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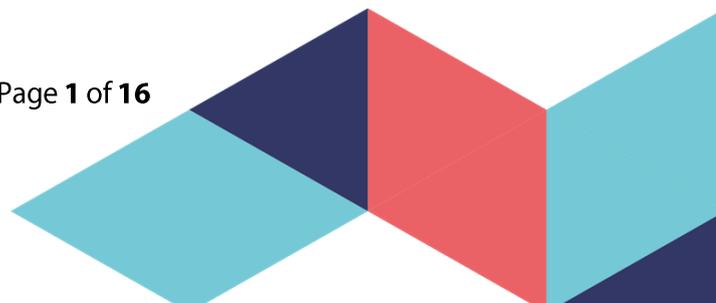
CVs with impact

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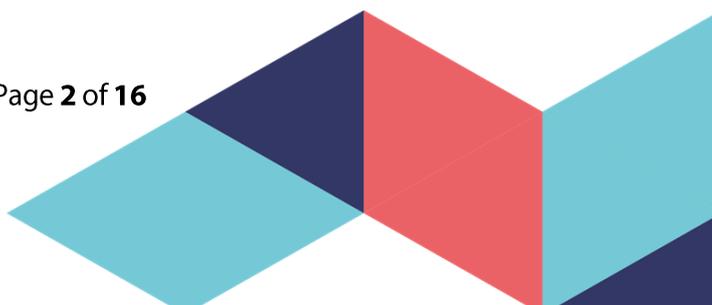
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Objective

This course aims to provide you with the knowledge to enable you to create a professional, graduate level CV.

Understand how to

- Layout your CV
- Embed key words
- Demonstrate impact and skill development

Introduction

High Impact CV's

If you are using a CV approach that simply lists your achievements, the chances are that you are

- boring the reader
- not impressing them
- not getting many interviews.

In this guide we explain how you can structure your CV to create the highest possible impact, impress the reader, convince them you should be interviewed and ultimately get recruited.

Purpose of a CV

A CV is a marketing product - in this case, we are marketing you.

The purpose of your CV is to interest the recruiter, impressing your potential employer so that you are invited for an interview.

The recruitment agent or the employer will be sent numerous CVs, needing to examine every one of them before deciding who to short list for interview. The process can be tedious and boring, each CV may be merely skimmed over and evaluated within 10 to 20 seconds.

It is important to realise that the employer will choose the candidate who has the best CV for the job, not necessarily the candidate who is best suited for the job.

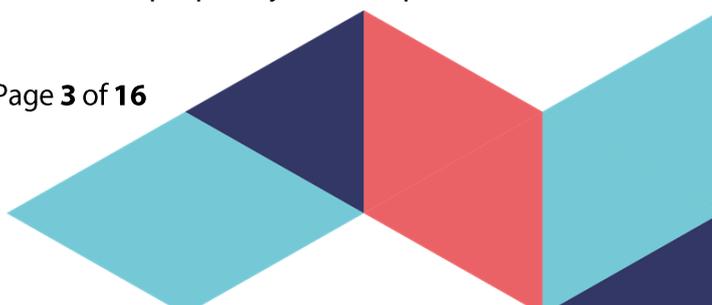
The primary objective of a graduate-level CV is to demonstrate your motivation, academic achievements and goals.

Recruiters will look to invest in your recent qualifications to prepare you for a position in their company.

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Employers won't expect you to possess years of experience on your CV, rather that you can demonstrate enthusiasm, motivation and a positive attitude. This can be achieved by including details of projects and dissertations that you have worked on - showcasing skills needed for the role.

The 20 second interview!!

The front page of your CV will be read for about 20 seconds before the reader makes the choice to turn the page and read more or put you in the reject pile.

Let's suppose you get a 20 second speech to impress the employer.

So, what would you say in 20 seconds to give yourself the chances of getting to the second round of interviews? Does your CV do that? Could an employer see that:

- You have the skills they require
- You have the experience they require
- You understand their requirements, you know what they are trying to achieve
- You have provided benefit to previous employers/clients

Does your CV...

