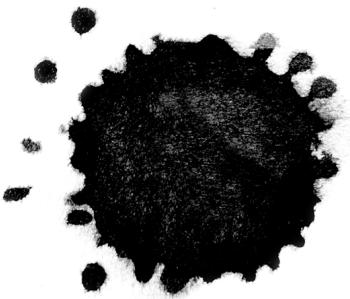


University of the
Arts London * *
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creative careers

writing an effective CV

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3 writing an effective CV

Getting started

Before you create your CV (Curriculum Vitae), it is worth asking yourself the following:

- What is my career aim in writing this CV?
- What do I know about the employers or opportunity providers I am writing this CV for?
- What are the requirements of the position/s I am applying for?
- How do my skills / experience match the 'person specification' as set out in the job description?

A CV is a great method of marketing yourself - think about it as an advertisement selling you! It is worth always having an up to date CV as a promotional tool when:

- Responding to an advertised position
- Contacting employers to ask if they have any current unadvertised positions or work experience (speculative)
- Handing out to people you meet at networking events
- In applications to residencies and awards
- When approaching galleries

But importantly you must tailor each CV to the employer you are sending it out to at that time.

CV content

In the same way as an advertisement, you need to convey the benefits of employing you to the recruiter; not just what you can do, but what you can do which is relevant to their needs.

The CVs that impress me most are those that really demonstrate that the person writing it has researched the job and my company
Freelance Fashion designer

In designing your own CV you have the freedom to decide how to present the material in the most effective way for you. It should also give a flavour of your personality – try and make it interesting. If you are finding it boring to write no doubt it will be boring to read from the reader's perspective.

Different employers respond to different types of presentation so it is worth considering carefully the design which is likely to bring the most positive results from your chosen employers. For example, an advertising agency or design consultancy may respond well to an original idea which is eye-catching and will make your application stand out from the many they receive each week. Other organisations will require simply a neatly word-processed and presented CV.

I don't have much time to read through CVs so I am really looking for something that leaps out of the page!
Retail HR Consultant

CV layout

Some basic rules:

- Generally no more than two pages
- Some employers, e.g. in the media industry, like a one page CV
- Remember, the information on the first page has more impact
- Give more space to those parts of your CV you want to create more impact
- Avoid long paragraphs
- Use bullet points / bold font where possible

Different styles of CV

The traditional chronological CV

Most people start by constructing a traditional chronological CV which they can adapt and develop afterwards. Categories of information to include:

Personal details:

Contact details including home address, home telephone number, mobile number, e-mail address and term time address (if different from your home address). Include your website address if you have one.

It is not necessary to include your age, marital status, gender, dependents, disability ethnic origin, and asylum & immigration status.

Education & qualifications:

Remember to list your the most recent qualifications first.

Is there any employer/external related projects you have completed as part of your course that a prospective employer might be interested to read about?

Have you detailed any short courses or training you received while on your part-time job or work experience?

Skills & achievements:

What are your skills? Do you have a particular ability or expertise?

In your previous experience, what have you become good at?

What business / professional skills can you give examples of e.g. do you have knowledge of another language?

Do you have any technical skills? e.g. what computer packages are you familiar with? How competent are you at these?

Do you have any other skills e.g. driving license?

What about any creative achievements? e.g. have you won / or been short-listed for any awards or competitions?

Have you sold or exhibited any work?

Work experience / employment history:

Have you got any experience related to the position / industry?

If your experience is unrelated, what similar areas could you describe?

What skills have you developed at work?

What were your responsibilities?

Can you describe any projects you took part in?

Can you explain any gaps in your employment?

Interests:

How are your interests related to the position/industry?

What do you like doing in your spare time? Why do you like doing these?

Can you describe your artistic style or influence on your creativity?

References on your CV:

You have two options here. It is acceptable at the very end of your CV to add “references available on request.” Or you can put down two references, one academic (e.g. your personal tutor) and one work related e.g. a recent work experience or part-time job employer. References are mostly used to confirm job offers and therefore not taken up until after interview. It is courteous to inform your referees when you are planning to use their names to support your CV application.

Skills-based CV

This is a powerful and widely accepted format if you have a substantial and varied life and work experience.

With this type of CV, you divide your main skills into broad areas e.g. technical/conservation skills; time and task management; team work etc. giving examples of how you can demonstrate the skills, drawn from any area of your employment or education experience and other activities. These skills should be targeted to the needs and requirements of the employer you wish to approach.

Once you have done this, you can then include other relevant CV headings, such as education, interests etc as listed above in the chronological CV section. Look at some examples and decide which layout you think looks the best.

The Artist’s CV

This is suitable for sending to a gallery, exhibition or competition organiser with slides or photographs of your work. The same guidelines regarding clear layout apply to the Artist’s CV as to the job related CV. However, you need only include details about your professional artistic training and achievements, plus any additional information relevant to your work as an artist (e.g. art teaching experience).

What to include:

- Personal details: name, address, studio address, telephone number(s)

- Professional art education: Postgraduate, BA or FdA, Foundation (if wished). Give dates attended, college, course title and qualification,
- Artistic achievements: i.e. exhibitions; awards / scholarships / prizes; work in collections; reviews and publications; bibliography etc.
- Art related employment: teaching, commissions, residencies, workshops and sessions
- Agent(s), membership of professional bodies etc.
- Artist's statement: A short unpretentious statement about your work / philosophy as an artist. Be sure that this is expressed in language a layperson will understand. You could prepare draw on your final degree year "statement of intent" to help prepare this statement.

