

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a shaved head and a grey beard, wearing blue-rimmed glasses and a light blue sweater. He is smiling and looking down at a laptop screen. The background is a blurred office setting with a blue geometric overlay.

Your Guide to creating a *successful CV*

Welcome to our *CV Guide*

Whether you're writing your first CV, or updating an old version, in this CV Guide you'll find all the tips and advice you need to ensure it gets noticed by a recruiter who can put you forward for your desired roles.

Here's an overview of what you'll find inside:

[Seven Things to think about before you begin](#)

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[Bringing your Achievements to Life](#)

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Seven Things to think about *before you begin*



It can be tempting to dive straight into writing your CV to kick off your job search. However, if you want to create a tailored document that is going to deliver the results you're looking for, it's important that you first take some time to think about what you really want in your next move.

So, before going any further, ask yourself these questions:

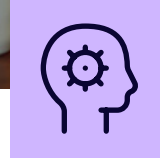
- Why** are you looking for a new role?
- What **salary** and **benefits package** are you looking for?
- Which **role** would be a sensible step towards your long-term **career goals**?
- Which **technical** and **soft skills** are you looking to develop?
- What kind of **culture** and **work environment** would you like to join?
- What are your **deal-breakers**?
- What are you prepared to be more **flexible** about?



Once you're clear on exactly what you're looking for, search for similar job descriptions online.

Review them and list the most commonly occurring keywords and skills found in the job descriptions – you can incorporate these words into your CV later.

Planning the Structure of your CV



Now you're ready to start creating your CV: one that both reflects you as a professional and the type of role you are suitable for. First, plot out the structure of your CV in a Word document:

01. Name, address and contact details

List the phone number and the professional email address you use most often. You should also add links to professional online profiles, provided these are up to date and synced with the details on your CV.

02. Personal statement

Summarise your career story in a few sentences, highlighting why your skills are a good match and what you feel you can offer to the employer. [Jump to personal statement.](#)

03. Employment history

Provide details of your work history, including any paid work, plus any relevant volunteer or work experience placements. [Jump to employment history.](#)

04. Achievements

Give a list of your relevant achievements which clearly highlight your suitability for the roles you are applying for.

05. Skills summary

Add a brief bulleted list of your skills, focusing on those that are most relevant to the roles you are interested in. [Jump to showcasing your skills.](#)

06. Education and training

Keep this relevant and remember to include any training courses that relate to the jobs you are applying for.

07. Hobbies and interests

Keep this very brief, and if possible, use the space to show how your personality is suited to the roles you are interested in.

Writing your *Personal Statement*



Your personal statement should be added directly underneath your contact details. Remember, this is the first thing a recruiter or hiring manager will read on your CV, so you will need to impress. Here's how to ensure yours does:

01. Introduce yourself

Tell the reader who you are and what level of experience you have. "I'm a hands-on Finance Manager with strong stakeholder engagement skills and a results-driven attitude."

02. List your skills and experience

Outline your key skills and evidence the achievements that set you apart from the competition. "With six years' industry experience, I'm able to increase visibility within a business, drive efficiencies and implement cost saving measures that increase profits and provide a greater return on investment."

03. Explain your ambitions for the future

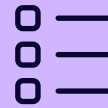
Finish by outlining what you are looking to achieve next in your career, ensuring it links to the role in question. This will instantly indicate to the hiring manager that you should be shortlisted for an interview. "I would now like to develop my skills in a global business environment, where I can progress my career within accountancy."

DOS AND DON'TS TO REMEMBER

- **DO** include relevant action verbs to evidence achievements
- **DO** use keywords from the job description where relevant
- **DO** keep your personal statement to around 100-150 words
- **DO** tailor your personal statement to each role you apply for
- **DON'T** switch between the first and third person (e.g. I have excellent interpersonal skills / Vanessa has excellent interpersonal skills)

03

Plotting out your Employment History



Now, it's time to plot out your employment history, starting with your most recent role. Remember to:

01. Format each job in the following order:

- Dates of employment
- Job title
- Company
- Key responsibilities and achievements

02. Avoid leaving career gaps

If you were unemployed for a period of time, explain how you made use of this time; whether it was job searching or travelling. Whatever your reasons, be as [transparent as possible](#).

Within each entry of your employment history, focus on the value you added, not what your duties were. If any of your roles were temporary, say so.

03. Identify the keywords for the job vacancy you are applying for, and use these where relevant in your role descriptions

04. Provide more detail for those roles that are most relevant to that which you are applying for.

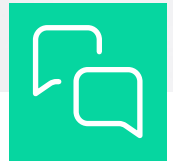
EXAMPLE

Finance Manager
[insert company name]
July 2017 – January 2021

- Management of monthly management accounts and P&L
- Planning and managing budgets
- Preparation of balance sheet schedules
- Analysis of key accounts and expenses
- Support in year-end audit

Once you have plotted this section out, you are ready to bring your experience and achievements to life with the language you use.

Bringing your Achievements to Life



As you write your employment history, make sure you use action verbs to communicate your successes and evidence your achievements.

