

CV MYTHS & FACTS

A quick quiz....

Most people at some point have had some guidance or advice on writing a CV – much of it contradicts other advice given. How do you know what's right?

The following Q&A should help you to sort out the fact from the fiction in terms of your CV.

True or False?

There are clear rules about writing a CV

A:False. There are varying opinions and personal preferences; most professionals agree there are some things that work better than others but there are actually **NO RULES.** Just a huge number of differing opinions and guidance

True or False?

Your CV should be a maximum of 2 pages long

A: False. It's a matter of common sense. With years of experience and lots of transferable skills or knowledge, some people wouldn't fit it all in. School leavers or those with limited workplace experience should not need to do more than a page. Keep it concise and factual.

True or False?

If you have a “novelty” email address it will put an employer off

A: True. Your CV is a professional introduction to a potential employer. Your email address should be based on your name only. Novelty addresses, those with lots of complex special characters or things such as your football team or juvenile spellings are unprofessional

True or False?

Sometimes employers check applicants' backgrounds to help them with shortlisting

A: True. This is quickly increasing. There are companies who sell a service to employers to do exactly this. Have one email address that relates to professional contact and a completely separate one for social media – and make sure your social media pages are kept private.

True or False?

It's good to use a nice photo on your CV

A:False. This is not appropriate in most professions. Your appearance does not normally have any bearing on your ability to do a job and unless you are applying for a job as a model or in performing arts/TV, what you look like simply shouldn't matter.

True or False?

Your CV should be short and “to the point”

A: True. Too many words in a CV doesn't help!

Keep it concise and factual as many employers are lazy and will “scan read” a CV to look for relevant information, only taking in the bits they need or reading the rest if they see what they want. Your key information can be lost amongst too many words.

True or False?

You must include DOB, Nationality and information about health and disabilities

A: False. These are personal details and not relate to your ability to do a job or be used in any shortlisting process. If they are relevant to a particular role, an employer can clarify this information with you directly but will be expected to comply with equal opportunities.

True or False?

You must include information about your hobbies, interests or spare time activities

A: False. It's not necessary – but can be useful, especially if your interests relate to the job you want to do. If your spare time activities add value to your application, definitely include them. There's no harm in including non-related hobbies but don't feel you have to

True or False?

You can include borders and boxes

A: True. some people will tell you that you can't use design. This is simply not true. A well set out CV is important – borders, headings and dividers help to make your information clear and easy to follow. If using these, however, make sure that all formatting is even and tidy. Mismatched borders and boxes will not do!

True or False?

The content of your CV is more important than the appearance

A: False. They are EQUALLY important. If your CV is presented poorly, it's quite likely an employer will have no desire to look at the content. Presentation matters. However a well formatted CV that says nothing relevant is just as bad.

True or False?

I need to change my CV for every application

A: True. At the very least you should check that it is suitable for the company and the position. A CV is not a “one size fits all” – it supports an application for employment and may need to be “tweaked” to make it relevant.

What impression does it give of you if your CV is not relevant to the vacancy?

True or False?

You can include colour on your CV

A: True. This is again something you may be told you can't do but there is absolutely no reason why not. A nicely laid out CV which includes all the relevant information AND has something that makes it stand out to catch the employer's attention is perfectly acceptable – just make it subtle and professional, not over the top.

True or False?

The odd spelling or grammar error is ok as long as there's not too many

A: False. It is absolutely vital that your CV contains no spelling or grammar errors – that includes capital letters in the right places. Your postcode is not b30 1ul – it is B30 1UL. Lack of basic literacy **WILL** put employer's off. So yes – punctuation matter's!

True or False?

Your CV must be constantly updated

A: True. Your CV is a “living document” which means it grows as you do. Every new job, every new experience and every new qualification should be added. You should never send an out of date CV to any employer. There is no such thing as a “final version” of your CV – you will only ever have a “current” one.

You will never know what each employer wants to see in a CV. Whether they like it plain, unformatted, black and white or with something eye catching you will NEVER please everyone.

Concentrate on making sure your CV tells them the information they need without any irrelevant information and is presented in a tidy, easy to read format and catches the eye for the RIGHT reasons.

Get it checked by someone else for accuracy

For more support on writing your CV try some of the below links:

- <https://www.startprofile.com>
- <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/cvs/cv-templates/>
- <https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/cv-templates>
- <https://www.cvtemplatemaster.com/cv-template/>