

How to Write the Perfect CV



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Focus on what is relevant to your job search

Why did you choose your university and want to study architecture in the first place? What attracted you to specific design studios or units? Highlight your enthusiasm for the subject, but also your particular interests – whether they are technical, design focused or more socially motivated.

You may not have a lot of architecture-related work experience, but what about previous jobs, perhaps in catering or in retail? Highlight any transferable skills this experience may have given you.

It's not just paid work that is relevant. Voluntary work for your local community, for instance, demonstrates initiative. Extracurricular activities, such as membership of sports teams, clubs or university societies, should also be listed. What skills can you confidently say you offer? Do you have experience with design-related software, project management tools, creating presentations or report writing?



Know your prospective employer

Some knowledge of the practice you are applying to is key to success. You can do this by looking at social media or the company's website, but don't be shy about using your personal network. Do you know anyone who used to work there or still does? Tailor your application to show relevance and genuine interest in the type of work and projects they carry out, and use your cover letter to expand on this.

Consider what sector the practice works in – residential, workplace, healthcare, housing, commercial or cross sector? Are they a small, medium or large practice? Do they communicate a particular ethos or values on their website?



Writing the contents of your CV

Your CV and your portfolio are your primary marketing tools for yourself and your career, and they may well be the first representation of you that a potential employer receives.

The order in which you list information on your CV is important. Essential information needs to be at the top of the first page to catch the eye of the reader. For experienced job seekers, this will be current and recent roles. When applying for your first position it should be a concise first statement and your university education.

1 Personal statement

This is not strictly necessary. However, if it is simple and informative it can serve a purpose. Limit it to two or three sentences, highlighting your present situation and what role you are seeking. Convey your individual skills and talents, avoiding generic statements and clichés.

2 Education

This is likely to be the most directly relevant aspect of your application at this point in your career. State your university or academic institution, your subject and any grades you already have, including A levels. State whether you have registered for your PEDR and at which university you will study your Part 2 if you know.

3 Technical skills

Set down your particular skills and proficiency, particularly in software packages, such as Revit, Photoshop, InDesign or Rhino. Be frank about your level of expertise because this may be tested as part of the interview process. Be sure to include other relevant skills such as hand drawing or model-making.



4 Work experience

If you have fulfilled an internship in an architecture practice or other design or construction-related environment, push this higher up the order of your CV. Here, your portfolio can show any drawings you have produced – not those of others or the practice in general. List the software used and the length of time you worked on the drawing. Otherwise, list any paid and voluntary work and be clear about the skills you have learned.

5 Positions of responsibility and skills

Include any roles at school or university that were not specific to your study. E.g whether you were a member of a society or a sports team at university. Also, listing things such as foreign language experience or whether you have a driving licence can add significantly to your application.

6 Hobbies and interests

Ideally, these should show some relevance to architecture or design – photography or life drawing for example. But note down anything that shows you take an interest in the world around you, different cultures, creativity or the built environment.

7 References

Offer references or list them if you still have space on your CV. If possible, these should cover your most recent employer and should be your immediate manager as opposed to a colleague. If you are not able to provide a work-related reference, then use academic ones.

If there are recent gaps in your résumé, give a simple explanation such as 'six months travelling in Eastern Europe' or 'carried out voluntary work while seeking employment'. Unexplained gaps may put off the person reading your CV. Above all, be honest. You are likely to have to elaborate on your CV during an interview, so you will be answerable for any inaccuracies or overstatements of the truth.



Presentation of your CV

- Keep the font simple, clean and readable: black text on a white background. Your portfolio will show your creativity. A good architecture CV is one that is easily read.
- Any visuals included must not be at the expense of the information behind it. If you choose to use graphics to demonstrate your creativity, keep the words clear and legible and explain any symbols used.
- Be consistent in formatting, particularly if using capitalisation or italics, and keep it succinct and focused – bullet points should be short.
- Ideally, your CV should be no longer than two A4 pages.



Final checks

- Check your grammar and spelling, especially the name of the practice to which you are applying. Spelling mistakes can mean applicants fall at the first hurdle.
- Ask someone else to read your CV and seek their feedback on its contents as well as any errors or inaccuracies.
- If you have prepared the CV in Word, consider converting it to a PDF, which is fixed and user friendly across platforms and devices.
- Track different versions of your CV and your applications. Once you have completed your CV for a particular job application, make a note of who you submitted it to and when to help you follow them up.



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