Feedback for Curriculum Vitae Submissions

Below are the most common questions we encountered when reviewing your CVs, along with some pointers on how you might begin to consider and address them[1]. At first glance, you may think that some of these points do not apply to you, but we would encourage you to see what it feels like to be "on the other side of the interview table" by swapping CVs with a colleague and using this list to give each other feedback!

1. Is your CV easy to read?

   - Leave white space for your reader to be able to move from one topic to the next with ease.
   - Don't mix and match fonts and keep it simple: some fonts don't render correctly in different browsers!
   - Keep a consistent style, e.g., Educational Institutions in bold, degrees/certifications in italics, etc.
   - Double-check for typos and grammatical errors.

2. Does it tell a story (which is relevant to the position you to which you are applying)?

   - Reverse chronological order gives a clear idea of progression and keeps "freshest" skills at the top.
   - Try to frame your experiences or activities to show a trajectory, when relevant.

3. Do you distinguish between tasks and skills?

   - *What* you did can be found in the job description, so demonstrate *how* you did it in an excellent way.
   - Give concrete/quantifiable evidence of something you delivered, e.g., instead of "*on team which increased sales reach of organisation M*" try instead "*expanded operations of M's regional team by 20 contacts, resulting in growth of x% in sales*"
   - Taking care to distinguish between responsibilities and accomplishments can go a long way.

4. Is it believable (and do you have an "evidence trail" you could share)?

   - Check your CV for discrepancies, gaps or possible red flags (e.g., no inflated numbers or exaggerations)
   - Including a link to your LinkedIn and/or any other professional webpages where you have assembled a portfolio of your work. This shows transparency and allows the reader to easily fact-check your CV.

5. Have you used generic words to describe yourself or your accomplishments?

   - Do any of the following words sound familiar: "*honest*" "*team-player*" "*hard-working*" "*ambitious*" etc.? The space on your CV is served by demonstrating these qualities instead of saying them.
   - Instead of "*strong communication skills*" try something like "*presentation skills include small-group Sixth Form tutoring (2-3 students), delivering GCSE lessons (15-20 students), and speaking at University Open Day events*"

---

[1] This list is directly adapted from G. Burnison's "6 things I loved about the most impressive resume I've seen – based on 20 years of hiring, here: https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/26/most-impressive-resume-ever-based-on-20-years-of-hiring-and-interviewing.html.