

Writing a CV or Supporting Statement

Use these tips to write your CV or supporting statement. If there is a job you really want, then don't miss out because you haven't made the effort to personalise your CV or supporting statement to show the interviewer just how much you want that job.

1) Not too long, not too short

It is not the length that's important (within reason) it's the content that matters. If you have a long career history and it's all relevant to the job you are applying then include it. Having said that, an interviewer receiving a very detailed 8 or 10 page CV is unlikely to read every word. Don't just reduce the font size to tiny to fit everything in – think about what message you want to get across. If you have limited work experience, then you may wish to keep your CV under one page.

2) What's my USP (Unique Selling Point)?

Describe yourself and what you have to offer in no more than 30 words. That's a good start to your CV. Then use your CV or supporting statement to back up your description. Your CV, as much as possible, should be an outline of what you would ideally get the opportunity to say about yourself in the course of an interview.

3) What to include

List your career history and what you **achieved** in each role or with each employer. Bullet points can help to list the most important things. Don't try to include every achievement and every detail of every job. As a general rule, the longer ago the job or the less relevant to your desired career, the less detail. Whereas you might want more bullet points / more achievements for experience that is relevant to the new post.

4) The 'So What?' Factor

Think of your CV as your sales pitch and you the product. Don't just restate your job responsibilities of your previous jobs, as this does not differentiate you from other prospective candidates out there. Describe what you achieved, or how you achieved it. For example, 'responsible for the assessment of care needs' could be 'I established effective communication and rapport with the patient while assessing care needs'. Employers want a sense of what you are really like in person. Include achievements that demonstrate the type of person you are, how you think and/or what you value.

5) CVs Are Intended to Answer Basic Questions About You. They Do Not Create More of Them

A CV is a snapshot of your career history, qualifications and achievements. Set out who you worked for, when you worked there, what the company did and where you worked. Avoid jargon, even within the NHS different acronyms are used; ALS could be Advanced Life Support in one Trust and Action Learning Sets in another!

6) Let's get serious for a moment

Whilst some of the contestants on the BBC's the Apprentice may proudly admit to lying on a CV, my advice is don't do it! Firstly a good interviewer will test your claims by asking you to explain or give examples and it will quickly become obvious if you have made it up. Secondly if you get a job and are found to have given false information, you could end up being dismissed later on.

7) That didn't work out so well....

If you have uncomfortable episodes in your career history, show how you have overcome them, or learnt from the experience. As a general rule, if an interviewer believes you are hiding something (gaps in employment, reason for leaving) they likely will assume the worst. If you are clear and honest on your CV then an employer is likely to be understanding.

8) It's as easy as ABC

Use the spell checker to check your spellings and make sure you write in the proper tense. If you are describing your present job it's ok to write in the present tense. If you are describing your responsibilities at your previous jobs then they should be in the past tense.

And finally, having a CV or supporting statement that describes your strongest achievements and makes a strong case for you without apologies or excuses, should get you shortlisted for an interview. Then it's over to you to reinforce everything in your CV or supporting statement at your interview.