

Step 14

CV's

**Aim of Step 14:
Is to help you write a strong CV**

What is a good CV?

Quite simply it's the CV that gets you an interview.

Your CV is your brochure, and it describes what you have to offer an employer. Its function is to get you an interview. It is only a step along the way, but it is a vital step, and getting it right is important.

A good CV:

- Has a positive focus and highlights your positive selling points
- Answers the three questions; Can you do the job? Will you do the job? Will you fit?
- Is tailored to meet the needs of the employer
- Expresses your unique selling points
- Is brief, to the point, and creates impact

All shapes and sizes:

CV's come in various layouts, with titles like Chronological CV's, Functional CV's, and Achievement based CV's, and if you would like to know a little more about these CV types please go to >>>>. While career professionals may like to refer to CV types, in reality there is only one valid CV - the one that gets you an interview.

Your hybrid custom built CV:

What the ACT gives you is a hybrid custom built CV.

Hybrid because it will incorporate aspects of the Chronological, Functional, and Achievement based CV's. Custom built because it will reflect what you have to offer an employer.

This CV will allow you to address all the bulleted points above that tell you what a good CV is.

The generic one size fits all CV:

Most jobseekers believe that a CV is all about them, so they organise one generic CV, and they send that same CV to employers for every job they apply for. It's laid out nicely, easy to read, and it's appealing to the eye. It gives their career history, qualifications, strengths, and whatever else THEY think is important. In truth, what's in their CV **is** important, but employers don't hire on the basis of what the job seeker thinks is important. The employer hires on the basis of what the *employer* thinks is important, and *every employer is different*.

This is true even where the job title is the same. Working as a waiter or waitress in one restaurant will be different to working in another restaurant.

The tailored CV:

A tailored CV is matched to the needs of the job being applied for.

Each CV you send out should be specifically tailored to the job being applied for.

Fortunately this is not as onerous as it may sound.

Continued...



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The tailored CV workload:

Tailoring your CV is not a lot of work, as you don't need to rewrite your CV for every job, from scratch. It is a matter of making a few small changes to the easily adaptable CV you will develop in this programme.

Sending out 10 tailored CV's is more effective than sending out 100 identical CV's. This reduces your workload significantly.

So what?

When organising content for your CV you should always put yourself in the shoes of the employer, and ask the question – So what?

That is the question an employer will be asking when they come across information that is not relevant to them.

For instance, your landscaping diploma may be of little interest to an Hotelier looking for someone who is good with people, and who is willing to work long hours. In this case if your generic CV opens with a list of your qualifications and education, the person reading your CV is probably asking – So what? If however your CV leads with a profile describing your proven people skills and the fact that you are willing to work long hours, then you are more likely to make an impression. You can of course mention your diploma at a later point.



CV Content:

In this section we look at the headings your CV content can appear under.

The headings listed are not necessarily written in the order that they will appear on a CV.

Content headings:

- **Contact details** (Must be included)
- **Profile** (Optional but highly recommended)
- **Competencies** (Optional)
- **Experience** (Included)
- **Career history/work history** (Must be included)
- **Education and training** (Included)
- **Key achievements** (Optional)
- **Strengths** (Optional)
- **Additional information** (Optional)
- **Hobbies and interests** (Optional)
- **References** (Heading must be included though actual referees contact details may or may not be included)

Note:

The headings listed above are not the only headings that can be used on a CV, but they do cover most eventualities. Some of the headings can be combined, interchanged or be adapted to suit differing circumstances. Some of the headings can be excluded, or written another way.

Consider the headings given and decide what is best for you and for the job that you are applying for.

It is rare that you will use every heading given here, and do not compromise the look of your CV for the sake of including non essential headings.

Examples:

Education and training can be broken into two headings where **Education** is one, and **Training** is the other.

Of course an individual had never undergone training since they had left school would simply use the heading **Education**.

Let us look at the headings **Key achievements** and **Additional information** as an example; in one of the sample CV's ([Click here](#) if you wish to view sample CV's) you will find a heading; **Other notable points and achievements**, instead of **Key achievements** and **Additional information**



Contact Details:

Obviously you must always include your contact details. Include your email address, and if you have a professional online profile or webpage you should also include a link to it.

