

Curriculum Vitae (CV) – Check List

In Finland, it is typical to use a CV in recruitment instead of a Resume. A CV is usually longer than a Resume, because it has more detailed information on your duties and activities.

The purpose of the CV is to show your most important professional experience and competence. A CV should convey your competence clearly, for example when you are applying for a job or attending an annual review with your supervisor.

Companies often use ‘internal’ CVs, which provide a fairly detailed picture of an employee’s work history and job descriptions while employed in the company. Generally, these CVs should not be used directly as such in job search, but they serve as a good aid when preparing your proper CV.

If you are applying for a job in the private sector, you do need to authenticate your CV (with signatures of outsiders). Certificate copies do not need to be appended to the application either, unless specifically requested.

The order of the sections in the CV may vary depending on situation. Your CV does not have to contain all the sections – only the ones that are related to your competence and are of interest to the recruiting person.

Check and optimise your CV

Make sure that your CV is clearly formulated and portrays **your best competence** to the reader! Use the list below as a checking aid. The list is divided according to the typical main sections of the CV.

When you have read the tip, checked your CV and made the appropriate changes or completions, tick the box!

PERSONAL DETAILS

I can be contacted easily and conveniently.

First name and surname

Postal address

The telephone number from which you can be best reached at all times (give only one!)

E-mail address (only the one you read frequently!)

You can also include a link to your LinkedIn profile

Insert the basic CV details in the footer so that they are found on every page.

For example: CV First name Family Name Date Page number.

My photograph is recent and gives a professional, positive impression.

You can insert a photo in the upper right corner of your CV.

We recommend that you have the photo taken by a professional photographer.

It is OK to smile 😊

Check that the photo comes out clear also when printed in grey shades.

Personal details contain information that has relevance from the recruiter's standpoint.

Date of birth (and place of birth)

Family relations (include the information you want or omit this altogether. Think about what is of relevance to the job you are applying for or to the other goals of the CV)

The personal details section does not take too much space from other information.

Preferably no more than 1/5 of the first page. Put all your contact details in the same place, in the upper left corner.

EDUCATION

I have explained my degrees clearly.

Your degrees and very broad or important study entities: name of the degree, school and year of completion. Also state your advanced subject, if necessary. Topic of your thesis/final paper if it is relevant to the job you are applying for. Remember to mention studies you may have completed abroad.

Educational information is presented in reverse chronological order.

State your most recent degree or study entity first.

You can also put the most relevant degree first.

Then continue with your previous education(s).

Information on the matriculation examination/high school is also included.

This information is often of interest to recruiters. 'High school graduate, name of school, also place, where necessary; graduation year.'

WORK EXPERIENCE

This is usually the most important part of the CV and promotes your recruitment the most. Spend enough time writing good descriptions for your work experience!

Periods of employment arranged as part of employment courses are also considered work experience. However, remember to mention at the end of the description that the employment was part of a training period.

Jobs are presented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent one first.

Start with your most recent job. Then continue with your previous jobs.

Each job description has a heading, stating your position title and name of employer.

State your title, employer and the start and end dates of employment.

It is sometimes also a good idea to state the town/country.

The start and end date of each job are clear to understand.

The most common time format is mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy.

The phases of the job or separate projects can also be divided into time periods.

This way you can show your professional development to the reader.

If you have been employed in the same job for a long time (e.g. 5 years), it is useful to divide the job into periods and describe the development of tasks and responsibilities within the job.

The employer company's basic information has been provided.

Some recruiters would also like to have information on the company, especially if you have a very high position, such as the CEO. Talk briefly about the company's branch of activity, size and turnover.

The reader can understand the activities I have been engaged in.

It is not enough to list things like 'quality system' 'marketing material', 'personnel', 'listing in a stock exchange', 'our company's R&D operations', 'factory production lines', 'user support', 'equipment purchases' or 'financing'.

You need a **verb** to explain what you have done. An active verb gives a more dynamic impression. For example:

- *'I managed our X factory's production line rebuilding project. In the project we customised the production to match our growing clientele.'*
- *'I headed the planning of the entire company's T&D operations, negotiated on project financing and recruited research personnel.'*
- *"I expanded our quality system into an environmental and safety system with my project team. We implemented the expansion in Finland in 2004 and in our Asian subsidiaries in 2005.'*
- *'I was in charge of technical support and the planning and implementation of marketing material for product family X. In planning the material, I worked in close collaboration our product development unit.'*
- *'I coordinated the procurement and maintenance of computer equipment and software for municipal office X. I also provided daily user support.'*

You can use verb lists when thinking about your activities:

See "Work-related verbs".

I have listed what I have been responsible for and the scope of my responsibilities.

Describe the key tasks and areas of responsibility of each of your jobs.

If you have worked at the managerial level or higher, you should explain the areas of responsibility of the position under separate headings, such as 'responsibilities' or 'key areas of responsibility'.

Similarly, insert your results, achievements or things done under separate sub-headings, see next section.

I have described my productivity and efficiency.

