This can help your major strengths and achievements to stand out.

#### What's the difference between abilities and achievements?

**Abilities are natural or acquired skills or talents.** You can provide specific details of the abilities and examples of when you've used them. For example, writing is a skill, but just listing 'writing skills' isn't specific and doesn't give an employer an indication of when and how you've used these skills.

**An achievement is accomplishing something.** Don't confuse responsibilities with achievements – they are different. Achievements are unique to you; responsibilities are what anybody undertaking that role would do. Achievements can make you stand out from others who may have similar skills and experience.

**For example, a responsibility could be:**

- Researching and writing articles for a company newsletter

**Whereas, an achievement could be:**

- Devised and implemented the introduction of a company newsletter, improving staff morale and communication throughout the organisation.
- If your achievements are measurable (they saved you or the company money or time) then try and include details of this too.

### WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS?

**You might like to use a targeted CV format if you:**

- Want to change career.
- Have had various careers or lots of jobs and you want to describe the experience you've gained as a whole.
- Want to target your CV towards one particular job.
- Have got gaps in your employment history.
- Want to emphasize skills you have gained in previous jobs that you don't use in

your current or most recent job.

**Drawbacks with targeted CVs can include:**

- **One of the more unusual formats** –some employers might not be familiar with it.
- If you've worked for well-known employers or you've had many promotions they will be on the second page, so not as noticeable
- **Setting alarm bells ringing for employers** –some may feel a skills-based CV format is an attempt to hide something (such as gaps in your work history).

## EXAMPLE TARGETED CV

### Adam Bowers

109a Any Road, Nairobi, Kenya, S63 3AB

[adam-bowers@email.co.uk](mailto:adam-bowers@email.co.uk)

07787 9159938

#### PERSONAL PROFILE;

With 20 years' experience in the construction industry as a labourer, bricklayer and plant operator, combined with practical, hands-on experience in carpentry and electrics. Physically fit with a good head for heights. Precise, accurate and a flexible worker. Currently seeking construction work in the UK or overseas.

This format of CV allows you to choose which abilities and achievements will be appropriate for the job you are applying for. This is different from a format like Performance where you would list all your responsibilities.

#### ABILITIES;

- ☐ Assisting various tradespersons such as carpenters, plasterers, electricians and plumbers with site duties.
- Concreting – layering and smoothing concrete for foundations, floors and beams.
- Road working – concreting, laying kerbs, paving and re-surfacing.
- Ground working – marking out and digging shallow trenches for foundations and drains.
- Dry lining – fixing internal plasterboard or wallboard partitions ready for decorating.
- Awareness of on-site health and safety, especially when working at heights and carrying loads
- Knowledge of small build to large scale construction projects
- Confident in driving earth moving bulldozers, dumper trucks and big tractors.

Achievements and responsibilities are different. Responsibilities could be undertaken by whoever was doing the job; achievements are unique to you. They can make you stand out from other candidates.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS;

- Selected to travel overseas with a previous employer to work on the construction of a new hospital in France, which at the time was behind schedule, ultimately helping to bring it in within budget and on time.
- Achieved On-Site Safety Award for commitment to health and safety

- Worked voluntarily every weekend for three months to help build a local community centre, taking on-site supervisor responsibilities.
- Regularly support local football club with groundwork duties, relaying a new pitch prior to the start of the new football season and assisting with maintenance throughout the year.

## WORK HISTORY;

2012 – 2013	General Labourer/Plant Operator	Thomas Construction
2011 – 2012	Bricklayer	GBH & Sons Builders
2010 – 2011	Various construction roles In Europe, USA and Africa	Smith and Weston
2008 – 2010	Bricklayer	Barns Homes Ltd
2002 – 2008	Various construction roles	Greens Employment Agency
1999 – 2002	Apprentice Electrician	Barnetts Electricals
1995 – 1999	Apprentice Joiner	Jones and Haywood

The work history section is different from a standard Performance CV as it just includes dates, job title and company name.

