



STAFFWISE GUIDE TO: CV WRITING

Did you know?

A good CV can't get you a job. It can get you an interview! Interestingly, research shows that a prospective employer reading your CV will take an average of **10 seconds** to decide if they are going to complete reading the first page of your CV and **another 5 seconds** to decide if they will read the full CV.

That means that:

1. You have only **15 seconds** to really wow someone and get them interested enough to meet you.
2. You have to really think what to put on that first page of your CV that will grab their attention and make it memorable.
3. You have to find the right balance between the quality and quantity of information you are sharing on your CV

CV writing is a learnable skill and is not so complicated. It is all about telling someone about you and your work experience in an interesting, informative and structured manner.

CV Sections:

- **Personal details:** this section is at the beginning and briefly covers personal details such as: your name, contact details (both physical and email address). It should be at the top of the document and shouldn't take too much space.
- **Personal profile:** This is a high level summary of who you are and what you are looking for. It is a short statement outlining your personal characteristics and tells the reader what kind of a person you are, the attributes and qualities that you possess and the experience you have.
- **Key Skills:** This section requires you to analyse the job advert/ organisation you are targeting and identify key requirements that are relevant to you. You need to keep this section concise and avoid generic language. While you have many different skills and expertise, this is the place to highlight only those which would be most relevant to the role / organisation and most attractive to the employer. you should aim to include information on additional skills such as

your ability to speak other languages or your proficiency in the use of computer programs. No need to include more than **5 -7 Key Skills**.

- **Key Achievements:** This section aims to make your application memorable and stand out from the rest. Use this section to showcase projects, awards, distinctions or any other claim for fame which is worthwhile mentioning or which will make you stand out from everyone else and will be a true testimony of who you really are. Research shows that CV readers remember numbers so use numbers in this section. Try to include no more than **5-7 achievements**
- **Employment history / Volunteer or Community Experience:** When completed adequately, the two sections above have already provided a meaningful insight into who you are, what you do, your skills, attitude and capabilities. It also showcased your compatibility for the role / organisation you are applying for. The purpose of this section is therefore to give the employer only a summarised overview of your employment and/or volunteer history. The Key tasks in this section, as discussed, are your “elevator pitch” for each role.
- **Educational history:** This refers to your educational background. Please fill in this section starting from your most recent qualification obtained, ending with least recent one. If it is relevant, you can include short courses and additional training that you have had other than your schooling.
- **Referees:** References are typically divided into 2 groups: professional and personal. Professional referees are people you generally reported to in a professional context. Personal referees are only referred to if you have no work experience or no one that can make reference to you in a working context. Note that family members cannot act as referees.

A few tips:

1. If you are a recent graduate or still at school, with little or no relevant work experience, mention your educational history first. In all other cases you must start with your employment history, thereafter, describe your educational background.
2. The most important or relevant information should go on the first page of your CV so if your strengths lie in your **academic background**, the profile should be followed by your education and then your **career summary**. If, however, you have enjoyed more success in a professional capacity, your career summary should come before your academic background.