Show your work results and achievements. You do not have to prove that you are a Superman, but the employer needs to know that you are productive and that you bring some additional value to the position.

Therefore, tell about your results in the scale of your responsibilities. You can also use separate headings, such as 'results' or 'achievements'.

It is especially important to specify your results if you hold a managerial or higher position. Also headhunters always want to see your results.

Here are some examples of results. Note that these results are imaginary so they are not sufficiently detailed. Tell about your results at a more concrete level.

'The market share of our service activities increased by 20 per cent.'

'My team developed a new software product.'

'I set up an effective retail network in South-America.'

'The refurbishment of the production line allowed our factory to increase its profitability.'

I have concretised my job descriptions with sufficient numerical and other data.

Also state the number of your employees, the size of the budget you have administered, the scope of your operative area by country, and other corresponding, concrete information that illustrates the scope and coverage of your responsibilities and achievements.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

I have listed all the languages I have command of.

Skills in rarer languages may prove surprisingly useful. Therefore, list all the languages you have command of. If you have even elementary skills in Finnish, do not forget to mention it.

I have evaluated my language skills.

State the current skill level of each language. Evaluate your level realistically on the scale excellent/good/basic knowledge, for example. Describe your written and verbal skills separately, if necessary.

In this section, you can also tell about your longer stays abroad, language courses, expatriate assignments or work in an organization with English or Finnish as the working language, for example. You can also include official language certificates here.

Mother tongue is also included in the language list.

Remember to include your mother tongue!

IT SKILLS

IT skills are described at an accuracy suitable for the goal of the CV.

List your IT skills and evaluate your skill levels. If necessary, you can use sub-headers or categories such as Programming Languages, Databases, Testing tools, Operating Systems, 3D Design, etc. IT-people typically have a very detailed list of IT-skills on a separate paper as an appendix to the CV.

You can use the same program/programming language in very different ways in different contexts. Are you a basic user or a guru? For what purpose do you use the program? You can also include this kind of information in the job description.

COURSES/TRAINING

The courses included support the goal of the CV.

Short courses not leading to actual vocational qualifications. If there are several courses of this kind, only list the ones that are relevant to the goal of your CV.

You can combine older courses, for example 'Several management-related courses in 2003–2009'. In this case you can bring a complete list of courses with you to the interview.

Course information is clear.

Name of the course, training organization, year, duration of the course (as credits, days, weeks or months).

POSITIONS OF TRUST

The positions of trust listed support the goal of the CV.

Professional positions of trust comparable to work experience, such as member of the company's board of directors or representative of an international community in your professional field.

You can talk about your recreational positions of trust when stating your hobbies.

PUBLICATIONS / ARTICLES

Relevant publications/articles are included.

List publications or articles that are relevant. If you have many publications or articles, enclose them with the CV as a separate list.

LECTURING

Relevant lecturing tasks are included.

Talk about your most important lecturing tasks, such as acting as a visiting lecturer in a foreign university / a seminar in your own field.

HOBBIES

I have stated my current hobbies.

Tell about your real, active hobbies. Your positions of trust related with your leisure-time. Some of them may also give you professionally important experience. For example, being responsible for fund raising in a recreational club.

The scope of the description of hobbies is moderate compared with the description of tasks.

If you show much more enthusiasm, explicitness and thoroughness when describing your hobbies than when describing the work you have done, the reader may become confused.

OTHER INFORMATION

I have provided other information to the extent necessary with regard to the goal of the CV.

Other information can include completion of military or civil service (if you want to include. In Finland we have compulsory military/civil service). A driving license, if it is of relevance to the job you are applying for.

The scope of other information is moderate compared with the description of tasks.

As for hobbies: If you show much more enthusiasm, explicitness and thoroughness in this section than when describing the work you have done, the reader may become confused.

REFERENCES

You may be asked to provide references in the course of the recruitment process. Therefore, you can mention at the end of the CV that you have references. However, names or contact details should not be included in the CV. Instead, you can make a separate reference list.

Example 1: 'I will provide a list of references, upon request.'

Example 2: "I have references from my supervisors, partners, colleagues and customers. I will provide a list of references, if requested.'

FINAL CHECK!

The CV supports my professional strengths that I have brought up in my application.

Make sure that your CV proves and complements all the skills that you have claimed to have and all the things that you have claimed to have done.

My key strengths and sales arguments are up front.

A stranger can understand your work history after having read the CV once.
Make sure that the CV conveys a consistent and logical professional story.

There is not too much professional jargon.

Your CV is often read by somebody that is not qualified in your field. Therefore, make sure these persons receive enough information from your CV.

Layout is OK.

The CV font is readable and there are no long, heavy paragraphs.
The necessary information can be found easily by just browsing the CV.
You have checked the CV with a spell checker.

The length of the CV is in proportion to the length of my career.

The CV should preferably be not longer than two pages. A person with a longer career of course has a longer CV than a newly graduated person. A good measure is one page per every 10 years of employment history.

Would I like to read this CV myself?