

CV Writing Guide



**TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR CV
WRITING SKILLS**

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INTRODUCTION

This e-book is a short guide for improving your CV writing skills and a few tips for writing and tailoring a CV for job applications.

Over time, CVs have changed significantly in terms of content, purpose, and writing styles, mirroring current technological advancements, behavioural shifts in organizational cultures, and new recruitment trends.

Traditionally, a CV was a detailed document outlining a candidate's education, work history, qualifications, skills and aptitudes in the "course of life" Latin for Curriculum Vitae."

CV's primary function was to present a detailed overview of a candidate's background, aiding employers in assessing applicants' work experiences and competencies for job roles.

While traditional lengthy CVs remain prevalent in academia, research, and government sectors, private companies' needs and recruitment trends have transformed the CV into a concise, short and tailored document.

Today, the focus is on highlighting achievements, key skills, accomplishments, technical expertise, and personal attributes to align with market dynamics and organisational cultural transformations.

In today's competitive job landscape, it is vital to show the minimal skills and demonstrate work experience, and abilities required by employers.

So, a CV transformed from a static official document meant to record work history into a versatile instrument for job matching. Today, CVs are written to highlight skills, strengths and work accomplishments.

This shift aligns with the personal branding trend of managing the online professional profile. Job applications often request links to LinkedIn profiles, blogs or portfolios, providing a comprehensive view of the applicant's competencies.



TYPES OF CVS

The first thing you need to do before starting to write is to decide on the structure of your CV.

Depending on your professional experiences and background you can choose between a **chronological or functional** CV. These are the main CV types, but you can **combine** both these types if you think this favours your job application.

The chronological CV lists work experience and education in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent and is suitable for experienced candidates with a clear professional evolution. To apply for some European organisations, the Europass CV template is mandatory, but it can also be tailored to your competencies.

The functional CVs can be used by less experienced candidates or those with limited experience in the industry they're applying focusing on skills obtained during education or courses, or volunteering and part-time jobs.



CV OR RESUME

Although they have the same purpose, they differ in length, structure and details. CV is typically **longer** than a resume and provides detailed responsibilities or task descriptions, personal attributes, courses, qualifications, competencies, academic achievements, publications, and professional accomplishments.

In Europe CV and Resume are used alternatively, but CV is the generic term and more widely used. A resume is suitable when applying for private companies and jobs that value concise communication and pinpointing relevant working experiences and skills, for example, tech companies.

So, a CV is used in both the short form and the longer version, we can say that a **resume is a concise form of a CV**. A resume may have one to two pages and is usually tailored to skills and work experiences relevant to a specific job, highlighting key skills and experiences.



CREATING CV SECTIONS

The CV should be organised into **clear sections** to allow readers to easily learn about your relevant skills and qualifications. Use the same formatting for each section. The sections you include should be adapted to your experience and the position you're applying for.

CONTACT INFO

The contact details should be placed at the **top of your CV** and include your name, phone number, mailing address and email address. If you upload your CV to an Application Tracking System (ATS), the links to your social media profile will cause issues, so avoid them. Most ATS have separate form fields for social media profiles, portfolios or blogs.

PROFILE SECTION

This is the first thing people will read about you and it should grab their attention. It's a good opportunity to make a good impression. This paragraph is called, a career summary, profile, professional objective or personal statement. It should have no more than **four or five sentences** and highlight key competencies and strengths.

While phrasing the summary try to pinpoint your personal qualities to give a compelling and real idea about yourself and mirror the language used in the job description, but only if it's possible.

A well-written profile statement is an opportunity to make a good impression. Experienced applicants can use a summary or a profile statement and try to phrase it with industry-specific **key skills, accomplishments** and **personal attributes**.

A professional **objective** statement is appropriate for entry or middle-level applicants aiming to gain a more senior role or intend to obtain more experience. The purpose of tailoring this paragraph for each job application and incorporating industry keywords is to efficiently communicate your professional value and competence to employers.

Adapt this personal statement to the **job description** by introducing the most relevant experiences and achievements that match the role requirements.

PROFILE EXAMPLES

Level Digital Marketer

My objective is to become a digital marketing professional with a creative and data-driven approach and to use my business education, communication and analytical skills to create marketing campaigns across multiple channels to increase products 'conversion rates and customer loyalty through innovative marketing initiatives.

Project Assistant

Project Assistant with 2 years of experience in digital commerce, supporting project management activities to enhance operational efficiency. Skilled in coordinating functional teams, organising schedules, and timely project delivery. Demonstrated expertise in project reporting and successfully provided data insights to drive business development.

Senior Java Developer

Senior Java Developer with 5 years of experience in the automotive industry, specialized in designing and developing high-performance Java applications. Experienced in optimizing application performance, reducing load times and enhancing user experience, successfully led the creation of scalable software solutions that integrate with advanced automotive systems.

EDUCATION

Most CVs are organized in reverse chronological order so that the most recent or **highest degree appears first**. Include the name of the school, the degree, and the year the degree was completed.

Though CV sections are similar their order is different from country to country. In Europe, education is typically listed before work experience, while in the United States, it is usually placed after the work experience section.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

This is the section that describes your work, skills, and accomplishments. Choose the main or critical industry-specific keywords and expressions from the job description. These keywords should reflect the essential skills and responsibilities the employer is seeking.

In this section introduce relevant work experiences you had in an organised manner and don't forget to express your responsibilities or duties using action verbs and positive language. Phrase it as an action-oriented result mentioning the skills you used, if possible.

