

‘Job Preparation’ Work Pack

Northside Partnership Local Employment Service provides the following supports to Jobseekers:

- Professional one to one support to assist with career progression
- Access to Job Seeking supports (phones, emails, printing and photocopying)
- Access to Job Vacancy listing and information
- Professional CV
- Assistance with job application letters
- Access to Job Vacancies
- Assistance with Job Seeking Skills
- Interview coaching – Access to our Northside Partnership Jobs Club
- Assessment of current education, training and skills experience
- Information on and referral to training courses available
- Access to financial supports for accredited training
- Information on / Referral to Community Employment Schemes and Tús

COVID19

Northside Partnership’s Local Employment Service offices are currently closed, however we want to continue to work with you, and we can do this by phone and electronic contact.

Northside Partnership Coolock Office: 01 8485630

Northside Partnership Kilbarrack Office: 01 8320995

What are you Best at?

Skills and
Strengths
Worksheet

My greatest strengths are:

1

2

3

My most significant achievements (at work or outside work) include:

1

2

3

Feedback (from teachers, colleagues, managers) confirms that I have the following skills:

1

2

3

The kind of work/activities that give me the greatest satisfaction are:

1

2

3

Powerful Words

The following is a list of verbs or 'action words' you can choose from to strengthen your CV and covering letter.

- Accomplished
- Achieved
- Activated
- Acquired
- Administered
- Allocated
- Advised
- Appointed
- Appraised
- Arranged
- Assessed
- Audited
- Boosted
- Briefed
- Broadened
- Changed
- Chaired
- Closed
- Collected
- Communicated
- Completed
- Computerised
- Concentrated
- Consulted
- Consolidated
- Controlled
- Converted
- Co-ordinated
- Counselling
- Cut
- Dealt
- Delegated
- Demonstrated
- Designed
- Developed
- Devised
- Directed
- Documented
- Doubled
- Earned
- Eliminated
- Engaged
- Enlarged
- Ensured
- Eradicated
- Established
- Estimated
- Examined
- Exceeded
- Expanded
- Extended
- Filed
- Financed
- Forecasted
- Formed
- Generated
- Guided
- Graded
- Helped
- Identified
- Implemented
- Improved
- Incorporated
- Increased
- Influenced
- Innovated
- Inspected
- Initialised
- Interviewed
- Introduced
- Involved
- Issued
- Launched
- Lectured
- Led
- Managed
- Measured
- Merged
- Modified
- Observed
- Organised
- Participated
- Performed
- Planned
- Prepared
- Processed
- Procured
- Promoted
- Purchased
- Qualified
- Recommended
- Recruited
- Reduced
- Regulated
- Replaced
- Reported
- Represented
- Responded
- Reviewed
- Saved
- Simplified
- Sold
- Sorted
- Started
- Streamlined
- Structured
- Submitted
- Supervised
- Synchronized
- Surveyed
- Targeted
- Taught
- Terminated
- Tracked
- Trained
- Transformed
- Uncovered
- Updated
- Verified
- Widened
- Won
- Worked
- Wrote

Creating a
Great CV

Creating a Great CV

While there is no one right way to prepare your CV, by following some simple guidelines you can ensure that your CV is an effective personal marketing tool. First, some general tips:

1. Research, Research, Research

If CV writing is not your strong point, ask for help – you only have one chance to make a good first impression. Research thoroughly before you begin. Check out the company website and social media channels to learn about the company, its values, products, customers and competitors. Read the Job Description and Job Advertisement and Identify the key skills that the successful person needs. You will then be able to highlight these skills in your CV. When you have a CV that you are proud of, update it continually to reflect your changing career story. Then you'll be ready to apply for new opportunities as they arise.

2. Pass the 30 Second Test

When your CV lands on an employer's desk or opens on a recruiter's tablet or PC screen, you have from six to 30 seconds to get your message across. That's because many employers and recruiters don't read CVs, they simply scan them for key phrases and information that shows if you're the right fit for the job. To identify the key phrases and information you'll need to study the Job Description and Job Advertisement.

