

How to write a graduate CV

We've spoken to a graduate recruiter to find out how you can create the best CV possible to impress.

The essentials

A CV should include a personal statement, your education history and qualifications, and a list of relevant previous positions (written with the most recent coming first).

As with any CV, what you write should also be clear, concise, and easy to read. You may also want to remove any previous positions that do not help sell yourself to the role. Any more than two pages long, and the employer might start to lose interest.

Stick to a basic Word or PDF format. Make sure all your fonts are the same and don't deviate too much from a standard font style.

Your CV should focus on those skills and experiences most relevant to your target employer. Your aim is to ensure that, after a 20 second scan, the employer can pick out evidence that you have exactly the skills and experience they are looking for.

You should also check that your LinkedIn information matches that of your CV. Ensure the dates of employment are the same or you may be questioned on why they're different.

We asked Jarrod Ruth, graduate recruitment specialist at CoSector, how can you market yourself with no real work experience?

"Look at transferable skills - if you've worked in retail or at a bar, but have no experience relevant to the role you're applying for, look at transferable skills you can pull out from that work experience. If the job demands problem solving, think of a time at work when you've solved a problem, or gone above and beyond for a customer."

Seven steps to a great CV

- 1 Identify the skills and experience that the employer is looking for. They are the criteria against which your CV will be assessed, and should be listed on the job description, website or job advert.
- 2 Think of examples – from your work, volunteering, study, interests, travel or home life – that prove you have these job requirements and try to use skills that would be used in the role.
- 3 Work out which sections you need in your CV, and then decide on section titles and order. It's up to you whether you place your education before work experience.
- 4 Incorporate your examples into the most relevant section/s of your CV. Ensure you have provided evidence for every job requirement.
- 5 Make sure your CV fits on two A4 pages; this is the longest your CV needs to be. This may mean you need to cut out some less important information.
- 6 Triple check all spelling and grammar and ask someone else to check this too. Many employers will regard even one error as an indication of poor motivation for the job.
- 7 Run through our CV Checklist on the next page.



Common CV mistakes



Find out what can be taken out of your CV and why.

Take these out of your CV

Full address

People often write their entire address in their CV. This is unnecessary and takes up valuable space; remember, the ideal length of a CV is two sides. You can state the first part of your postcode or your city but the whole address doesn't add anything to your application.

False claims

This is obvious but people still do it. Take out any kind of false claims within your CV. You want to impress employers, but anything that's not true or doesn't represent something you've achieved will be found out throughout the interview process.

Fluff

Any unnecessary information should be culled. If you've had experience working in a bar and you're going for an IT internship, by all means put it in, but keep it to two bullet points. If it's too long, you're going to go over the two page limit.

Education history

Some graduates fall into the trap of listing primary and secondary schools. Put your A-levels down but leave that to one space and concentrate on your degree or Master's course; that's what a lot of employers are looking at. Did you put together an event or do an experiment that went particularly well? Include those sorts of things and pull out examples of what you've really enjoyed doing.

CV checklist

Think you're ready to submit your CV? Here's our handy checklist you should look at before sending it off.

- 1 Look at your CV as if you were the recruiter. After a quick scan, can you pick out evidence of each of the job requirements?
- 2 Is your CV two pages in length? (Note: some UK employers request a one-page CV, and academic CVs can be longer).
- 3 To ensure your CV is easy to read, is there about the same amount of text on both pages, and have you avoided large chunks of text?
- 4 Have you used formatting tools (e.g. bold, italics, capitals and spacing) consistently?

Stand out from the crowd



Your graduate CV and applications will stand out more if you offer examples instead of generic statements. If you've said you're a hard worker, you can back this up with an example of positive feedback from a lecturer.



Jane Doe

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ABOUT

I recently graduated from UoL with a 2:1 in History. I am keen to break into Social Media Management as I am a digital native who has experience running social media for the UoL Netball sports teams and for the University paper. I also completed a two week internship with a marketing firm, with a focus on learning about social media management.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Placement at Red Funnel Media - June - July 2018

- > Creating content for clients' social media channels
- > Using Hootsuite to schedule posts
- > Creating imagery for social media on Photoshop
- > Attending meetings and contributing ideas
- > Doing research on customer brand to ensure brand consistency
- > Emailed clients, increasing business communication skills

Social Media Manager - UoL Netball Team - 2016 - 2018

- > Creating engaging copy and scheduling posts using Tweetdeck
- > Increasing Facebook page likes by 35% by working with other sports teams to promote the page
- > Introducing live streaming video
- > Creating 'get to know the Netball team' campaign which had the most views of any campaign in the last 5 years
- > Running charity events with the team to raise money for Cancer UK, being solely responsible for the social media content

Marketing officer - UoL Newspaper - 2015 - 2018

- > Sharing articles on social media channels
- > Sending emails to writers and running marketing meetings
- > Taking photographs for articles
- > Learning the basics of marketing through Google Academy
- > Reporting on stats for meetings

EDUCATION

History BA: 2:1 - 2015 - 2018

- > 10,000 word dissertation received a high 2:1
- > Essay writing - meticulous grammar and spelling skills
- > Running seminars - setting topic and questions for other students, practicing presentation skills
- > Team projects - creating blog on Cold War - we received a 1st for this project

London Academy for Girls 2002 - 2015

- > 3 A-Levels - A*AB - History, German, Maths

The 'About' section is clearly tailored to a specific sector, i.e. social media management.

Relevant work experience starting with placement, i.e. showing professional experience.

Including statistics and figures is a great way to show measurable success.

Pulling out aspects of your university degree that reflects the job description is a great way to demonstrate some transferable skills.

Consistent formatting, spacing and bullet points makes it easy to read.

Any notable awards or achievements may make you stand out from others.

Work experience not related directly to the job can be inputted later on. It can be used to re-enforce certain messages, such as teamwork and communication skills.

Keep hobbies and interests short, and if you can't fit references in write 'References available on request.' Always make sure you get permission from your references.

Jane Doe

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SKILLS

I have used several social media listening and scheduling tools such as Hootsuite, Sprout Social, Buffer and Tweetdeck. I understand the intricacies of each social media platform and how to address audiences on each platform - for example I wouldn't use hashtags on Facebook but would do on Instagram and Twitter.

I have strong skills in IT software such as Excel, Word, PowerPoint and Outlook. I am also very comfortable working with Photoshop, and have experience of using a DSLR and editing video on Adobe Premiere.

AWARDS

2015 Player of the Year - Netball
Google Academy - Certificate of Marketing

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Bar tender - UoL - 2017 - 2018
> Worked with a team to divvy up responsibilities
> Studied health and safety manuals and passed tests
> Worked over-time to help university

Shop assistant - JLB Ltd - 2014 - 2015
> Served customers, complimented on my customer service manner
> Trusted to lock up shop

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

In my spare time I play group Netball with friends made from University. We compete in local games. I also enjoy photography, especially wildlife photography.

REFERENCES

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