



# HOW TO WRITE YOUR FIRST CV FOR JOBS IN TECH

## A Beginner's Guide



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Technology has always been your passion, and you often dreamt of the day you'd start pursuing a career in IT – and good for you! The tech industry is thriving and shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

To prepare for this day, you've put so much time and effort: into learning how to code, teaching yourself how to design websites, and spending hours and hours in classrooms or online to get all the necessary qualifications and certifications. But you made it, and that day has finally come. Whether you're a recent graduate, a self-taught tech savvy, or a career shifter with an aptitude for technology, you're now just one step away from landing your first dream job: writing a killer first CV for a career in tech.

So, there you are now, sitting in front of a blank word page, scratching your head while wondering – probably for hours – how to write your first CV. Where to even start? What to include and which template to use? And, most importantly, how to fill that page when you have no work experience?

The good news is that you're not alone in this. We feel your struggle, and we're here to help.

In this article, [Templeton's tech recruitment specialists](#) will guide you step-by-step to writing a winning IT CV with no professional experience. You will be introduced to some handy tips on what your CV should include, how to structure it, and how to ensure it aligns with the industry and the tech role you're applying for.

But first, let's cover the basics.

## What Is a CV ...and Why Do You Need One?

A CV, short for the Latin phrase curriculum vitae (which means "course of life"), is usually a 1–2-page document that details your best qualities as a potential employee when applying for jobs. It is, essentially, a written overview of you, your work experience, educational background, skills, knowledge, interests, and achievements.

As we already established, a CV is a big first step to getting a job. Think of it as your personal marketing tool for your career. It offers you the opportunity to "sell yourself" to potential employers, grab their attention, and persuade them to call you in for an interview.

Consider your CV as a powerful marketing tool that can help you promote your most valuable product: you and your amazing skills and qualities. So, you need to put in time and effort to make it right.



A well-written CV doesn't just show employers what you've done and what you have to offer their organisation; it also shows them a big part of who you are and your potential. So, your goal here is to come through as the best possible candidate for the job you're applying to, and your CV should be able to back up this claim with facts.

## How to Write a Great CV With No Work Experience

Today, it's certainly an exciting time to be part of a field that continues to innovate and push the boundaries. And the UK is the place to be since the Land of the Rose maintains its lead as one of the world's premier centres for tech of all kinds. So, embarking on your career should be exciting, right?

Whether you're aspiring to be a data engineer, a software developer, a web designer, or another cool role in the tech industry, your CV is the first piece of evidence potential employers see, and it's crucial to make a lasting impact. But in such an uber-competitive market, how can you write a CV that stands out when it's up against hundreds of others? And most importantly, how do you solve this frustrating puzzle: "you need the experience to get a job, but you need a job to get experience"?

Fortunately, not all skills employees value most are acquired in the workplace. You might as well already have what it takes to be a fantastic hire, and you just don't know it. Finding creative ways to showcase your most impressive skills and qualities is the key to writing a killer CV with no professional experience. Here's everything you need to know to build a CV that will land you the tech job of your dreams:

### Part 1 – Structure and Layout

#### 1) Pick the Right Format

There are four main CV formats you can pick from. Each of them highlights a different part of your experience and skills:

- **Chronological CV:** This structure lists your experiences in chronological order (arranged from the latest and most recent one to the oldest one). This format is not very common but is quite helpful if you want to emphasise your career progression.
- **Reverse Chronological CV:** This is the most common format, where your work experience and education are listed in reverse chronological order.
- **Functional or Skills-Based CV:** This format focuses more on your personality, skills and achievements.
- **Hybrid CV:** This format focuses on your skills and work experience for a more creative approach when building a CV.



**Tip:** If you are a recent graduate or a career shifter with little or no professional experience to demonstrate for the tech role you're applying for, choose the structure of a skills-based CV.

## 2) Focus on the Layout

Once you've picked the best format, the next step is to perfect the layout, font, and style of your first CV.

- **Keep it Simple:** Try to avoid fancy fonts and colours. Instead, use a clear font (like Arial, Times New Roman, Courier, Helvetica etc.) and black text on a white background. The simpler, the better!
- **Keep it Short:** If you don't have any professional experience, a one-page CV should be enough. However, if you want to fit more content into your CV, a two-column layout will allow you to do so without exceeding the recommended one-to-two-page CV limit.
- **Keep it Clean:** Give your CV a more professional appearance clearly dividing the different sections with bold headings and borders. Additionally, use bullet points to highlight your skills clearly and concisely.

