

# cv overview

**N.B.** all CVs,  
references, letters  
and names  
are fictional!

The main purpose of your cv is to demonstrate your suitability to prospective employers and those with opportunities. **Its goal is to get you to interview stage.** It should clearly communicate your capacity to do the role/undertake the opportunity and along with a cover letter, it should demonstrate your motivation.

> Make sure to look at all the CV samples throughout the book and not just those related to your discipline.



> Licence to design  
Think about everyday items and how you can rebrand them creatively for your cv

## your cv

Putting together your CV involves making a series of decisions about content, typography, layout and visual style. Before each decision you should ask yourself if your choice will show you in the best and most professional light. Remember your CV is your marketing tool; your brand.

**Remember judgements will be made on what you say, how you say it and the way you present it.**

- > Before submitting your CV check industry standards and/or company/organisation requirements (see presentation formats section).
- > Before submitting your CV make sure you read the job description/details of the opportunity in depth.
- > Set out evidence which demonstrates you can meet the necessary requirements.

### Your CV should:

- > Generally be no more than two pages long – A4 size is standard and it should be printed on good quality paper stock.
- > Be tailored for each position or opportunity you are applying for.
- > Contain language — simple and concise.
- > Avoid the personal pronoun 'I' or 'my'. The reader knows the CV is about you.
- > Contain action verbs for describing skills and experience, i.e. created, designed, composed, managed, directed, etc.
- > Be checked for spelling and grammar.
- > Usually be accompanied by a cover letter.

# types of cvs

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## Chronological

Most common format where education and work experience are set out in reverse chronology (most recent first). Good when education and experience are directly relevant to role or opportunity.

## Skills based

Less common format where education and experience are categorised according to skills relevant to the role or opportunity. Good for highlighting skills and abilities and hiding chronological gaps.

## Combination

Combines aspects of chronological and skills based formats. This format is good for really targeting your education, experience and skills.

> Does the office drink coffee?  
Send them your CV in a  
customised cup!





## what to include

What follows is a list of broad areas which can be included in your CV. The extent to which you emphasise or include some areas over others will depend on the industry requirement, the role or opportunity and your level of education, experience and skills.

### Artist's statement

Sometimes it is necessary to include an 'artist's statement'. This is a short description of your work, influences and philosophy as a practitioner. Although it is ok to be technical in your description, as your reader will probably be in the industry, avoid being too self-indulgent, pretentious or longwinded, as this may alienate, confuse or even bore the reader.

#### Your statement can include:

- > **The main themes of your work**
- > **Materials used**
- > **Influences**
- > **Professional beliefs and ethics**
- > **Skills**
- > **Personal reflections**
- > **Potential and intended market**
- > **Ambitions**

### Personal information

As with all information in the document, only include it if it is relevant. The main points to include under your personal information are your name and contact information. Ensure your email address is professional. Additional details such as date of birth, nationality, etc. should only be included if they are relevant to the position — under Irish equality legislation you are not obliged to reveal age, religion or nationality.

### Education/qualifications

Generally speaking it is practice to start with your most recent qualification and work your way backwards chronologically. Grades may be included but more useful information would be the core subjects, area of concentration of dissertation or thesis, final year project or shows and skills developed over the period of study. As your most recent qualification will probably be the most relevant, it is usually sufficient to summarise earlier courses or qualifications rather than give full course information and grades.

### Skills

This is where you can detail your main strengths under clear headings. Divide your strengths in to broad areas such as creative, project management, administrative skills and IT or other skills relevant to the requirements of position or opportunity. It is critical to provide examples of the skills from your life (education, work experience and or interests) rather than a unsubstantiated list. Other elements to include in this section would be languages, drivers licence and software training or competencies.

## Employment

With work experience highlight your role, responsibilities and achievements in the position. Give key information such as dates of employment, organisation's name and job title. It is also a good idea to outline your key responsibilities in the position as well as skills acquired during your employment such as time keeping, time management, team work, working under pressure organisational skills, etc.

## Career goals

This area is optional and will depend on the nature and level of the position you are applying for. It is a short statement of three or four lines summarising your key ambitions and strengths. The purpose of the section is to provide an overview and to tie in the key elements of the CV. Bring in things like your work experience and qualifications and how they are going to be influential in achieving your goals. Be careful here to avoid bland generic statements.

## Awards/achievements

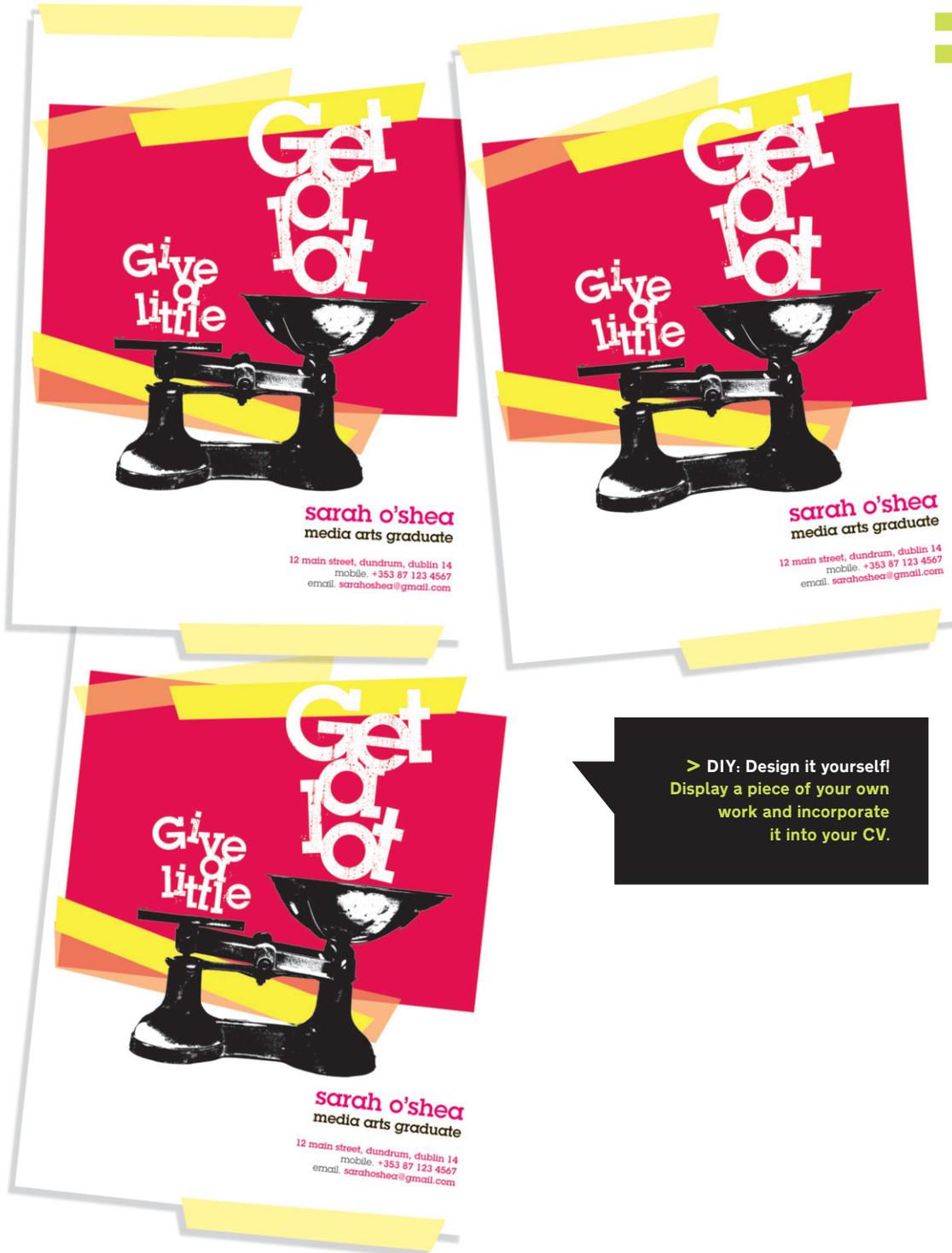
This section is particularly relevant in the creative fields. You can include exhibitions, end of year degree shows, awards obtained and competition success. It is important to include the dates and titles of any exhibitions, the venue and whether it was a solo show or a group project. Don't be afraid to include information about work as part of a collection or details of work purchased.

## Interests

This is an opportunity to include your extra curricular activities including hobbies, sport, etc. Provide detail rather than single word descriptions such as tennis, walking and reading. This area can set you apart from others and give an insight into the kind of person you are. Describing your interests can help you connect with the reader, help them remember you and give them a sense of your personality. The employer will also pick up on skills and evidence of your motivations from your interests. If an interest or achievement is linked to what is required in the industry all the better.

## Referees

Make sure to include a name, organisation name and title and email. Be sure to get your referees permission in advance. It is also acceptable to simply state that references are available on request. Good referees would include a personal tutor; employer — work experience or placement manager, or project supervisor. Give them a copy of your CV and details of the opportunity you are applying for so they can project you in the best light with respect to the opportunity.



> **DIY: Design it yourself!**  
Display a piece of your own work and incorporate it into your CV.



# presenting your cv

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## Presenting your CV

Depending on the industry, the style of your CV can say as much about you as its content. In creative industries, make sure that your CV is produced to the highest of standards in terms of printing and paper. If you have a business card or headed paper, or even a personal logo be sure to include them.

## Examples of your work

It is especially important to be mindful of printing when it comes to your creative work. Frame your work on a white background. Be mindful of your reader and make sure it fits in with the position you are applying to and also as part of the document. When sending images in PDF be sure that they still look good in the format. If you are sending slides, CDs etc be sure to label them as they can become detached from your CV.

