

KWCD EMPLOYER EXCHANGE

All you need to know on...

PREPARING A CV

Your CV is often the first impression of you a prospective employer is going to get. Try to think what a busy employer needs to know first and foremost about your skills and experience.

In the main there are 2 types of CV:

▶ **CHRONOLOGICAL CV**

This will lay out all your experience in a chronological order starting with your most recent job first

▶ **SKILLS-BASED CV**

This type of CV focuses on your skills and experience rather than on dates. It is common to list work experience first and then put dates and information on the company afterwards

WRITING YOUR CV



1. Personal Details

These should include:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Contact details: Address, Home phone, Mobile, Email address.



2. Work Experience

As stated previously choose which type of CV you are doing and lay it out accordingly.

For a Chronological CV start with the most recent employment first and give information as follows:

- ▶ Date
- ▶ Job Title
- ▶ Employer's Name and Address
- ▶ Responsibilities/Duties.

It is important to start with the duties most relevant to the job you are applying for.
Do this in short concise sentences in bulleted format.

For a skills-based CV list as follows:

- ▶ Job Titles and Responsibilities/Duties
- ▶ Dates and employer details.



3. Qualifications and Training

If this is recent then put this section before Work Experience.

Start with the most recent course completed first and provide the following information:

- ▶ Date
- ▶ Course Title
- ▶ Course Provider
- ▶ Certification Achieved
- ▶ Modules or topics covered

Remember to include here any skills-based or on-the-job training such as forklift licence or manual handling course.



4. Skills

This section allows you the opportunity to list skills, knowledge or attributes that you may not have outlined before. Always start with the most recent and impressive first but do include those that may not be directly relevant.

Include things like:

- ▶ Computer Skills
- ▶ Software packages
- ▶ Languages
- ▶ Typing Skills
- ▶ First Aid
- ▶ Driving Licence.

5. Achievements

Include here activities over and above work experience and study which show a constructive use of your spare time.

For example:

- ▶ Positions held on Committees
- ▶ Charity Work
- ▶ Competitions
- ▶ Captain of a sports team.

6. Hobbies and Interests

Use this to show you have interests outside of work and it can show attributes like

- ▶ Ability to function well as part of a team.

Don't just write a list, give a brief description.

For example:

- ▶ Music – mainly pop and rock
- ▶ Reading – Modern day fiction.

7. References

It is best to write

- ▶ References available on request

and provide contacts when an employer asks for them.

Employers prefer contact referees than letters of reference although it is good to have both.

Always ask for a reference if you have worked for someone, even if it's only for a few days.

Employers will want to know specific details such as whether you were reliable, did the job well and got on well with customers and colleagues.

If you don't have work-based referees then give the names of people who have observed you in a role of responsibility, e.g. on a committee.

HOW TO DEAL WITH GAPS ON YOUR CV

It's common for employees to take time off between jobs and reasons include:

- ▶ Raising a family
- ▶ Caring for a sick or elderly relative
- ▶ Recovering from illness
- ▶ Travelling
- ▶ Simply taking a break.

There are two ways to deal with these gaps on your CV

- ▶ Draw the readers attention to them and present them in a positive way.
- ▶ Change the format of your CV to a skills based one where there is less emphasis on dates and more on actual experience and skills.

CV Dos and Don'ts

CV Dos

- ▶ Do use short bullet point style sentences.
- ▶ Do focus on the job you are applying for and ensure your CV is relevant.
- ▶ Do make sure relevant experience/skills stand out.
- ▶ Do keep the reader in mind at all times.
- ▶ Do be positive and relay your strengths.
- ▶ Do elaborate on more recent experience.
- ▶ Do include a summary or profile as long as it summarises your skills and experience and is unique to you.
- ▶ Do keep it to a maximum of 2/3 pages.

CV Don'ts

- ▶ Don't lie or exaggerate.
- ▶ Don't have gaps.
- ▶ Don't fudge dates or hide jobs.
- ▶ Don't have format and spelling errors.
- ▶ Don't miss the application deadline.
- ▶ Don't enhance job titles.
- ▶ Don't write a CV in first person.
- ▶ Don't try to squeeze it all onto one page. Let your CV breathe with plenty of white space.

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is a vital part of your job application. Many employers make their first selection on this basis. It should be a clear, comprehensive and concise account, proving why you are the best person for the job. Use it well to complement your CV.

Spelling mistakes, messy writing, vagueness or a lack of understanding of the job will bring an abrupt end to your application even before reaching the interview stage. Therefore, ALWAYS have someone else check your spelling. Do not rely on a computer – it will not necessarily pick up a wrongly chosen word spelt correctly, or a mis-spelt name.



Things to remember

- ▶ Your cover letter should be laid out like a business letter, starting with the date, your contact details, then the company's contact details.
- ▶ Address your letter to the name or title on the advertisement. If there is not one, then start with Dear Sir/Madam. Never presume the gender of the person.
- ▶ State the position you are applying for, including where you saw the job advertised and the publication date.
- ▶ Explain who you are and what you feel you can offer the position. Be very clear about the job. Include details about any relevant qualifications for the job.
- ▶ If the advertisement outlines specific skills and qualities, make sure you mention that you have those qualities or describe past achievements that highlight how you have developed those qualities in previous positions.
- ▶ Refer to your attached CV.
- ▶ Conclude by stating you believe you are suitable for the job and would be interested in an interview to discuss the job further.
- ▶ Sign off with 'Yours faithfully' if you started with 'Dear Sir/Madam', and 'Yours sincerely' if you started with the person's name.
- ▶ Sign your name and print it under the signature.

APPLICATION FORMS

Employers use application forms in order to gain specific information in a standard format from which they can readily assess your suitability for the job. Do not be surprised if filling in an application form seems to take ages – it will, because you are being asked for very important information in a very concise way. This is the test! For you the only purpose of filling out an application form is to get an interview. Preparation is vital – your form must show the employer that you have really thought about yourself and how your abilities and interests match the needs of the particular job you are applying for.



Techniques for Completing Application Forms

- ▶ You must have your preparation done.
- ▶ Photocopy the form two times and practice filling it out before you complete the original.
- ▶ Read all the questions on the form before you attempt to answer any of them.
- ▶ Consider carefully which information to put in each box.
- ▶ Give concise answers including hard facts. Avoid wordy descriptions and vague statements.
- ▶ Use action verbs to describe your achievements. "I organised, I managed, I devised, etc."
- ▶ Include a CV with your application form but do not write on the application form "See CV" you must still complete the application form in full.
- ▶ Take special care with your application. It should be well set out, neat with sentences properly constructed and no mistakes in spelling or grammar. It should look good at first sight. If any of the questions are not applicable to you, say so, don't just leave blank spaces.
- ▶ Always keep a copy of your application form for future reference.



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