Shannon CV Preparation

You must give careful attention to all elements of the CV: its overall presentation and layout, grammar, spelling, and most importantly, content.

Presentation & Formatting

The presentation and formatting of a CV is incredibly important. Keep your CV simple with adequate white space to enhance readability.

- Always print your CV in black ink on good quality white paper.
- Do not include a photo unless specifically requested.
- Use simple font like Arial, 10-12pt, and keep formatting like italics and underlining to a minimum. Keep all headings the same font and size.
- Use bullet points, be concise and succinct.
- Ensure that your contact details can be clearly found at the top of your CV.
- Your CV should not be longer than 2-3 pages, unless your industry has its own standards, for example, if you are expected to include publications or project details.
- Always check for typos and grammatical errors. Never just rely on your computer's spell checker – you may be using the correct spelling of the word but it could be wrong in context, eg: "their" for "there". Always ask someone who has a keen eye for grammar and spelling to look over your CV – common errors would include "Its" when it should be "It's".
- For past roles, start each bullet with an action verb: "Created", "Managed", "Increased", "Improved" etc., rather than "I created" or "I managed" etc.

Basic CV Structure

Choose a clear layout, **e**mployers spend around 20 to 30 seconds scanning your CV, so it needs to remain clutter-free and easy to read. The last thing a recruiter wants to do is to go hunting for the information that they are looking for so don't hide it.

1. Personal details / contact details.

This should be first in any CV and clearly visible. Make sure to use the phone number and email address that you use most often. Make sure the e-mail address you use appears professional. Nationality and working visa details would be included if applicable.

2. Personal profile

This is optional, but it is a good opportunity to highlight what you hope to achieve in your next position and what you feel you can offer to an employer. Think about what will make you unique and stand out from other applicants.

3. Professional profile

Employers may have only a few seconds to scan an application, a skills section can make it immediately clear what you can offer.

Since today's workplace is driven by technology, more jobs require technical skills. Highlight a brief bulleted list of relevant software packages you have worked on. Wherever possible, use the same adjectives as those used in the job ad. For instance, if the ad specifies someone who has effective administrative abilities and excellent management skills, these should be addressed under your skills section in similar order.

Academic achievements – Put this in reverse chronological order with your most recent qualifications first. Always make sure that these are kept up-to-date. List your professional memberships.

4. Relevant experience and Career history

This should be presented in reverse chronological order, with your most recent employer first. Include a brief overview of the company first, including describing what the company does, what size it is and the company structure. Then put your job title and your primary responsibilities, listing the most important and relevant of those first. List your day-to-day activities. It can be helpful to keep a portfolio of job specifications that you see advertised and match your duties up, using the same terminology.

If you are a graduate, you may not have a great deal of work experience, instead highlight the relevant skills that you gained in your course or on work experience, again, list each position in reverse order, so that the most recent appears first. Unless otherwise stated, you do not need to attach copies of certificates relating to educational and/or professional qualifications. You should instead bring these to the job interview.

Gaps & Incorrect Dates - Employers do not like to see unexplained time gaps or incorrect dates. Check your CV over for correct dates, ensuring dates are not duplicated or overlapped. Write a timeline check beside each job so that you are aware of any gaps. If you have been travelling, explain that in your CV, this shows that you have life experience. If you took time off to study, explain that in your academic record and again briefly in the chronological structure of your CV.

Keep your CV up-to-date **-** To avoid missing important pieces of information, revisit your CV every month adding anything of importance and cut any information that is no longer required.

5. Extra achievements and Interests

These are optional, but should you choose to include a section on hobbies and interests, keep it very brief and the last item on you CV. Employers do like to see a well-rounded individual and hobbies help create that perception. Wherever possible, use the space to show how you can fit in with the company's organisational culture. For instance, if they have a company soccer/tag rugby team, it might be useful to indicate that you enjoy playing soccer/tag rugby. If you have been nominated for an award or you have won an award, mention it in your CV if it is relevant. *Any mention of awards or achievements show employers that you are ambitious and self-motivated.* Avoid saying anything that could be contentious (political or religious affiliations). Do not fall back on old reliables such as "reading" or "cinema". Never lie, the employer may know more about your hobby than you do.

6. References

Actual references are rarely included on CV's. It is usually fine to simply say 'References available on request'. Where including references do not actually include the reference itself, merely the referee's name, their professional title, the company and a contact number. Make sure that you contact them beforehand for their permission.

Tailored CV

Think carefully about your audience and create your CV around their

    requirements. A generalist CV is no longer sufficient in today's

    market.

    Skill-set– highlight your experience ensure that your skills match the required skills.

    Specific organisation – find out what type of employee they are looking for by using LinkedIn and looking at the profiles of existing employees.

    Adding value – Be clear where you have added value in your previous roles and where you will be adding value in the new post.

    Relevant terminology – Use relevant language and keywords in your CV but avoid excessive jargon. Understand the terminology you use.