CV Top Tips

Structuring a CV

A CV is your first impression to the employer so it must be memorable, communicative and coherent. Sections include:

Personal Details (heading not needed):
- No need to type "CURRICULUM VITAE" across the top of the page.
- Name in Large Font. Include address, contact numbers, email.
- If you live away from home, you should include your current Dublin address as well as your permanent address to help employers to contact you.
- Ensure you use a professional sounding voicemail message and email address.

Education & Qualifications
- List in reverse chronological order, i.e., most recent/current first.
- Include dates, title of degree, university name, modules and project work, particularly applicable to the role.
- Include overall year mark (if good) or expected result.
- Include relevant projects that you have completed- especially if they demonstrate transferable skills such as team work/ communication skills/ project management etc.
- For engineering/ Science and Computer science students it is very important to highlight your technical/ lab skills early on in CV

Employment History
- Read the job advert to identify the skills required: In the description of your duties try to link your skills and experience to the requirements of the position.
- Make it action & results orientated. Use positive active verbs (e.g. research, organise, create); avoid weak passive verbs and phrases (e.g., took part in, was responsible for).
- Different ways to format Employment History. For example: divide into "Relevant Employment History" and "Other Employment History" or list all Employment History together.
- Regardless of format, use reverse chronological order, i.e., most recent first.
- Include the dates, title of position, name of organization.
- Don't forget about summer jobs, INTRA, part-time work etc.

Voluntary Work
- Use a separate heading for Voluntary Work. Follow the same format for Employment History.

Interests & Achievements
- Mention any special awards/achievements - include from DCU and previous school days or other extra curricular activities. Achievements may include the attainment of awards, certificates, medals, etc. Don't overload your CV with interests.
- Indicate level of interest - posts of responsibility, representing Ireland, your county, school, university etc.
- Think about including interests that demonstrate a degree of social contact, interaction or teamwork.
- Draw attention to your transferable skills that are relevant to the job and make your application stand out. Remember to give evidence of your skills, for example:
- Co-ordinated the Entrepreneurs Network presence at the annual Clubs & Societies Day in DCU demonstrating excellent leadership skills

Additional Skills
- Use this section to highlight skills you feel have not been covered in other areas of the CV or to provide more evidence of skills
- Skills may include languages, I.T. skills, driving licence etc.

Referees
- Make sure you ask the permission of your referees before adding their details to your CV.
- Only two referees are needed. E.g., one academic (i.e., from you third level college) and one from employment. Give only two unless specifically asked for more.
- Include title, organization, emails, phone numbers as well as addresses so that they can be contacted easily.

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- **The primary purpose of a CV is to get an interview**.

- It is a **summary** of your qualifications, experiences and skills.

- **Tailor** your CV for each position.

- Review the **job specification** and **highlight** the qualities, skills, experiences and qualifications the employer is seeking. Then review your experiences and career interests. Think about what is **relevant** to this particular job. Ask yourself what particular skills do you have that are relevant to the position and what evidence will I provide.

- **Make the 30-40 second review count** – Make it easy for the recruiter to find out what they want – time is precious, limit your CV to 2 A4 pages (portrait)

- **Use standard font, make it legible**, e.g. 'Arial' in font size 10 or 'Times New Roman' in font size 11. Avoid too much bold or underlined detail, boarders or boxes.

- **Put** your education and work experience in **reverse** chronological order (most recent first). Ensure the dates you have given for university and employment history are correct.

- **Sell yourself: your CV is about what you have achieved,** not what you have done. List experiences where you have used skills and qualities which you feel are necessary for the job / role.

- Write your CV in the third person, **avoiding the use of 'I'**.

- **Be succinct and to the point** – make it relevant to the job you are applying for, make every word count!

- Use **direct, active and confident language** which reflects the job specification – watch the buzz words! Example of active verbs include prepare, plan, co-ordinate, execute, implement, manage.

- **Don't rely on your application or CV to do the selling for you.** No matter how qualified you are for the position, you will need to sell yourself in the interview on the day!

- **Be honest** - compare your CV with the job description you are applying for. Ensure that the skills and experience match were possible.

- Finally, **check for spelling mistakes** before emailing/printing or posting!

- Your CV will need a **cover letter**, to introduce yourself and summarise the main points that you hope will attract the employer.

For more information on CVs and Cover Letters

www.gradireland.com

www.prospects.ac.uk

dcu.ie/careers