You can include the keywords by linking them with your experiences or achievements to showcase your competence. A well-crafted and customized CV or resume will help you exemplify how you match the job requirements you are applying for.



HOW TO WRITE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Express a professional achievement using the **STAR** method (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, and **R**esult). Detail your responsibilities by addressing the situation, and focusing on relevant keywords to show your expertise.

Also, describe specific actions you took to solve the issues and emphasize your use of industry-specific tools or methodologies.

Whenever possible use **measurable indicators** of your actions and quantify your achievements because statistics give more credibility. Additionally, highlight any soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, or leadership that contributed to the success of the project.

Choose achievements that reflect your industry-specific expertise and include **relevant keywords**. Additionally, highlight measurable outcomes, quality improvements and skills used in the process.

Take the responsibilities or your task list and rephrase it as an **action-oriented result** mentioning soft or hard skills involved and statistics related to the task achievements. See below a few examples to inspire you.

WRITE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS CONSIDERING KEYWORDS

Responsibility/ Task	Keywords	Achievements
Handle customer complaints and solve problems efficiently and in a professional manner	Customer complaints	Efficiently addressed customer complaints, resulting in a 15% increase in positive feedback.
Responsible for Six Sigma implementation to the production process	Six Sigma	Introduced Six Sigma methodologies to the production process, resulting in a 25% decrease in defects and increasing overall product quality.
Development and optimization of Java applications	Java	Demonstrated proficiency in optimizing Java application performance, reducing load times by 10%, and enhancing user experience.

HOW TO WRITE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS



Express your responsibilities and achievements using powerful **action verbs** and **positive** words.

CV CUSTOMISING TO MATCH THE JOB REQUIREMENTS

Your customizations should highlight relevant work experiences. Start by reviewing relevant experiences from your track record with emphasis on the last three or most relevant roles. After identifying the matching responsibilities or achievements you can prioritize the experiences **closely aligned** with the job requirements.

You should include those experiences directly linked to the employer's needs and selection criteria. If the CV is longer than expected remove or shorten details that don't relate to job requirements. Remain focused on **relevant background** and professional experiences demonstrating your suitability for the position.

1. Analyse job description keywords

Start by reading the job description having in mind the objective to draft a list of the critical skills, qualifications, and work experiences the employer is seeking. To pass the initial screening you need to fulfil the minimal selection criteria.

You need to consider the job title, main responsibilities, key skills, personal qualities and education. Every industry has specific education, skills, personal attributes and qualification requirements. In the job ads, you can easily identify these keywords as the selection criteria or main job requirements.

2. Phrase action-oriented work experiences

After identifying the minimal requirements you should think about your specific tasks in previous roles that you can link to job requirements and translate them into results. You can take into consideration similar requirements, objectives you reached or relevant outcomes that can stress your contributions to the team or project.

Professional experiences should be communicated as successful actions and achievements by using verbs and significant achievements. Rearrange the bullet points placing your relevant experience first to emphasize responsibilities important to the job you're applying for. When phrasing your work experiences and responsibilities reinforce them with metrics and clear action-oriented results.

3. Customize Your Skills

In most cases, skills are job-specific selection criteria and they are usually categorized as minimal or critical, nice to have or not mandatory but advantageous. Exemplify your experience and achievements using powerful verbs and accomplishments. To match job openings you need to adapt your skills and align them with the critical skills from the job description.



FORMATTING

Most organizations receive a large number of applications for various available roles. Employers are using Application Tracking Systems (ATS) to process the CVs they receive.

The ATS will scrape information from the CV and automatically fill it into form fields to handle the high number of documents received and keep the data accurate.

So, the ATS will parse and categorize resumes or CVs into **predefined domains, categories or classes** based on their content. Skills and competencies from the job descriptions are set as keywords to match candidates and be selected on the shortlist.

In conclusion, use **simple formatting**, not fancy fonts, pictures and tables. Most of us read from left to right and our brains are wired to better navigate in a simple and organised content.



ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Your sentences should be clear, and concise and express exactly what you intend
- Use a clean CV layout and the same section headings format
- Choose simple and consistent formatting so each of the CV section's contact, education, professional profile, work experience, and key skills will be easy to read
- Add a section about your achievements or relevant details for each job application
- Use similar terminology from the job ad to indicate to them that you are a match
- Include bullet points to illustrate your problem-solving abilities and adaptability
- Introduce action-oriented phrases that will point out your competence in each skill
- Exemplify with metrics to demonstrate your proficiency because quantitative data strengthens your credibility



KEY TAKEAWAYS

CV Structure



The CV must be tailored to skills and work experiences relevant to a specific job, highlighting key skills and experiences. It should be organised into clear sections and have simple formatting, allowing readers to learn about your relevant skills and qualifications easily.

Summary/Profile or Objective



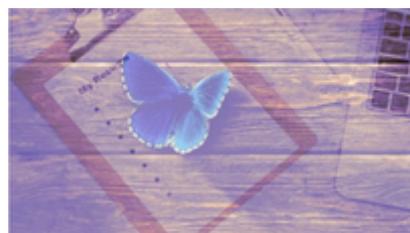
Skilled applicants should use a profile or career summary and try to phrase it with industry-specific key skills accomplishments and personal attributes. A professional objective statement is appropriate for entry or middle-level applicants aiming to obtain a senior role or gain more work experience.

Achievements



Use measurable indicators to write your professional achievements and quantify your accomplishments to enhance credibility. Select work achievements that prove your industry-specific knowledge and include related keywords.

READ MORE



How To Write A Customized CV

How To Write A Customized CV for Job Applications. This guide provides simple steps for writing and customizing your CV effectively.

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