

## Writing a CV

A good CV will help you sell yourself to a potential employer. Your CV is among the first things an employer sees so use your creative skills and knowledge to make sure their first impression of you is a positive one.

You need to convince them you can do the job you are applying for. Employers see hundreds of CVs each week - if your CV isn't effective it may not get read. It's a good idea to show your CV to other people to see if they think it looks good before sending it out.

It's easy to make mistakes on a CV and very difficult to repair any damage caused. These tips will help you to avoid mistakes:

- **Avoid typing errors and poor grammar**  
Avoid typos and poor grammar by using spellchecker software and getting friends and family to proof read your work before you send it out. If it's sent to an employer with mistakes they may think you are lazy or don't care enough.
- **Be specific**  
Employers need to understand what you've accomplished.  
Don't just write – *'Worked with students on different projects'*  
Be more specific – *'Worked with students on different projects using traditional drawing and sketching skills, along with various computer packages; Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign and QuarkXpress. This helped me to develop my team building and time-management skills.'*
- **Add all relevant information**  
You need to include all relevant extra information, such as working on hospital radio, editing your university newspaper, specific software and equipment you have used, people you have worked with etc. Don't be afraid to state what you consider obvious as the person reading it knows nothing about you or your work.
- **Tailor your CV**  
A 'One-Size-Fits-All' CV will almost always end up in the bin. Tailor your CV to specific employers; they expect you to clearly show how and why you fit the position in their organisation.
- **Length of CV**  
Generally, you should limit your CV to a maximum of two pages, but don't fill two pages if one will do.
- **Portfolio**  
Some applications may be supported by a portfolio of your work. State on the CV that your portfolio is available on request. If you have applied online, or you have an online portfolio, make sure you include the url link to your site. If you are sending a CV for creative roles it may be appropriate to send examples of work attached. There should be no more than three examples which include an image, description of the brief you were given and a short paragraph on how you met the brief. Make sure any style used for attachments is consistent with the rest of the CV.

- **Positive personal profile**  
Employers want to see something specific that focuses on their needs as well as your own. For example: *'I am seeking a challenging entry-level graphic design position that allows me to contribute my creative skills and experience in web design'* is more specific than *'I'm seeking a challenging role as a graphic designer'*.
- **Improve your self-marketing**  
Avoid using phrases like 'responsible for' - use action verbs like 'created', 'designed' and 'produced'.
- **Include your work history**  
Mention jobs you've taken on to earn extra money whilst at college - the skills you've gained from these experiences (e.g. work ethic, time management, working under pressure, working in a team etc) can be important to employers. The main thing to remember is, if you think it might be relevant, put it in.
- **Format**  
Employers in the creative industry will be paying particular interest to the design of your CV. If it consists of wall-to-wall text with no white space and 10 different fonts on pink luminous paper, it might give them a headache rather than offer you a job!
- **Contact details**  
Ensure your contact details are correct - employers can't contact you if your phone number or address is wrong so double-check.
- **Headings to include**  
Don't write Curriculum Vitae along the top, it wastes space that could be used for far more valuable and relevant information such as:

**Personal Details:** Your name, address, email and telephone number. (Date of birth, nationality, and marital status are optional - include only if relevant to the job)

**Personal profile:** This should be a few sentences, or a short paragraph, describing your key skills and experience. Keep it short, no more than 30 words, and include a short statement about yourself to make potential employers take notice. Tailor it to the position you are applying for. Detail your professional status and career development, along with your immediate ambitions. Write in the third party to reflect how others see you.

**Key Skills:** You can include these as an alternative to the personal profile or to complement it. List your key skills and experience as bullet points, including any equipment you have worked with or software you have used. Start with the most relevant to the job you are applying for.

**Education:** List the most recent first and work backwards. If you have a degree in a relevant subject, employers will not be interested in a list of GCSE grades - it would be enough to say 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, including Maths and English.

**Further training:** Include anything relevant e.g. computer courses, languages etc.

**Work experience:** Paid, voluntary, relevant and non-relevant.

**Interests:** Include only if they are relevant or demonstrate your skills. If not, they can take up valuable space on your CV, which could be used for more relevant information.

**References:** Usually two, one academic and one work.

- **Be consistent**

For applications to creative industries, particularly design, you should think of yourself as a brand. Your cover letter, CV, card and any examples of your work should comply with your brand and all formatting should be consistent throughout your application.

- **Use the checklist**

Use the checklist on the next page to make sure you have included all relevant information on your CV.

### Useful websites

- To get help with CV writing for the creative media industries, go to [www.skillset.org](http://www.skillset.org) and type 'CVs' in the search box - it has useful guidelines for different areas within the industry.
- Use the CV builder on [www.advice-resources.co.uk](http://www.advice-resources.co.uk).
- Prospects, a website for people looking for graduate careers in the UK, has valuable advice on writing CVs – go to [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk). The Education, Further Training and Work experience sections are the most important as this is where you prove you are the person best suited to the job you are applying for.

## CV Checklist

Use the following checklist as a quick test of your CV:

<b>Style and content</b>	
Does the look of the CV show your creativity and skills?	
Is the CV specific to the company you are applying to?	
Is the content relevant to the job role?	
Is it easy to pick out your core skills?	
Does it look good before you even read it?	
Has it been checked thoroughly for spelling and grammar?	
Is it clear and concise?	
Is the style consistent with your 'brand'?	
Is it less than two pages?	
Is it honest? Can you back-up any statements made?	
Have you made sure there are no gaps in your history?	
<b>Personal Details</b>	
Are your full contact details included and accurate?	
Is it easy for the employer to contact you at the details given?	
<b>Education</b>	
Have you listed most recent and relevant first?	
Have you explained relevant modules and projects?	
Are relevant awards and scholarships included?	
<b>Work Experience / Employment</b>	
Can you show a broad range of experience? Paid work, voluntary, college societies, freelance commissions etc.	
Do details concentrate on your most relevant experience?	
<b>Skills</b>	
Does your CV match the skills required in the job advert?	
Have you included examples of how you applied your skills?	
Have you talked about how you have developed transferable skills? e.g. Team work, customer service, communication, IT, organisation	
Have you mentioned job specific skills? e.g. software applications, technical skills, craft skills etc	
<b>Interests</b>	
Have you included a description of relevant activities rather than just producing a list?	
Have you used this section to complete the picture of you as a good employee / person to work with? e.g. travel, community projects, related interests.	
<b>References</b>	
Do you have your referee's permission?	
Have you included their contact details?	
Can they be easily contacted?	