1. Make an impact in 10 to 20 seconds?
2. Make the reader turn the page or put you in the reject pile?
3. Appeal to your target audience?
4. Use key-words used in the industry?
5. Use key-words highlighted in the job description?
6. Make it easy to find the key information?

Identifying your target audience



In order to make your CV as effective as possible, you need to identify your audience to meet their goals. Think about key words they have used in the advert, the essential and desirable skills they are looking for. And all of this on nothing generally longer than 2 pages.

Your CV may be shortlisted by a computer, or someone who is not from that specialism. By using key words, they can identify your knowledge, skills and behaviour to short-list you.

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Job adverts

The easiest way to do this is by looking at current job adverts for the same type of roles. Collect about 10 from the country you wish to work in.

- What are the industry key-words?
- What key skills, knowledge and behaviours are required in these roles?

Remember: these will change!

These websites will help (further websites are available - see job search module):

- Debut www.debut.careers Graduate schemes & internships
- Gradjobs www.gradjobs.co.uk Graduate jobs
- Indeed www.indeed.co.uk Graduate jobs
- Milkround www.milkround.com Graduate jobs & schemes
- Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk Graduate jobs & schemes

What goes on the front page

There are essentially 3 sections required on the first page.

- Your name, address and contact details including LinkedIn profile - 3 lines
- A profile of you - 4 lines
- List of skills/expertise - 10 Bullet points
- List of achievements - 5 Bullet points (possible 4th section, depending upon where you are in your career)

Professional profile/personal statement

How long should a personal statement be for a job?

Personal statements are all about getting the necessary information across with brevity. You need to keep it concise and straight to the point. A personal statement should be no longer than 150-200 words, or no more than four or five sentences. You may feel that you need to convey more information than you can summarise in this amount of words, however, this is best saved for the cover letter, where you will have more space to go into details about your skills and experience and why you are a great fit for this specific role.

Who you are?

How you write your personal statement is up to you, you can write it in third or first person, but do not mix the two; keep it consistent.

You could start off by saying who you are, which may look something like this:

"I'm a recent graduate with a 2:1 in Biochemistry from Bangor University, seeking a graduate role in ..." or

"I am a Business Management degree student at Anglia Ruskin University, seeking ..."

We recommend including your grade if it enhances your CV. If you don't think it's necessary or you need the space to highlight your skills, leave your grade out, as the person reading your CV can find it in the education section. You can also leave out the institute you studied at if you need this space for other important information, as this will also appear further down the CV.

What you can offer the employer?

The next couple of lines should be about your relevant experience. Make a song and dance about any skills that are highly relevant to the role you are applying for; remembering to always tailor your personal statement to the specific job. Once you have outlined your relevant skills, you'll need to show when you've used those skills. For example:

"During my time at university and my year in industry, I developed excellent time-management skills, work well under pressure and detail orientated. As well as the above skills I have experience of working in a highly regulated laboratory environment"

Top tip: Use terms that employers or recruiters may be searching for. For example, if you're a computer science graduate and have experience with C++, make sure this is stated in your personal statement, as well as in the skills section of your CV.

Your career goals

For graduates, this can be tricky, especially if you are not sure which road you want to take. However, you don't need to panic and show an employer a 10 or 20-year career goal. No one is expecting you to have mapped out your life. You can, however, show what your short-term goals are and detail the skills you would like to develop if you were successful in getting a position in the organisation you are applying for. For example:

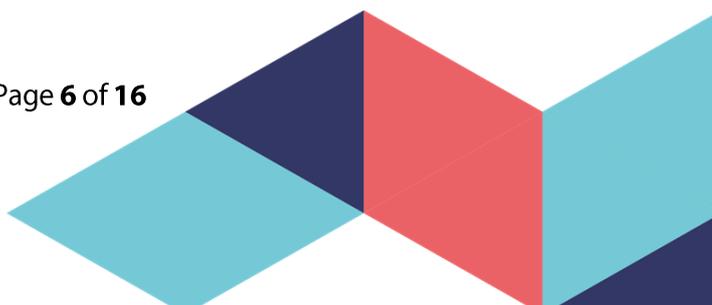
"I am looking for a new opportunity in an innovative company, where I can use and develop both my soft skills and technical skills, whilst using and continuing to expand my knowledge of biochemistry."

