

DOUGLAS HOPE

Douglas Hope specialises in assisting
solicitors and partners
in **England and Wales**

CV Guide

CV GUIDE

The CV is your first opportunity to sell yourself and is ultimately what decides whether you are successful in securing the second opportunity to sell yourself – at the interview. The importance of producing and presenting a quality CV is crucial as it is the first thing that you will be judged upon. It is your responsibility to ensure that your CV stands out amongst the rest and therefore the importance of clear presentation and relevant content cannot be underestimated. This is your prime opportunity to market yourself, do this accurately and positively, do not exaggerate your skills and experience, never be tempted to include any information that cannot be supported at interview.

Your CV should be set out clearly and concisely enabling the reader to identify with ease the relevant information they need. Do not aim to “knock out” a new or updated CV at the first attempt, producing a quality CV takes some time and effort on your part.

CONTENT

Your CV should include the following information:

- ⊙ Personal details – name, address, telephone numbers including a mobile number and email address where possible, date of birth and nationality (where relevant for work permit purposes).
- ⊙ Education – degree, name and dates of university, course title and classification; name and dates of secondary school / college, A levels, subjects and grades, number of O levels / GCSE's and grades as well as any other further and higher education courses.
- ⊙ Professional qualifications – dates, any highly notable awards and date of admission.
- ⊙ Employment history – This section should be given the most time and effort and should form a large proportion of the document. It is here where you have the best opportunity to make your CV stand out and clearly highlight your level of experience. Include your career to date with employment record in reverse chronological order, from most recent back including dates and places where you trained and qualified listing your current position first. For recently qualifieds, provide details of responsibilities undertaken in the seat/s to which you are now practicing within. The only exception to this would be for candidates wishing to change discipline who should detail any relevant experience gained during their

training contract.

Current position – You should give greatest attention to your most recent position. Detail the name, location and dates of employment. If you have been promoted, changed roles, gained any particularly notable experience or achieved exceptional billing performance ensure that this is highlighted at the beginning of the text. It is important to highlight your ability to market, network and establish and develop sustainable client relationships. Whilst it is crucial to emphasise as much as possible your strengths in these areas you must ensure that commercial information and client confidentiality are never jeopardised. Provide as much relevant information as possible with regards to experience. Include detail regarding supervision, teamwork, training and development as well as specific projects undertaken and wider contributions made to your employer. Provide specific cases / transactions together with details of your involvement in these matters to quantify the depth and range of your capabilities.

Previous positions – Provide details of any previous employment including firm, dates, job title and a brief description of work undertaken and matters handled highlighting any specific or notable achievements.

- ⊙ **Interests** – these give an employer a picture of your life outside of work seeing you more as a person. Make the most of your achievements as employers prefer well-rounded individuals. Be concise, honest and current with the information you provide, do not be tempted to put something in for the sake of it or to exaggerate in this section, you must remember that you must be prepared to elaborate on any of your interests cited at the interview stage.

Your CV should ideally be between 2 and 3 pages long. It is crucial to ensure that the CV remains at all times concise, clear and interesting focusing on key achievements. Ensure that there are no gaps in your employment or educational history, include brief explanations accounting for your time.

Do not worry too much about format at this stage. We understand that you have busy schedules, that you may have limited experience of writing CV's or simply just be a bit rusty - we can help with layout and overall style. So long as you can detail your professional work experience to date and your notable achievements and skills then we can work with you to bring it all together on

the page in the most appropriate way.

DO

- Use clear headings and bullet points
- Check spelling and grammar, dates and order
- Explain any gaps in your CV
- Keep the CV to no more than 3 pages in length
- Get advice and assistance from your consultant
- Proof read your completed CV

DON'T

- Exaggerate, embellish or be economical with the truth
- Give reasons for leaving any of the jobs on your CV, it is best to explain in person at interview
- Use technical jargon
- Include salary details on your CV
- Include a photograph
- Make your CV double-sided
- Focus too much on interests and hobbies
- Include irrelevant information or references

Remember that at Douglas Hope we have many years experience in ensuring that CVs fulfil their purpose – marketing your skills and experience in a way most pertinent to employers and ultimately securing an interview. For further assistance or advice on producing an effective CV or updating an existing CV please do not hesitate to contact us.