3. Outsmart the robots

Some employers and recruiters (60% of UK employers and 98% of Fortune top 500 companies) use automated applicant tracking systems (ATSs) to filter out CVs that do not meet their requirements. If you are asked to complete an online application or to upload your CV to a website, you are most likely dealing with an ATS. This combined with the 30 Second Test (see 2. Above) means it's doubly important to include information about your key skills in a clearly readable format.

4. One page or two?

A long, rambling CV will not make you a more impressive candidate and it could irritate your prospective employer. As a general rule, if you have less than three years' work experience, aim for a one-page CV. Otherwise aim for two-pages or less. Three pages are for careers of over 10 years – but even then, only if your qualifications and career achievements are exceptional.

5. CV Presentation

- Use a simple, clear CV format. There are many CV builder apps online but do make sure that the template you use is appropriate to the company and country you are targeting.
- Use standard A4 white paper and save your CV in a readable format such as Microsoft Word or as a Portable Document Format (PDF). Note that some recruiters do not accept PDFs and many ATS machines can't read PDFs. It's safer to save your CV in a **.doc** format such as Microsoft Word.

- Give your CV an appropriate file name, for example, John Murphy CV.
- Choose a standard font such as Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman – avoid elaborate typefaces, colours and designs which can be confusing to machines – and humans!
- Make the best use of the available space by keeping your CV clutter free – select normal sized margins (2.54 cm) and font sizes of 11 or 12pt.
- There is no need to put the heading Curriculum Vitae on your CV – it’s self-explanatory
- Ensure consistency of style by keeping dates in the same format.
- Use bullet points instead of full sentences and paragraphs.
- Do not use unfamiliar abbreviations or terms that need further explanation.
- Use plain English and avoid jargon and clichés.
- Follow the instructions given in the Job Advertisement. Common instructions include: *email your CV and a separate cover letter; email your CV and include a cover note in the body of your email; Complete an online Application Form.* You would be surprised by the number of applications that are screened out because the applicant has failed to follow simple instructions.
- Ensure your CV is error free – check your spelling and grammar and ensure that information such as employment dates and company names and addresses are correct. Don’t just rely on spell-check: print it out, proofread it and ask a friend to check it too.
- Don’t insert photographs or attach educational certificates unless you are specifically asked to do so.

A

6. CV Content (see Sample CV Handout)

Contact Details

- **Name** – large Type (14 or 16 pt.)
- **Address** – type it all on one line to save space
- **email** – make sure it conveys a responsible impression (not wineoclock@gmail.com or madcow367@yahoo.ie. Don’t use email addresses that incorporate your age or date of birth
- **LinkedIn** – for some jobs it may be useful to include your LinkedIn URL. If you haven’t got a LinkedIn page, set one up and ask previous employers or clubs you have volunteered with to post recommendations for you. Once you have set up your page you can edit your LinkedIn address to include your name so that people can easily find your profile.

*Be aware that prospective employers could look at your social media pages. If these pages don’t paint you in a positive light, change your privacy settings.

Do not include a “Career Objective” section. Employers know that you are interested in working in a company like theirs – otherwise you would not have applied. Don’t waste precious CV space by telling them what you want from a career – they will be more

interested in what you can offer them and in how you'll make a difference to their organisation.

B Profile

The space on your CV under your contact details is prime real estate. It's where the reader's eye will rest first. In three or four lines, list your main selling points in relation to the job on offer. Avoid tired phrases and clichés such as: *highly motivated, team-oriented, customer-focussed, target-driven*. Instead try to give the employer a snapshot of you in action. If you can include one or two genuine achievements, you will make a greater impact. For example:

"An experienced customer service agent with a Marketing degree, excellent computer skills and a flawless attendance record. I enjoy serving existing customers and winning new business. In 2019 I was voted customer service agent of the year by my team for exceeding my sales target by 10%. I am thoroughly dependable and make a strong contribution to team spirit."

