
bsas

british society of animal science



Guidelines for Writing Your CV

BSAS

Guidelines for Writing Your CV

What is a CV?

Your CV, short for *curriculum vitae*, is a personal marketing document used to sell yourself to prospective employers. It should tell them

- about you
- your professional history
- your skills, abilities and achievements
- why you're the best person for the job

What do I include?

Contact Information

- Name
- professional title
- contact details
- your email address
- phone number(s)
- address (town and county are sufficient)
- optional: LinkedIn profile link (make sure it is up to date!)

Personal profile

A short paragraph giving prospective employers an overview of who you are and what you're all about.

You should:

- tailor your profile to every job you apply for
- highlight specific attributes that match you to the role
- keep it short and sweet

Experience and employment history

- Outline previous jobs, internships and work experience.
- List your experience in reverse chronological order, recent role is most relevant. When listing each employment position, state your job title, employer, the dates you worked and a line that summarises the role
- Bullet point your key responsibilities, skills and achievements, and bolster each point with supporting figures and key outcomes Choose the duties most relevant to the job you're applying for
- Do not include information more than 10 years old

Education and qualifications

- Education should be listed in reverse chronological order
- Include the name of the institutions, dates you were there, qualifications and grades you achieved
- If you have a degree, list a few of the most relevant modules, assignments or projects

Additional sections

Key skills: If you're writing a functional CV, or have some abilities you want to show off to the employer immediately, insert a key skills section underneath your personal profile. You should aim to detail four to five abilities at most.

Publications: as relevant to the role you could include any publications, such as PhD papers and abstracts

Hobbies and interests: If you feel that your CV is lacking, you can boost your document by inserting a hobbies and interests section at the end. This can help to show how well you fit into the company or the industry. For example, if you're applying for an environmental job, why not include that you have a big interest in climate change activism?

References: Like including an address on your CV, adding your referees to the end of your CV is no longer standardised. You can include a line that reads 'references available on request', but if you don't have room, it's acceptable to remove it altogether.

If you have any questions please contact:

British Society of Animal Science
Berewyk Hall Court, Bures Road, White Colne,
Essex CO6 2QB

Tel: +44 (0)1787 221 029

Email: bsas@bsas.org.uk

Web: bsas.org.uk

BSAS

Guidelines for Writing Your CV

Formatting

Length: The standard length of a CV in the UK is two pages. However, one size doesn't fit all, and so for some professionals, one or three pages may be more appropriate.

Headings: Each section must be introduced by a big, bold heading to ensure an easy read.

Font type: Most employers will receive your CV in a digital format, so choose a clear font like Calibri or Arial. You can use a different font type for your headings, but keep it professional and easy-to-read.

Font size and page margins: The body of your CV should be between 10 and 12 point font, and your headings between 14 and 18 points. Keep your page margins around 2.5cm, but never reduce them to less than 1.27cm or your CV will appear cluttered and hard to read.

Proofreading and consistency: Your formatting must be consistent throughout your CV to keep it looking slick. Don't spoil your polished look by including typos and inaccuracies; proofread like a pro to capture every mistake.

Tailoring: It's acceptable to keep a generic copy of your CV for your own records, but if you're applying for a job, it must be tailored to the role. This shows employers why you're a match.

Saving the file: Save your CV as a pdf file to ensure recruiters can open it on any device. A pdf will also maintain formatting, so you can be sure that employers will see your CV as you intended.

What not to include

Age and date of birth: The only dates that should be on your CV are from employment and your qualifications. Your age doesn't affect your ability to do the job, and it's illegal for employers to ask about age under the Equality Act 2010.

Other personal details: Like your age, your marital status, ethnic identity, political affiliation, religious preference, sexual orientation. These details are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and it's against the law for employers to ask about them, so don't include them on your CV.

Seven Common Mistakes

1. Poor formatting: CVs that aren't clear and easy to read are a huge turn-off for employers. On average employers spend around eight seconds reviewing each CV - leaving you little time to make a good first impression.

2. Failing to tailor your application: One size doesn't fit all. Everything that you include must be completely tailored to the company and role that you're applying for. This will make it easy to see that you're the perfect candidate.

3. Spelling errors: There are no excuses for spelling mistakes - even if English isn't your first language. An error-free CV is vital in showcasing your precision and attention to detail, so check everything - even your contact details.

4. Lying: When you're trying to get a foot in the door and impress potential employers it's tempting to be economical with the truth, because who's going to check, right? Wrong. The facts on your CV are easy to corroborate so never assume that recruiters won't make enquiries to do so.

5. Lack of evidence: It's easy to make generic, empty statements on your CV when you're trying to meet a tight application deadline. However, failing to effectively evidence your skills, achievements and experiences can be a big mistake.

6. Not explaining 'why': It isn't enough to just state your credentials; you need to prove them by justifying why you've chosen to undertake certain activities in terms of your personal and professional development. You should then elaborate even further on the resulting skills you've gained.

7. Ignoring gaps in your work history
Gaps in employment history are fairly common and rarely a problem as long as they're explained. You don't need to worry about gaps of a couple of weeks but if you've been out of work for months (or even years) you need to clearly and concisely explain why.

3. Other personal details that are not necessary include age; ethnic identity; political affiliation; religious preference; sexual orientation; place of birth; photographs; height; weight and health. Unless specified, some of these details are not necessary.