

Top 10 Tips for your CV

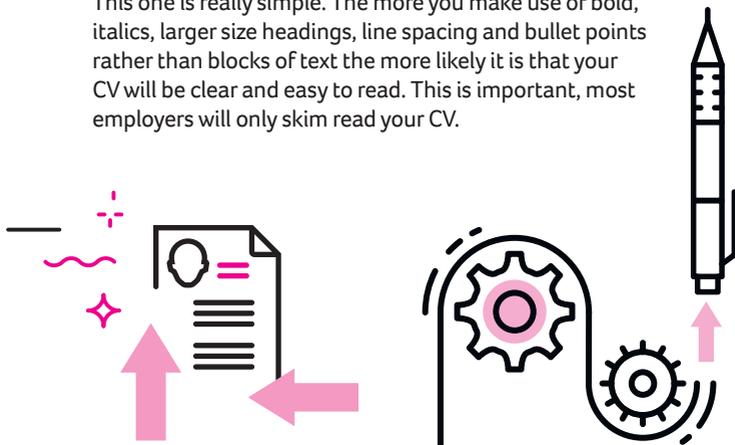


1. Have a purpose for your CV

The best CVs are written with a particular job advert in mind or at the least a particular company or sector. By looking at the advert or through knowing the industry you can discover what skills, experiences and attributes you need to share with the employer in the CV. You need a new CV for each role you apply for. This makes sense if you think about it, why should a CV for a retail job have the same detail as a CV for teaching?

2. Consider your layout

This one is really simple. The more you make use of bold, italics, larger size headings, line spacing and bullet points rather than blocks of text the more likely it is that your CV will be clear and easy to read. This is important, most employers will only skim read your CV.



3. Avoid generic or dull language

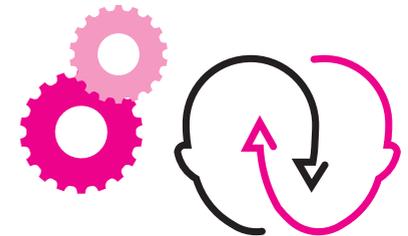
It is very common to see buzzwords like 'hardworking' and 'enthusiastic' on a CV. Try to mirror the language from the job advert in the way that you describe yourself. Be careful to avoid negative language like 'basic', 'had to', or 'required to' as well as general phrases like 'various tasks' that don't really tell the reader much. Google 'CV action words' for inspiration.

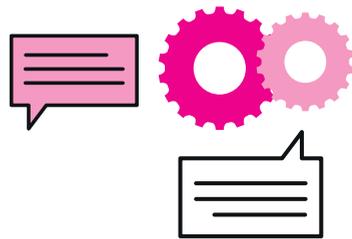
4. Always evidence your skills

Don't list skills without providing an example of how you have used or developed that skill anywhere on the CV. This means that a skills profile (if you want one) needs to be more than just a list of common words you would expect to see on a CV.

5. Adapt your structure to show relevant information first

Lots of people don't know this but there is no set structure to a CV! If your skills profile or volunteering is more relevant than your paid work experience for a particular job, make sure that that section comes first. You can even section things out into 'Relevant Experience' and 'Other Experience' for a role if that helps.





6. Utilise all of your experience

Often everything from sports, societies, volunteering, part time work, internships, competitions, travelling, start-ups and university work can be made to look interesting on a CV.

7. Don't put style over substance

For most roles, a clean professional CV is fine and there will be no need to go in for an imaginative CV. For more creative roles the design can be very important but it is still key to include the relevant information about you as well as a fantastic design!

8. Check spelling and grammar

This is very straightforward and very important.

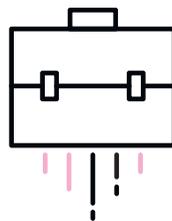
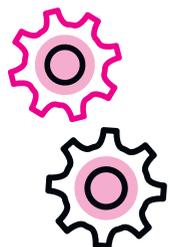
9. Get involved

The more you do outside of university and especially over your long summers the more you will have to write about in your CV.

10. Get it checked

You are always welcome to speak to a Careers Adviser to ensure that you have written a strong CV. You can make an appointment online or in the Careers Centre.

You can watch our video online at <http://bit.ly/2BVQh9n> to see our Careers Adviser Laura use these tips to improve a CV.



What about the basics?

The CV should be 1 or 2 pages long.

Try to avoid leaving a half empty page.

