

Key Skills that all CVs Need



CV skills

A CV ought to demonstrate all of your skills. Ideally, you will be able to link your key skills to workplace experience, but if this is not possible then try to cite ways in which you have used them outside of employment situations.

Most key skills fall into one of three categories:

- **Transferable skills.** These are skills which have been acquired in one setting but can be used in many different sorts of businesses.
- **Job-related skills.** These skills are specific to a certain line of employment or trade and may require you to have received training to perform.
- **Adaptive skills.** These sorts of aptitudes are sometimes less obvious and harder to quantify because they rely on personality traits rather than learning.

Let's look at each of these in turn and see how you might address them in your CV.

Transferable skills

Everyone has transferable skills even if they don't recognise them as such. Sometimes, your current employer won't make it obvious that the skills you have acquired with them are transferable because they don't necessarily want you to realise how employable you are elsewhere.

Typical transferable skills you may already possess are:

- **Reading or writing related skills.** This means being able to digest written information and present it in written form as well.
- **Computer skills.** If you have aptitude with computers and common office programmes then consider this to be a transferable skill.
- **Management experience.** If you have managed people before then you could transfer this experience to benefit another type of employer.
- **Commercial skills.** People who can negotiate and handle figures like turnover and gross profit often possess the sort of business acumen which is sought after in many organisations.
- **Deadline success.** Being able to work to deadlines is something that doesn't happen in all jobs, but if you are used to it then this is a key transferable skill desired in many companies.
- Of course there are other types of [transferable skill](#). Think of them as aptitudes that can function equally well in multiple industrial sectors. Mention them in your CV as you have picked them up throughout your employment history.

Job-related key skills

More specific than transferable skills, job-related ones can get you work with another employer who needs them. Despite this, transferable skills won't necessarily be of use to employers outside of the sector you already work in.

Examples of job-related skills are:

- **Brick laying.** Although many construction firms need brick laying skills, it is unlikely you will be able to use this skill to find work outside of the building sector.
- **Nursing skills.** Being a qualified nurse shows you have certain transferable skills like being caring or organised, but nursing itself is a job-related skill which only really works in the [healthcare sector](#).
- **Mechanical engineering.** Being able to work and repair engines is a job-related skill. It may mean you can transfer into related sectors but probably only within similar roles unless you have other transferable skills to offer.
- **Accountancy qualifications.** Bookkeeping and [accountancy roles](#) are on offer within a wide range of organisations which presents plenty of job choice. However, this job-related skill narrows down that choice to certain types of jobs only.

Although there are nearly as many job-related skills as there are jobs, try not to think of them as restricting what you can do. If you do feel trapped by your job-related skills and have trouble breaking out into new areas of work, then acquire some new ones by enrolling on a training course.

Remember that many job-related skills imply transferable ones so they are always worth mentioning. It is best to add any courses or qualifications that are pertinent to your job-related skills in education section of your CV.

Adaptive skills

Ideal skills for [CV personal statements](#) or even a [cover letter](#), adaptive skills can also be listed in your work experience if you prefer. Think about the sort of personality you have when discussing your adaptive skills. Some of the key ones to look out for include:

- **Team working.** Not everyone is a team player, but team working is an important adaptive skill that many employers are looking for.
- **Loyalty.** Been in your job for a long time and seen it through thick and thin? This is an adaptive skill to mention on your CV.
- **Positivity.** If you are the sort of person who sees the glass as half full and not half empty, then this shows your positivity. Employers tend to favour positive people so mention this as an adaptive skill.
- **Creativity.** Some jobs cry out for creative people. If you paint, play music or are even good at telling jokes, then this may show off your creative skills.
- **Adaptability.** Being flexible is something we all need in the workplace from time to time, but some are better at it than others so don't discount your adaptability as a skill.
- **Tenacity.** Taking ownership of problems and seeing them through is a key skill in many organisations. If you can demonstrate this from your past career, then include it on your CV.
- Although adaptive skills may seem like the least important ones to mention because they are not specific to the job you are applying for, they can often mark you out from another candidate. Don't overlook the importance of your blend of adaptive skills which is as unique as you are.

Be proud of the skills that you have and see each and every one as a way to progress in your career.



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What to include in a CV - an international guide

A guide to what personal information to include in your CV, no matter where you are applying for a job.

A Zenit-E camera is positioned in the upper right corner of the image. Below it, several Polaroid photographs are scattered on a map background. One Polaroid shows a street scene with a sign that reads 'BEST WESTERN'. Another shows a building with a sign that reads 'HOTEL BROWN'. A third shows the Eiffel Tower. The text 'ZENIT-E' is visible on the camera's body.

The international resume

What to include on your CV applying for a job in another

Writing a CV or resume can be confusing, especially if you are applying for jobs in a foreign country. Exactly what you should include in a CV varies greatly depending on your location. This guide will walk you through what to include, no matter where in the world you are applying.

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North America, Australia and the United Kingdom

	Include	Optional	Exclude
Picture			✓
Address		✓	
Gender			✓
Date/place of birth			✓
Marital status/children			✓

For job applications throughout the Anglosphere, a one to two page resume is expected. It should include examples of your work experience, skills, and education, with specifics and details tailored to the position you are applying for.

Resumes can be chronological or functional. A chronological resume has your work history arranged by date, beginning with the most recent. Functional resumes focus on skills, with work experience organized by expertise.