By following the above rules, you will create a document that is pleasant to read and easy to scan, both by humans and robots.



**Tip:** If you want to avoid the hassle of building your CV template from scratch, there are plenty of online CV builders online you can use for free for professional-looking results.

## 3) What to Include and What Not to Include in Your CV

A CV **must include** the following:

- Full name
- Contact information
- Personal Statement (Personal Profile)
- Work Experience (Don't be discouraged just yet. There are plenty of things that could count as work experience on your first CV. Just keep reading)
- Education
- Key Skills (technical and soft skills)

These are basics, but a CV **could also include** any of the following:

- Professional Certifications
- Knowledge of Foreign Languages
- Additional Training and Courses
- Conference Participation
- Publications
- Awards
- Volunteer Experience

To boost your job application, don't forget to **accompany your CV** with the following:

- Cover Letter
- Portfolio (if needed)

What about **hobbies and interests**?

- If you don't have much professional experience under your belt, the answer is yes. In entry-level CVs, this section can demonstrate your genuine interest in the industry or suggest you are a good cultural match.

What **not to include** in your CV:

- Age/Date of birth
- Gender
- Religion
- Nationality
- Physical address
- Your photo (unless explicitly asked for)
- Irrelevant social media URLs
- Relationship status (No, it's not complicated, it's just no one else's business. All the above are way too personal for employers to know)
- A non-professional email address
- Lies or misleading information (your CV must be truthful, and you must be able to back up any claims made. Lies can only get you that far)
- References (unless explicitly asked for)

## 4) Optimise the Structure of Your CV

Before diving into more detail about what information you should include in each section of your CV, we need to establish two things:

1. According to **50%** of recruiters, the order of your CV is its most important feature.
2. The order and structure of your CV will always depend on the stage of your career you're currently at.

A good CV can play a crucial role in your job search at any point in your career. However, when you don't have much formal work experience, it is even more critical to have a meticulously crafted and well-thought-out first CV.

To compensate for your lack of job history, your CV should be skills-based rather than experience-based. A skills-based structured CV will help you focus more on your abilities and qualifications rather than having the work experience section at the very centre of your document. So, here's what the structure of your first CV for an IT role should look like if you have little or no experience:

- **Header** (including your full name, address and contact details)
- **Personal Statement** (Career Objective/Personal Profile)
- **Relevant technical skills, experience with technologies and soft skills**
- **Educational background and academic details** (degrees, certifications and qualifications)
- **Relevant experience** (including projects, internships and volunteering)
- **Extracurricular activities, interests and achievements** relevant to the technology role you're applying for.

## Part 2 – The Content

### 1) Header

You should always provide your contact info in your CV, and the recruiter or potential employee should have at least two ways of reaching back to you. With that said, at the top of your CV, you must always include the following:

- First and last name
- Email
- Phone number
- Location (just the city and country where you live is enough)

Apart from the above must-haves, it is a plus if you can also provide:

- Your LinkedIn profile
- Relevant links to sites like your portfolio, personal website, GitHub, or other projects – anything that can prove your experience and showcase your skills.



**Tip:** Double-check the spelling, make sure your phone is reachable, and that all your links work and are up to date.

### 2) Personal Statement

From the moment a recruiter opens your CV, you have about seven seconds to leave a great first impression and convince them you're the right person for the job. And, as the famous Oscar Wilde once said (or Will Rogers – that's debatable), you never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

Luckily, a good personal statement can help you with that.

A personal profile or CV bio is usually a 2-3 sentence snapshot of your skills, achievements, and career goals. You can use this space to give insight into who you are as a tech professional and sell your most valuable attributes in the best possible way.

In your summary, don't forget to mention the technologies and tools you're comfortable using, why you think you're great for the position and what you can bring to the team.

You'd want to keep this section short and brief, highlighting only the key areas that make you an ideal tech candidate. Also, make sure to tailor your statement to the role you're applying for each time.

### 3) Skills

The two types of skills you can mention on your CV are your technical/hard skills and your personal/soft skills.

- **Soft skills** are attributes related to your personality, social and communication skills, attitude, cultural fit, etc.
- **Hard skills** refer to your technical knowledge and abilities to perform specific tasks and processes, such as the use of tools, equipment, or software.