Examples of action Verbs:

Demonstrate your creativity:

Built, crafted, devised, implemented, pioneered, initiated, established

Demonstrate your efficiency:

Enhanced, advanced, capitalised, maximised, leveraged, improved

Demonstrate your leadership skills:

Headed, coordinated, executed, managed, operated, organised

Demonstrate improvements made:

Refined, remodelled, strengthened, upgraded, transformed

Demonstrate your management skills:

Guided, fostered, motivated, recruited, enabled, united

Demonstrate bottom-line contributions:

Reduced, decreased, consolidated, saved, yielded, increased

Demonstrate overall achievements:

Awarded, exceeded, outperformed, surpassed, earned, granted

Action Verbs in action:

Rather than stating you have strong communication skills, use verbs like: 'wrote', 'published', 'edited' or 'swayed'

As opposed to writing that you have good organisation skills, try: 'facilitated', 'programmed', 'coordinated', 'allocated' or 'arranged'

And rather than writing that you always achieved your target goals, try: 'reached', 'surpassed' or 'accomplished'

You can read more advice on how to use action verbs [here](#).

Replacing any *Clichés*



Action verbs may emphasise your skills, but clichés will dilute them. Below is a list of the most [common clichés](#) to avoid:

“Works well independently”

If working independently is a genuine strength of yours, then give an example of a time you showcased this strength and the results. For instance, try “I independently developed a new strategy that increased customer engagement by X percent.”

“A great team player”

Stand out from the competition by providing evidence that you can work well with colleagues to reach a common goal. For instance, “I worked with our international and local marketing teams to implement a global rebrand across 12 countries.”

“A fast learner”

If you really want to demonstrate your aptitude, you need to put your money where your mouth is. Describe a time you grasped a new concept quickly.

“A hard worker”

Prove your productivity and time-management skills by giving examples, for instance, creating a successful product launch in a short time frame or never missing a deadline in two years in your last role.

“Good communication skills”

Be more specific by giving examples of situations in which your communication skills have really shone through, such as a presentation or sales pitch you gave that won a new client for your business.

“Results driven”

Instead of simply stating you are results driven, you should support this claim with facts. Ensure that you give quantifiable evidence of your results, such as “I increased sales by 25 per cent.”

Showcasing your Skills



Next, it's time to draft your skills summary – a bulleted list of your skills that relate to the role you are applying for. These skills can also be referenced in your personal statement and employment history sections of your CV and should include the keywords that you have picked out from the job description.

Remember to include the following:

Technical Skills

These are the skills that you have gained throughout your professional career, which are either required or desirable for this role, for instance:

- Microsoft Office (Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook)
- SAP
- Sage
- QuickBooks

Soft Skills

These are your personal attributes that allow you to work well with others and achieve your goals. For example:

- Communication
- Decision making
- Time management
- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving
- Stakeholder engagement
- Business acumen

You can read more about soft skills [here](#).

If you are stuck, think about the [transferable skills](#) you may have learnt in previous roles or whilst you were studying; for instance, you may have honed your listening skills at university. Also, think about when you have taken it upon yourself to upskill in any way – for example, you might have taught yourself how to use WordPress when writing your personal blog.

Ensuring your CV is *error-free*



You have come this far and worked so hard to craft the perfect CV. Don't undersell yourself by forgetting to proofread properly. Here are the **most common CV errors** to look out for:

01. Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors

- Use the spell-checking software on your computer (ensure it is set to the correct language)
- Print off your CV and/or cover letter – you will find it easier to pick up on mistakes
- Read your CV aloud – again this will highlight any glaring errors to you
- Read your CV backwards – it might sound odd, but this is a proven way to pick up errors
- Ask a friend or relative to proofread the documents for you.
- Make use of free online software such as [Grammarly](#) or [Paper Rater](#) to help you spot any grammatical errors

02. A lack of consistency

- Ensure you are consistent in your use of abbreviations and capitalisations
- Consistently use the same simple font and font size throughout your application – the same goes for bold and italicised copy
- Don't switch from writing in the first person to the third person, and vice versa
- Similarly, ensure you maintain a professional tone throughout

03. Formatting issues

- Keep it simple – avoid the temptation to get carried away using backgrounds, borders or clipart
- If using Word, zoom out of the document to get a clearer view of formatting
- Print the document out to quickly flag formatting errors – this way, you will soon see if something doesn't look quite right
- If your CV is more than one page, ensure your page transitions are smooth, for instance, don't start a sentence on one page that carries on to the next
- Once you are happy with the formatting, try converting the document into PDF, which should ensure the formatting stays as you intended it
- Check your CV reads well on desktop, mobile and tablet devices

You can read more advice on how to avoid errors on your CV [here](#).

Register your CV with Hays



Once you think your CV is job application ready, register it via your [local Hays website](#).

Online registration takes under a minute and allows you to set up personalised job searches and alerts. Once you have registered your CV, one of our expert recruiters will be in contact with the latest opportunities within your area of expertise and preferred locations.

Further Job Search Advice

We are here to support you throughout your job search. You may find the below advice useful for each stage of the process:

- [Finding your perfect job](#)
- [Interview preparation](#)
- [Accepting a job offer](#)
- [Starting a new job](#)



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