The CV Overview
What You Need to Know About CVs

WHAT IS A CV?

The initials stand for the Latin 'Curriculum Vitae' meaning 'course of life'.

It is a marketing tool to help get you an interview by presenting your abilities and experience. It must include your name & contact details, all your education, qualification & training, your skills & abilities and a work history along with dates and places or names of company/organisations. It should also include a short personal statement at the beginning which sells you to an employer.

WHY DO I NEED A CV?

- When you're applying for advertised vacancies – a CV should always be accompanied by a covering letter
- When sending a speculative letter to employers or an employment agency
- To use as a 'memory jogger' when completing application forms, or when preparing for interviews

IS THERE A SET FORMAT FOR PRESENTING A CV?

No, there are several ways to present the information but the two most popular are:

Chronological CV – this means you present your work history in the order you did it, by starting with the most recent first, and outline your accompanying skills and achievements with each job. It is often known as a traditional CV.

It allows you to provide clear details of your qualifications, work history and responsibilities.

It is important to include:
- Dates – cover any gaps in your history
- Qualifications and work experience – match these to the role you're applying for
- Additional skills & knowledge – cover essential criteria for the role.

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Skills-based CV – this means you list your skills first. This is a useful format for covering work gaps. Later on in the CV, you could list your work history but more in the form of a list. This type of CV is also useful if you have limited experience or are applying for a job which is unrelated to your previous work.

Employability skills are transferable to different roles and employers. The skills-based CV allows you to focus on the skills you have developed in various areas of your life. You can include information as far back in time as is relevant to the type of work you are looking for.

It is important to:
- Position your skills prominently
- Provide evidence of how you've used your skills in a real life situation
- Match your skills with the role you are applying for and use the same headings. E.g. If the job description asks for strong numeracy skills, then create a NUMERACY heading and underneath explain how you used numeracy in a real life situation and how your numeracy skills produced a positive outcome.

CV PRESENTATION

- Phrasing information in a CLEAR, SHORT & POSITIVE style
- Being truthful
- Clear and well-ordered presentation format (maximum 2 sides)
- Tailor information according to the job role description
- Match your skills to the job description you're applying for & prove how you meet the criteria