Adam started two Apprenticeships when he left school but did not finish them. However, he did gain valuable skills that he has continued to use. He has therefore listed them but has not included a related qualification.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING;

- **Construction Skills Certification Card (CSCS)** – construction site health and safety certificate after successfully completing the Experienced Worker Practical Assessment (EWPA) (expires 2015)
- **Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS)** – in-date license to drive construction plant machinery (expires 2015)
- **City & Guilds (6217-08) Basic Construction Skills; Multi-crafts**
- 5 CSEs
- Fork lift truck license
- Full UK driving license.

Adam has included expiry dates of his licenses so employers will know they are in date.

## INTERESTS;

I regularly work out and I am a member of a local gym. I play for my local football team and also enjoy outdoor activities, including fishing and diving.

These interests may not be directly relevant for the work he is applying for but they do highlight his physical fitness (an important factor in such a physical job).

## REFERENCES

You may provide or write available on request.

## 5.4: WHAT IS A STUDENT OR GRADUATE CV FORMAT?

You might consider using a student or graduate CV if:

1. You're still at school, college or university.
2. You've recently finished a full-time course.

With a student or graduate CV you highlight your qualifications first. If you've been in full-time education most of your life your qualifications will probably be your main achievement. If you don't have a lot of work experience, try to make your course work relevant to the skills you'd use in the job. For example, you probably use time management, research and IT skills every day. You may also be able to say you're a fast learner, and are up to date with the latest equipment and techniques in your field.

### EXAMPLE OF STUDENT/GRADUATE CV



Your profile should summarize the skills you've gained from both academic and work experience.

#### PERSONAL PROFILE;

A versatile and professional law graduate with wide ranging experience in a variety of law-related areas including youth offending, debt and benefits advice, employment law, and housing. Seeking to combine academic achievements and work experience in a challenging role within the voluntary sector.

#### EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS;

2009 – 2012

##### **LLB (Hons) in Law**

University of Nairobi,  
Optional course modules: Employment Law, Contract Law, Consumer Law, Law and Medical Ethics, European Law.

2007 – 2009

Nairobi integrated College  
**3 A-Levels** English Language (A)  
Psychology (B)  
Business Studies (B)

2002 – 2007

Enugu Secondary School  
**Mean grade A- (A-minus)**

## **VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCE;**

**2010 – 2013 Volunteer Advisor TGH Advice Centre.**

- Providing independent, confidential and impartial advice to clients on debt, benefits, employment, housing, relationship and family issues for local voluntary organisation.
- Interviewing clients face-to-face and over the phone to establish their needs
- Drafting letters and making calls on behalf of clients.
- Referring clients to specialist caseworkers for complex problems or signposting to other agencies when appropriate.
- Assisting clients to negotiate with companies and service providers to resolve any difficulties.

**2007 – 2009 Volunteer Mentor Youth Offending Team.**

- Providing one-to-one support, guidance and encouragement to young people who are at significant risk of offending or re-offending.
- Maintaining confidentiality, whilst ensuring child protection procedures and issues of disclosure are followed.
- Supporting mentees to set positive goals and work towards achieving these
- Establishing and maintaining regular and timely contact with mentees.

Separating the voluntary work from the paid work can help to make the voluntary work more prominent. In this instance the voluntary work is the most relevant.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE;**

**2007 – 2009 Bar Supervisor Student Union Bar**

- Served customers, maintaining excellent levels of customer service during busy periods.
- Managed the bar in line with health and safety regulations.
- Trained and supervised new bar staff.
- Key-holder and responsible for opening and closing the bar within licensing hours.
- Planned and organized staff rotas.
- Ensured the bar area was stocked and well maintained.

Although this role may not be relevant to the new area of work, it highlights transferable skills and experience such as supervisory and management skills.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Confident with a range of IT packages including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, internet and e-mail.
- Fluent in Spanish and French.
- Full, clean driving license.