C Key Skills

Here's where your preparation is crucial. The key skills you list should be completely relevant to the job you are applying for. By highlighting these skills in one place on your CV you make it easier for the hiring person or ATS machine to match you to the job. The skills you list can be: Employability Skills such as leadership, teamwork, organisation skills; Technical Skills such as Sage Accounting Payroll, Microsoft Excel, Reach Forklift experience and Personal Qualities such as reliable, enthusiastic, creative, punctual.

D Employment

Start with your most recent job and work backwards. List *from* and *to* dates in month and year format. Include the name and address of each employer and the title of the job you held. Don't just list duties – show how you achieved high standards in everything you did. For example, instead of writing *"stocking shelves"* try *"Ensured that shelves were stocked with neatly displayed, in-date products with front-facing labels."* Use 4-6 bullet points to indicate what you did in recent jobs and reduce the number of bullet points for less recent jobs. Where possible, quantify the results you achieved in each job – for example:

- *Increased sales of Cheeky Cat Cuisine by 25% in 2019*
- *Attracted 85 new online customers through my weekly blog, Cheeky Cat Capers, which had a following of 10,000 pet lovers*
- *Reduced stock damage by 20%, by introducing a set of guidelines for stock-handling*
- *As a member of a factory project team, I identified waste saving measures leading to a cost saving of €5,000 in the month of January 2020 alone.*

E Education

List your educational qualifications in reverse chronological order (type the title of each qualification out in full and avoid unfamiliar abbreviations). If you are a school leaver you may want to include your Leaving Certificate or equivalent examination grades. If you have recently completed higher education and have limited work experience, then list your

subjects and grades and any special projects or assignments you completed during your studies.

F

Training and Development

Demonstrate your commitment to self-development by listing all relevant training and development you have completed to date. On your CV, note the name of the course or qualification, the provider or awarding body and the completion date. Tell the truth and do not try to gloss over incomplete courses of study.

G

Interests

It's not essential to list your interests on your CV, though for certain job applications it may be an advantage. List interests that are relevant to the job or that demonstrate qualities like organisation skills, teamwork, leadership, dedication and technical ability. If you have notched up some achievements, include them. For example:

- *Soccer – I play on the 3rd team of The Rovers Club and organise an annual soccer marathon to raise funds to upgrade our clubhouse*
- *Credit Union Volunteer – I have been a member of the Credit Control Committee in ABC Credit Union since 2017*
- *Website Design – I design blogs and websites for friends using WordPress*

Tell the truth – if you can't comfortably talk about an interest, don't include it. Playing video games, watching Netflix and shopping for clothes may be your true interests but don't list them on your CV unless they are relevant to your application.

H

References

You have two options here: you can leave this section out altogether or you can ask your referees in advance for permission to include their contact details in your CV. No doubt you will provide references if asked, so don't include the overused "References available on request" line. If you have limited work experience, a referee can be a lecturer, a manager of a voluntary organisation that you assisted or any other credible person who will vouch for you.

Print out the Job Advertisement, Job Description and any other information provided by the recruiter as it may be removed from recruitment websites once the closing date for applications has passed.

Start preparing for your interview as soon as possible as you may be called at short notice. And finally, if your phone rings and you don't recognise the number, answer in a business-like way – it could be your future employer inviting you to an interview.

A JO BLOGGS

3 River Lane Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 11

Email: Jobloggs@xxxxx.com

Phone: 01-xxxxxxx Mobile: 086-xxxxxxx

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/Jo-Bloggs5

Sample CV
Handout
(Use with CV
Writing Handout)

B Profile

An experienced manager with a proven ability to motivate staff teams to achieve high standards of customer service. Skilled in setting up new office systems and processes. I am thoroughly dependable and make a strong contribution to team spirit. While managing Universe Motoring School our pupils consistently achieved a Driver Test pass rate of over 70% and the school was voted ACME Insurance Driving School of the year in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

C Key Skills

- Confident communicator with the ability to present information clearly and accurately
- Capable staff manager and excellent team player who can prioritise a demanding workload under pressure
- Proficiency in MS Office, Sage Accounting Payroll and holder of DE Category Driver Licence
- Honest, reliable and diligent in the performance of all my duties

