

CVs

WHAT IS A CV?

A CV (curriculum vitae) summarises your education, employment and achievements to date. It is usually accompanied by a cover letter (see handout 2 of this series).

A good CV will:

- be consistently laid out and easy to get information from
- be targeted to the job/internship you are applying for
- enable the reader to follow your timeline - use start and end dates
- be either one or two full sides of A4 (for some recruiters one page is preferred)
- always start with the most recent item in each section and then follow reverse chronological order
- have the most relevant content for the target reader on the first page
- give more detail for the most relevant items and concisely present less relevant/older items
- 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

START YOUR CV

Name

In large letters at the top of the first 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 email.

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

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
Interests and achievements		

CONTENT IN SECTIONS SHOULD.....

- Be in reverse chronological order ie with most recent first. Use start and end dates and state what you did and where.
E.g. May – June 2017 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 box)
- 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 words/phrases like 'several', 'some', 'a number of'. Be precise.
- 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:

- **Careers Service website:** www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/cv
- **Bookable appointments** with Careers Consultants: book through **JobsLive***
- **Reference books** - including: 'The Perfect CV', and 'CV and Cover Letters', available in the Careers Service, level 5 Sherfield Building
- **Careers Service events** - each year we plan talks and workshops which are designed to enhance your chances of success in the application process - for details, see **JobsLive***
- 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/disclosure

* www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobslive