



## Tips for a Successful CV

A good Curriculum Vitae (CV) is vital when seeking the best employment. When you are writing a CV, you are communicating with someone who does not know you and it is important to ensure your first impression gets you an interview.

***Your CV should reflect your individuality, your unique achievements, your particular combination of skills and expertise. It should set you apart from other applicants.***

There are varying views on the ideal structure of a Curriculum Vitae. Ultimately, the exact structure is not particularly important. The essential thing is that your CV succinctly conveys your talents and capabilities to the reader.

### Most Importantly.....

1. **Be Honest** – don't make inaccurate claims about your skills or experience.
2. **Tailor Your CV to the Social Services Industry.** Emphasise your skills that are most relevant to the positions and sectors you wish to work in. For example, a child protection position may ask for good client assessment skills. If you have this knowledge, make sure it's listed in your Skills Summary and appears in the description of each position where it was used.
3. **Make sure your CV is Up-to-Date.** Please send us your updated CV whenever you have gained new work experience or skills.

### What Should a Curriculum Vitae Look Like?

- Keep it brief – a CV should be no more than 4 pages.
- Use a word processor! Many programs have templates you can use to easily design your CV.
- The layout should be clear and balanced. Use margins and plenty of white spaces to help the reader easily scan the document and reduce eye fatigue.
- Lots of underlining and italics can be distracting - use **bold** for headings instead.
- Use font sizes of 10 - 12. Smaller is difficult to read, larger looks like a primary school project.
- Typeface is a matter of personal taste but should be easy to read. The more obscure fonts cannot be electronically transmitted and will jumble your formatting upon receipt. In general, non-serif type fonts (eg, Arial, Verdana) are quite modern and easily read. Once you've chosen a font - stick to it!

- Keep paragraphs short and use bullet points to list responsibilities and achievements. This makes it easier for potential employers to absorb all the detail.
- Don't use fancy borders, pictures and other special effects as they distract the reader from what is important and hinder electronic transmission and printing.
- Pages should be numbered and it's a good idea to have the document title (e.g. Jane Doe – CV) on the bottom of each page.
- **Last of all, SPELL CHECK the CV and proof read for any grammatical errors.**

## What to Include in a Curriculum Vitae

Your Curriculum Vitae should include the following sections, where relevant:

### 1. Personal Details

- Name
- Contact details
- Date of birth (not mandatory but recommended)
- Nationality (optional)
- Working visa status (if applicable)
- Drivers Licence details

### 2. Career Summary and Objectives

This is a 100 - 200 word summary of your experience, skills and ambitions (try to avoid anything that sounds too much like a personal mission statement).

### 3. Academic Qualifications

List the most recent qualification first and then work backwards. Include:

- Year you graduated; or if unfinished the year commenced and level achieved to date
- Name of the qualification
- Name of the University/TAFE/School

### 4. Employment History

Again, list these in reverse chronological order. Place emphasis on positions in the social welfare field and the relevant skills you have developed. Where appropriate, summarise less relevant

positions. Do not leave large periods of time unaccounted for. If you were out of the workforce for a while, please state why.

Structure each listing in a standard format and include the following information about each role:

- Start and end dates
- Employer
- Title of the position you held
- Brief description of the organisation and role, if required
- Responsibilities of the role
- Your key achievements

## **5. Voluntary Employment & Student Placements**

Include the experience and skills you have gained through voluntary work in community services and student placements.

Structure each listing in a standard format and include the following information about each role:

- Start and end dates
- Employer
- Title of the position you held
- Brief description of the organisation and role, if required
- Responsibilities of the role
- Your key achievements

## **6. Professional Development**

This section should include any additional training, workshops, conferences or activities that you have undertaken to build your skills. It should show that you are in control of your personal & professional development and have taken the initiative to build your understanding of current issues and trends in social service delivery.

## **7. Skills Summary**

In this section you should list your personal attributes and the key skills you possess that are relevant to your desired employment. Remember to include those skills that you have developed through your studies and extra-curricular activities which may be transferable to the workplace.

## **8. Relevant Associations & Memberships**

Take the opportunity to mention your membership or eligibility to become a member of any relevant professional associations, such as:

- Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)
- Australian Psychological Society (APS)
- Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers (AIWCW)
- Golden Key Honour Society
- Other professional associations
- Community network involvement

## **9. Achievements**

This section should list any relevant Achievements, Awards or Commendations that you have received. These may be Career, Academic, Community Service, or Sporting related and may also include conference presentations and published reports.

## **10. Referees**

Prospective employers will usually want references from previous employers prior to making an offer of employment.

- List 2 - 3 Referees who can be contacted for an employment related reference report. Our Clients prefer references from recent direct Line Managers/Supervisors, rather than colleagues or character referees.
- Never list a person as your referee without gaining their permission to do so. It is also a good idea to keep your referees informed of your job searching progress to assist them to provide a favourable and relevant reference.
- Provide the referee's name, organisation name where you worked for them, their position at the time you were working for them, and a current email address and contact telephone number.
- Also state the details of anyone you have written references from - advise that copies of these are available upon request.

**GOOD LUCK writing your CV!**

**The ProCare team**