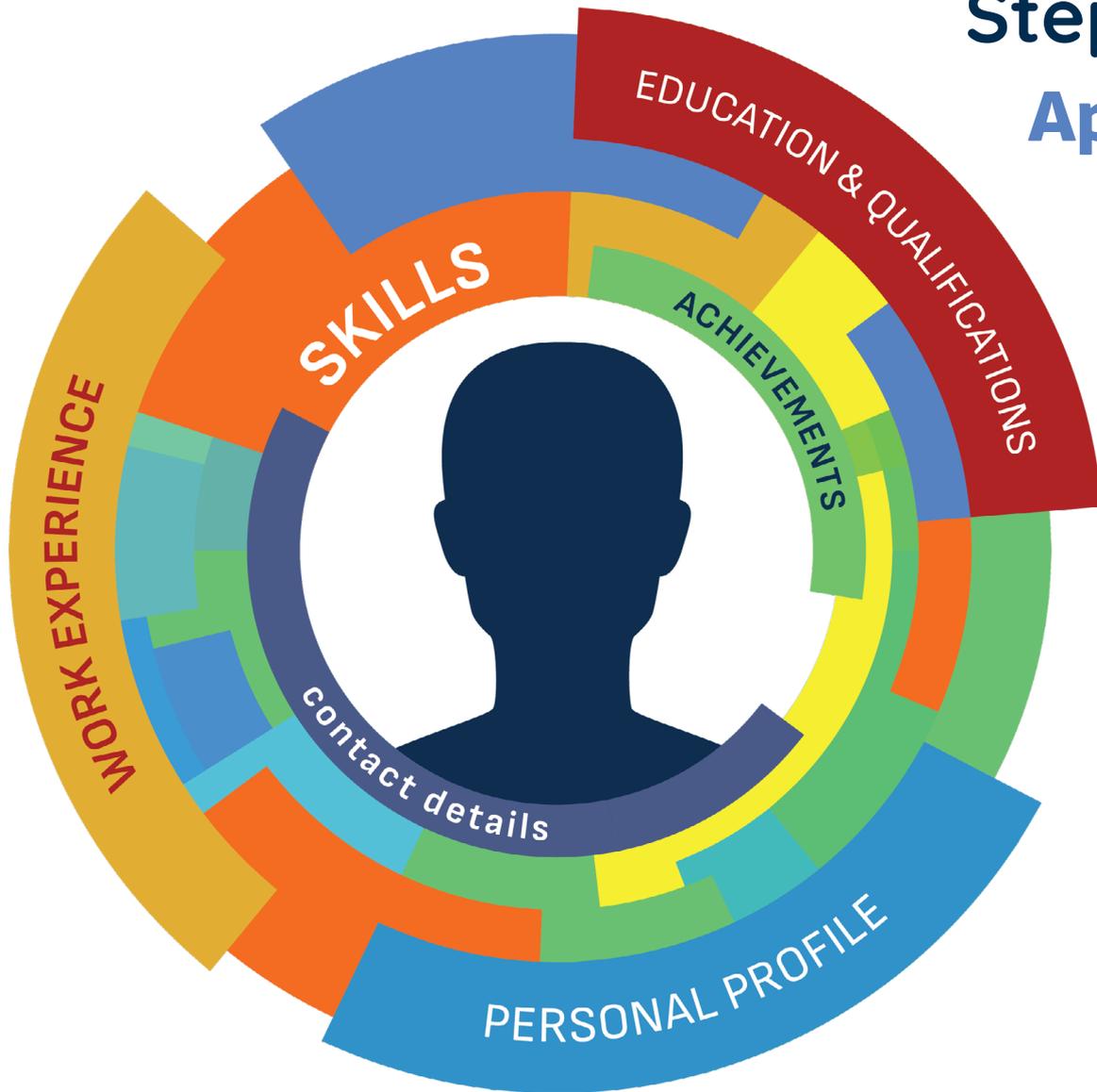


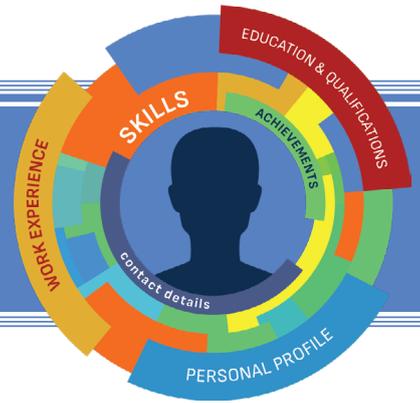
JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Step 2:
Apply



6: Writing your CV

Writing your CV



What is a CV?

- A CV is a document that outlines your skills, qualifications and work experience.
- A good CV is the most important tool for any really serious job seeker!

Why have a CV?

- Most employers expect you to send one when you apply for a job.
- Employers use them to help choose who to interview.
- A good CV will persuade an employer that you are worth interviewing.

Why would I use a CV?

You can use it to:

- apply for advertised jobs
- apply 'on spec' to employers (not applying to a specific job advert, but asking a company if they have any vacancies)
- help you to fill in application forms (traditional and online)
- help you get ready for interviews
- refer to if you are asked questions when you phone about a job.

Starting your CV

A CV is essentially a marketing tool – your 'personal brand'.

It sets out your skills, qualities, qualifications and work experience in a way that will persuade the employer to interview you.

You can set out your CV in lots of different ways. Getting it right is largely a matter of following a few basic rules in terms of its structure and content, and choosing a style or format an employer will find attractive and easy to read.

Once you are happy with your basic CV you can try different designs and formatting. Remember to tailor your CV to the specific job and type of work you are applying for. This is really important. You will cover how to match your skills to a job in the next module.

A skills-based CV is a good idea if you have little or no work experience. It emphasises your skills rather than your work history.

Basic CV Structure

Contact details

Include your full name, full address including the postcode, your landline phone number (including the area code) and/or your mobile number, and your email address. You don't need to include your date of birth or age.

Personal profile

A personal profile is a short statement, just two or three sentences, highlighting your very best skills and qualities. It isn't essential, but is a great way to catch the employer's attention. **For example:**

"I am a motivated and flexible person keen to get back into the workplace. My transferable skills include time management and organisation, adaptability, communication and teamwork. I'm eager to apply these skills professionally while continuing to develop further."

Skills

List your key skills – and those most relevant to the job. List each skill as a heading and give one or two brief examples of situations that demonstrate where you've used that skill.

Look back at the work you did in [1: All about you](#) – this will help.

Remember that skills aren't necessarily gained in the workplace, you may have lots of transferable skills gained from life experience.

Education and qualifications

If you were in education in the last few years, you would detail the secondary schools and colleges you've attended. Start with the most recent and work your way back. Include the name of the school or college, and the dates you attended.

Under each school or college list your qualifications. Again, start with your most recent qualifications and work back. Include the subject or course name, level of qualification and grade you achieved.

If you've been out of education for quite some time, you don't need to include all the learning and training you've ever done. Highlighting your most relevant and recent qualifications is enough.

Work experience

List your most recent work experience first, and work back.

Include work experience placements and any part time or voluntary work you've done. Give the dates, the employer's name, your role and a short description of what you did. What did you learn and what did you contribute?

Voluntary work is a good addition to a CV, as it shows that you are a committed person.

No work experience? Leave out this section. Instead focus on your skills and any interests or activities you've taken part in that might be relevant to the job.

Achievements

Have you ever worked towards an award, been recognised in some way for good work or achieved a goal?

It could be through a job, volunteering or your personal life.

This is where you can give a brief explanation, giving the name of the company/organisation involved and what it was you achieved.

Interests

Keep this section fairly short. Mention any interests or activities that show you have skills relevant to the job. Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, so don't be tempted to make them up!

Why include interests? They can give an employer an indication of your strengths and personality.

References

You don't have to name your referees on your CV. Simply write 'References available on request.' The employer will chase these up later if they want to take your application further.

You will need two referees. These could be a tutor, mentor, previous employer or employability coach. Always ask for their permission before you add them to your CV.

If you are including them on your CV, give their: name, job title and employer's name (where appropriate), phone number and (if possible) email address.