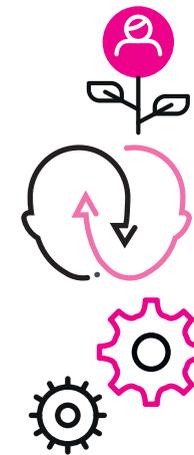
Use a sensible font and font size 11.

You need to include your name, address, phone and email address. The employer needs to be able to contact you!

In the UK there is no need to include your age, gender, nationality, marital status or a photograph of yourself.

The content within the sections on your CV should be ordered with the most recent first.

Make sure that you include dates of when you have done things.



What sections should I include?

There is no set list of sections that everybody has to have on their CV, however, you **always** need your personal details and you will **likely** want to include your Education and Experience (including paid and unpaid work, volunteering and internships) and at least state that your references are available on request.

You **could** also include sections for laboratory or technical experience, university modules and projects, professional qualifications, skills, positions of responsibility, research interests, achievements, self-employment, languages and interests.

What will it look like?

Have a look at our example CV so that you can start thinking of how to best write your own CV.



Sophie Dexter
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Personal Profile

Final Year Sociology Student with relevant experience in marketing. Particularly adept at adapting communications to different audiences, a skill developed during a summer internship at ASDA Headquarters. Looking to secure a challenging marketing and communications position within a large organisation that offers opportunity for progression upon graduation.

Education

2016-2019 **University of Huddersfield** BA (Hons) Sociology Predicted 2.1

Relevant Modules:

Representing the Social: Culture and Society Explored how the media and digital communication have an impact on society

Humanity 2.0: Living and Participating in the Digital Age Enhanced knowledge on how technology can be used to engage with different groups and individuals

2017-2019 **New College, Huddersfield**

Sociology **A** English Literature **A** Psychology **B**

2012-2017 **Newsome High School, Huddersfield**

9 GCSEs A-C including English and Maths

Relevant Experience

Summer 2017 **Communications Intern, ASDA Head Office, Leeds**

- Solely responsible for writing content for the August edition of the monthly staff newsletter, including 7 distinct articles, for a readership of over 10,000 employees.
- Pro-actively researched possible articles for the staff newsletter and intranet site.
- Gathered data on social media engagement and identified areas for improvement; testing analysis skills and attention to detail.
- Creatively experimented with posts on the ASDA twitter feed within corporate protocols and saw an increase in follower interaction by 6% over two weeks.
- Contributed ideas to the quarterly Communications Action Plan team meeting which included presenting to 20 members of staff at all levels of seniority.
- Developed strong working relationships with a close team of seven other communications colleagues.

Summer 2016 **Market Research Interviewer, Skellet and Raymond, Manchester**

- Elicited key market insights through 1-2-1 market research interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire for 52 consumers within one week.
- Operated in-house database systems to collect and interpret data.
- Composed concise 2-page report on findings for management, honing my written communication abilities.

Notice how this is short and to the point. A good guide is:

Sentence 1, who you are

Sentence 2, a strength or strong piece of experience

Sentence 3, your career aim.

If your degree isn't related to your career aim then you can skip this but if you have relevant modules then include them! Make the most of your degree, you can even set aside a separate section called 'University Projects' if you have a lot to share.

Take note that there is no need to list all of your GCSEs.

You don't have to stick to the headings we have here, feel free to choose sections and titles that work for you.

This person has made sure she emphasises achievements and skills at the same time as keeping things short and snappy. This is an effective way of making the CV an easy and impressive skim read.

Check when you write your CV that you include lots of numbers. It can help you be far more precise regarding things like timescales or how busy you have been. Numbers are a great way of ensuring you include enough detail.

Other Experience

November 2015 – Present **Retail Assistant, WHSmith, Huddersfield**

- Fostered excellent communication skills working with customers in person and over the telephone.
- Achieved sales targets during peak periods, often serving up to 40 customers per hour demonstrating my ability to thrive under pressure.
- Resolved customers' queries expanding my problem solving abilities.

2014-2015 **Shop Assistant, Clintons Cards, Huddersfield**

Skills Communication

Through writing copy, tweets and reports in my work experience and formal essays at university developed excellent writing skills. Strong listening skills and ability to clearly explain information practised as a market researcher and when interviewing participants for my undergraduate dissertation on social exclusion.

Attention to detail

Error free web copy and newsletter articles positively commented on by superiors at ASDA internship.

Organisation and working to deadlines

Currently balancing 7 hours of university contact time with 10 hours of independent work per week, 16 hours of work at WHSmith, as well as regular gym sessions to prepare for upcoming charity race.

In the workplace regularly and successfully produced written material for deadlines.

