

Activity 10. Compiling your CV and Completing Application Forms

There are no rules for how your CV should look. Each one is individual and is a way of expressing your own experiences and achievements.

Tips on preparing a CV

- Information that you give about yourself, either academic achievements or work experience, **MUST** be accurate. Although you need to portray yourself in a positive way, to lie or deliberately mislead will almost certainly lose you the job when you are found out.
- Make sure your CV is easy to read, clear and concise. If you are unsure about the content ask someone to proof read it and give you some feedback on the content.
- Time spent planning the content and format is a good investment, this is your only way of securing an interview. A document that looks as if no time or effort has been put into it is unlikely to prompt a prospective employer into asking you to attend an interview.
- You will need to update your CV regularly and it is unlikely that one generic CV will be suitable for all of the applications you may be making. Carefully reading the job description and assessing the skills that the employer is looking for will help you know which areas of your CV to highlight for each application.
- Use good quality plain paper and word process the document. As you are aiming for the document to be concise, two single sided pages of A4 should provide sufficient space at this stage in your career. Prospective employers or recruitment consultants are not going to wade through multiple pages of text to find the relevant information, make it easy for them to see your strengths and successes.
- Always include a covering letter with your CV. The letter should be carefully thought out and is a way of introducing your CV and encouraging the employer to read it.

- Make sure the style you choose is consistent and the document does not contain spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Discarding those with errors is an easy way to make an initial selection process.
- Do not just simply list your academic achievements. Instead, use your CV as a way to sell yourself and highlight other achievements and qualities.
- If you are applying for a technical position you may include an extra sheet that lists the modules you have taken and explains any technical skills you have developed from undertaking practical work or experiments and projects.

Tips on Completing Application Forms

- Always read the form carefully several times before attempting to complete it
- Keep the form neat and tidy; crossed out text and spelling mistakes will not create a good impression. If you are worried about how you will fit everything onto the form photocopy the application form so that you can practice.
- ALWAYS fill in the section that asks you to say something about yourself and why you are suitable for the job. Leaving this blank means an initial selection process could be to discard those without anything positive or interesting to say. It looks as if you cannot be bothered to make the effort.

Remember, everyone applying for the post will have suitable qualifications. Whether using an application form or a CV you need to show prospective employers something more than just listing your qualifications.

Activity 1.

You should prepare an up to date CV. Limit the document to two pages. Remember to highlight your strengths, include any work experience you have and use it as an opportunity to sell yourself! Bring six copies with you to the next session.

Activity 2.

Working in small groups share copies of your CV and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the other group member's CVs. You may wish to modify your CV as a result of your group discussion and feedback from your colleagues.

Meta data

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Author (s)	Della Grice, UK Physical Sciences Centre
Owner (s)	University of Hull
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