

Preparing your curriculum vitae

The main purpose of a CV is to effectively market your employability - your skills; education; knowledge and experience - in order to secure an interview. A CV is a means by which to showcase your suitability for a particular role. It needs to be succinct, conveying the maximum amount of relevant detail whilst using the minimum number of words. Although much of the information in each CV that you use will be similar, it must be tailored for each application, with the aim of matching your skills and experience to the job requirements. CV conventions vary from one country to another. Where you are seeking work outside of New Zealand, please contact the Career and Employment staff for advice on this.

ESSENTIAL ASPECTS:

- **Your name** in larger font at the top.
- **Contact information** including your address; email; telephone number(s) and, where appropriate, a LinkedIn or portfolio URL.
- **Key/Relevant strengths and skills:** As much as possible, these should match the requirements of the job.
 - o Try to give examples of your skills where possible. Transferable skills such as communication; teamwork; leadership; critical reasoning and industry knowledge are all commonly required. Examples can be drawn from all aspects of your life
 - o Examples you provide in your CV often form the basis of interview questions
 - o Use bullet points with action verbs after each one. In this way the reader can immediately get an idea of what you are capable of doing for their organisation.
 - o An outline of skills also shows that you understand the essential aspects of the job
- **Work / Employment history:** Starting with the most recent and working in reverse ensure each role is described with the job title first, then the reader immediately knows what you did. Record the organisation and the dates you held each position. Bullet points go underneath to outline responsibilities and achievements in each position. Indicate whether each role was part-time or full-time. Include placements, internships and practical work experience. Ensure you highlight the results you achieved in the roles and what skills you used to achieve them (called achievement statements).
- **Education and qualifications:** List your current or most recent qualifications first. If your degree is almost complete, record it in full with something like (to be completed...) next to it. Include your highest school qualification depending on how long ago this was gained. You may want to include brief details of relevant papers. Provide an academic transcript if requested.
- **Voluntary / Community work / Interests:** Many employers look for voluntary or community work on CV's. This indicates your involvement in useful activities other than university study.
 - o Interests ideally focus on what you do for others, not just what you like to do for yourself. Things like music; reading & movies don't say anything useful about you. Coaching netball; teaching music and managing club events team all indicate good involvement.

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- **Referees:** Generally you can record 'Available on request' but be aware that some employers may want you to supply specific details. Have the contact details of two or three referees, including their names, positions or job titles, along with their 'phone and email information at the ready.
- Always send your CV with a cover letter, unless specifically requested not to. Refer to the Cover Letter resource sheet for further tips on this document. The cover letter should flow on to the CV and highlight particular relevant skills and experiences and your interest in the role and organisation.
- Be positive, presenting yourself and your abilities in the best possible manner.

OPTIONAL ASPECTS:

- **Personal statement or Career summary:** A short summary of your experience and who you are. Can include your professional aims and aspirations. It needs to be brief, specific to the position you are applying for, and focus the reader's attention on what you can do for them. In three or four lines, try to outline who you are, what you are looking for in a job, and what you can offer.
- **Achievements and awards:** Include scholarships and other relevant information that may help you get an interview. Include both university and non-university achievements.
- **Professional development:** This conveys your commitment to your profession through attendance at conferences, short courses and other skill development you have engaged in.
- **Publications / Conference presentations:** This is essential for certain roles where your academic achievements are required for the job e.g. postgraduate placements or academic roles.
- **Using a template:** Use CV templates and example CV's as a guide only. Remember that anyone else who uses the same template will have a similar CV to yours.
- **Personal attributes:** These can be included in Relevant Skills, or a cover letter, or a Profile.

APPEARANCE:

- Aim to make it easy for the employer to read. Size 11 or 12 font is ideal, perhaps with a larger size for headings. Use clear, consistent and legible font – Calibri and Arial are good. *Fancy lettering is hard to read.*
- Leave decent margins, striking a balance between space and text
- Plain white paper. Your CV doesn't need a folder or binding. See Online Job Applications
- Correct spelling and grammar. It cannot be over-estimated how important this is. Get it proof-read, ideally by a native-English speaker, and ask for feedback.
- CLEAR HEADINGS – this helps the reader to identify information when skim reading
- Length – keep it concise. 2-3 pages is ideal. There needs to be a good reason why your CV is longer than this, such as a list of publications or extensive work experiences and achievements
- Bullet points are for highlighting important information, and help to break up continuous text.



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WHAT YOU DON'T NEED:

- A cover page or the words Curriculum Vitae. Whoever reads it knows what it is.
- Full sentences explaining your responsibilities. Start each line (particularly in the Skills or Experience sections) with an action verb e.g. Developed, Facilitated, Completed, Surveyed, Created, Wrote, Evaluated, Selected, Reported, Organised, Compiled, Implemented, Performed.
- A photo, unless specifically requested, which is rare.
- Reasons for leaving your past employment.
- Comprehensive details of every job you've done: employers are interested in your most relevant experience and study. However, you may need to explain 'gaps' in your CV.
- Padding: information included simply to fill a space. Employers want the essential information presented in an obvious, readable and concise manner
- Date of Birth, Nationality, relationship status, or health status. None of these are normally relevant to whether you are capable of doing the job. If you an international student with permanent residency or NZ citizenship, it's a good idea to mention this.
- Drivers Licenses, unless specifically asked for in the job description.
- Words that may suggest doubt, such as "I believe..." or "I hope". They want to know what you can do for them, not what you hope you can do.

Save a copy of every CV you send, so you can refer to it later when you get an interview. For further information on CV's, including different styles of CV, and useful CV samples, please refer to the Career and Employment Service: <http://careers.massey.ac.nz>

All the best with your application from the Massey University Career and Employment Service team