

The three types of CV

The Chronological CV

A chronological CV focuses on presenting the candidate's experience on an employer-by-employer basis, with the posts being listed in reverse chronological order. Chronological CVs should also contain a brief personal statement at the front which sets out the key skills and strengths of the candidate. This is the most common type of CV.

How to structure a chronological CV

A chronological CV typically uses the following structure:

- *Personal Details* (i.e. name and contact details)
- *Personal Profile*
- *Career History* in reverse chronological order unless you are a graduate or you have very little work experience, in which case, it may be best to start with your *Education and Qualifications*
- *Education and Qualifications*
- *Professional Memberships*
- *Other Information*
- *Interests*

Advantages

- Particularly useful for those applying within the same industry as it will demonstrate your career progression
- It is the favourite format for most employers, who simply want to easily identify the roles and responsibilities in each job
- If you do not have many achievements or significant highlights across your career, taking a job-by-job approach can detail your main responsibilities and take the emphasis away from key achievements which is more expected in a functional CV

Disadvantages

- If you have gaps in your employment which you would rather not highlight, a chronological CV will make them more obvious
- If you are changing career direction, a chronological CV may not be so relevant to a recruiter who will be more concerned about the transferable skills that you are bringing rather than the detail of your experience in an unrelated sector

The Functional CV

Unlike a chronological CV, a functional CV places the emphasis on your skills and expertise rather than the chronology of your employment to date.

Although not generally the preferred choice by most recruiters, some senior executive positions would require that a functional CV accompany a chronological one so that their key skills and achievements can be clearly identified.

How to structure a functional CV

A functional CV typically starts with a personal profile which highlights the achievements, skills and personal qualities that you possess. This is then followed by a succession of sections, each relating to a different skill or ability. These should be ordered in decreasing order of importance. Instead of focusing on any particular job, you should describe your experience in its entirety. Since you are not detailing any specific role, this means you can include any skills or experience gained in voluntary or unpaid work.

Advantages

- If you have changed jobs frequently, or your experience is a combination of seemingly unrelated posts or if you have several career gaps, a functional CV will help place the emphasis on what you have to offer as a whole rather than your career progression
- If you are changing industry, a functional CV will help the recruiter focus on your transferable skills
- If you are a more mature applicant, a functional CV will take the spotlight away from your age

Disadvantages

- If you do not have much work experience, you may struggle to highlight achievements in a separate section
- Most employers do not like this type of CV as they prefer to clearly see what the candidate has done and it also raise questions around whether the candidate is trying to hide something
- A functional CV will not enable you to highlight consistent career progression. If you wish to convey career progression, you should adopt a chronological format

To conclude the CV, you should list your employers with the employment dates, as well as a section on your qualifications. The final section should focus on any other relevant information and hobbies/interests.

The Combined CV

A combined CV follows both the chronological and functional format, which makes the CV slightly longer than normal. However, it does offer the best of both types of CV and is becoming a more popular structure to use.

Advantages

- Perfect format if you have a strong career progression with many achievements
- Enables you to sell your strengths as well as your experience

Disadvantages

- Lengthier than a functional or chronological CV so may put off some employers
- Not suitable for those with little experience or achievements
- Not suitable for those with employment gaps