

Tips for Writing an Effective CV

There are many facts and fallacies about writing an effective curriculum vitae (CV) and depending where you turn, you'll get different advice.

A CV (or resume) is a document developed by job applicants to promote their suitability for employment to prospective employers. Along with your covering letter and/or your response to the selection criteria, your CV will also help determine whether or not you are short-listed for an interview.

While there are many things that an employer expects to find in your CV, there is also room for flexibility.

What to Include in Your CV:

- Current contact information, citizenship/country of permanent residence;
- Present and previous positions which includes information about the position, your responsibilities, outcomes and/or major achievements.
- Notice period of resignation required for present appointment. For Academic Staff, you should also include your current remuneration package;
- Details of education and professional training and qualifications, including summary of academic record (including honours), professional and community affiliations etc;
- Details of voluntary (paid or non-paid) experience;
- Any other relevant information, such as offices held in professional bodies, community service etc; and
- Contact details of at least three referees whom the University may contact. Email is Griffith's preferred method of contact.

In addition to the above, Academic Staff MUST also include:

- Details of teaching and teaching development, research postgraduate training and supervision, and other educational experiences;
- Research interests and list of publications;
- Details of research grant record and experience in the provision of professional services (consulting); and
- Details of administrative roles and experience.

A good CV helps you get your foot in the door. So, in order to capture the employer's attention, your CV needs to stand out from all the others and the language you use to express your qualifications and achievements can help to attract the attention and interest of employers.

Remember to:

- keep the length to a minimum. Depending on your work and experience, around three to four pages should be enough;
- keep the layout and design legible, consistent and easy to follow, with good clear headings, large easy-to-read typeface such as Times New Roman, Courier or Arial;
- use good quality, plain paper and print on a high quality printer (for paper based submissions);

- orientate it towards the position you are applying for and use specific (and quantifiable) achievements rather than duties and responsibilities. It should tell prospective employers everything that might interest them and nothing that will waste their time;
- write in clear, concise terms, and use active words (eg. accomplished, created, enhanced, launched, negotiated, etc). If you don't feel comfortable with this, write a factual statement such as: 'Improved customer service levels through the implementation of electronic communication tools (email and Blackboard) to respond to routine student queries with a 24-hour turnaround....' Or 'Awarded an ARC Linkage-Project grant in {research area} through negotiation of a collaborative research project with companies A and B which resulted in the development of a gizmo that significantly cut production costs for both of these companies. This project also resulted in a conceptual break through in {ABC} and was subsequently reported in the paper {paper title} published in one of the leading journals in the field {journal X};
- keep it succinct by writing in point form as opposed to prose as employers may skip long blocks of text;
- put your work history and educational details in reverse chronological order, that is, by starting with the most recent. It's easier to follow;
- be specific in your CV and highlight positive outcomes, for example, use numbers or percentages to illustrate your successes or the impact you can have;
- be flexible in the use of headings. You can shape headings to suit your purpose by either combining similar headings that have limited information or where you have insufficient detail for just one category. For example, "Memberships", "Community Involvement" may be better as "Memberships and Community Involvement".

Try not to:

- exaggerate your experience to make it sound more impressive. If it can't stand up to scrutiny in the interview, you will most likely significantly reduce your chances of getting the job.
- claim complete responsibility for achievements; implying no one else deserves any credit, as this is usually not the case;
- write a novel. It should concisely paint a picture of you and your job history. Key points should be highlighted to develop interest and excitement about you as a potential candidate;
- use a narrative style. Highlight your accomplishments in a bullet point format and then you don't need as many complete sentences. But be warned: brief points must be carefully thought out; and
- use initials and jargon and write so you're understood. There's a general consensus by good interviewers that people who really know their subject, write and speak clearly and don't try to complicate issues.

Further Information

Additional information on writing effective CVs can be obtained from:

- [Graduate Careers Council of Australia](#)
- Griffith University's [Student Services](#)