## Branding

Unifying your CV, cover letter and even a business card together in terms of typeface, layout and design can make a very strong impression. A common theme can create a professional and cohesive feel to your presentation... just don't go overboard.

## Language

In the majority of creative media, language is the primary form of communication, so after branding your work and presenting your previous work well, don't forget about the written elements of your CV. Although it is essential to keep the content of the CV concise, don't be afraid to show some literary flair while you're writing it.

Make sure your words reflect your personality, remember this is your first chance to make a first impression, don't waste a word.

## Photographs

To include or not to include a picture of yourself. This is a question that often arises and it is completely down to personal opinion. Many employers have said they find it unprofessional, on the other hand, in the case of a painter or digital artist, a self-portrait may be a novel way of highlighting your work.

## Folding and 3D design

Many design students use the CV itself as an art project with free standing card or novel folding techniques. This may be effective in some areas but you must remember that the majority of CVs will be held by potential employers in files or filing cabinets. If your CV isn't convenient to keep on file then there is a real chance, original as it may be, it could end up in the bin.

## Multimedia

There is a number of options for multimedia CVs — i.e., Flash, Powerpoint presentations, pdf, websites, movies on CD-Rom. If you decide on designing a digital option, (in industries such as web-design and animation in particular, it makes logical sense to do so) bear in mind compatibility and software issues as well as who will be the person viewing the CV — more traditional employers may still be keen on a standard CV printed on paper. If you are sending a file by email, be mindful of the size of any attachments. It won't create a great impression on an employer if the files clogs up their email server!





### CD

Whether it's a CV in Word format with video or images included on the disk, or a full-on integrated presentation there are a couple of things to be careful of when sending in a CD. Make sure the presentation of the box and disk is as professional as the contents of the disc itself and be sure to include your name and contact information on both the disc and box insert. Consider getting the disc professionally printed. If there is a particular software plugin or player needed to view the work on the CD (Real Player, Adobe Reader etc) include them on the disk to make it easier for the viewer to look at the contents.

### Website

If you have good web-design skills, or know someone who does — then a website can be a very useful alternative to a traditional CV. Be sure to keep the design as simple as possible and make navigation easy. Also it is worth trying to be mindful of printing when designing the layout. Your employer may want to print sections of the site to look at again, so try to make the layout as conducive as possible to printing on a standard A4 page. One nice touch that we've come across is having a PDF version of your CV downloadable from the site. It is worth including a link to download Adobe reader on the same page in case the viewer doesn't have in on their machine. Bear in mind that, unless you have security in place on the site, all information on the site will be in the public domain. Don't feel you have to include phone numbers and your home address. An email address will be sufficient. Having a suitable domain name is important. (see article on websites).

### Email

Probably the most common way to send a CV in Ireland nowadays, there are still a couple of points to be careful of when sending your CV in this way. Make sure you have the right contact person, i.e. make a call in advance and confirm the address of the HR Officer or person with responsibility for assessing applications. Be aware of compatibility issues. Packages such as MS Works, Publisher, Quark or very new versions of Word may not be easy for everyone to open. Don't send a large number of high-res images or a very large file that might cause problems for the person receiving it. Make sure you have an appropriate return email address. Do not send it from an unprofessional email like beerfan@... or chunkylover55@... it may undo all your good work.



# cv checklist

## General research

- > Have you sought advice from friends, tutors, industry and careers specialists?
- > Have you assessed different styles and formats of presentation?

## Job specific research

- > Have you found out what specific skills and qualities are needed/ desired for the job or opportunity?
- > Are you using industry terminology and buzz words?
- > Have you looked at the organisation's website?
- > Do you know anyone who works for the organisation (or a similar organisation) with whom you could discuss the vacancy?

> You may receive conflicting views and need to use your own judgement

## Matching the vacancy/opportunity

- > Is your CV relevant for this employer/vacancy/opportunity?
- > Have you communicated what you can give to the organisation?
- > Have you communicated your unique selling points?
- > Have you provided evidence of all the skills and qualities required for the job/opportunity?
- > Have you clearly stated how your experience is relevant for the job/opportunity?
- > Does your CV work in tandem with your cover letter?
- > Have you updated and changed your CV for each job, identifying and adding skills, qualities and experience needed?

## Visual impact

- > Does your CV look good visually i.e. not too dense?
- > What is the visual impression when held at arm's length?
- > Is your design consistent e.g. in terms of alignment, spacing, use of fonts?
- > Is the information clear and well-presented within one or two pages?
- > Does your CV look professional?
- > Is it perfectly produced and printed on good quality paper?
- > Does the look and feel your CV clearly communicate your creative abilities?
- > Has your CV been checked to eliminate any spelling or grammatical errors?
- > Does the sequences of sections work in your favour so that your selling points stand out?

## Seek feedback

- > Have you obtained feedback from people working in the industry, course lecturers and/or careers advisers?
- > Obtain feedback from employers who have rejected your application?