Writing a personal statement with no work experience!

If you are entering the world of work after university, but do not have any work experience, there are transferable skills you've learnt while in university or in your extracurricular activities. We would recommend that you identify a mentor and work experience as quickly as possible but here is guidance in the meantime.

Soft skills that employers are looking for include

- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Communication skills
- Leadership



- Teamwork
- Work ethic
- Time management

During your university degree or in any extracurricular activities, you will have used some, if not all, of these skills. In your personal statement, cover letter and CV, you need to demonstrate when and how you have used the skills that employers are looking for. They don't necessarily need to be directly related to work.

If you do have some work experience, even if it's not relevant to this role specifically, make sure you mention this in your personal statement. For example, it might have been a part-time job whilst studying, or during holidays, working in your family business or volunteering.

Don't forget about optimising your CV for online searches

In the digital age, most jobs are advertised online, and it's also where employers and recruiters look for potential candidates. Millions of people have LinkedIn accounts and have uploaded their CVs to various job websites. So, how do you stand out, by 'keyword-optimising' your personal statement and CV?

Often, potential employers and recruiters will use **role-related keywords** to search for candidates on LinkedIn and job websites. Generally, recruiters are looking to fill a graduate job that requires certain skills or qualifications. So, if you are a biology graduate and a job requires DNA extraction skills, which you have, then make sure you add this information to your personal statement so that you will appear in searches that match this term. It's important to research the accepted industry terms that relate to your skills, so you stand the best chance of high search visibility.

The key skills and expertise section

This section needs about 10 bullet points that prove that you are the person for the job. Highlight in bold the words that match the advertisement. Make sure you also show a broad range of skills rather than wasting too many lines on one area.

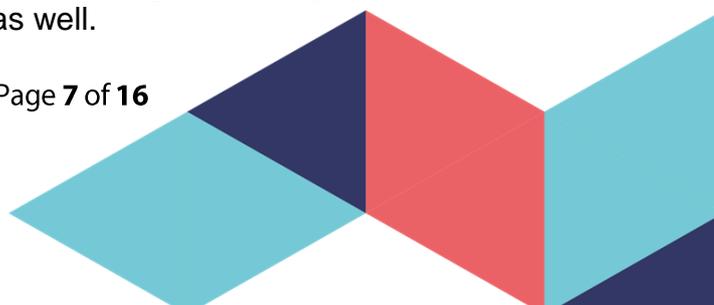
You can put multiple skills from the same area on one line. Remember to add personal qualities. e.g. Meets tight and demanding deadlines under pressure.

Transferable skills

Everyone has transferable skills even if they don't recognise them as such. Sometimes, your current employer won't make it obvious that the skills you have acquired with them are transferable because they don't necessarily want you to realise how employable you are elsewhere.

Typical transferable skills you may already possess are:

- **Reading or writing related skills.** This means being able to digest written information and present it in written form as well.



- **Computer skills.** If you have aptitude with computers and common office programmes then consider this to be a transferable skill.
- **Management experience.** If you have managed people before then you could transfer this experience to benefit another type of employer.
- **Commercial skills.** People who can negotiate and handle figures like turnover and gross profit often possess the sort of business acumen which is sought after in many organisations.
- **Deadline success.** Being able to work to deadlines is something that doesn't happen in all jobs, but if you are used to it then this is a key transferable skill desired in many companies.