## **INTERESTS**

- Team captain of the university hockey team.
- Active member of the university Student Union.

Positions of responsibility related to sport such as team captain may not be related to the job but highlight leadership qualities.

## **REFERENCES**

You may provide or write available on request.



## 5.5: WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE CV FORMAT?

An alternative CV uses an original and eye-catching format or clever wording to show off your creativity. You could consider using this approach if you apply for creative jobs such as a graphic designer or advertising executive.

It's impossible to summarize what usually goes into an alternative CV because all of them are original and different. But examples are:

- Presenting your CV as an advert, maybe if you're going for a job in advertising.
- Printing your CV on decorative paper, if you're applying for a job in visual design.
- Presenting your CV details in a story format, if you're applying for a creative writing job.

## WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS?

**You might like to use an alternative CV if:**

- You're applying for a job needing visual or written creativity and you want to show off your originality
- You know the person you're applying to and you're sure they'll respond well to an original approach.

**This CV format might not suit you if:**

- You're applying for a management job.
- Your CV will go to the human resources department and not a person on the creative team.
- You're applying for a job that's not in the creative industries.

Use your judgment when thinking about using an alternative CV format. If you're in any doubt about whether the employer will respond well to this format, it might be wise to play it safe with a 'normal' CV.

As with all CVs, the most important thing is you get across the information clearly and prove you can do the job. If a complicated design gets in the way of this message, it's probably best to stick to a more traditional format.

## 6: WHAT MAKES A GOOD CV?

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

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ It is carefully and clearly laid out: logically ordered, easy to read and not cramped.
- ❖ It is informative but concise.
- ❖ 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!

When asked what would make them automatically reject a candidate, employers said:

- CVs with spelling mistakes 61%
- CVs that copied large amounts of wording from the job posting 41%
- CVs with an inappropriate email address 35%
- CVs that don't include a list of skills 30%
- CVs that detail more tasks than results for previous positions 16%

### **What mistakes do candidates make on their CV?**

**One survey of employers found the following mistakes were most common;**

- ❖ Spelling and grammar 56% of employers found this
- ❖ Not tailored to the job 21%
- ❖ Length not right & poor work history 16%
- ❖ Poor format and no use of bullets 11%
- ❖ No accomplishments 9%
- ❖ Contact & email problems 8%
- ❖ Objective and profile was too vague 5%
- ❖ Lying 2%
- ❖ Others 3% (listing all memberships, listing personal hobbies, using abbreviations)

## **7: Five Things That Get Your CV to the Trash.**

True, there are things that will get your CV noticed. Things like a clean layout, use of bullet points, use of white space and so on will get the attention that you so desperately need.

But do you have a clue what's on the flip side? What could you be doing to your CV that could cause recruiters to overlook your CV- or worse, toss it in the trash?

Yes the trash! Recruiters have dozens if not hundreds of CVs to go through. So, in an effort to cut them down to a reasonable amount, they'll simply toss any that don't meet what they're looking for.

**Here are the deal breakers.**

### **1. You do not meet the minimum requirements.**

First and foremost, review the requirements listed in the job description and confirm that you have the skills and experience the recruiter is looking for. This is the “first knockout factor” for many. At least have the minimum requirement needed.

I know one can get desperate while applying for a job and would tend to apply for any jobs that touches an area of their expertise but to avoid your CV landing at the dreaded trash, make sure you look at the requirements before applying for the job, and identify if your skills are a match.

### **2. You don't pay attention to detail.**

When it comes to your CV, the devil is quite often in the details. Recruiters take note if you don't include everything the job posting asks you to send. A cover letter and a CV or just a CV? Sometimes you are told to include certain wording on the Subject. Don't ignore such simple rules.

### **3. You have too many errors in your CV.**

Proofreading your own CV is a must, but don't rely on spell check and grammar check alone—ask family or friends to take a look at it for you. Have several eyes look at your CV. They might notice some hideous and stupid errors that you wouldn't see.

