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# **TOOL FOR ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET:**

## **curriculum vitae and cover letter**

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

This video will teach how to write a powerful *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) for entering in the labour market of the enterprises and organizations.

Concerning the academic CV, the information to be included are different.

The CV is a fundamental tool for a job application and it is like a personal business card that should capture the attention of the recruiters. The CV's purpose is to interest the recruiters and to be invited to a job interview.

This video will teach you:

1. to present your personal story in a good and effective manner in your CV;
2. elaborate your skills and interests to point out the reasons why you are the best candidate for the job.

Please be aware that there is no perfect CV. It is important to tell your personal story. Emphasize on your strengths and make sure to adapt it to the individual job requirements. The contents of the ideal CV are determined by the job position and the person who is applying.

In order to succeed in capturing the attention of the recruiter, it is essential to better understand how they work. Please consider that they don't have much time for analyse a single CV and usually they take a very short look at your CV. Therefore, it has to be interesting enough for them to continue reading. Time is crucial for recruiters, in fact if they had to read from the beginning to the end each CV, they would fail to achieve their goals.

Some advices:

1. make the recruiter easily identify your skills, your results using the right keywords, which make it clear that you have read the job opening carefully;
2. use key words;
3. try to summarize everything in one-two pages;
4. insert a summary, a very short paragraph in which you will write who you are, what you do today, which skills you have, what makes you unique, what you would like to do in your future (max 50 words);
5. customize the CV to align it with the selection criteria.

Be aware that there can be different requirements in other countries and remember to always check the requirements to be included in the CV when you are applying abroad! For example, United Kingdom and United States usually do not include the following information:

- date of birth;
- gender;
- photo.

Before to start writing your CV you have to decide the format and the structure that you want to use.

Here are our general recommendations for making your CV well structured and clear:

1. white margins help focus on the content;
2. short paragraphs contribute towards a better readability;
3. use a clear font such as Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial and a font size not smaller than 12 pt and no larger than 18 pt. Don't use different font styles;
4. adjust your CV to the job profile and make sure that it is easy to read.

### *Formats*

Often used CV formats are the Europass and the resume.

Europass<sup>1</sup> is a standard format valid for most professions, which allows you to further detail your experiences, dividing them into thematic sections.

When filling out this type of format, pay attention to the length, because remember that the time that recruiter spend on your CV don't exceed ten seconds.

Resume<sup>2</sup> is more creative and suitable for the professional fields of Innovation, Finance, Industry, Marketing and Communication.

It can include colours, photos and infographics and other elements that make it more customizable.

Be careful to structure it clearly and cleanly to make it easy to read.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/> (01/2020)

<sup>2</sup> Google documents offers different forms to create a resume,  
<https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/?ftv=1> (01/2020)

You can find another resume free builder at <https://www.resume.com/> (01/2020). Finally, word and power points also offer resume's models.

Now let's look at the structure of the CV in Europass format in order to understand the contents to better fill each part.

### *Personal data*

In this section you have to include contact information. The criteria must be maximum availability, for this reason it is necessary to write down all your contact details.

The information you need to include are:

- name;
- surname;
- address;
- telephone, including the Country code;
- e-mail;
- skype;
- LinkedIn;
- nationality, including if you have dual nationality;
- gender;
- date of birth.

### *Photo*

The photo is required in both Europass and Resume formats.

The image must be frontal, with good light and a neutral background. The dress code is usually formal and remember to smile!

Photos while you are playing sport or you are on holiday or with friends are not suitable.

### *Professional summary*

It's a short paragraph, just two or three sentences, for a maximum of five lines at the beginning of the CV that describes your professional profile, highlighting your characteristics and your skills.

It can be an effective introduction to your resume to capture the recruiter's attention.

It is a statement about:

- who you are;
- what you do;

- your professional goals.

Summary is highly customizable in relation to who you are, the job position and the company for which you are applying.

### *Work experience*

The work experience section is the first part that recruiters read, so it is important to write down the results achieved clearly. List your experiences from the most recent to the oldest.