Of course there are other types of transferable skill. Think of them as aptitudes that can function equally well in multiple industrial sectors. Mention them in your CV as you have picked them up throughout your employment history.

Job-related key skills

More specific than transferable skills, job-related ones can get you work with another employer who needs them. Despite this, transferable skills won't necessarily be of use to employers outside of the sector you already work in.

Examples of job-related skills are:

- **Mechanical engineering.** Being able to work and repair engines is a job-related skill. It may mean you can transfer into related sectors but probably only within similar roles unless you have other transferable skills to offer.
- **Accountancy qualifications.** Bookkeeping and accountancy roles are on offer within a wide range of organisations which presents plenty of job choice. However, this job-related skill narrows down that choice to certain types of jobs only.

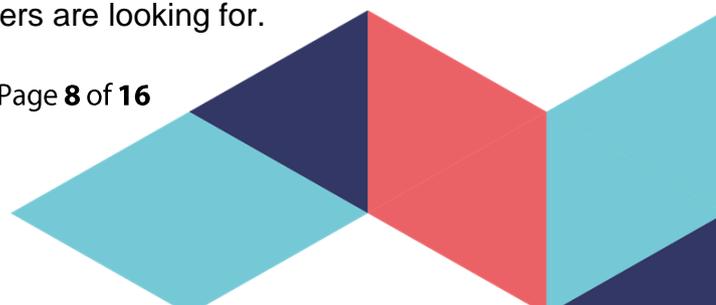
Although there are nearly as many job-related skills as there are jobs, try not to think of them as restricting what you can do. If you do feel trapped by your job-related skills and have trouble breaking out into new areas of work, then acquire some new ones by enrolling on a training course.

Remember that many job-related skills imply transferable ones so they are always worth mentioning. It is best to add any courses or qualifications that are pertinent to your job-related skills in education section of your CV.

Adaptive skills

Ideal skills for CV personal statements or even a cover letter, adaptive skills can also be listed in your work experience if you prefer. Think about the sort of personality you have when discussing your adaptive skills. Some of the key ones to look out for include:

- **Team working.** Not everyone is a team player, but team working is an important adaptive skill that many employers are looking for.



- **Loyalty.** Been in your job for a long time and seen it through thick and thin? This is an adaptive skill to mention on your CV.
- **Positivity.** If you are the sort of person who sees the glass as half full and not half empty, then this shows your positivity. Employers tend to favour positive people so mention this as an adaptive skill.
- **Creativity.** Some jobs cry out for creative people. If you paint, play music or are even good at telling jokes, then this may show off your creative skills.
- **Adaptability.** Being flexible is something we all need in the workplace from time to time, but some are better at it than others so don't discount your adaptability as a skill.
- **Tenacity.** Taking ownership of problems and seeing them through is a key skill in many organisations. If you can demonstrate this from your past career, then include it on your CV.
- Although adaptive skills may seem like the least important ones to mention because they are not specific to the job you are applying for, they can often mark you out from another candidate. Don't overlook the importance of your blend of adaptive skills which is as unique as you are.

Be proud of the skills that you have and see each and every one as a way to progress in your career

Education



You should list all of the qualifications the employer is interested in; these will generally include degrees, A levels, GCSEs and specialist qualifications (or stated equivalent qualifications). For GCSEs, it is suggested that you simply state the number gained and the range of grades, highlighting only those most relevant to the role. Always start with the most

recent

It is not necessary to provide the education provider or dates, but many people prefer to include this.

For example

BA (Hons) Business Management 2.1 Anglia Ruskin University 2017-2020

- Modules included....

A levels XYZ College 2015-2017

- Subject, grade; subject, grade; subject, grade



- 10 GCSEs, ranging from A-C grades including maths, English, ICT and x (relevant to job application)

Module/qualification content

If relevant, include up to six of the degree modules covered to highlight specific knowledge or skills you have gained.