D Employment

May 2009-Aug 2019: Universe Motoring School, Finglas, Dublin 11

Office Manager

- Managed a team of 18 driving instructors and five receptionists
- Handled sales and promotions and delivered excellent customer service – both face to face and over the telephone
- Managed a computerised payroll and appointments database and assisted instructors with appointments and with running their daily schedules
- Matched new students and instructors, considering personality types, temperaments and each instructor's strengths and weaknesses to ensure that students received the high standards of tuition
- We achieved a 95% customer satisfaction rating in a 2019 survey of 250 customers

Sep 2004-Sep 2009: Voluntary Member of Bonnybrook Youth Resource Centre

Secretary/Director on Board of Management

- Acted as Secretary of the Drug Awareness Group and member of a number of committees: Bonnybrook Youth Resource Centre Board of Management; Bonnybrook Forum; National Drugs Task Force and Dublin City Council
- Successfully contributed to raising funding of €200,000 to build a rehabilitation unit – promoted the project and liaised with statutory agencies to put ideas into action

Aug 2000-Aug 2004: Full Time Homemaker

- Organised and ran the daily activities of my household while rearing my family to independence
- Completed a Drugs Awareness course which led to my involvement with the Dublin Drug Awareness Task Force and my work in supporting drug addicts who were trying to get back to work and rebuild their lives
- Prepared school lunches and managed cash on a voluntary basis at my son's school

Jan 1994-Aug 2000: First Ireland Building Society, Grand Parade, Cork Branch Supervisor

- Promoted in 1996 from Customer Services Officer to Branch Supervisor – led a team of 5 staff and managed the day-to-day operation of the branch, ensuring we achieved excellent customer service standards
- Met with high value customers to encourage deposits, arrange loans and mortgages and sell new insurance products
- Compiled financial reports and attended area meetings of the Building Society

E Education

- **Certificate in Business and Finance**
Colaiste Dhulaigh, Coolock, Dublin 17 (Sep 1992-May 1993)
- **Honours Leaving Certificate**
The Newlands School, Coolock, Dublin 5 (1991)

F Training and Development

- **Re-launching your Career: Certificate Programme**
Northside Partnership, Local Employment Service (full-time, Sep 2019-date)
- **Information Technology: ECDL Certificate (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Outlook)** Enterprise Centre, Coolock, Dublin 17 (evening course, Jan-Dec 2018)
- **Personal Development and Awareness: Public Speaking Certificate,**
Colaiste Dhulaigh, Coolock, Dublin 17 (evening course, Sep 2005-May 2006)
- **Drugs Awareness Programme**
Enterprise Centre, Coolock, Dublin 17 (Jan-Aug 2005)

G Interests

- Weekly hikes with the Sprightly Northsiders Hiking Club – in 2019 we walked a combined 4,000 miles and raised €7,000 for local charities
- Pitch and Putt – active member of Castlegate Pitch and Putt Club
- I have travelled throughout Ireland in a vintage motorhome which I renovated with a friend

H Referees

Tom Smith, Owner, Universe Motoring School, Finglas, Dublin 11, 087/xxxxxxx
Maria Ortiz, CEO Blackhorse Youth Resource Centre, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7, 086/xxxxxxx

Cover Letter
Handout

Writing a Cover Letter

When applying for a job online or by post, you will often be asked to attach a separate cover letter. Occasionally you will be asked to state the reasons for your suitability in a section of your online application form or in the body an email. Showing that you can follow simple instructions is an important part of every selection process. Do exactly as you are asked – if not, your application may be rejected.

Research

When applying for a new job you will need to research thoroughly before you prepare your CV and cover letter. Check out the company website and social media channels to learn about the company, its values, products, customers and competitors. Read the Job Description and Job Advertisement and Identify the key skills that the successful person needs. You will then be able to highlight these skills in your CV and summarise them in your cover letter.

Your cover letter needs to showcase your suitability clearly and concisely and it needs to be written and presented in a way that persuades the recruiter to call you for interview.

