

# CVs

## WHAT IS A CV?

A CV (curriculum vitae) summarises your education, employment and achievements to date that are relevant for the opportunity you are using it for. There are variations in CV style by geographic region and this document provides advice for CVs to be used within the UK. Advice for CVs to be used outside the UK can be found at [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/abroad](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/abroad).

A good CV will:

1. have a consistent format and be easy to read
2. be either one or two full sides of A4 (for some recruiters one page is preferred)
3. be targeted to the opportunity you are applying for
4. enable the reader to follow your timeline - use start and end dates
5. always start with the most recent item in each section and work backwards from there
6. have the most relevant content for the target reader on the first page
7. give more detail for the most relevant items and concisely present less relevant/older items
8. have correct spelling and grammar

See examples of good CVs online at: See examples of successful CVs online in the Imperial Careers Service Guide to CVs: [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/cv](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/cv)

## START YOUR CV

### Name

In large letters at the top of the first page. Make sure you do not write 'CV' or 'Curriculum Vitae' on the page.

### Contact Details

Your address, email and phone number. Keep it short – the information won't be used to select you, so don't allow it to take up a lot of space. Use a sensible email address that looks professional, such as your imperial.ac.uk email. If you have a good LinkedIn profile or relevant similar online profile, include the URL here too.

### Education

If you are currently a student or have just graduated, your Education section will come next. Start with your most recent education at the top of the section. State the university name, degree subject, degree title (e.g. BSc).

Include when you expect to graduate and your projected grade. If relevant to your target reader, include details of course content.

## CHOOSE SECTION HEADINGS

After Education, you can start to choose section headings. Where you can, use sector or skill specific headings that are relevant to your target opportunity. For example, if you are applying for a job in a conservation charity, you could use 'Conservation Experience' as your first heading after your Education section.

Examples of section headings could include:

Generic	Sector Specific	Skills
Employment	Research experience	Leadership
Internships	Banking/Finance experience	Technical skills
Work experience	Industry employment	IT/Programming
Awards	Clinical experience	Communication skills
Extra-curricular activities	Conservation experience	Language skills
Voluntary work	Science communication	Social media

## CONTENT IN SECTIONS SHOULD:

- Be in reverse chronological order; meaning you start with the most recent first. Use start and end dates, and state what you did and where.  
E.g. May – June 2019 Intern at the Science Museum.
- Under each item use bullet points to concisely describe your achievements.
- Use the words they have used in the job description or typical words you see in the LinkedIn profiles of people working in these types of roles so that they can see the match to what you are applying for.
- Use active language (see the next page for some examples).
- There is no need to use 'I' repeatedly. It's your CV so they will assume you are describing what you did.
- Do not be vague - avoid using words or phrases like 'several', 'some', or 'a number of'. Be precise and quantify any details or successes if possible.
- Include evidence that your work has been of high quality.  
E.g. 'recommendations were presented to the client';  
'campaign increased membership by 50%'



## ACTIVE LANGUAGE

When describing projects or work experience in your CV, aim to express yourself clearly and concisely, making use of the language used in recruitment. Here are a few examples of words you might like to use, describing actions which demonstrate particular skills. Using your thesaurus can help you find others:

**Achievement** - accelerated, accomplished, achieved, carried out, completed, improved, delivered, enhanced, finished, negotiated, obtained, produced, secured, increased, doubled, implemented

**Communication** - advised, participated, chaired meeting, wrote, instructed, demonstrated, edited, presented, discussed, promoted, persuaded, recommended

**Taking initiative** - created, formulated, designed, established, introduced, devised, started, developed, set up, launched, initiated, enabled

**Research** - classified, differentiated, investigated, determined, experimented, equated, searched, developed, surveyed, examined, indexed, compiled, catalogued

**Organising and planning** - distributed, reorganised, arranged, restructured, budgeted, verified, scheduled, computed, planned, produced

**Interpersonal** - advised, negotiated, consulted, evaluated, proposed, handled, sorted out, collaborated, discussed, mediated, facilitated

**Leadership** - directed, supervised, motivated, guided, managed, led, organised, undertook

**Managing** - organised, implemented, established, produced, initiated, attained, maintained

**Problem solving** - analysed, diagnosed, reduced, increased, simplified, evaluated, synthesised, tackled, investigated, reviewed, identified, refined, streamlined, examined, reorganised, solved

## FURTHER SUPPORT

Available from the Careers Service:

- **Explore more resources**, information and top tips to help create and tailor your CV from our website. You can also download the “Imperial Guide To CVs & Cover Letters” to access example CVs. Further details can be found at [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/cv](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/cv).
- For resources to help tailor your CV to the format of a different country please see our subscription to GoinGlobal accessed via the link at [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/abroad](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/abroad).
- **Our events programme** includes a variety of talks and workshops which are designed to enhance your chances of success in the application process - for details, see JobsLive\*.
- **A variety of 1-2-1 appointments** can be booked via JobsLive\*. Please check [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/appointment](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/appointment) for further details.
- **Reference books** including: *The Perfect CV* and *CV and Cover Letters* are available in the Careers Service, level 5 Sherfield Building.

- For information on the disclosure of disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, please see information on the Careers Service website: [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/disability](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/disability).

\* [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobslive](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobslive)