If you are applying for a role that does not relate your degree, you may also wish to highlight the content of your A levels or equivalent. For example, you have an archaeology degree and are applying for a management role. You may wish to highlight a few relevant degree modules and your A level modules in Business Management.

You may also choose to add key achievements whilst at university under the modules section, and skills developed.

- Modules included....
- **Skills:** data management, communication, presenting
- **Key achievement:**

Working abroad/international qualifications

If you wish to work abroad, or have qualifications from another country, you will need to state what your qualifications are equivalent to.

- If you wish to work abroad: be equivalent to the country you wish to work in e.g. if applying in the USA you would write "AP Examinations equivalent" for A Levels
- If you have qualifications outside of the UK and are apply to a UK company: be equivalent to the UK' qualification names e.g. "A level equivalent" for level 3 qualifications

Other courses/training

You may wish to add information regarding other courses you have completed such as language courses, ICT qualifications, first aid etc.

You can either set up a new header called "Training", or add them to your education section, changing the title to " Education and training".

Start with your most recent qualifications and work backwards again, following the same format as "Education".

Employment history

Provide details regarding employment, work experience, internship, placement etc., starting with the most recent and working back.

- No essays.
- Short and sweet, using bullet points.
- Explain the things you did, what skills you developed and the impact you had.

Phrases like 'responsible for ordering stock' can make your CV read like a job description. Instead, describe what you did and what the positive outcome was, like, 'by closely monitoring sales trends and stock levels, I reduced out of stock instances by 21%'.

Using 'active' language instead of 'passive' language makes your CV sound more dynamic. An example is changing 'involved in the promotion of the company at industry events...' to 'I promoted the company at industry events...' This makes you sound like a 'doer', rather than someone who was just 'involved'.

Guidelines

Provide each job, work experience, internship, placement etc., starting with the most recent and work back

1. the company (and web address if there is room)
2. Title of role
3. Dates
4. Summary of impact (again, apply the STAR/PARS technique)

A CV is about marketing yourself, sharing with the reader the impact you made at each employer and the potential impact you can make for a future employer. It all begins with a STAR story.

Example

Here's a BEFORE and AFTER example, transforming a responsibility statement into an impact based CV - make an enticing STAR story.

BEFORE

- Responsible for the Maintenance Department and all PM activities.

AFTER

- Led the 24-person Maintenance Team to create and implement a formalised Preventative Maintenance program, reducing assembly downtime by 75% while doubling production output.

Companies want to see impact

One of the common mistakes when writing a CV is to write the achievements as a set of skills you learnt quickly and focus on how you benefited personally rather than the benefits you generated for the client.

You really have to dig deep and think about what business benefits you added by applying your skills for your clients. Just remember, in business no one really cares about you – they care about what you can do for their business.

Companies often want to do some of the following:

- Make more profits
- Sell more widgets
- Become more efficient
- Get more customers
- Beat competition
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Enter new markets
- Drive higher quality

Can you consider how you have

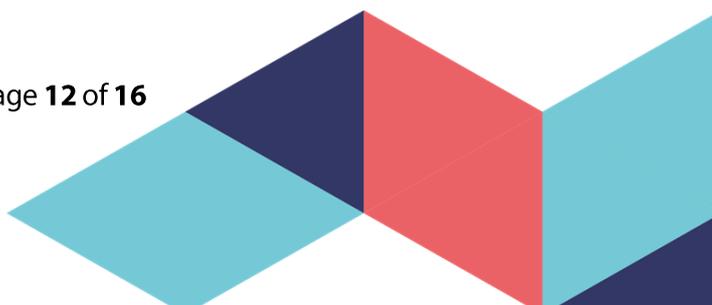
- Solved business problems and met goals.
- Saved the business money.
- Made business processes more efficient.
- Completed projects faster and cheaper
- Implemented changes faster
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Used less staff
- Improved software quality
- Improved capability (this includes staff)

The following two techniques will help you write this section. They are called PARS and STARS.

STARS method

The STARS method allows you identify your impact.