Both hard and soft skills are equally important and a must-have for your CV. However, when you're applying for a tech position and lack professional experience, your technical skills become your strongest selling point. Here are some valuable tips on how to best showcase your technical skills:

- **Dedicate a Section to Technical Skills**

Since technology is your speciality, it deserves a section of its own. Not to mention that tech recruiters often look for specific skills when sifting through CVs. Therefore, your IT skills and qualifications should be clearly defined in a distinct section so that you can draw their attention immediately to your knowledge and strengths. We recommend placing this section right below the contact information at the top of your CV, so it's impossible to miss.

- **Organise Your Tech Skills into Categories**

To save space and make it easier for recruiters to spot your abilities, we suggest organising your technical skills into categories. You can either sort them by category or level of competence.

Example 1:

Programming: C#, Java, Python, JavaScript, TypeScript  
Operating Systems: OSX, Linux, Windows  
Frameworks: Angular, React

Example 2:

Expert: Python, Linux  
Intermediate: Java, OSX  
Basic: C#, JavaScript, TypeScript

- **Provide Evidence of Your Skills**

Simply listing your technical skills is not enough. You still have to validate them – ideally, by providing examples of how you put them into use in the work experience section of your CV. If you don't have professional experience, you can highlight the technical skills you picked up and demonstrated in other scenarios (like a personal project or a summer job), which you can then transfer to the workplace.

Of course, you don't have to prove your level of aptitude for every single skill on your list. Use the job spec for the role you're applying for as a guideline as to what technical skills to feature.

- **Demonstrate Your Tech Skills Are Up to Date**

The tech industry is constantly evolving, and it's crucial to demonstrate that you are up to date with the latest technologies, tools and innovations. Make sure you emphasise your commitment to continuous learning and development and how you're constantly gaining new knowledge and skills through courses, training, events, etc.

- **Tailor Your Skills to the Job Ad**

This section is not supposed to be an exhaustive list of all your skills. Focus on the hard and soft skills the employer and the role require each time, and don't include anything that isn't relevant or might be outdated.

- **Don't Underestimate Your Soft Skills**

While demonstrating your tech skills may be your main focus, it's also important to include other details that show how well you can do your job. For instance, leadership, communication, teamwork and time management skills can only be an asset for every technical and non-technical job.

## 4) Education

As a candidate with little or no experience, this section is quite important, and you need to get it right. Here are some tips:

- List your education and academic qualifications in reverse chronological order (with the most recent first).
- Don't miss out on the chance to show you've got the academic background needed for the job. And remember, apart from your skills, your education is the biggest selling point in your first job resume. So, this is not the place to be humble and play down your achievements.
- Don't forget to include the following: programme name, school/college/apprenticeship/university, years attended, your (predicted) degree grade, relevant subjects and projects to the employer you are applying for.
- In this section, you can also list any additional technical qualifications you may have gained apart from your degree/course, like online courses or classes you attended on a particular technology.
- If you have any certificates relevant to the job you are applying for, definitely include them too.

### FUN FACT

Have you ever wondered what the difference between a CV and a resume is? The answer is much simpler than you'd think since they basically mean the same thing, just in different parts of the world. What Europeans call a CV, Americans call a resume.





## 5) Work Experience

If you're a recent graduate, a career shifter, or on a long career break, you know well that this section won't be your strong suit. Recruiters know it as well – and that's okay. As long as you're applying for a junior or entry-level tech position, professional experience isn't expected.

However, even if you have never had a proper job in the field, you may still have more experience than you think. In fact, there are plenty of other things you could include in this section, like:

- Internships
- Work placements
- Part-time or summer jobs
- Extracurricular activities
- Projects
- Volunteering
- Charity work
- Any other positions of responsibility

What recruiters want to see in this section are practical examples of the candidate's skills and passion for technology. Even a project from a hackathon, a volunteering role, or contributions to GitHub could do the job just fine.

Long story short, when you have little to no experience, this section can take all kinds of forms on your first CV. Just don't forget to format them just like you'd format any other "proper" role. This means that, for each piece of experience, you should include information like the name of the place you worked, how long you were involved with that organisation or project, and a brief overview of your responsibilities and achievements.

For example;

### **Web Design Intern**

IODA Group

April 2022 - October 2022

Assisted web designing team in various projects and initiatives. Conducted client research, assisted with social media and design projects, and worked closely with experienced designers.



**Tip:** The work experience section allows you to put your technical and soft skills into context. So, don't miss any opportunity to mention the tools and methodologies you used, the new programming languages and technologies you learned, as well as how your teamwork or project management skills helped you overcome specific issues.