Research and analysis

Key part of Sociology degree involves researching and assessing information from multiple sources and then synthesising this into clear content. As a Market Researcher categorised consumer input and determined best recommendations going forward.

IT

Achieved proficiency in HTML, HootSuite and all Microsoft Office Applications through University and Work.

Comfortable using Windows or Mac.

Designed charity promotional materials in PhotoShop (self-taught) for fundraising 5K race.

Interests

Volunteering – I enjoy charity work. Most recently I have participated in a Charity Bake Sale raising £256 for a local hospice and I ran in the Race For Life last year, raising £798. I plan on racing again this year.

Travel – When I can find the time (and money!) I love to explore the world. I have so far visited 8 cities in Europe, my favourite being Berlin, and I hope to travel further afield to South America in the near future.

References Available on Request

Notice that this is technically the most recent position but the separate sections mean that this can be listed behind the most relevant experience.

This is a very typical part time role but notice the confident language used to describe it. This makes it sound more interesting.

If something is far in the past, not too relevant or similar to a more recent role it is okay to simply list it without providing a description.

You can't put this on your CV and then send it in with errors! Take the time to make sure the spelling and grammar is perfect!

Balancing university work with other commitments is a common example provided by students and recent graduates so you need to make sure you take the time to properly outline all of the things you've been balancing to make the most out of it.

Sometimes we see really exciting things in an interests section! When you write your CV make sure you aren't hiding anything away in here that deserves a more prominent position.

Notice that the tone in this section is more personal, this is because an interests section is a real opportunity to give the employer an insight into your personality.

What if it's only a part time CV for casual work?

Many students need to work whilst studying and people commonly find suitable work in bars, restaurants, cafes, shops and offices. Here are some tips on how to make an effective part time CV for that kind of work:

Try to stick to one page with content that is really clear and simple to read. Often, employers don't properly read the whole CV.

Strangely, some of your more interesting or impressive experience, such as an insight day at a top employer, may be less relevant than part time work in a related field. So, your work in a coffee shop may be more helpful when applying for a restaurant, than your month of work experience at a major accountancy firm.

You still need to tailor the content of your CV. Common things you will need to highlight will be your relevant experience and skills in:

Customer Service
Communication
Teamwork
Problem Solving
Initiative
Working under pressure
Attention to detail

If you are looking for your first part time role, it is wise to create a skills profile evidencing some of the above skills on your CV to show that you are a good match for that type of work. You can see an example of a skills profile in the previous CV in this leaflet.

When looking for work in bars, hospitality, or retail it can often be a great idea to hand your CV in, in person, so that you can meet the manager and show a keen interest in the job.

We have an example CV for part time roles on the right, notice how the layout and level of detail in this CV has changed compared to the more professional example on pages 5-8.

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Personal Profile

University student with four years of experience in two major retail stores looking for part time work to fit alongside study. Adept at providing customers with exceptional service evidenced by achieving employee of the month award in October 2017 at WHSmith. Available weekends, evenings and Thursday and Friday mornings.

Education

2016-2019 **University of Huddersfield** **BA (Hons) Sociology** **Predicted 2.1**
2017-2019 **New College**, Huddersfield 3 A Levels
2012-2017 **Newsome High School, Huddersfield** 9 GCSES A-C including English and Maths

Relevant Experience

November 2015 – Present **Retail Assistant, WHSmith, Huddersfield**

- Developed strong ability to anticipate customer needs.
- Fostered excellent communication skills working with customers in person and over the telephone.
- Achieved sales targets during peak periods, often serving up to 40 customers per hour demonstrating my ability to thrive under pressure.
- Resolved customers' queries expanding my problem solving abilities.
- Demonstrated strong teamwork ethic supporting new staff during seasonal periods.
- Achieved employee of the month award in October 2017 and June 2016.

2014-2015 **Shop Assistant, Clintons Cards, Huddersfield**

- Supported customers and used initiative to answer their queries regarding products.
- Quickly gained knowledge of the store and its product range.
- Successfully served large queues of customers during busy peaks throughout the year.

Other Experience

Summer 2017 **Communications Intern, ASDA Head Office, Leeds**
Summer 2016 **Market Research Interviewer, Skellet and Raymond, Manchester**

Interests

Volunteering – I enjoy charity work. Most recently I have participated in a Charity Bake Sale raising £256 for a local hospice and I ran in the Race For Life last year, raising £798.

Travel – Visited 8 cities in Europe over the last two years. My favourite city to visit was Berlin.

References Available on Request

This publication is also available online – should you like to have it in an alternative format please contact us.

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