- **Situation:** An event, project, or challenge faced
- **Task:** Your responsibilities and assignments for the situation
- **Action:** Steps/procedure taken to relieve or rectify situation
- **Result:** Results of actions taken.
- **Skills:** What skills have you developed?



STARS example

- **Situation:** I served as a bar attendant for an independent micropub, and was responsible for serving customers, managing deliveries, maintaining stock and cleaning tables.
- **Task (Problem):** When I was hired, the company was not reaching their expected sales figures, which resulted in a loss of profit.
- **Action:** I identified alternative stock that would attract a wider audience and devised entertainment evenings.
- **Result:** Within four months, the company's client numbers improved, profits increased and additional staff were required to meet the new demand.
- **Skills:** I developed management, negotiation, communication and sales skills.

My CV and LinkedIn profile would show

- Led a plan to resolve a profit decline at ABC Micropub
- Redesigned stock held, planned and implemented customer entertainment evenings
- **Impact:** increased profits and increased clients
- **Skills:** management, negotiation, communication and sales skills

Note that I've written this in business language as I am applying for graduate roles!

PARS Method



Rather than simply stating the responsibilities you had, you should highlight the impact and the skills developed.

P – What was the **Problem** you addressed?

A -What were the **Actions** you took?

R – What were the **Results**?

S – What **Skills** did you use or develop?

PARS example

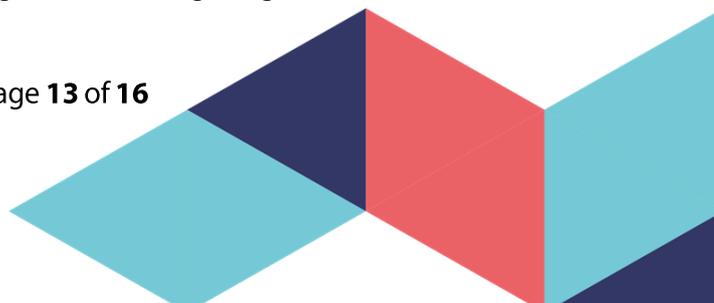
- **Problems?** High labour costs
- **Actions?** Focused on cost reduction initiatives
- **Results?** Reduced labour costs by 12%, overtime by 24%, and material waste by 43%
- **Skills?** Managing and leading a team, negotiation, budgeting

My CV will show:

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- Managed and led a team of six in cost reduction initiatives
- **Impact:** Reduced labour costs by 12%, overtime by 24%, and material waste by 43%.
- **Skills:** Managing and leading a team, negotiation, budgeting
- My LinkedIn profile may say: I am an experienced team manager with significant skill in reducing costs a to ensure profit success (12% reduction... at xxx company) .

Additional information

www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140709061710-108230503-12-tips-to-improve-your-work-experience-section-on-linkedin

www.melissallarena.com/linkedin-challenge-tip-3-fill-linkedin-experience-section%E2%80%8F/

www.ivyexec.com/career-advice/2013/power-stories-fuel-winning-job-interviews-part-2/

Achievements and interests



Only include hobbies, interests and achievements that are **relevant to the job**. If you're involved in any clubs or societies, this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. Interests like sports and physical recreation activities can also show employers that you are fit and healthy.

Be mindful of not just listing the achievements but highlighting the skills and impact to show the employer the reason for you including them on the CV. You can use the STARS/PARS method to help.

Additional information

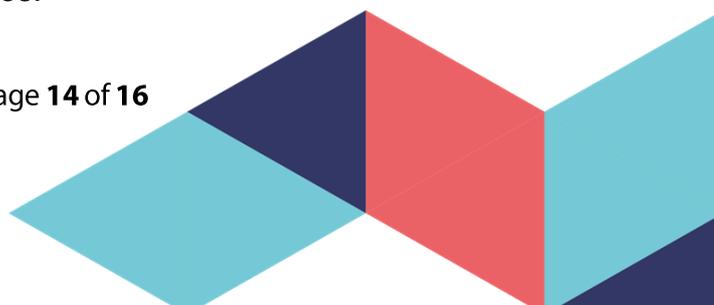
You can include this section if you need to add anything else that's relevant such as publications, research completed, patents etc.

