

# TIPS FOR WRITING A PROFESSIONAL CV

Your CV is your first opportunity to showcase yourself and highlight your skills and experience to a prospective employer.

Your primary focus is to provide strong evidence of your suitability, describing your achievements and skills as well as former job titles and responsibilities.

## **Keep it succinct**

- Short sentences and bullet points to set off your achievements (use action words or phrases).
- The upper third of the page should give a clear outline of what you want to achieve.
- Your CV shouldn't be unnecessary long and should identify key skills and experience succinctly.

## **Tell the truth**

- Your CV should be truthful, relevant, interesting and to the point. Employers will check the facts provided through reference checking, verification of qualifications and memberships with academic and professional institutions.

## **Tailor each application**

- It is important to tailor your CV against the job description provided for each job you apply for. Your experience and skills should be matched against the key points highlighted in the position description. It is not enough to simply state the jobs and responsibilities you have held, but you should be highlighting how well you carried out this work through your list of achievements. Research the organisation so you have a good idea of their key values and understand how you reflect these.
- A good CV should also give an idea of your future potential. Use the job description as a basis for how you could identify development opportunities.

## **Language**

- Use simple, easy to read language. Your tone should be business like and you should generally avoid any use of jargon, colloquialisms and acronyms.
- Choose strong action verbs and avoid the use of third person
- Avoid the use of overused clichés.

### **Proof read**

- Ensure you properly proof read and spell check your CV before sending it to a prospective employers. Getting someone else to read over it is always a good idea to catch any mistakes you might miss.

### **Document format**

- Use either word document or a PDF (recommended).

## TYPES OF CVS

It is important to adapt the format of your CV to best highlight your areas of experience and skill sets and adapt it to suit the job you are applying for. Your CV should be tailored so it illustrates your achievements.

### **The Chronological CV**

This is the traditional CV format that focuses on your career history. Use it when you are looking for a job in a similar career area. Be sure to provide details to explain any gaps in your employment history – be up front about your career history and provide clear reasons on where you were and what you were doing.

#### **Order:**

- Name and Contact details should be displayed at the top
- Summary/Profile – summarise your key selling points and strengths and your career objective
- Key Skills/Career Achievements – identify work that produced especially good results. This could cover STARS guidelines (Situation, Task, Action, Result, Skills). Identify any awards.
- Career History (reverse chronological order – most recent job to appear first).
- Qualifications & Professional Development (list any CPD courses or other industry training)
- Professional Association Memberships
- Hobbies/Personality – Anything you are passionate about that brings your personality to life – keep it short!
- Referees

### **The Functional or Skills-Based CV**

This is useful when you are making a career change to a different job type or industry. This type of CV emphasises your skills and abilities rather than your recent employment history. Remember an achievement is a statement of how you have added value to an organisation.