

## What Should I Include in my Graduate CV?

Getting your graduate CV right is vital if you want your hard study to be rewarded by securing the job of your dreams. However, graduates often find the prospect of completing their CV a very daunting one and many struggle to fill the pages appropriately.

As a graduate it may be that you have little or even no previous employment history, but this doesn't mean that your CV should be filled with excess white space or even worse, unsupported sweeping statements that are fabrications of the facts.

### **So what should you include in your graduate CV?**

The structure of a graduate CV starts out like any other, you should open with your personal contact details, ensuring that all of these are accurately recorded and current; remember that your University email address will soon be defunct so make sure you use an alternative otherwise you may miss out on that all important email that says *you're hired!*

The next step is to move on to an opening paragraph that outlines your knowledge and skills, where possible reflecting on examples from your student life, voluntary work, paid employment and extracurricular achievements, or societies or clubs that you have played an active role in. Do not underestimate the importance of the latter; demonstrating that you have made a significant contribution to an organisation or been elected into a position of responsibility by your peers, for example as chairperson of a particular society, will send out exactly the right messages to a potential employer, i.e. that you are personable, respected, conscientious, have strong leadership skills etc. Having invaluable detail such as this appearing in the first few lines of your CV will draw the reader in and get them forming a positive opinion of you right from the start, which you need to maintain or indeed enhance with the rest of your CV.

The next stage is to include your educational achievements. You should list your qualifications in reverse chronological order, so that your most recent qualification appears first. If you have not yet received your actual grade you can still include the course studied and a predicted grade, but please do state that it is predicted. Failing to do so could cause a great deal of embarrassment at a later date.

Next is your employment section, which can include paid employment, voluntary employment, work experience and work shadowing. Always draw out your personal achievements within each of these roles, rather than focusing on your responsibilities. You can also include any gap year achievements within this section.

Graduates tend to benefit in their CVs from the inclusion of this next section which relates to positions of responsibility. This gives you the opportunity to further highlight some of the skills that you may have mentioned in your opening paragraph and allows you to demonstrate that you are not purely an academic and that you do have other abilities that would be welcomed within the workplace. These positions of responsibility can relate back to posts held within college or 6<sup>th</sup> form, but ideally these should be as recent as possible.

Hobbies and interests is the penultimate component of your CV and is an important area for graduates again; allowing them to demonstrate that they are well rounded individuals and hopefully with pastimes that make them intriguing enough for employers to want to know more.

As with all CVs a graduate CV should close with a statement confirming that references are available on request. When requested, these references should ordinarily be your current or most recent employer, paid or otherwise, and your course tutor.

Once your CV has all of these components you should be set to compete in the job market with both graduates and experienced workers alike.

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