



CREATING A GREAT CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A CV is a marketing tool, which is intended to put across your best points. You might have a lot to offer, but if your CV is poor, you may not get past the first stage in the selection process. It is worth spending time reflecting on yourself, understanding your value proposition, and then writing, editing, and updating your CV until you are confident that it presents you in a professional and comprehensive manner.

Here are some tips to help you develop an Impactful CV that you will be proud of:

Identify what you will be using your CV for: If your CV is for a particular job opportunity or bursary, make sure that you have the requirements or the job specifications. This will help you understand what to put in your CV. Bursary or scholarships CVs are different from job application CVs.

Choose your headings wisely.

Choose headings that fit your experience. Avoid using templates which constrains you from adding headings, or those that are commonly used. Headings should be eye-catching and be fitting to what you have done and achieved. Refer to CV example provided.

What skills are required?

These are often outlined in the job description. Identify examples of where you have used skills drawing from all your activities and experiences (i.e., studying, course work, part time work, cultural or sporting activities, community involvement or voluntary work).

Use evidence to strengthen your skills section.

Many students claim to have skills but give no examples that act as evidence of what they have done. Evidence is powerful and shows that you have thought about how you can transfer a skill from one area to what you are applying to. See our examples in this handout.

Avoid repetition!

DO NOT repeat information. Some of the same information could go under different headings. You need to decide where to put information so that your CV is not repetitive.

Check spelling and grammar.

Your CV needs to be error free. Applications can be rejected if they have spelling errors and typos. Also make sure that your formatting, style, spacing and headings are consistent.

TIPS:

Targeted
content

Simple

Concise

Easy to
read

Unique to
you

Error free



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Include supporting documents and a cover letter.

Always send your CV with a cover letter and supporting documents. Your CV is part of an application package which generally includes:

- Cover letter
- ID/ passport
- Certificates and
- Academic records.

Remember a cover letter enables you to write in prose, which you should not do in a CV: do in a CV:

<https://careers.uct.ac.za/media/7415>

Tips on layout and formatting:

- ☐ Put all activities in each section in reverse chronological order (start with most recent information)
- ☐ Use the **same font** throughout and consistent font sizes for headings and text.
- ☐ Font size for body text should be between 10 – 12, use Ariel or Calibri (body)
- ☐ Be careful of templates - they may not serve your purpose (use plain and simple ones if needed)
- ☐ Avoid using **CAPS** other than in headings.
- ☐ CVs are typically two pages, but employers may request otherwise, so always follow instructions. Academic CVs can be longer, and resumes are one page.
- ☐ Use your space wisely, but don't overcrowd the information (use line spacing between 1 and 1.5 pts)
- ☐ Adjust your margins if you are trying to keep to two pages and are one or two lines over.
- ☐ Do not include a photograph, unless requested by the employer to include it.



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Use your preferred name, do not include all your names. Include one email, a professional email. Preferable use your **Gmail, apple, Hotmail, or webmail.**

LinkedIn link must be hyperlinked. Make sure your account is updated. Include **ONLY** if you have an account.

John Doe

Cell: 082 345 6789 | Email: Careers.service@uct.ac.za | LinkedIn: johndoe | Mowbray, Cape Town

PROFILE

Graduate with Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies and Political studies, currently completing Honours in Political sciences at the University of Cape Town. Interested in social media, vacation work experience in publishing and marketing. Avid blogger (studentponderings.blogspot.com) and winner of Alan Paton Short Story Award in 2022. Proficient communicator, writer, and debater in English, Afrikaans, IsiZulu and a conversationalist in German and Spanish.

EDUCATION

2022 – Current: Bachelor of Arts Honours in Political sciences, University of Cape Town (UCT)

2019 – 2021: BA in Media studies and Political sciences, UCT

- Deans' merits award, 2020
- Achieved 85% passing average.

2017: National Senior Certificate, Matric, Lesonga High school, Cape Town

- Achieved 4 distinctions in Mathematics, English, Biology and Geography
- SRC chairperson and Class captain
- 2017 Western Cape regional debate finalist

Online courses or additional training should be placed under a different heading e.g.
Additional training/Courses
2022 Jan - June 2022:
Python fundamentals, Coursera

WORK EXPERIENCE

December 2020 - February 2022: Intern, Media 24, Cape Town

- Assisted with logistics, editing, administration and wrote article "Hungry Students" (Drum, March 2021)

January 2021 – March 2021: Orientation leader, UCT Faculty of Science, Cape Town

- Facilitated 3 orientation sessions and presented a talk to 350 first year students.
- Provided guidance and clarity to science 1st year students on how the university is structured and where to get services.

June 2016 – December 2017: Waitress (part-time), Brian's Burger Palace, Cape Town

- Provided customer services to all about 40-50 customers daily, gained employee of the month for 5 months in a row.
- Designed and proposed a menu change which increased customer satisfaction and dining.

Include any work experience (part time, vac work, volunteer, internships etc.). Use actionable words to describe your impact and involvement in the organization or company: See here for actionable words: <https://tinyurl.com/mrymb2jw>

SKILLS

- **IT and Computer skills:** Proficient computer user with key skills in Microsoft office suite (Excel, Word, PowerPoint), Python, Adobe package, Canva and troubleshooting.
- **Communication:** Developed public speaking skills and presenting through debate participation and further enhanced communication skills as a waitress. Completed Spanish and German courses.

Include at least 5 - 7 skills ranging from your **transferrable skills, interpersonal skills. Technical/ IT skills, qualification, or industry skills** (i.e., As a BA media student, gained digital marketing skills, research, editing and communications. Additionally, add skills to close the gap from different job postings you are targeting.

This is optional, however, if you choose to include a profile, be specific and concise about your unique selling points. Should be no longer than 4 points. Concentrate on your Education, passions, interests, and skills.



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- **Marketing and Design:** Designed a restaurant menu using Canva and shared the menu on social media to drive engagement, gained 100+ customers per day.

HELP TO IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS: <https://careers.uct.ac.za/students-considering-your-career/identifying-skills>

Referees

- Professor Percy Davis, Head: Botany Department, UCT: percy.davis@uct.ac.za
- Mr Vincent Mabona, Manager: SWAT Marketing: vincent@swat.co.za

**Only include email addresses
and exclude cellphone contacts.**

Additional information:

Only include these topics if you have the relevant experiences.

Achievements/Roles of responsibility/Leadership/Community work/Cultural activities/Sport

- 2015 -2018: 1st team Basketball, Rondenbosch community team
- 2021: Humanities Exclusive, UCT (6-week Career Development programme)
- 2017: Member of Students' Representative Council, Lesonga High School

Membership of Professional Associations

- 2020: Member of Golden Key International Honour Society, UCT

Publications and Conferences

- 2021: Africom Conference, Cape Town: Co-presented paper on "Do Student Voices Make a Difference: Exploring Outcomes of Student Activism at the University of Cape Town."

Publications and conferences section can be included if you are compiling an academic CV or a postgraduate scholarship.

select a
HEADING
which is
relevant
to you.
No need
to include
all of
them

