

Aleksander Foundation Guide

CRAFTING A WINNING CV

Step by step guide on how to create the
perfect CV with insider tips for guaranteed
success



BASICS

1 **How long should a CV be?**

As a general rule undergraduate and master's CV's should not be longer than 1 A4 page. This is the standard format, and you are highly advised to adhere to it, unless explicitly specified by the institution/company.

2 **What font should I use?**

Sans serif fonts, like Arial, can make your CV look clean, neat and most importantly readable. Use a font size between 10 and 12. Avoid unusual fonts; they have the effect of making the reader focus on the font rather than the content.

3 **Should I include a photo?**

No, you should not. Modern CV standards do not require a photo to be included.

4 **Should I send my CV as a Word document or a PDF?**

Send a PDF version if possible, unless otherwise specified. A PDF will look the same on any computer, whereas sometimes a Word document might look different (overflowing to three pages for example) depending on the software version.

5 **Should I use different colors on my CV?**

We recommend black ink on white paper as standard. Using more exciting colors will certainly make you stand out, but perhaps not in a positive way unless you are applying for a creative or design role.

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STRUCTURE

John Doe
John.doe@email.com +359 655 123

EDUCATION

- 2020 - 2021 London Business School, London, UK
MSc Finance, GPA 87/100, Specializing in Corporate Finance & Restructuring
Social Responsibility Scholarship recipient
- 2015 - 2019 New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria
BA Economics, GPA 5.86/6.00,
- 2018 - 2018 Prague University, Prague, Czech Republic
Exchange Program – Economics & Business

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

- 2021 - Education NGO, London, UK
Non-profit organisation supporting students in attaining higher education
Programme Coordinator
- Designed digitalization campaign increasing foundation's reach and capabilities, resulting in 2,000+ new website visits and content engagements
 - Re-structured scholarship program recruitment and marketing process driving up applications by 60%+; provided applicants with higher flexibility regarding timelines and course choices
 - Organized finance field trip for 10 students to London, featuring career coaching and company visits
- 2020 - 2020 FinTech & Co, Sofia, Bulgaria
Mid-market payments provider serving 150,000+ clients in 140 countries
Business Analyst (6 months)
- Oversaw team of 4 developers re-designing FX P&L database, enabling management to more efficiently access and evaluate performance
 - Prepared financial statements and regulatory reports submitted to the Financial Supervisory Commission
 - Reconciled accounting errors in client transactions of €50,000 resulting in cost efficiency/client satisfaction improvements
- 2018 - 2018 Banking Group LLC, Sofia, Bulgaria
Investment Banking Analyst, (3 months)
- Prepared client deliverables in response to RFP for mid-market FMCG retailer; after securing mandate assisted senior partner in model construction with key macro and industry inputs
 - Conducted comparative strategy analysis report on financing €630m investment project
 - Produced investment recommendations and created pitch-books for a portfolio of start-ups valued at €190m distributed to perspective buyers

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Led 5-member team in International Finance competition; conducted stock research and presented results to a panel of 6 international judges
- Elected by 500+ students as representative on Student Government, prepared and allocated annual budget for student activities
- Treasurer of undergraduate finance club, raised money from 10+ companies to finance company valuation competition
- Organized student-practitioner investment conference with 20+ presenting companies and 250+ attendees
- IT Skills: Microsoft Office, C++, Python, Java, SQL
- Languages: fluent English, fluent German, beginner French, native Bulgarian
- Interests: Cooking, Traveling (15+ countries), Competitive skiing, Swimming

A

EDUCATION

You should give most prominence to the part of your education that is most relevant to the job you are applying for. Usually, this is your most recent education, but you can emphasize an earlier qualification if it is more relevant, as well as specific modules or projects.

B

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Work experience is everything from full-time positions and internships, voluntary/unpaid work, part-time jobs, and entrepreneurial activities. All of these can be directly relevant to a role. Employers are interested in the transferable skills you have developed and so it is your job to decide how relevant each experience is to your application and to highlight this

C

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is an important section where recruiters look for evidence of what you have achieved outside of your studies and work experience. It enables you to identify things that really interest or motivate you. It may also indicate what your values are, aspects of your personality and the transferable skills you have developed. It is better to include one or two things which you are really involved with and can describe fully.

D

IT SKILLS / LANGUAGES

Towards the end of your CV, you can detail your familiarity with relevant packages, programming languages, operating systems, web design software and anything else listed on the job description and person specification.

LANGUAGE

Language

The way you write about your experiences is nearly as important as the activities themselves. Write confidently about your achievements using professional, proactive and positive language. However, avoid using jargon that cannot be clearly understood and if you use any abbreviations you should explain them.

Professional, proactive and positive language gives the reader the impression that you make things happen and that you are in control. It highlights the fact that you have analyzed the competencies required and your own experiences, and identified a match

Examples of proactive language:

Research:

• analyzed • investigated • determined • experimented • surveyed • solved

Leadership:

• coordinated • implemented • established • managed • led • directed
• supervised • delegated • coached • allocated

Achievements:

• promoted • launched • developed • redefined • simplified • persevered • enhanced
• accelerated • improved • produced • secured • increased

Taking initiative:

• initiated • created • designed • established • launched • set up • conceived • implemented

Organization:

• streamlined • scheduled • encouraged • expanded • resolved • budgeted • (re)organized • prepared • administered

Communication:

• trained • negotiated • consulted • presented
• persuaded • interacted • advised • collaborated
• facilitated • mediated • consulted • liaised

1 Top tips: presenting your experience

- Remember that depending on your level of education (Undergraduate/Masters) your focus should be on different things. If you are still completing your bachelors although still important, work experience should not be the main focus of your CV
- Your CV should direct the employer to the skills and experience they have asked for. If you can demonstrate the skills you have acquired and apply them to the role you are applying for, then any experience can be of interest. Don't underestimate yourself.
- Your CV may form the framework of your interview. Be comfortable with what you have written and be prepared to elaborate and talk enthusiastically about anything on your CV.
- Be clear about your individual contributions to the achievements you list and be ready to explain them at interview.
- Avoid obscure abbreviations, jargon or slang.
- Try to quantify successes with facts and figures – “scored in top 5 per cent”, “increased sales by £x”, “managed a team of five staff”.
- Remember not to misrepresent any information – employers can revoke an interview or offer if you do.
- **Work & Travel** is **not** considered work experience in the eyes of professional employers. They fully understand the need to finance your studies but will heavily discount those experiences.

TIPS & TRICKS

2 Writing a winning CV

- Be concise and ensure your information has an impact.
- Keep it simple and clear – you can always elaborate at the interview.
- Analyze the job description – read it and identify which relevant skills, experience, and competencies you have or consider other experiences that could be appropriate.
- If you have any gaps in your experience, for example through a career break or travelling, explain it on your application.
- Academic and professional qualifications should flow in a logical order.
- Check your CV including spelling and get a friend or family member to read through before submitting if it helps.