Profile:

A profile is optional but highly recommended, especially if you don't have many qualifications, or your qualifications have little or no relevance to the post being applied for. Your profile is one of the better opportunities you will get on your CV to promote your best and most positive selling points. If you want to find out more about your profile go to [Profile tool](#).

Competencies:

Your competencies are those things that you are well capable of doing. This heading is optional, but is very useful where you may not have many qualifications, yet you may have well developed skills or traits that are very relevant.

Experience:

Experience is very high on employer's priorities. If you have experience then it is a must.

Career history:

Career history/work history is always included unless you have never worked.

Education and training:

Education and training is always be included. You need only include the highest level of education you have received. In other words, if you have attended second level education you do not need to include the primary school you attended. Likewise, if you have a college degree then you don't need to mention your Leaving Certificate.

Key Achievements:

Include this heading if you have made significant career related achievements. A career related achievement is something that you have succeeded in doing in a previous employment. It is not the fact that you have passed your driving test and that would be useful to the job you're applying for. That goes somewhere else.

If you have made other life achievements that may 'connect' with the CV reader then do so. You must however give close consideration to your achievements, and decide what is relevant, if it is not directly related to career, and remember – what you consider an achievement may be anything but, to someone else.

You can also consider putting achievements that are not directly career related under another heading e.g. Additional Information, Other Notable Achievements, or Hobbies and Interests



Strengths:

If you have particular strengths that are very specific to the job you are applying for, then it is appropriate to include a section under this heading.

If you have strengths that are not specific to the job, then you should consider listing those strengths in your profile.

Additional information:

This heading can be written in many ways, and is useful for adding information that may not relate directly to the job you are applying for, but may be relevant indirectly.

There is a variety of information that can be included here. You can add additional training that may not be particular to the job specification; for example; you may have completed a first aid course at some point. You can refer to the fact that you have a clean driving licence, if you haven't already done so. You could mention that you are on the local residence committee.

Consider any positive information that may in some way add value to your CV.

Hobbies and interests:

While this heading is optional, it is often better to make some reference to your hobbies and/or interests. We are human after all, and what we do in our spare time can throw a positive light on our character, as well as indicating that we live a healthy balanced life.

Do not include interests that can possibly be interpreted in a negative fashion. For example; watching soaps on TV is unlikely to be interpreted by an employer as a positive interest.

References:

Always indicate that you have references, though it is not always necessary to give them. The statement 'References are available on request' will suffice in most instances.

If however, you have a notable reference that may catch the eye of the reader then by all means include it. For example; if you are applying for work an accounts office and Eddie Hobbs is willing to give you a reference, then including it would certainly be a good plan.

Always ensure your referees know you are including them on your CV.

Click here to find several [sample CV's](#).

You will notice that the order and titles of the headings are broadly similar to the headings referred to on this page, although their order may appear differently and their titles may differ



CV Layout:

