CV Guidelines

Layout – no longer than 2 sides of A4, using a clear font (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Verdana), with a minimum 10 or 11 point size. Use short, concise sentences and bullet points. Make headings bold so that it is easy for the reader to navigate around the document.

Personal details – these go at the top, and should just consist of name, telephone number and/or email address (if you prefer to be contacted by one medium, leave the other one off). No need to mention anything else, such as date of birth, address, marital status, etc – these are irrelevant to your ability to do the job. Email addresses, if used, need to be professional (e.g. joe.bloggs223@hotmail.com rather than sexykitten@hotmil.com).

Personal statement/profile – a few short sentences stating the qualities you have that are particularly relevant to the role you are applying for. This will need to be re-written for each application to ensure it is tailored and relevant.

The next elements can be presented in the order which sells you the best. If you have a strong and relevant work history, that could go next. However if your skills are your strong point, they might come first. If you are going for a graduate role, your degree may be the first thing you talk about.

Work history – generally, work backwards from your most recent or current role. Rather than just listing tasks you were expected to undertake, give examples of results you achieved that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Skills – list the five, six or seven skills that this job requires, and give examples of how you used those skills effectively. Don't forget transferable skills that you may have used outside of work (e.g. managing personal assistants will develop people management skills, managing direct payments will develop financial management skills)

Training/qualifications – list the relevant training (relevant to the role you are applying for). If you did O levels forty years ago, they may not be relevant now, but if you are a recent school leaver, GCSEs, AS and A levels will be relevant. Include any relevant training you have done even if it didn't lead to a recognised qualification.

Other information – don't include hobbies unless they are directly relevant. If you do activities which demonstrate effectiveness in areas relevant to the role, do include these. Use your judgement about including things which sell you to the employer, and leaving out things which take up valuable space without adding any value.

NB Everything you say in your CV must be true – never be tempted to exaggerate or embellish, but do tell the truth in a positive way!

Checklist:

- Is it in a consistent and readable format? First impressions matter – how your CV looks tells the person who is reading it a lot about you.
- Does the document emphasise your skills and achievements that are specifically relevant to this role?
- Does it tell the reader what they need/want to know about you? Look at what you have written from the employer's perspective – is it logical and fluid?
- Is it accurate? Check your documents for spelling and grammar
- Have you used enough white space? Do not put too much information on a page or use too small a font size
- Have you prioritised your information and used words which make you sound proactive and positive?
- Have you asked someone to proof read your CV before sending it?
- Have you told the truth?
- Have you kept a copy?