



## Drawing up a curriculum vitae

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### What is the purpose of a CV?

A good CV is a targeted CV. That is to say, it is focused on the specific job that you are applying for, or it can be adapted to the project or commission which you want to be considered for. So your first step is always to read carefully. You should only mention things that are relevant to the job or commission. The purpose of the CV is to impress a potential employer or client on the first reading. Most employers or clients will peruse your CV first, and only then decide whether to read your application letter. If you do not comply with the set requirements, or if your CV is poorly written or badly laid out, then your letter may not even be read.

### What information should a CV contain?

Some of the information in a CV is standard. All the other information that you provide should be relevant to the job, project or commission. It all depends on what you want to emphasise. If you are applying for a job in an organisation, then your education and work experience will be most important. If you want to participate in a project, it makes sense to emphasise your skills, competences and previous achievements. Think of exhibitions, performances or any other projects which you have taken part in.

Standard:

- Personal details

Ask yourself what personal details you want to put in like marital status and nationality.

Common:

- Education and training
- Work placements/traineeships
- Work experience
- Profession-oriented skills arising from your art discipline
- link to your own webpage

Specifically for artists:

- Projects
- Commissions
- Performances

Describe which role you performed in the project or commission, and what skills you employed. Also accurately describe any skills that you acquired during the project or commission.

You can also include:

- Publications
- Exhibitions
- References
- Agency: who is your agent?
- Professional details: membership of professional associations
- Awards, nominations, stipends
- Pictorial documentation/collections: where can your work be seen?
- Techniques



**Tip:** Make a 'basic CV' in which you record everything you have done. You can use this when writing a targeted CV.

## Types of CV's

A very short CV can be useful to put on a website

More elaborate CVs can be organised in different ways. Main types are chronological (or reverse chronological) or skills-based.

### *Chronological CV*

The standard CV is the chronological type. This type of CV details your education, jobs and other activities in chronological order. It is especially suitable if you have been employed and have held various jobs. A variant is the *reverse chronological CV*, which is identical in content but which details your most recent activities first, and then goes back in time.

If you are still studying or have recently graduated, in most cases you will not have yet done much work in your field of study. In this case a chronological CV is recommended. A reverse chronological CV is most commonly used. It is more suitable if a distinct development in your activities is apparent. If you have been working for some time and want to highlight major or specific activities, you should make a selection from your activities.

### *Skills-based CV*

In a skills-based CV, you organise your experience according to your achievements, skills and competences. In this case, the order is not chronological. A skills-based CV is suitable in particular if you work as an independent artist or as a freelancer, if there is a 'gap' in your career or if you do not have much (relevant) work experience.

In a skills-based CV, you should:

- mention your achievements: e.g., make a list of performances, published work or exhibitions;
- describe your competences and skills: emphasise your capabilities and what you are good at - not where you learned this;
- describe any work experience you have had in various roles: describe your role, what you had to do and what the outcome was.

## What you should and shouldn't mention

A CV is not an exhaustive listing of everything you have ever done. In everything you write, remind yourself of the purpose and function, ask whether it is relevant for the commission, and what you want to make clear. See the tips below.

- Did you study with any well-known teachers or did you work with, for example, any famous choreographers or musicians? Mention their names if that could be to your advantage.
- Are you a dancer or do you use your body in some other way in your work? In that case, state your height, weight or other physical attributes that may be relevant.
- Side jobs: only mention these if they are relevant - because you learnt something that you can apply in your new job, or to make it clear that you are a hard worker.
- Hobbies and training courses: mention these only if they are relevant.
- References: only state these if they are asked for in the vacancy advert. Or write: References are available on request. If you do mention a reference in your CV, ask the person in question for permission in advance. For work placements/traineeships, the educational course is your reference and it is not necessary to ask permission.
- Avoid gaps. If you were out of work for a while, explain what you did during that period.
- Submitting work: not unless asked. What you can do, is mention that you have an image or sound recording, a website or a portfolio available.



## The layout of a CV

- A person reading your CV must be able to gain insight into your capabilities and experiences in the wink of an eye. The better your CV looks, so much the easier it is for the reader to get an impression of your abilities. Two A4 sheets is the maximum size. For the rest:
- Use the same font and the same type of paper as your application letter.
- Organise your CV in distinct blocks.
- Check your CV for writing and spelling mistakes.

## Video CV

A relatively new way of presenting yourself is through a video CV. This is a personal introduction video in which you can show yourself and tell something about yourself. Besides, you are forced to think about your elevator pitch: a short and clear presentation of your strengths and skills. Make sure it is a one minute, maximum two minute video. There are different companies that can make a video CV for you, but of course you can do it yourself. Just make sure it looks professional and fits the kind of work that you do.

## More information

- On [BeroepKunstenaar.nl](#): an article about *writing an application letter* (pdf)