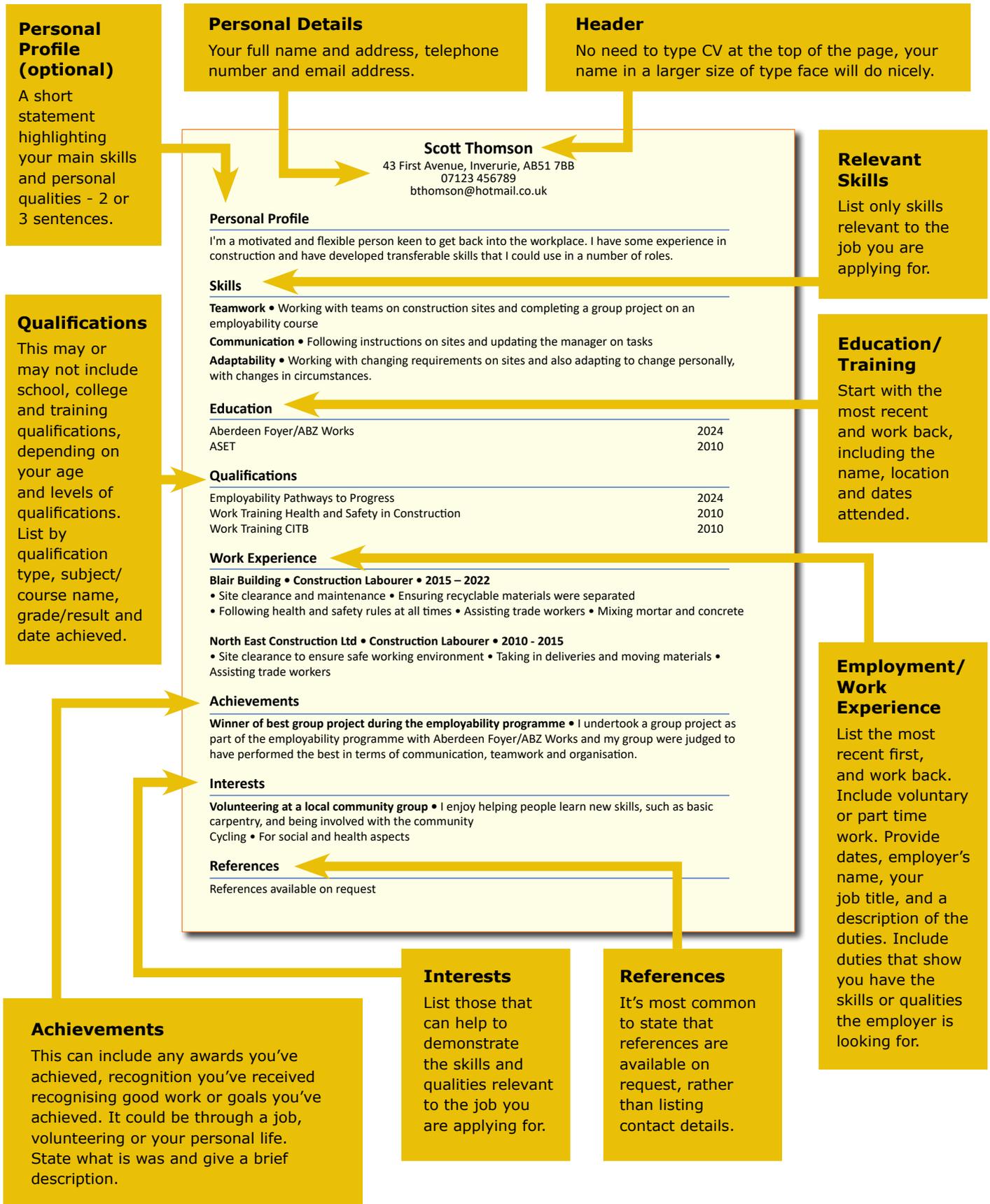
How should a CV look?

On the next page, **Anatomy of a CV** illustrates how a CV is typically laid out.

This also allows you to see the main parts that an employer will scan, before reading any further.

Anatomy of a CV

Order of sections will depend on whether you are creating a skills-based or experienced-based CV.



CV Checklist

The main thing to remember when writing your CV is that employers don't have a lot of time to review them, so they need to include only the most relevant information.

Warning: On average an employer may only spend around 30 seconds scanning your CV before making a decision to read any further!

So - think carefully about what to put in your CV - and what to leave out.



A good CV should be:

- word processed** - looks professional and is easy to change for different jobs
- short** - for someone with little, or no work experience, one or two A4 pages are sufficient
- easy to read** - clear font; text separated by bullet points and headings
- attractive** - well laid out and formatted
- tailored** - to the job, or type of job, you're applying for
- accurate** - no mistakes in spelling, grammar or punctuation (don't rely just on the spellchecker - they don't catch everything!)
- truthful** - no exaggeration, or complete lies
- focused** - containing relevant information only
- positive** - about you, your skills, personal qualities and experience
- complete** - explain any gaps in your education or experience. Double check your dates!
- clean** - no smudges or stains - or crumpled paper
- checked** - get someone to check it for mistakes before you send it.





Other things to remember

- Don't put 'CV' or 'Curriculum Vitae' at the top of your CV - it should be your name.
- Always send a covering letter, or covering email, with your CV.
- Save an electronic master copy of your CV.
- Adapt your CV for different jobs, and try different styles or formats.
- Choose a classic font such as Calibri, Arial, Helvetica or Verdana. They are available on most computer systems, so the formatting will not be changed when sending an electronic copy.
- Don't go overboard on the formatting. Keep the style simple and consistent.
- Update your CV regularly.
- Take a copy of your CV along with you to interviews.
- If you are emailing your CV, attach it as a file - don't send it in the body of the message.
- Use a sensible and professional sounding email address.
- When you save the version of your CV that you're using to apply for a job, make sure that the file name includes your name - this makes it easy for an employer to find it if they have a lot to look through. CV Builder automatically does this for you.



Activity 1: Creating a CV

Use [CV Builder](#) to have a go at creating your own CV.

CV Builder

- Open [CV Builder](#). Work your way through each section, following the instructions.
- If there are any sections that you want to complete later, such as Work Experience, you can click through to the next section.
- View the [Activity 1 Sample CV](#) to see to see how someone might set out their skills and experience.
- There are some hints and tips throughout to help you.

Alternatively, you can use Word to create your own CV. Use the [Activity 1 Sample CV](#) to guide you.

Now you know how to create your CV,
you can move on to

[7: Match your skills to a job](#)

Or [click here](#) to return to the main screen.