Don't worry if you don't have any professional experience in your sector. You can create a new section, called "vocational experience", where you will include internship experiences, volunteer civil service, baby-sitting, children's entertainer, etc.

Those experiences tell something about you and your skills and therefore allow the recruiter to know you better.

Any experience that you report on your CV must include:

- start and end date of each employment relationship;
- for the work experiences or internship still in progress reports the starting year and the formula "in progress" or "present";
- company name and a description line;
- name of the position held. It is essential to use clear and widespread definitions, which are understandable even for those who aren't in your sector;
- activities carried out and skills acquired by them, in a synthetic but descriptive manner. You can also choose to use bulleted lists.

### *Education and training*

Describe your education and training experiences, starting with the most recent. Add a field for each course, reporting the following data for each:

- year of graduation;
- name of the course, qualification obtained;
- name and location of the University;
- final vote;
- thesis title;

- course exams: you will have to select only a few (no more than three), which you consider having been decisive for the development of your professional identity.

In this section you can also report on study experiences abroad, such as Erasmus. You will have to report the informations related to the University where you worked, indicating the duration and the activities in which you took part.

Otherwise, based on the number of experiences abroad, you can decide to create a special section in which to enclose them.

### *Personal skills*

#### Language skills

Indicate the level of written, oral and comprehension knowledge. Also, include any language course attended, language exams and the marks obtained, significant stays abroad attesting the learning of the language.

If you have a certificate, indicate the date on which you obtained it.

#### Soft skills

“Soft skills represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills alongside ethical values”.

(Haselberger, Oberhuemer, Perez, Cinque, Capasso, 2012, p. 82)

Soft skills are life skills, because they can be exercised in all areas of life.

For each competence that you report, specify in which context it was acquired. We need to be able to exemplify episodes where the transversal skills have been implemented.

#### Digital skills

In this section you will have to indicate your digital skills, specifying your level and the possible acquisition of IT certificates.

#### Professional skills (or other skills)

Indicate any competence related to the work not mentioned elsewhere and which adds value to the candidacy. Specify in which context it was acquired.

### Driving license

In this section you will have to indicate if you have a driving license, specifying which type.

### *Additional information*

Additional information's section gives you the possibility to tell something more to the recruiter about who you are and your personal background.

In this section you have to write down all those activities that have allowed you to develop skills useful for performing the profession for which you are applying for (training programs, interests, hobbies...). Enter only the relevant profile information.

In this section you can report:

- participation in Workshops or international conferences;
- publications: if you have written articles that have been published in scientific journals, you will need to provide the data in the following order:
  - author: indicate the full surname and the initial of the name;
  - title (in italics);
  - name of the magazine (in italics);
  - year of the dossier (for example: Vol.1);
  - issue number (for example: n.1);
  - page number.

Example: Harish J., *Society and Social Power*, in *Cadmus*, 2014, Vol. 2, n. 3, pp. 584-590.

- projects/boards/judgments;
- associations;
- attachments.

### *Consent to processing personal data (Personal Data)*

According to the law on privacy, companies must have your authorization to process your personal data.

Remember that you have the possibility to create new sections in your cv, on the basis of the experiences you have done and what you believe important in relation to the position you are applying for.

*Place, date of compilation and signature*

At the end of your CV remember to insert the place and the date of compilation. Update your CV frequently and change the date each time.

Remember to add a legible signature to your CV

We hope those tips have been useful to you. Now test yourself and update your CV.

Thank you for your attention!

## **COVER LETTER**

After the CV, the cover letter is the second most important document in your job application.

The recruiter, after reading your CV and being interested in you, will read your cover letter.

This video will teach you how to write a good cover letter.

It is important to write it correctly and effectively because it can make the difference and help you to get a job interview.