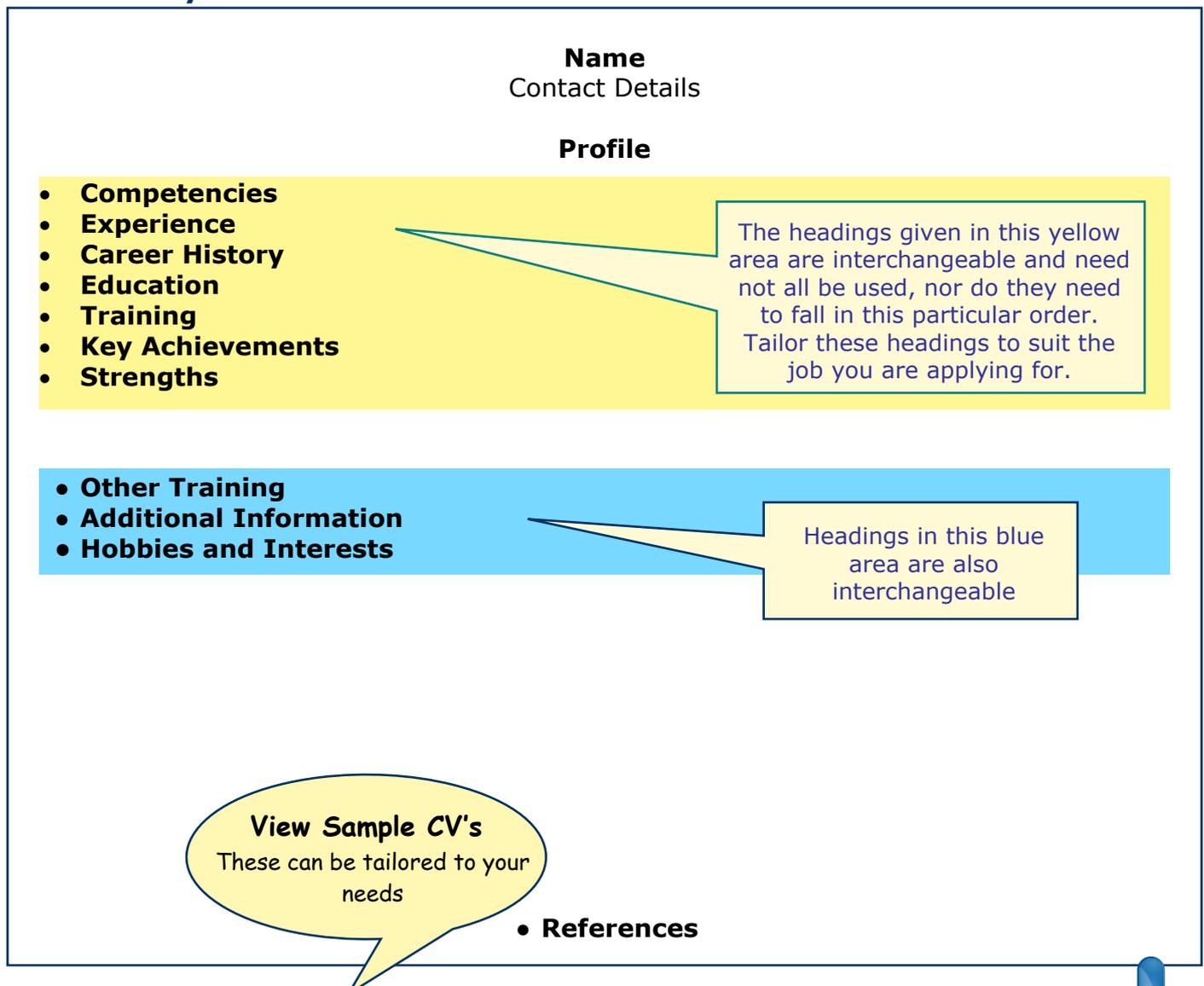
There are no hard and fast rules about how you should lay out your CV. yet there are some standards that will serve you well.

The layout format in this programme is to a high standard and is easily tailored and adapted to circumstances.

The layout you choose should ideally answer the potential employer's key questions **ON THE FIRST PAGE.**

Below is the basic layout of the hybrid custom CV. given in this programme.

You will note that this CV does not say Curriculum Vitae on the page. There is no need to mention Curriculum Vitae, as it is already understood by the reader.

Basic CV Layout

CV do's and Don'ts

Do's:

- Use bullet points, underlines, bold, capitals, and italics where appropriate. Be careful not to overuse as this can make a CV. look messy.
- Spell and punctuation check. An incorrect spelling or poor punctuation can negatively impact your CV.
- Use an A4 envelope when posting a hard copy of your CV.
- Email and/or hard copy. It is best to send your CV on both email and by hard copy for each job being applied for, unless the employer specifies one or the other **ONLY**. **Note**; if sending both hard and soft copies ensure that you refer to the fact that you have sent a copy in both formats.
- Support your claims; give evidence or an example that will support the claims you are making on your CV.
- Emphasise positives; but be honest. No over exaggeration or lies.
- Keep it neat; a CV should be visually clear, easy to read, and appealing. Use a font like Arial, Tahoma, or Verdana (sans serif).

Don'ts:

- Don't use 'I'; it is already understood.
- Don't include negatives; check your content carefully to ensure that it can not be interpreted negatively.
- Don't include irrelevant detail; it will be for you to decide what is relevant and what is not relevant. Put yourself in the shoes of the reader and consider the relevance of your content.
- Don't try to fit too much information into too small a space.