### **4. You sound too desperate on paper.**

You could be desperate for a job, I get it, but does the recruiter have to know that? It's in the language that you choose to use. Some people start by saying how much they have gained so much experience over the years and how taking up the job on offer would be good for them and it's even worse when they do not put into writing what kind of experiences they have gained. You have experience? Kindly put it on paper to show you are worth what you claim you are worth.

### **5. You use the wrong format in writing and sending your CV.**

A good CV should be in a chronological order. This way, the recruiter will have an easy time knowing what you are doing now and what you did way back. Put yourself into the recruiter shoes, it's not her work to start jumping from one page to the next of your CV looking for what's relevant and what's not. Make it easy for her and mostly for yourself or your CV could be steps away from landing on the bin.

While sending out your CV, if you use a format which is not compatible with most computers, your CV however good, might not see the light of day. Most recruiters will tell you which format to use. Make sure you follow the rules.

Applying for a job can often feel like a huge challenge, and knowing that there are so many applicants out there can be daunting.

But if you follow these simple rules, you'll make sure your CV gets past the first hurdle: the trash can. Better yet, if you tailor your CV and make sure it's a fit to the company and job, you'll definitely increase your chances of getting to the top of the pile.

## **8: How long should a CV be?**

There are no absolute rules but, in general, a new graduate's CV should cover no more than two sides of A4 paper as employers are getting more and more CVs they tend not to have the time to read long documents!

If you can summarize your career history comfortably on a single side, this is fine and has advantages when you are making speculative applications and need to put yourself across concisely. However, you should not leave out important items, or crowd your text too closely together in order to fit it onto that single side. For those who have been in employment for long can have much longer CVs, but again concise and brief also.

### **How do I get my CV down to two pages from three?**

- First change your margins in MS Word to Page Layout / Margins/Narrow.
- Use tables with two or three columns for your academic results and references.
- Use bullets for content, rather than long paragraphs of text.
- Finally set line spacing to single space.

If after all these tricks you are still on three pages you have to be ruthless with your content: read every single word and remove it if it doesn't add value to your CV!

### **The one page lean and mean CV!**

In certain sectors such as investment banking, management consultancy and top law firms, a one page CV, highly focused, highly objective CV, now seems to be preferred. All of these areas have in common that they are highly competitive to enter and it may be that selectors, faced with so many CVs to work through prefer a shorter CV.

There is no point putting lots of detailed information into a CV which doesn't add any value, and in fact, just dilutes the impact. This is called the presenter's paradox. These CVs normally have lots of single line bullets and no personal statement at the beginning. They are full of factual, as opposed to subjective content. You must make every word count. They focus on achievements, initiatives and responsibilities more than on tasks and duties. When carefully designed, these can be the very best CVs, but also the hardest to write!

## 6.9: Tips on presenting a CV to prospective employer.

- **Your CV should be carefully and clearly laid out** - not too cramped but not with large empty spaces either. Use bold and italic typefaces for headings and important information
- **Never back a CV - each page should be on a separate sheet of paper.** It's a good idea to put your name in the footer area so that it appears on each sheet.
- **Be concise** - A CV is an appetizer and should not give the reader indigestion. Don't feel that you have to list every exam you have ever taken, or every activity you have ever been involved in - consider which are the most relevant and/or impressive. The best CVs tend to be fairly economical with words, selecting the most important information and leaving a little something for the interview: they are an appetizer rather than the main course. Good business communications tend to be short and to the point, focusing on key facts and your CV should to some extent emulate this. The longer and denser your CV is, the harder it is for an employer to comprehend your achievements. As Mark Twain said: "If only I had more time, I would write thee a shorter letter".
- **Be positive** - put yourself over confidently and highlight your strong points. For example, when listing your school grades, put your highest grade first.
- **Be honest:** although a CV does allow you to omit details (such as exam resits) which you would prefer the employer not to know about, you should never give inaccurate or misleading information. CVs are not legal documents and you can't be held liable for anything within, but if a recruiter picks up a suggestion of falsehoods you will be rapidly rejected. An application form which you have signed to confirm that the contents are true is however a legal document and forms part of your contract of employment if you are recruited.
- **The sweet spot of a CV is the area selectors tend to pay most attention to:** this is typically around the upper middle of the first page, so make sure that this area contains essential information. The achievements and skills part.
- **If you are posting your CV, don't fold it** - put it in a full-size A4 envelope so that it doesn't arrive creased.