There are some important points you need to keep in mind before writing a cover letter:

- the cover letter must be written ad hoc for every occasion, it has to be individual.  
When you write it, you must focus only on the most significant experiences and on the skills learned related to the position you are applying for;
- the cover letter shouldn't talk about you, but about the possibility of a match between you, the organization and the job position;
- your cover letter is a supplement to add to your CV, not a repetition of it. It shouldn't contain your CV information, but should focus more on your motivation, on how you would match the organization and the position. It is an opportunity for you to connect with the employer on a more personal and direct level.

Next, you collect information out of the job description. It could be useful to answer the following questions:

1. What does the job require?
2. What skills are required and how do they fit to the organization?
3. What motivates me to apply for this position?
4. Why am I the best person to get this job?

Once you have thought about the answers and you have them clear in your mind, you can start writing a cover letter.

A cover letter should be orderly and airy allowing for quick and pleasant reading and not longer than one page. Remember that the recruiter cannot devote it much time.

The cover letter must follow the same graphical structure as your CV:

- simple;
- clear;
- white margins;
- small block of text;
- the same font and size used in the CV;
- some words in bold.

You have to convince the reader that:

- you know the organization well and value its philosophy, that is why you want to apply;
- you share the same fundamental values and beliefs of the organization;
- you have the right skills and the right experiences for them

Now let's see together the parts that make up a cover letter.

Here you can find an example of a cover letter, and now we will go through this example to introduce you what information you should place in each section.

### *Heading*

Your contact details must be placed at the top left. While in the top on the right reports the data of the person/company to whom you are addressing the letter. Indicate the name and surname of the Human Resources Manager, if you don't know it, search on the web or call manually the company. If you can't find it, write a generic "Dear Human Resources Manager".

### *Object of the letter*

It is important to specify which job opening you are responding to. In case of self-application, it is important to specify it in the object

## *References*

This section of the cover letter must be a paragraph in which you introduce yourself and the organization, referring to the job position for which you applied.

Remember to mention, if you know them, the names of the people you met in your personal and professional life who come from that particular organization.

Show that you know the organization. This is a good opportunity to connect with the employer at a higher level.

Tell a strong story that strikes the employer, help him visualize yourself and have the ability to connect you to him and his work environment.

## *My possible contribution*

The second part of the cover letter concerns the candidate. Therefore, it reports what you can offer to the organization in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and personal characteristics.

It shouldn't be repeating what was written inside the CV, but dedicated to writing some specific examples to show how your skills are in line with the position you are applying for. Give examples of how and why you developed the required skills by focusing and emphasizing the transferability of these skills in relation to previous experiences and the role you are aspiring to.

You can also argue with the experiences you have gained during your study (specific study subjects or internships). Don't forget to include the results obtained from your actions.

Highlight your transversal skills, from team work to the communicational skills.

The aim is to try to matching and focus attention on what we can offer and what are our real strengths such as:

- knowledge of one or more foreign languages (provable) or ICT;
- have made a thesis on a topic of interest for the organization or on the company business;
- having attended master's or courses consistent with the business activity;
- have had some experience (internships included) in the area of competence of the company;
- have a demonstrable "passion" with the facts for that business segment;

- possess personal characteristics particularly suited to the business context.

It is always a good idea to give information on availability and flexibility (travel, internships, shifts, holidays, various types of contracts, don't fear stressful environments).

#### *Personal motivation*

In the last paragraph of the cover letter, you can specify why you want to enter into that specific organizational context. You can deepen your motivation on multiple levels. You can explain why you are attracted by the organization, by that sector and by that position.

#### *Formal ending and thanks*

Thank the recipient of the letter for his consideration/attention and express the desire and strong interest in being contacted as soon as possible.

In summary, in this video we have explained how to write an effective cover letter.

Always remember:

- write an ad hoc cover letter for each occasion;
- address it to a natural person;
- not longer than a page;
- don't use too formal language but at the same time it shouldn't be too enthusiastic. It is important to study the language of the company and use a similar style;
- differentiate the cover letter to the CV;
- only focus on the most significant experiences and skills for the position you apply for;
- don't focus too much on your studies;
- check and double check the spelling and correctness of what you have written.

We hope those tips have been useful to you. Now test yourself and write your cover letter.

Thank you for your attention.