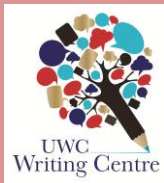


# A toolkit for writing CVs

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# Before you begin...

- **A P C**
- Audience
  - Who am I writing to? How much do they know about my subject or me?
- Purpose
  - Why am I writing this? What is it for?
- Context
  - What is the background to this task? What is the bigger picture it fits into and where does it fit?
- And sometimes **E**
- Evaluation
  - How is my writing going to be evaluated and assessed? (This is obviously important for job applications)

# CV writing guide p1

## A basic guide for writing an appropriate CV

1. The first thing to do is some background research. What is the position you are applying for? Look carefully at the minimum requirements as well as the description of the responsibilities, and what they cite as advantages. You want to play up your suitability for the job as much (and as honestly) as possible.
2. Look at your skills, knowledge and experience – what do you need to include that is relevant to this position? You don't always need or want to include all your work experience, for example. A casual job as a waitress 5 years ago may not be relevant to applying for a job in HR now. If the work experience connects with the job you are applying for now, though, add it in.

# CV writing guide p2

3. Organise the information logically: start with basic personal information and your education history. Then your employment history, showcasing knowledge and skills, tailoring these to the requirements of the position. You could follow this with a section on awards and achievements you have earned, if relevant.
4. Give each section a clear heading in bold and make all your headings look the same (e.g., **1. Personal information**; **2. Education**). Number them to make it easier to refer to them in your summary (point 7)
5. Create a style for your CV that is 'clean'. Choose a font that is suitable (no comic sans!), and use an MSWord template as a guide if you are not sure where to start. Formatting is important – it needs to be neat and easy to read.

# CV writing guide p3

6. If you have to send a very short CV, choose only the MOST relevant information – look very carefully at the description and requirements. If the position is academic, for example, then you don't necessarily need to include non-academic work, like waitressing etc.
7. Always end with contactable references who will be able to say something about you that is related to the skills and knowledge these prospective employers will be looking for. (Ask these people before you add them).
8. When you have finished organising your CV, write a short summary of yourself referring to the sections where an employer could read more about you. Add this before section one.

# CV writing guide p4

9. Go easy on the decorations. A professional CV that impresses prospective employers tends not to be covered in frilly borders and large cover pages with your name in bold, huge type and fancy fonts. Employers have to read a lot of CVs, so you want to aim for a neat, simple, easy-to-read CV with clear headings, well-organised information and no errors.

10. **PROOFREAD!** Always read over your work carefully before you print it and send it out. Pay attention to the red underlining that indicates spelling errors, and remember that sometimes there are typos that the spell or grammar checker will miss so you need to read it yourself.

# Example of a summary from my own CV – as a guide

I am a teaching, learning and writing researcher and practitioner, and have been working in the higher education sector since 2001, and now Director of the UWC Writing Centre (Section 4). I have worked at three different universities in South Africa, and with many different students and colleagues. This includes teaching and tutoring in disciplinary subjects, like Political Studies and Ethics, and academic support courses focused on teaching students to read, write and study effectively as they move from secondary to tertiary education.

In 2009 I reopened and redeveloped the Writing Centre at the University of the Western Cape, and have been managing it since then, creating and running many workshops with both students and lecturers, and also researching aspects of my work and presenting it at local and international conferences (Section 6). More recently my work has expanded into other areas of academic literacies, writing and teaching development, and these are the areas in which my current research is focused.

I have published both internationally and locally on both my writing centre research as well as my research in teaching and learning more broadly (Section 5), and I completed my PhD in Higher Education Studies at Rhodes University in 2013. I hold further degrees in Political Studies and English, as well as Women's and Gender Studies (Section 3).

I am highly motivated, efficient, well-organised, empathetic and creative. I learn quickly, and am good at working with a range of different people, enjoying amicable and professional collegial relationships with my present Writing Centre team and colleagues outside of the Writing Centre. Outside of work I enjoy spending time with my family, cooking, reading, making ceramics and surfing when time allows.

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# Excerpt from my CV: setting out employment history (one idea)

*Employer*

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

*Position held:*

Module tutor and co-ordinator (5 month contract)

*Duration:*

February to June 2008

*Roles and responsibilities:*

- I taught and acted as academic coordinator on a module entitled Academic Communication Studies 101, which teaches effective writing skills for the humanities and social sciences. I also taught in the APLS 113 module, which teaches effective writing skills to students in the Commerce and Management faculty. Both of the modules are writing support courses, and the work focuses on teaching students reading and critical thinking skills, and also basic academic writing skills.

I was responsible for:

- preparing and facilitating three classes per week for both modules
- regular consultations with students in both modules
- marking a variety of assignments and giving formative and summative feedback in both modules
- setting and marking exams for ACS 101
- sourcing additional course materials for ACS 101
- coordinating a collaborative team of colleagues in ACS 101
- appointing external examiners for ACS 101
- exam marking in APLS 113.



# Excerpt from my CV: setting out employment history (one more idea)

## 4.2. Academic: Teaching

University of the Western Cape, Bellville, Cape Town	
Module tutor (4 month contract)  February to May 2009	I tutored five groups of first year science students in a module entitled 'English for Educational Development'. The content dealt particularly with subjects related to the broader scientific field. I was responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equipping students with relevant reading skills and strategies, as well as coaching them with academic writing skills necessary for science students, such as basic research and writing a research report, as well as paragraph and discursive essay writing.</li><li>• Modelling and developing critical thinking skills.</li><li>• Marking and giving formative feedback to students on drafts and final assignments.</li></ul>
Lecturer (3-month contract)  April to June 2009	I lectured in the Political Studies Department for one term, teaching a group of first year students in an introductory international relations module. My responsibilities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sourcing readings and course materials and creating a course reader.</li><li>• Writing and delivering lecture materials to full and part time students over seven weeks.</li><li>• Setting and marking essay assignments.</li><li>• Designing tutorial materials and tasks and supporting two tutors.</li><li>• Setting a section of the June exam and doing my share of the marking.</li></ul>