

GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY

Australian CVs/résumés and covering letters

These are generic guidelines - companies may have their own requirements for CVs (such as email with no attachment, etc.) so it is important to always pay attention to company requests. Remember that you should always tailor your CV to meet specific requirements from companies.

Covering letter

The covering letter should be no longer than one-page in length and compose of four elements. First, it should state the purpose for writing and list the position which the candidate is applying for. Second, it should provide an indication of the candidate's interest in the job and the reasons why the candidate is suitable. Third, when selling previous experience and skills, the letter should not repeat the CV/résumé but translate the transferable skills as relevant to the particular job. Finally, the letter should end with a statement of availability and a willingness to provide further information upon request. While it is important to sound confident, it is also important not to exaggerate.

CV/Résumé

Each CV/résumé is unique and the following should be consulted as general guidelines. However, in Australia it is usual to submit a CV of one to three pages in length, providing that the information is relevant and engaging.

Personal information should be included at the top of the CV: This should include your name (positioned as the document heading), address, telephone and email information. If the name used is more than the first and last name, the last name should be underlined. Also, if the gender of the application is unclear, the name should be accompanied by their title (e.g. Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss). If the telephone number supplied is international, state the time difference from Australia to indicate an appropriate contact time. Date of birth, nationality, and a passport photo are not required unless specified.

Personal Summary: A short summary of the candidate's status and skills, career ambition and long term goal is a preferred way to open and tailor the résumé/CV. Key words or buzz words will rate highly in recruitment databases.

Key differences from UK CVs and covering letters:

- CV and résumé are used interchangeably in Australia.
- A two to three page CV is considered the norm, but this must be justified by being able to keep the reader engaged.
- General consensus finds wide margins of 2.54 cm (1 inch) pleasing to the eye and a font size of around 10 to 12 points most suitable.
- There is no significant cultural difference in an Australian covering letter.

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Educational Qualifications: For a first job application, the education section should come first and indicate the most recent tertiary studies undertaken. This should include degrees earned, majors or specialties, institutions and start/finish dates. Any outstanding awards or averages received should be stated here. This information should be listed in reverse chronological order. Provide the name, location and dates of attendance for each institution. Special courses, internships, training programs, part-time work and foreign study may also be included in this section.

Skills and Attributes: This is where any relevant training courses or career-related skills should be outlined. Examples include: communication skills, computer skills, language skills (state proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking), leadership skills, and entrepreneurial skills.

Employment History: Each entry listed should be in reverse-chronological order and include the job title, company, and position held. The job description should be brief yet detail the major responsibilities and accomplishments. The aim is to give the employer a clear impression of your suitability to their company by emphasising your key and transferable skills. Use alternative headings where appropriate, such as "Internships", "Sales Experience", etc. or topics relating to the job specifications when appropriate.

Awards/Achievements/Associations: This section should only include items that are relevant and important to the job. A timeframe of five years is applicable to most awards and achievements unless exceptional or timeless. These should also be listed in reverse chronological order. Membership in and activities with relevant professional groups or publications may be of interest to the employer.

Interests and Hobbies: Interests are often used as a conversation starter in interviews. Make sure that listed interests/hobbies are relevant and not unprofessional.

References: The last item on the résumé/CV. At least two referee details should be included on the CV who the candidate has worked closely with or who is in a senior position. This should include their full name, title/position, affiliation, and contact details such as address, telephone number and email.