

# Writing Your CV

Your curriculum vitae (CV) is one of the first pieces of information an employer will know about you. Keep it short, simple and clear.

A CV should contain:

## 1. Personal details

- Full name
- Address
- Phone
- Fax
- E-mail
- Date of birth

## 2. Qualifications

Starting with the most recent, include:

- **Name of course, result and when you did it**, e.g.:  
*September 1998 – June 1999*  
*Diploma Business Management (Distinction).*
- **Name of School or College**, e.g. *Dublin Business School*
- Give information about any **part-time study** you are doing.

## 3. Work Experience

Starting with the most recent first include:

- **Job title, start and finish dates**, e.g.:  
*June 2000 to present: Administrative Assistant.*
- **Name of Company**, e.g. *Vodafone.*

- If necessary, a short sentence about your job duties, e.g.:  
*Responsible for general office administration.*

#### 4. Skills

- Write down any useful skills starting with the most important/relevant for your particular job application.
- Write down any others that may not be important for your application, but show you are a talented person.
- Write down things like computer skills, giving the particular software/hardware packages, languages, typing skills, training courses not written in the qualifications section (say when and where the training took place).

#### 5. Hobbies and Interests

- Use this section to show you have interests outside the job and can work well with other people (e.g. in a team). It's important to show that you are an interesting person who spends their free time productively, and not watching TV all the time!
- Do not just say "Reading" or "Sport". Give a short description, e.g. *Reading* [what exactly? i.e. *20<sup>th</sup> Century Fiction*], *Sport* [which sports? i.e. *tennis, swimming, running*].

#### 6. Referees and references

- Referees (people who can give you a reference) are considered more important nowadays than letters of reference, although it is good to have both.
- Always ask for a reference after having worked for someone, even if it is only a few days or in a voluntary capacity.

- Referees are people who worked with you as your manager or worked in a position above you as your supervisor.
- Employers want to know exactly how you work, for example, if you are reliable, can work under pressure or have good communication skills with the general public.
- Do not give a referee's name without asking them first.
- It is best to write "Referees available on request". When the company rings for the referee name, you can get in touch with the referee and tell them to the kind of job you are looking for.

## **IMPROVING YOUR CV**

The first stage is writing your CV, the second is to make it look much better than the rest. Here is some advice to help you catch the eye of a possible new employer.

- Print your CV on good quality A4 paper. Coloured paper may make your CV stand out from the rest, but only use subtle colours.
- If possible, print all CVs from the printer rather than photocopying. However, if you are photocopying them, make sure the screen is clean with no marks.
- Use a simple clear font, e.g. Arial, size 12.
- Always do a draft copy first and get somebody else to check it for spelling and grammar mistakes.
- Always use the same style. If you write your date of birth out in full, i.e. 02 March 1972, then use the same style for any other dates in the document – do not change styles.
- Make headings clear and easy to follow.

- Use enough space. Try to get everything onto **two pages**, but do not make everything very small to do this.
- Give tidy photocopies of your certificates and references. Do not send originals. You can bring these with you if you get called to an interview.
- When sending information on disc or e-mail attachments, check for viruses and make sure it will be easy for the employer to open on their computer.

**Now that you have read the information on writing a CV, answer these questions:**

1) Your CV should have 6 main sections. What are they?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Skills
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2) When you write a **qualification**, you should have four different pieces of information. What are these?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3) When you write about **work experience**, you should have four different pieces of information. What are these?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3) Write four examples of what you can include as **skills**.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4) Write one important thing you should remember for **hobbies and interests**.

- \_\_\_\_\_

5) Write down two important things you should remember when giving a **referee** or **reference**.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6) Write down the five most important things (in your opinion) that you can do to **improve your CV**.

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_