Really wacky CVs

Some creative CVs have taken on an extremely creative approach. Examples of work that have sent to employers have included tee shirts with eye-catching comments, a brown paper bag with CV printed on it and a Heinz soup label converted into a CV format.

Three dimensional CVs

For some industries e.g. packaging, three-dimensional CVs can have a clear link to the area of work. There is one main disadvantage to the use of this format – many employer file away CVs for use later on.

Showing examples of your creative work

It is possible to add examples of your work to your CV in a created space or even set in the background. However, this needs to be done very carefully so that the work looks like it is of a high quality and compliments the overall look of your CV.

Branding

Many design students with strong graphic design or illustration skills will incorporate a house style which they will use in their CV, covering letter and business card. This layout helps convey the total marketing pack as being linked to one person.

Power Words

Power words can help you highlight your skills and abilities. Because your CV is about you to begin with, you don't need to write the words "I" and "my" this is repetitious and clutters your CV with unnecessary words.

For example: "I have good customer service skills" you could use instead "provided fast and efficient service to customers in a popular city centre restaurant on a Saturday night."

Some examples of power words

Achieved	Established	Co-ordinated
Created	Supported	Reorganised
Arranged	Attended	Developed
Designed	Marketed	Negotiated
Edited	Helped	Planned

Optional extras

Some people feel they would like to include a 'Personal Profile' or 'Career Aim'. This is usually a short statement added to the beginning of your CV which can usefully summarise what you are currently doing, what you have to offer an employer and what position you are looking for. It is usual for mature students and those students wanting a career change. It is important that you back your skills up in the rest of your CV. If you are going to include this ensure that it is your statement is positive and really targets the industry you want to get into.

Declaring your disability

You can describe your disability in a positive light, as well as any positive implications it has had on your life – it is up to you to get that point across to employers. You are not obliged to inform the employer of any disabilities you may have. Disability Discrimination Legislation requires employers of more than fifteen people to make 'reasonable adjustments' for the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. Depending on your circumstances, employers can apply for financial help towards the cost of any particular equipment and alterations to the workplace for people with disabilities.

If you are dyslexic, and you need special equipment to do your job, you may choose to disclose this on your CV by stating it in a specific context, e.g. under skills section: 'Competent user of IT (state packages) with appropriate modifications to machine'.

If you have a disability, you may have developed many positive attributes because of it. You may be very logical, have a good memory and very determined. All these features will add value to your CV and should be added.

How effective is your CV?

Use the assessment criteria below to rate your CV

1. Structure

Is it logical, relevant, and effectively ordered? Is there balance clarity between the sections?

2. Style:

Is the writing fluent & succinct? Is the style consistent?

3. Layout

Does it look attractive? Is it easy to read/skim? Is it suitable length?

4. Relevance

Does then content emphasise skills and or experience needed by the job/organisation?

5. Self-awareness

Are the skills backed up with good examples and evidence that shows understanding of the process behind the skills?

6. Awareness of the employer and job

Is there evidence of research?

7. Persuasiveness

Would it convince an employer of your ability? Is there clear evidence? Are all the statements positive? Does it communicate enthusiasm?

8. Mechanics

Are the sentences grammatical? Is spelling and punctuation correct? Is use of the personal pronoun kept to a minimum (e.g. I, me, mine) kept to a personal minimum?

5= excellent 4=good 3=satisfactory 2=poor 1=unsatisfactory

Overall Mark:

Example CV's

We hold many CV examples in the Careers Information Centre that you can look at. There are also examples on our website at www.arts.ac.uk/student/careers click on 'Resources' and then 'CV Workshop'

Many libraries including careers and public libraries hold a selection of books on CV writing such as *The Perfect CV*, *Creating a Successful CV* and many more.

Many websites contain further examples of CVs and Covering Letters. We would recommend you looked at the following sites:

www.prospects.ac.uk - click on applications and interviews

www.doctorjob.com - click on careers advice

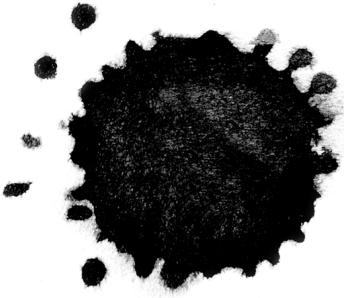
www.graduatecareers.hobsons.co.uk - click on job-hunting advice

www.eurograduate.com - useful sections on preparing international CVs

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University of the Arts London
– a creative constellation

Camberwell College of Arts
Central Saint Martins College
of Art and Design
Chelsea College of Art and Design
London College of Communication
London College of Fashion
Wimbledon College of Art
www.arts.ac.uk



The main purpose of our written material is to provide specialist careers information, that is not readily available elsewhere, for our students and recent graduates.

All eligible students and graduates are welcome to use Creative Careers. We provide a range of services from information, advice and guidance through to practical group workshops. To find out how we work with students and leavers at your college or how to contact us visit www.arts.ac.uk/student/careers.

We aim to be disability friendly so do let us know of any particular requirements you may have. All our handouts and workshop materials are available in alternative formats on request. Please contact us to discuss your needs and how we can help. To make comments about this handout or suggestions for new ones we could produce, please email us at careers@arts.ac.uk

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