Cover Letter Presentation

- Always use a single sheet of good quality unlined A4 paper
- Leave a margin of at least one inch on either side of the page
- Aim for a maximum of three paragraphs
- If you know the name of the person handling the recruitment, address your letter with “Dear Ms O’Brien/Dear Mr Black” and close it with “yours sincerely”. If the name of the person is not advertised, address your letter with “Dear Sir/Madam” and close it with “Yours faithfully”.
- Proofread your letter for spelling and grammar accuracy – mistakes such as “*I am a perfektionist and have an I for detale*” will make a poor impression!

Cover Letter Structure

First paragraph – the opening: mention the title of the job you are applying for, how you heard about it and that you are enclosing your CV for consideration.

Second paragraph – the sales pitch: Your letter needs to arouse the recruiter’s interest. And your CV will provide further evidence to support the key points that you mention in your cover letter. Briefly describe your qualifications and experience and summarise why you think you are suitable.

Third paragraph – the positive statement: this is your opportunity to spell out what you can do for the company. Emphasise how much you would enjoy the job and say how much you would welcome an opportunity to attend for interview to discuss your application.

Interview Tips

Before the Interview

- Anticipate the questions you will be asked – refer to the Job Description and the Job Advertisement, your CV or Application Form and to the research you did before you submitted your application.
- Use the CARL Competency Preparation Sheet (see next page) to draft your answers, then edit your answers by cutting out all unnecessary words.
- Practise answering out loud – ideally with a trusted colleague or friend.
- Plan your route to the interview.
- Choose interview clothing and personal grooming suitable to the job you are applying for (for example, for catering jobs, demonstrate your commitment to best hygiene standards by ensuring that your hair is tied back. Keep fingernails short and don't wear nail varnish. Avoid heavy makeup and fake tan).
- Model the behaviours you will need to demonstrate in the job (for example, be friendly, polite, organised, honest, motivated).
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Think positive – if you've prepared thoroughly you can put your best foot forward.

On the day of the Interview

- Arrive at the interview location ahead of time but announce yourself no earlier than 10 minutes before your interview.
- Treat everyone you meet with respect.
- Breathe deeply to calm any nervousness.

During the Interview

- Greet the interviewers warmly and let them lead the conversation.
- Establish eye contact with all interviewers on the panel and focus mainly on the person who is asking you the questions.
- Listen carefully and answer clearly, providing strong examples to back up your skills and achievements.
- Keep distracting gestures and mannerisms in check (no hair flicking, biro clicking or leg jiggling. Avoid verbal ticks such as “you know”, “um” and “er”. Avoid grammar clangers such as “I done” and “I seen”).
- If you don't know the answer, be honest and don't bluff.

At the end of the interview

- Interviewers are usually operating against a strict timetable so don't delay them unnecessarily.
- Only ask questions if the information you need is vital.
- If you have no questions, use the opportunity to briefly summarise your suitability and to reconfirm your interest in the job.
- Thank the interviewers for the opportunity to attend for interview.

CARL Competency Preparation Sheet

Complete a sheet for each competency in the Job Description

Interview
Preparation
Handout

Competency _____

C Briefly describe the **CONTEXT** (What was the situation? Was this your initiative? What was your objective?)

A Briefly describe the **ACTION** steps that you took.

-
-
-
-
-

R Highlight the specific **RESULTS** that you achieved. (Ask yourself: "So what"? How did it benefit the business: in terms of service provided; methods improved; money, manpower, materials, or time saved?)

L Where appropriate, briefly note your key **LEARNING** from this experience.

**Pitch your
Skills**

Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a quick summary of your background and experience. It's called an elevator pitch because it should be short enough to present during a short elevator journey.

Your pitch is about who you are, the skills and experience you have, what you are looking for, what you would like the other person to do for you and what you can do for them in return. Be confident enough to start a conversation – you never know where it will lead to.

1. My name is:
2. I am experienced in/skilled in:
3. My ideal employer would be:
4. The kind of opportunity I am looking for:
5. I would be really grateful if you would:
6. If you ever need help with: