

## Your curriculum vitae (CV)

The CV is at the **heart** of your application. It's often the **first document** that recruiters look at; they'll only read your cover letter if your CV has made a good impression. And if you get invited to interview, the interview will often be based on what you wrote in your CV.

### What you definitely need to include in your CV

A CV always starts with the applicant's **personal details** (name, date and place of birth, nationality). While you don't have to include a photo with your application, a **CV photo** taken by a professional photographer can help to make a good first impression. Your CV should list the main stages of your **professional career** and your **educational history**. Compile your CV in **reverse chronological order** and make sure that it is **complete**. If you have a gap in your CV, it shouldn't stop you from applying, but it may provoke one or two critical questions during a job interview. Other elements that should be included in your CV are your **language skills** and any **special skills and qualifications** that are relevant to the position you are applying for. Information about your language, IT and other skills should be provided in detail; vague statements are of little value to the recruiter. To give the recruiter a clearer picture of you and your personality, feel free to mention any **voluntary work** you have undertaken and your **hobbies**.

### Length and layout of your CV

An eye-tracking study carried out by Stepstone showed that on average, recruiters only take (or only have) 43 seconds to look at your CV. So make sure you focus on: **quality over quantity!** Make sure your CV is not more than **two (A4) pages** long.

The layout you choose will depend on the position you're applying for and how you want to present yourself. If, for instance, the job requires media design skills, your CV should reflect your creative skills. Whatever the job, try to make your CV look visually appealing and persuasive. Take a look at the latest CV templates that are available online. Remember that recruiters don't have much time for each application, so make sure your CV is **clear and easy to read**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stepstone.de/Karriere-Bewerbungstipps/eyetracking/>

## General tips and advice

The layout chosen for your CV should match that of your cover letter.

- You don't have to list every job you've ever done. If a job wasn't relevant to the position you're applying for, it's fine to leave it out, provided it doesn't leave a gap in your CV.
- Your CV should be placed after your cover letter. Your application documents should be ordered as follows: cover letter, cover sheet (if used), curriculum vitae, employment references.
- Make sure that you use a professional email address in your application.
- Don't make any false or misleading statements in your CV. Recruiters are trained to spot inconsistencies and errors in what you write and to detect discrepancies and insecurities during a job interview.
- Avoid grammatical and spelling mistakes and make sure you write all names correctly. Find out about the filtering criteria used by automated application processing and CV ranking software. Even minor spelling errors in your application can cause problems for such software, with the result that your application is rejected immediately.
- If you are applying for a position in a traditional company, such as a bank, we recommend using a traditionally formatted CV with a classic design. Some start-ups and young tech companies might prefer to see a more creative or innovative CV. At the end of the day, it's up to you to choose a CV design that fits both you and the company you're applying to. No matter how creative and innovative your chosen design is, your application should never come across as glib or frivolous – after all, you want your application to be taken seriously. Looking for inspiration? The job posting itself is a good place to start. It will often give you an idea about the tone and style to adopt in your cover letter.