

CV stands for 'curriculum vitae', which means 'the course of one's life', or 'life history'. A CV is a document which records relevant facts about you, such as your skills, work experience, education and personal details.

A CV is a handy reference document which you can use to fill in job application forms, highlight your achievements & your suitability for a job and market yourself speculatively to organisations that you would like to work for.

What needs to be included in your CV?

There is no single way to produce a CV. This guide will cover a number of possible options. There are no fixed rules about what you need to include, but you should aim to cover the following areas:

Personal details – name, address and telephone contact numbers are essential. Include an email address if you have one. Date of birth, nationality and marital status can be included if you want to.

Profile – a short statement which outlines your personal characteristics, work skills and/or career objective. Not everyone chooses to include a profile, but it is a good way to emphasize qualities and abilities that may not be reflected in the rest of your CV.

Work experience and skills – this is the section where you can list your work experience. However, if you have had limited work experience, a wide variety of jobs, or have gaps in your work history, you can focus on your relevant skills and achievements. There are various different styles of CVs that you can use. When detailing your work experience, don't overlook any voluntary work or other non-paid activities that you have undertaken.

Education and qualifications – include names of schools, colleges and awarding bodies. List qualifications gained, including dates, subjects and levels achieved. A mature person may not need to go as far back as school details. Usually, you will start with the most recent qualification.

Other information (optional) – here you can list additional information such as health and safety training, first aid qualifications, computer literacy, languages, driving licence, membership of organisations or anything that might attract an employer's attention. This is also the section where you can include your hobbies and interests. Make sure that all your interests are not solitary activities as this may imply that you are not a team player.

References – references can be work-related, academic or personal. Personal references, or character references are useful if you are applying for your first job or if you have limited work experience. You need to ask two people if they would be willing to provide a reference for you. Make sure you have their contact details ready to pass on to a potential employer. All you need to put on your CV initially is 'references available on request'.

The Chronological CV

This is the most traditional CV format and the most familiar to employers. This style highlights your work experience and is ideal when you want to emphasize progress and increasing responsibility and experience. It is also useful when you want to emphasize a stable and structured career path.

Each job you have ever held is listed in reverse date order. Beneath each job you can bullet point your achievements and responsibilities.

- Good for applying for positions in similar fields to your previous jobs
- Useful if you have had an employment history that shows development over time

- An appropriate style when applying for jobs in more traditional fields

(This style is not particularly well-suited to the individual who has changed jobs frequently or who is switching career paths).

For a more comprehensive guide to other CV styles, please call the nextstep helpline on Freephone 0800 138 5550.

Maurice Edwards

**20 Blackway Road, Heythorp
Rutland, HE9 2RR
Tel: 01321 412516
Email: medwards@internet.net
Date of birth: 27 April 1965**

A qualified and experienced maintenance engineer, with effective communication skills and management experience in plant hire, seeking further responsibility in a managerial position.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

February 1992 to present: Manager, Russell Hire Ltd, Heythorp

- Responsible for smooth and effective management of this small but busy branch, hiring out tools and equipment to customers in the construction trade and to the general public.
- Oversaw the successful introduction of a computerised financial record system.
- Developed the existing staff induction programme, which has now been adopted by the company nationally.
- Increased turnover by 30% since taking over management of the branch.

October 1986 – February 1992: General Assistant, Kennet Plant Hire, Heythorp

- Dealt with customers wishing to hire tools and equipment.
- Responsible for checking and maintenance of the equipment, and undertaking basic repair work.
- Provided instruction and advice to the customers to ensure customer safety, and correct usage of the equipment.

September 1983 – October 1986: Maintenance Assistant, Heythorp Borough Council

- Responsible for the upkeep of machinery and tools in the Parks and Gardens Department.
- Undertook simple repair work of gates, seats, etc.

EDUCATION

1981-83 Heythorp College: City and Guilds General Horticulture

1976-81 Heythorp School: A range of CSE's, including English and Mathematics

OTHER INFORMATION

I am a positive, well-motivated person, both at work and in my spare time, where I help a local charity for the visually impaired. At present, we are raising funds for a scented garden.

References available on request.

Useful phrases to help you build your CV profile

A conscientious and hard-working administrator, fully experienced in the use of Microsoft Office applications, seeking a full-time position in a local company.

A flexible and efficient operative, with ten years experience of manufacturing processes, looking for a supervisory position.

An adaptable and efficient catering assistant, able to work under pressure, keen to expand their skills in the industry.

A friendly, outgoing person, punctual, reliable and willing to learn, happy working on own initiative or as part of a team.

Your CV needs to be easy to read, so make sure it is relevant, concise and well laid out. In order to achieve this, consider some of the following points:

Do:

- Use headings or bullet points to separate sections and leave a space between paragraphs
- Use good quality white or cream paper
- Choose a font style that is easy to read such as Arial
- Use font size 12 and allow at least 1 inch margins
- Make sure your CV is accurate and proofread - ask someone else to check it over for mistakes
- If possible compose and save your CV on a computer so you can update or amend it when you need to
- Try to restrict your CV to 2 A4 pages

Don't:

- List full addresses of previous employers or places of learning – town and/or county is sufficient
- Include photographs
- Lie or exaggerate
- Be too modest – remember that you are 'selling' yourself to a potential employer

BEST Training & NextStep provides information and advice on work and learning to adults 20+ across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

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