

Common CV Mistakes and How to Avoid Them



Hospitals don't hire CVs; they hire clinicians. However, the quality of your CV can be what either gets you in the door for an interview or what closes the door. And, we know that if you don't get the interview, you certainly can't get the job.

To help you make the best impression possible, we've identified the following common mistakes and how to avoid them:

NOT PROOFREADING FOR GRAMMAR AND TYPOS

A good rule of thumb is to have at least a couple of other people review your CV. If you can hire a professional copy editor, the more eyes the better. You can find well-qualified people at affordable prices on freelance marketplace sites such as UpWord and Fiverr.

NOT FOLLOWING PROPER FORMATTING

Akin to not looking for grammatical errors is the failure to format your document properly. There are many templates to help you format your CV. Here are two sample templates we like the best:

- Sample 1
- Sample 2

Also, keep these formatting pointers in mind:

- **Make it easy to read.** Don't use hard to read fonts; stick with the basics, such as Times New Roman, Verdana, or Trebuchet. Also, incorporate white space to keep it easy on the eye.
- **Maintain consistent formatting.** If you bold one headline, then bold all headlines. If you indent bullet points in one section, do the same in others. Consistency will contribute to a stronger presentation and make a more favorable impression.
- **Place dates to the right.** Which do you want the employer to focus on, the date or the accomplishment? Put the most important information to the left side and leave the right for the date.
- **Put events in reverse chronological order.** The term "curriculum vitae" is Latin for "course of life," so it makes sense to show your most recent accomplishments first.
- **Get rid of the clutter.** The first draft of your CV will likely contain lots of clutter – vague words, non-essential details, bloated sentences – which you will want to trim in the second draft. Keep the text clean, clear, and precise. Never submit the first draft to an employer; always rewrite, revise, and polish first.

NOT FILLING IN THE GAPS

[Residents Medical](#), a site that helps residents navigate the path to placement, said that 70 percent of Program Directors listed gaps in medical education as an important factor when choosing who to interview for residency. It went on to say that applicants with large gaps in their CV will not even have the chance to prove themselves.

“Don’t make the mistake of letting gaps in your medical education upset your chances at residency,” the site advised. “Whether you are currently applying to the Match, or are planning to apply in the upcoming years, make sure your CV is consistent and be smart in your preparations.”

MAKING YOUR CV TOO LONG

Experts say that a two-page CV is standard. As a resident, you shouldn’t need to go beyond that length, as doing so may lend the impression that you can’t distinguish what’s important or that you are attempting to cram everything in to look more experienced.

INCLUDING UNTRUTHFUL INFORMATION

An [article in Reuters Health](#) citing the results of two studies found that many residents lie on their CVs. Honest mistakes are one thing but lying on a CV is something else altogether. It’s a matter of integrity and credibility. Don’t risk putting your career in jeopardy due to a lie.

NOT TAILORING YOUR CV TO THE EMPLOYER

Don’t think for a minute that one CV will fit every situation. Each is unique and, as such, you should tailor the CV to the role for which you are applying. That’s not brain surgery either; just look at the specific job requirement and work from there.

NOT INCLUDING YOUR CORRECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Don’t make it hard for a recruiter or employer to get in touch with you. Be sure your contact information is up-to-date.

INCLUDING REFERENCES

Listing references is not necessarily encouraged. You don’t even need to say “References available upon request.” If a recruiter or employer wants references, they will ask for them.

NOT INCLUDING A COVER LETTER

While cover letters are not required, it might be an item you consider including. Cover letters have a unique purpose: breaking the ice. It can be your opportunity to make a good first impression. It doesn’t have to be long – three-quarters of a page is sufficient.

According to the blog [Adventures in Medicine](#), if you have a cover letter, you should include the following information:

- **Introduction** - Briefly outline the job for which you are applying.
- **Objective** - Include a summary of your career objectives.
- **Strengths** - Discuss why you are the person ideally suited for the job. Highlight your strengths but keep it real.
- **Education** - Again, not a rehashing of your CV, but some educational accomplishments relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- **Personal** - Include characteristics that make you suited to the job.
- **Ties to the area** - This is something many residents miss, says [Adventures in Medicine](#). Stating your ties to the area can set you apart from the other applicants.
- **Closing** - End by reiterating your interest in the position.

Visit our [blog](#) for more tips on embracing your transition from residency.