

Writing a Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) or biography or resumé



Call it what you will, they all cover similar aspects of your life, education and employment

It has many and varied uses to accompany portfolios, letters, exhibitions, etc

It basically fills in the gaps of knowledge that can't be seen directly in the work.

Easy to put together and easy to regularly update and something you may be asked for throughout your professional career. The aim is to present all the important details of your life in a clear manner and to be able to see at a glance if someone has the relevant experience for a job, and to gain knowledge of a person's education, interests and ambitions

What is a C.V.?

It lists your basic details of:

- Education
- Qualifications
- Employment history
- Achievements
- Skills
- Interests

There tends to be a set way of doing things so that they can be 'read' easily at a glance. It is one of the components of a Business Plan. It is your personal and work biography where it is used in job and grant applications, accompanies press releases etc. Put one at the back of your portfolio

Compiling the Master Copy

It can consist of 4 parts which makes it easier to update and extract information from it. You can use parts of it to photocopy and distribute as needed. Keep the **Master Copy** safely

Personal Details

- Covers the basic details about you:
- Name and address(s)
- Contact numbers (telephones, fax, e-mail)
- Status (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc)
- Date of birth
- Country of origin possibly if relevant

Education

Covers all your education from secondary schools onwards

- List all your schools and colleges with location and dates
 - List all examinations passed at all levels of secondary, further and higher education
 - List grades of passes where possible
 - List any distinctions gained or prizes won
 - Include all current education courses and put dates with all these
- There may be gaps in your educational career where you have worked or travelled abroad
- List also any membership of educational or professional bodies or guilds to which you may belong
 - If there is some special fact about the nature of your education add it here
 - E.g. working in a particular artist's studio or designed your own course

Work experience

It is usual to list in reverse order the jobs you have had right up to the present So start with the most recent and work backwards including dates and responsibilities.

If you worked in a shop you could list:

- the handling of money
- customer enquiries
- sales
- display
- locking up
- training
-if you carried out any of these duties

You can include (at this stage) work placements during your education. Also start to include lists of **commissions** or **exhibition** opportunities. This list becomes one of the most important parts of the C.V. in later years

- Again list commissions etc in reverse order along with dates
- Who the client was
- May be useful to note who you might have worked or exhibited with

This will be *constantly* revised and updated

Everything else!

The final section rounds up all the areas of your life not so far included

- Foreign travel (*not a fortnight in Majorca!*)
- Languages spoken
- Driving licence
- Leisure pursuits or hobbies which shed a positive light on you and your intellect

- Sports played and achievements. So if you have grade 6 cello, or have walked the Alps with a llama, or sailed round the world on a doormat; list it here.

You can finish off with an, as yet, unachieved ambition. It all provides a more rounded picture of you in the context of your business or job application.

Personal Statement

As an extra to this it has become usual to add a short personal statement. This describes your personal philosophy in the approach to life and your work. It should sum up the attitude to yourself and your work. Keep it cliché free if possible!

2 Referees

Very often you see the names and addresses of two people who are willing to act as your referees. Ask their permission to include them. They can be asked to write on your behalf confirming that you are a nice person, skilled, honest and talented etc.

Someone from work and educational backgrounds would be most suitable. Not your aunty!

The **master copy** of the CV is made up of all four sections plus the personal statement

Ideal use of a computer, where it is easy to update and revise details. Depending what use you are putting it to, you extract the relevant sections or details from the Master Copy. What is suitable to apply to a bank for a loan with a business plan is different from what you need to go with an exhibition. You have to judge which details you think are appropriate

Skills based C.V.

One way to use a C.V. is to restructure it to present it as a skills based one. This highlights what you are good at and then shows how you have made good use of those skills

If you are good at **people skills**.....you list all the things you have done where you have made use of those skills.

If you have particular **technical skills**....show how they have been deployed to advantage. Where possible demonstrate the measurable outcomes of the application of your skills

- E.g. Boosted sales of a gallery by 10% by selling your craft work etc or improved traffic flow for after you redesigned a company's website

The good C.V.

- Well constructed and targeted it is a useful sales document. Markets you and your business. If you are applying for a particular post make sure your

- C.V. highlights your skills, experience or enthusiasm that are necessary for the job. Give it character and personality where possible.
- Present it neatly and attractively. Check details, punctuation and spellings! Stick to one font and a couple of point sizes – only use type creatively if you are a graphic designer and know what you are about.
 - Use normal easy to read type on heavy (200 gsm) light coloured or white paper
 - Well constructed and targeted, it is a useful sales document so cut out any waffle!

It has become more common to include a photograph of yourself on a CV – easy to do with a computer. Some say it is not a good idea...Why?
Remember the C.V. may be one of the first things anyone sees of you and your business. First impressions count!

[Writing an effective CV](#)

For very comprehensive information on writing a CV follow the link to Creative Choices and click on the word document about writing a CV which comes complete with examples of good, bad and indifferent CVs.

If in doubt it can be useful for the careers adviser to look over your CV to clarify whether it is as good as it can be. HECareers@hca.ac.uk

There are a number of books in the college library on the subject as well.