## 6) Hobbies and Interests

Any projects or experiences that don't fit into the above categories can be included in this section. This is another way for you to prove your passion for technology and sell your tech skills. So, don't be afraid to include any clubs, groups, or events that illustrate how you've developed your skills and demonstrated a genuine interest in technology. How you use your free time can tell recruiters a lot about your drives and motivations. Moreover, mentioning non-tech activities is also a strong way to highlight more of your soft skills.

## Part 3 – More Cool Tips

### 1) Don't Be Tempted to Lie or Exaggerate

When listing examples of your experience and skills, make sure you don't stretch the truth and overstate your abilities. At some point in the recruitment process, your CV will be reviewed by people with significant technical knowledge, and you need to be prepared to support with facts anything stated on your CV at the interview.

### 2) Tailor Your CV for Each Job

Your CV should be the document that explains why you're the right person for the job you're applying for. Therefore, it's crucial for it to be tailored to each employer you're trying to convince. We advise putting together a CV template that you can adapt each time to the specific tech role you're interested in.

When tailoring your CV, highlight the skills and qualities mentioned in the job ad, and provide examples of how you demonstrated them in different scenarios, echoing the job description's wording.

### 3) Proofread Your CV (Again and Again)

Before sending out your CV, ensure that you present a professional and polished document to your potential employer.

- Double (and triple) check for spelling and grammar errors.
- Read the document many times to spot typos or phrasing issues.
- Ensure that you've formatted dates consistently.
- Unify your document formatting into one style.
- Click on any hyperlinks to ensure they work.
- Ask someone else to proofread your CV – a second pair of eyes can make all the difference.
- Check that you have communicated your experience, evidence of skills and suitability for the role.

## 4) Accompany Your CV With a Personalised Cover Letter

While your CV provides an overview of your expertise and relevant experience, a cover letter allows you to go into more detail about what makes you an ideal candidate for the role. This personalised touch demonstrates the time and effort you've put into your application and draws attention to the essential points on your CV.

### Part 4 – The Cover Letter

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself and highlight your skills and qualities. Basically, it is a short A4 letter to complement your CV and explain a little bit about you, your goals, why you want the job and what you can bring to the table. Here's a breakdown of what to include and how to structure your first cover letter for a job in tech:

- **Introduction**

Start strong by introducing yourself to your potential employers, just as you would if you were meeting them in person. Apart from covering the basics (name, academic qualifications, what position you're applying for), here you'd want to briefly describe who you are and why you are applying for the job. If someone currently working at that company recommended you, you should also mention it here. This can help you immediately improve your chances of getting an interview.

- **Showcase Your Skills**

When applying for an entry-level IT role, don't worry about your lack of work experience. Instead, showcase your traits, soft skills and technical knowledge you possess that make you an ideal match for the job. Don't forget to relate back to the skills mentioned in the job description.

- **Highlight Your Relevant Experience**

Use the third paragraph of your cover letter to highlight your relevant experience, whether it's from internships, extracurricular activities, or volunteering. This part is the core of your document. Make sure to specify what each experience taught you and what skills you developed that are relevant to the job you're applying for. If you don't have much to mention, focus more on showcasing your passion for technology and your interest in the position.

- **Conclusion**

Wrap up your cover letter by restating your enthusiasm for the role, and mention your interest in scheduling a meeting or a call with them to discuss this opportunity further. This shows you're excited about the job and pushes the hiring manager to reach out to you. It's important to come across as determined yet polite.

## Part 5 – Key Takeaways

Writing your first CV for a job in tech can be challenging, especially if you have little to no work experience to demonstrate. However, if you stick to the guidelines above, you can easily create an attractive CV that can help you land your dream job.

Let's recap the key steps to writing a killer first CV:

01. Use a skills-based format for your CV, focusing more on your skills and achievements.
02. Keep it short, simple and clean to create a document that is super-easy to read.
03. Impress with a solid personal statement – outline who you are and how you can benefit the company.
04. Place your technical skills at the forefront of your CV – list the most relevant and back them up with evidence.
05. You can include plenty of other things in your CV instead of work experience (like internships, personal projects, or extracurricular activities).
06. Don't forget to accompany your CV with a personalised cover letter to enhance your chances of winning an interview.
07. Tailor your CV and cover letter for each job application.
08. Proofread your documents before sending them to potential employers (yes, again).

Good luck with your job search!



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