Chronological resumes are the most common. They do a good job of depicting the progression of your career and showing how your skills have developed. Functional resumes tend to be used by

people who are making a significant career change, so their most recent position may not be the most relevant, or have long gaps in their work history.

Your resume should include sections covering work experience, education, and skills. Certifications, publications, and volunteer work are all appropriate to include if possible. A brief summary of yourself can also be an asset, but is optional.

Do not include a picture with your resume for traditional job applications. In the interest of privacy and non-discrimination, many employers do not want to know what you look like before interviewing you and will remove any resumes with pictures from consideration. Due to the increasing prevalence of social media and online portfolios, this norm is changing, but for now it is better to err on the side of caution and omit your picture.

For profiles or resumes that are available on the internet, however, a picture is recommended. A tasteful, professional photo can go a long way in selling yourself online.

Age or date of birth, gender, nationality, and marital status should all be left off of your resume for similar reasons of non-discrimination.

It is not necessary to include your full address in your resume - your city and state is sufficient. You also do not need to include all of your references, though you may want to mention that they are available upon request. If an employer is impressed with your initial application and wants to speak to your references, they will ask for them.

Only include your high school education if you are a recent graduate or have no postsecondary experience. If you do choose to display your high school, only include the school name and the dates you attended. No more detail is necessary (in the UK, it is appropriate to include A and O levels).

Europe

	Include	Optional	Exclude
Picture	✓		
Address	✓		
Gender		✓	
Date/place of birth		✓	
Marital status/children		✓	

European resumes are typically referred to as CVs, but are formatted like a North American resume (as opposed to a North American CV, which is usually longer and more detailed). This means that the choice between a functional or chronological resume remains, as does the recommended length of one to two pages.

However, more personal information is expected in European resumes.

A picture, for example, is expected. A professional headshot is appropriate to include on your resume or with your application.

It is also common to include information like age and marital status - things that would be inappropriate in North America. You can also include the number of children you have, as well as their ages, though this is optional.

It is also common to include your gender and nationality, though this is not required.

As much of Europe is multilingual, it is important to include your language skills. Specify your level of fluency with each language and whether your skills are written or spoken.

Finally, it is common but not required that you include a personal interests section. Don't just list generic hobbies, however - only include activities that help to sell your skills or make you seem particularly interesting.

Of course, Europe is a diverse place. Each country has its own set of expectations of what to should be included in your CV. Some highlights from certain countries will be provided below, but be sure to research your country before sending out applications.

Germany

German employers will expect more detail in your CV. German CVs tend to be longer, running two to three pages, and should include references. It is also expected that you include your date of birth

and place of birth, your nationality, and your full address. You can include your marital status and children, but this is optional.

France

In France, your CV needs a picture, your age, your address, your marital status and number of children. It is also customary to include a handwritten cover letter in applications, though this is becoming less common as online applications become the norm.

Spain

For Spanish CVs, a photo is recommended. You should also include your nationality, place of birth and date of birth, full address, and passport number.

Russia

A Russian CV is no more than two pages. It includes a full address, place and date of birth, and marital status. A picture is optional, but not recommended.

The Middle East and Africa

	Include	Optional	Exclude
Picture	✓		
Address	✓		
Gender	✓		
Date/place of birth	✓		
Marital status/children	✓		

Resumes for applications in the Middle East can be up to three pages, but two pages is recommended. It is common to include a brief description of your current employer, but this is not necessary for past positions.

Split entries in your work history into two sections: Responsibilities and Achievements. Employers will appreciate the clear organization and readability. This is also a great way to differentiate between what the role required and what you brought to it.

Employers in the Middle East expect a lot of personal information in your resume. A picture is required, as is your age and gender. You will also want to state your marital status and your nationality.

Include your full address in your contact information. If you are willing to relocate, you should mention where you are willing to move to and where you are currently residing.

Be sure to include your language skills. Specify your level of fluency with each language and whether your skills are written or spoken.

It is not necessary to include references directly on the CV. Simply mention that they are available.

Asia

	Include	Optional	Exclude
Picture	✓		
Address	✓		
Gender	✓		
Date/place of birth	✓		
Marital status/children		✓	

Resumes in Asia will have different expectations from country to country. Generally, however, it is expected that you include a picture, your gender, and your place and date of birth.

China

Chinese employers expect that a picture is included in your resume. Also include your gender and the date and place of your birth. It is acceptable to include the reason you are leaving your previous employer, but this is not required.

Japan

Resumes in Japan, called rirekisho, are unique in that they follow a very specific format. Templates for rirekisho can be found online or purchased from most Japanese convenience stores and must be filled in by hand. Individual rirekisho must be made for each application, and it is important to write very neatly. The template includes space for a picture, date of birth, gender, and address.

India

Indian resumes typically include a picture. In India it is also customary to include a Personal Details section at the end of a resume that includes date of birth, marital status, nationality, languages, and passport number.

South America

	Include	Optional	Exclude
Picture	✓		
Address	✓		
Gender		✓	
Date/place of birth	✓		
Marital status/children		✓	

South American resumes should include a picture. Your personal information section must contain your full address and birthdate.

It is recommended that you include your gender, nationality and your language skills (spoken or written). In some South American countries, such as Brazil, it is appropriate to include marital status and even religion, but these are also optional.

Conclusion

Expectations of resumes are change from country to country. The specific culture of each location affects what is appropriate to include in a job application. It is important to know what employers expect to ensure that your resume doesn't stand out for the wrong reasons.