



## CURRICULUM VITAE - STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND FORMAT

### What are the key characteristics of a good curriculum vitae (CV)?

#### Length and Content

- Two or three sides - 3 maximum. 12 point minimum type size.
- Ensure personal details (Address, contact numbers including mobile, email contacts) are easily seen and are correct, including evening/answer-machine and mobile. Ensure all contact information is current and accurate.
- Qualifications - most senior/relevant first. There is no need for a personal/general introduction of superlatives (you may if you wish use an additional sheet which focuses on experience relevant to the advertisement or job requirements).
- Use bullet-point format and do not write in the first person singular. I.e. I did x and y.

#### Making the most of space

Use space wisely, eg. your address can go across one line. Do not use space or pages for their own sake. Two or three sides give you room for a clear layout and high-grade detail of responsibilities and achievements.

#### Ordering of information

Reverse chronological (most senior qualifications first; most recent jobs first)  
state clearly the date you passed key qualifications

BSc (2.i) Computer Science, University Leeds	June '04
A levels Maths; Physics and Economics, Doncaster Grammar	June '01

#### Important Issues

Dates:	Dates you held a position - please include months eg Jun 01-Oct 03 - explain gaps (remember '01-'02 can be two years or two days)
Companies:	Give a short summary of the business sector eg number of employees ie ownership, size (t/o and staff), core businesses, locations, markets, customers, etc
Position:	State position, key responsibilities and achievements

Repeat for previous positions with increasing brevity towards the earlier parts of your career.



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Example:

### Business Unit Leader for Oncology Supply Chain (Dec '06 to date)

#### Main Responsibilities:

- Management of global supply business unit (£155m t/o) which delivers products across the global network (6 core groups, 14 countries).
- Accountable for customer service levels, reduction of waste across the whole supply chain, prioritising and sponsoring key projects to deliver critical objectives.

#### Significant Achievements

- Customer service target of 97% achieved in 2008.
- Reduced cost of goods by 20%. Potential savings identified > £15million- Projects initiated in 5 defined areas (see appendix).
- Led benchmarking activity across three sites to establish potential benefits to reduce waste (outline savings identified as £8.5m).
- Evaluated and proposed new working shift patterns to meet current business need and organisational design based on current downsizing plans.



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**As a presentation aid, ensure that it is easy to see your career progression at a glance - obviously there will be more detail in your more senior roles than early roles**

Interests/spare time: Again bullet points of your spare time activities

Driving licence/Refs: Indicate time held and points/no need for references on CV

### Usually on a separate sheet or covering letter

#### Salary:

Most job applications ask that you include current remuneration.

This is base, bonus and major benefits eg car or allowance.

Clearly indicate, either on your cv or the accompanying letter, what your salary is and how the remuneration is constructed (ie base, bonus etc). This is IMPORTANT. This also saves you from being shortlisted for companies or jobs at levels widely different from your expectations.

#### Relocation:

If you are willing to relocate then MAKE THIS CLEAR. If you are not, then say so. In our experience most individuals who say that they would relocate 'for the right position' have little intention of relocation. Be clear in your own mind on the subject of relocation and be realistic about long distance commutes with a senior role.

#### Important:

Remember, you can always use a separate sheet to match the company/job requirements to your particular set of skills and experiences. This is a very under-utilised tool. For example, the client wants someone ideally who has Project Managed the relocation of a company. You have, but only as a part of your previous role, so it only gets one small mention on your CV.

Make more of it in the 'Supporting Documentation'.



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### Common mistakes in the Curriculum Vitae and Letter of Application

- Poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. Sorry if this sounds patronising but we estimate that over 30% of cv's have basic mistakes of this kind.
- Poor layout and use of space, eg. crammed first page and half used back page.
- Not easy to see career progression (ie. no quick view of key roles across career).
- No information on what company does/business it is in. In a large company define the purpose of your department or business unit.
- No dates with durations - are they hiding a gap?
- Responsibilities/achievements have no scale and scope. 'Managed a team' – does not say if it is 4 or 400.
- The covering letter makes no reference to professional strengths, relevant expertise and personal strengths in light of role requirements.
- Cannot see individual's remuneration or expectation.
- Poor or 'generic' letter of application – clearly not bespoke to the target opportunity.
- Not attractive to the eye – use different typefaces, underlines, bold or grey to make the 'package' look well presented, clear and professional.