**Research by forum3 (recruitment and volunteering for the not-for-profit sector) suggested that;**

- Graduates sent out 25 letters per interview gained.
- The average graduate will send out about 70 CVs when looking for their first graduate job. Of these, the average number of responses will be 7 including 3 to 4 polite rejections and the remainder inviting the graduate to interview or further contact.
- There was a direct link between the number of CVs sent out and the number of interviews gained: the more CVs you send out the more interviews you will get.
- Applicants who included a covering letter with their CV were 10% more likely to get a reply.
- 60% of CVs are mailed to the wrong person: usually the managing director. Applicants who addressed their application to the correct named person were 15% more likely to get a letter of acknowledgement and 5% more likely to get an interview
- 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". The most common mistakes to not show up in a spell check were:
  - fro instead of for,
  - grate instead of great,
  - liased instead of liaised,etc

**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"

## USING BOLD FOR JOB TITLES AND SCHOOLS

It's a good idea to use the "bold" style for job titles and employer names in your work experience and education to make these stand out.

### 6.10: Targeting your CV;

If your CV is to be sent to an individual employer which has requested applications in this format, you should research the organisation and the position carefully.

In the present competitive job market, untargeted CVs tend to lose out to those that have been written with a particular role in mind. For example a marketing CV will be very different from a teaching CV. The marketing CV will focus on persuading, negotiating and similar skills whereas the teaching CV will focus more on presenting and listening skills and evidence for these skills is necessary.

Even if you are using the same CV for a number of employers-Which is not advisable to do, you should personalize the covering letter - e.g. by putting in a paragraph on why you want to work for that organisation.

### Emailed CVs and Web CVs.

- Put your covering letter as the body of your email. It's wise to format it as plain text as then it can be read by any email reader.
- Emails are not as easy to read as letters. Stick to simple text with short paragraphs and plenty of spacing. Break messages into points and make each one a new paragraph with a full line gap between paragraphs. **NEVER WRITE IN UPPER CASE! That is shouting.**
- Your CV is then sent as an attachment. Say you'll send a printed CV if required.

### In which format should you send your CV? A survey of American recruiters found that:

Most people use MS Office Word format .docx or Adobe Acrobat format .pdf

PDF (portable document format) is perhaps becoming a widely used format now. But it is preferable to attach Pdf and word and let the employer, open the one they prefer.

## **Web CVs and Electronically Scanned CVs.**

Web CVs use HTML format. You can include the web address in an email or letter to an employer. They have the advantage that you can easily use graphics, colour, hyperlinks and even sound, animation and video. The basic rules still apply however - make it look professional. They can be very effective if you are going for multimedia, web design or computer games jobs where they can demonstrate your technical skills along with your portfolio.

## **LinkedIn.**

It's a good idea to have your profile and CV (without personal details such as your address of course) on LinkedIn. In 2011 89% of businesses planned to use social networks for recruitment and LinkedIn was by far the most popular one for this purpose with 86% of companies wishing to use it, 60% were considering Facebook and 50% Twitter. Make sure that your Facebook page doesn't carry evidence of any of your indiscretions that employers might view

If you reply to a job advert over the internet, be careful about what information you give.

The following are not needed by employers but can lead to identity theft. Don't include:

- Date of birth.
- Place of birth.
- Marital status.
- Copies of birth certificate/passport documents or details of your bank