



How to Write an Architecture CV

What is a CV?

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a personal marketing tool which communicates your academic qualifications, work experience and skills to potential employers. The main aim of your CV should be to highlight your strengths and suitability for the post in order to obtain a first interview.

Before you start your CV

It is essential to research thoroughly what the employer will be looking for – use job descriptions, company brochures, personal contacts, etc. Then focus on your experience, knowledge, skills and attributes to put together a personal profile. One simple way of preparing the relevant information is to divide a blank A4 page in two, note down all the requirements of the post and try to match them to your experience. Remember to consider all aspects of your life in terms of what you have to offer, for example; spare time activities and family commitments will often offer valuable evidence of relevant skills.

What should go in your CV?

The average employer spends between 30 seconds and 2 minutes reading a CV. Therefore it is essential to make an instant impact. Architecture is a very visual industry and a word-only CV may not make the most of your first impression. Design your CV! This is as an opportunity to showcase your design skills and make an immediate visual impact. You can also include images of work you have created. You must demonstrate evidence of your achievements, skills and qualities concisely and explicitly. Information presented in your CV should include: Personal Contact Details; Education and Qualifications; Work Experience (paid and voluntary); Skills; Interests; Referees. However, these headings are flexible and you should use them to suit the focus of your application.

What should go in your portfolio?

Some potential employers may ask to see some examples of your work prior to taking your application to the next recruitment stage. However, more commonly you will be asked to provide a portfolio of your work at interview where it will then become the basis for the interview discussion. Ensure you have got plenty to say about your own work. Your portfolio should contain only the strongest examples of your work. It should show a good variety of what you've done, displaying sketches, detailed drawings and images of completed projects. As well as a tangible portfolio, your

work should also be digitally scanned or photographed so that it can be uploaded online if required.

When should you use your CV?

Many employers ask for a CV rather than an application form. In this case your CV should be highly targeted toward the particular job and employment sector. CVs are also used to make speculative applications. When making such applications it is important to anticipate what kind of opportunities are likely to be available within the organisation and to display knowledge of the company in your covering letter.

Your referees?

People use a variety of referees. Generally one should be an academic reference and the other should be a work-related or personal referee. In choosing an academic referee the most appropriate people to ask are your Adviser of Studies, a lecturer/tutor or a supervisor. A personal referee should ideally be someone who has known you for a long time, but not a family member. A work related referee could be your most recent employer or internship supervisor. Be sure to choose someone who will support your application effectively. Ask your referees if they are willing to provide a reference before putting their name in your CV; ask if you may put down their contact details; always give your referee a copy of your CV and keep them informed about your career plans.

Golden Rules for CVs

1. Aim for a maximum of two sides of A4 – this should be plenty for most undergraduate or graduate CVs although you may use more if you have over 10 years professional experience
2. Get the formatting right, Make it straightforward and concise; neat and easy to read. Always type your CV, using a professional font e.g. Arial or Verdana.
3. Tailor it to the employer and/or type of work - use different versions if necessary.
4. Keep it relevant. Focus on the skills needed for the job you are applying for. Use the job description and person specification to help you.
5. Be logical and consistent in style.
6. The amount of space you allocate to something indicates the importance you give it - your most recent achievements should appear first (i.e. reverse chronological order).
7. Avoid long sentences and large blocks of type. Use bullet points.
8. Check grammar and spelling – UK spellcheck – Proof Read!
9. Don't leave time unaccounted for – explain gaps using positive language.
10. Avoid gimmicks, unexplained abbreviations and jargon.

11. Include evidence from all areas of your life, but ensure you explain the significance of any activities, achievements and skills to the job you are applying to.
12. Omit details such as marital status, age, national insurance number. A photograph is not normally included in a UK CV.
13. Never lie.
14. Use an appropriate email address.
15. Add a 1 page covering letter if appropriate.

Registering your CV

The first thing you should do once you are happy with your CV is register with suitable profession specific recruitment agencies. RIBA have a specific recruitment agency called RIBA appointments. This website also contains further support for candidates looking for work, such as a sample CV, a salary guide and useful web links.

Some Useful Resources

- [RIBA Appointments](#) - online job board, displaying the very latest architectural vacancies.
- Future Trends monitors the employment and business trends affecting the architectural profession. [These are the survey results from 2021](#).
- [RIBA Appointments](#) - careers advice and guidance to help you on your career path.
- [RIBA Journal](#) - free to RIBA members, the RIBA Journal will keep you up to date with what's happening in the profession.
- RIBA Architecture.com - comprehensive career and education [advice and guidance on becoming an architect](#).
- [Building Design](#) online keeps you up to date with the latest industry news, events and opportunities.
- [Architects Journal](#) - search for jobs, see industry news updates, product information and competitions.
- [RIBA Architecture.com Scholarships and Bursaries](#) - this page details scholarships and bursaries available for application to help fund your studies.
- For information as to what funding students studying architecture are eligible for during their placement year, please refer to pages 20 to 21 in the SAAS guidance booklet available on the [SAAS website](#) under the section titled forms and guides. The section regarding practical placements applies to those who study Architecture and undergo a full year placement as a compulsory section of their course. Please contact SAAS direct for further information.

Careers Service Events, Presentations & Talks

The Careers Service runs a number of events, presentations and workshops open to all students particularly in semester one which includes workshops on application forms. Visit our [events page](#) for further details and an up-to-date programme.

Further Information

For further information or to see a Careers Adviser, please come to a Quick Query or book an appointment on our [CareersPortal](#).

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