A. WHAT IS A CV?

Your CV, short for curriculum vitae, is a personal marketing document used to sell yourself to prospective employers. It should tell them about you, your professional history and your skills, abilities and achievements. Ultimately, it should highlight why you're the best person for the job.

A CV is required when applying for a job. In addition to your CV, employers may also require a cover letter and a completed application form.

B. WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR CV?

While the structure of a CV is flexible, bending to your unique skill set and experiences, there are particular sections that employers expect to see on your CV regardless.

Here are the sections you must include in your CV:

1. Name, professional title and contact details

The first part of your CV, positioned at the top of the page, should contain your name, professional title and contact details. Under no circumstances should you title your CV with 'curriculum vitae' or 'CV' as it's a waste of valuable space. Treat your name as the title instead.

When it comes to your contact details, your email address and phone number(s) are essential. Once upon a time, it was customary to include your full address on your CV. Today, you simply need to list your town and county.

If you like, you can also include a link to your LinkedIn profile in this section – but only if it's up to date!

2. Personal profile

A personal profile, also known as a personal statement, career objective and professional profile, is one of the most important aspects of your CV. It's a short paragraph that sits just underneath your name and contact details giving prospective employers an overview of who you are and what you're all about.

You should tailor your profile to every job you apply for, highlighting specific qualities that match you to the role. Aim to keep your personal statement short and sweet, and no longer than a few sentences. To make the most of this section, you should try to address the following:

Who are you?

What can you offer the company?

What are your career goals?

3. Experience and employment history

Your employment history section gives you a chance to outline your previous jobs, internships and work experience.

List your experience in reverse chronological order as your recent role is the most relevant to the employer.

When listing each position of employment, state your job title, the employer, the dates you worked and a line that summarizes the role. Then bullet point your key responsibilities, skills and achievements, and bolster each point with powerful verbs and figures to support each claim and showcase your impact.

It helps to choose the duties most relevant to the job you're applying for, especially if it's a long list. If you have many years' worth of experience, you can reduce the detail of old or irrelevant roles. If you have positions from more than 10 years' ago, you can delete them.

4. Education and qualifications

Like your experience section, your education should be listed in reverse chronological order. Include the name of the institutions and the dates you were there, followed by the qualifications and grades you achieved.

5. Additional sections

There is a range of additional sections that may strengthen your CV and highlight your skills. Here are just a few you can include if you have room:

5.1. **Key skills:** If you're writing a functional CV, or have some abilities you want to show off to the employer immediately, insert a key skills section underneath your personal profile. You should aim to detail four to five abilities at most.

5.2. **Hobbies and interests:** If you feel that your CV is lacking, you can boost your document by inserting a hobbies and interests section at the end. This can help to show how well you fit into the company or the industry. For example, if you're applying for an environmental job, why not include that you have a big interest in climate change activism?
Be careful though; avoid listing hobbies that don't add value to your CV or are run-of-the-mill, like reading. Draw on interests that make you stand out or are relevant to the job.

5.3. **References:** Like including an address on your CV, adding your referees to the end of your CV is no longer standardized. You can include a line that reads 'references available on request', but if you don't have room, it's acceptable to remove it altogether.

C. FORMATTING AND SPACING GUIDELINES

If you're unsure of how to format your CV, it's worth downloading a few CV templates to familiarize yourself. After all, formatting and spacing your CV is equally as important as the content.

Here are some formatting and spacing tips to bear in mind:

Length: The standard length of a CV is two pages. However, one size doesn't fit all, and so for some professionals, one or three pages may be more appropriate.

Headings: Each section must be introduced by a big, bold heading to ensure an easy read.

Font type: Most employers will receive your CV in a digital format, so choose a clear font like Calibri or Arial. You can use a different font type for your headings, but keep it professional and easy-to-read too.

Font size and page margins: The body of your CV should be between 10 and 12 point font, and your headings between 14 and 18 points. Keep your page margins around 2.5cm, but never reduce them to less than 1.27cm or your CV will appear cluttered and hard to read. White space ensures clarity and professionalism.

Proofreading and consistency: Your formatting must be consistent throughout your CV to keep it looking slick. Don't spoil your polished look by including typos and inaccuracies; proofread like a pro to capture every mistake or invest in intelligent spellcheckers like Grammarly.

Tailoring, keywords and ATSs: It's perfectly acceptable to keep a generic copy of your CV for your own records, but if you're applying for a job, it must be tailored to the role. Not only will this show employers why you're a match, but it will help your application beat the ATS robots too.

Saving the file: It's likely you'll send your CV via email or through a job board like CV-Library. Save your CV as a pdf file to ensure recruiters can open it on any device. A pdf will also maintain formatting, so you can be sure that employers will see your CV as you intended.

https://www.cv-library.co.uk/career-advice/cv/how-to-write-a-cv-tips/