You may need to explain a gap in your employment history, like travelling or family reasons. You could also include other relevant skills here, such as if you have a driving licence or can speak any foreign languages.

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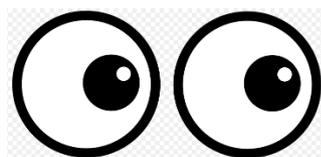
You can merge the Other Achievements and Additional Information section; calling it Additional Information and listing the info from both. This is useful if you do not have much to add to each section, or if you need to reduce space.

References

Write 'References are available upon request'. This ensures that you manage when and who has access to your referee's contact details.

Ensure your LinkedIn profile has endorsements and recommendations from others to support your references.

Make it easy to read and look good



- Don't include so much information that it makes your CV look cluttered.
- Avoid long paragraphs with very little white space.
- Bullet pointed lists and short sentences make your CV easier to read and easier for recruiters to scan.
- Don't mix up your fonts/formatting for visual effect - it can look messy or do not pay attention to detail.
- Typos, spelling, grammar? Are you using English spelling i.e. not American, if applying in the UK?
- You don't need to print your CV on bright coloured paper or over a picture.

The right length

The rule of thumb is that a CV should be no more than 2 pages long. If you've a lot of relevant experience at a high level, however, you can go over 2 pages.

If you're just starting out in your career, 1 page is fine. If your CV goes back a long way into your work history, make sure the information is relevant to the job you're applying for. A Saturday job you had 20 years ago probably isn't relevant.

Final checks

Tailor your CV

Avoid sending out the same CV to hundreds of employers. Mass mailshots are too general and unfocused - and employers can spot them.

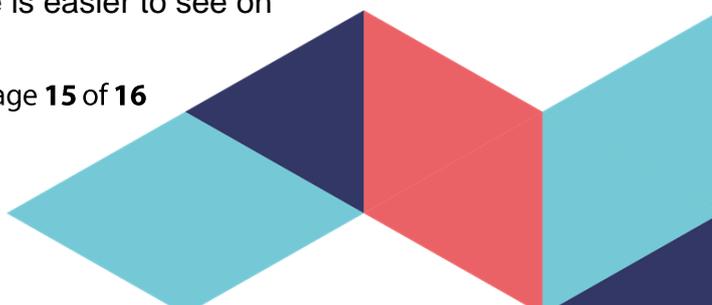
Instead, tailor your CV to sell your most relevant skills. Consider what skills the employer might be looking for, and highlight your most relevant experience.

For example, if you've got experience in retail and care work, and you're applying for a job in a shop, make sure your retail experience is easier to see on your CV than the care experience.

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Avoid typing errors, poor spelling and grammar mistakes

Mistakes can make it seem like you haven't put the time in, or you don't think details are important. A tidy, mistake-free CV shows you're professional, thorough and care about how you come across.

It's a good idea to have your CV checked by someone whose English is good, even if yours is good too. Spellcheckers can miss things, like the difference between 'ceiling' and 'sealing'.

Templates

A CV can take any format but remember it must be easy to identify your key points, you have 20 seconds to impress the reader!

- Word templates are available with this module as separate documents.

For those of you in a creative industry (such as journalism, marketing, media, design, programming), your CV should also show your creative talent.

Here are examples of extreme make-overs:

- <https://interestingengineering.com/11-examples-of-creative-cvs-for-engineers>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-professional/careers-blog/gallery/2015/feb/25/the-worlds-most-creative-cvs-in-pictures>
- <https://enhancv.com/blog/the-23-most-creative-resume-designs-weve-seen/>

Just remember to ensure that the reader can still skim read your key information in 20 seconds!

