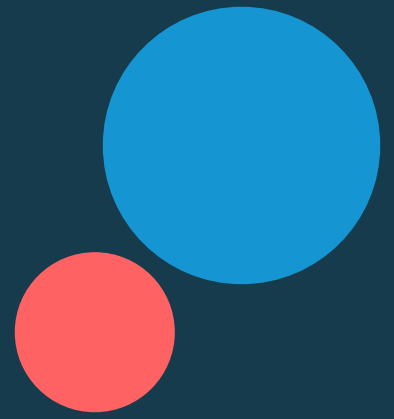




THE CV REVIEW CHECKLIST

Before you click Apply, make sure your CV
gives the employer a reason to keep reading.



SWM Careers

Part of SWM Services - Two Specialist Brands. One Shared Purpose.



Welcome

A strong CV doesn't need to tell an employer everything you've ever done. Its job is to quickly show why you could be a good fit for this particular opportunity.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Work through it with the vacancy beside you, make your changes, then complete the final scorecard before you submit.



Start With the Vacancy

1

Don't ask whether your CV is good. Ask whether it is right for this job.

- ☐ I have read the whole job description, not just the job title.
- ☐ I understand the main responsibilities.
- ☐ I have identified the essential requirements.
- ☐ I have identified desirable requirements.
- ☐ I have highlighted repeated skills, experience and behaviours.
- ☐ I understand what the employer is looking for.
- ☐ I know why I want this role.

The five things that matter most to this employer

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

SWM CAREERS TIP

Start by asking: Is my CV right for this job?



30

The 30-Second Test

Make the reason to keep reading obvious.

- ☐ A recruiter can quickly identify what type of candidate I am.
- ☐ My most relevant experience is easy to find.
- ☐ My strongest skills are visible.
- ☐ My qualifications are clear.
- ☐ Evidence against the main requirements is obvious.
- ☐ There is a clear reason to consider me for interview.

If I were recruiting for this role, what would make me keep reading?



2

Personal Profile & Tailoring

Make this CV relevant to this vacancy.

- ☐ My profile is concise and relevant.
- ☐ It highlights specific strengths rather than generic claims.
- ☐ My CV has been reviewed specifically for this vacancy.
- ☐ Relevant experience appears prominently.
- ☐ Important skills from the job description are reflected.
- ☐ I demonstrate essential requirements with evidence.
- ☐ Less relevant information has been shortened.

AVOID

I am a hardworking, enthusiastic and motivated individual looking for an exciting opportunity.

The three strongest reasons this employer should interview me

1.

2.

3.



3

Experience & Achievements

Show what you did and what difference it made.

- ☐ Job titles and organisations are clear.
- ☐ Dates are accurate and consistent.
- ☐ Relevant experience gets the most attention.
- ☐ I explain what I actually did.
- ☐ I demonstrate relevant skills.
- ☐ I include achievements where possible.
- ☐ Older or less relevant experience does not dominate.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible for helping customers and answering enquiries.

STRONGER

Supported customers with face-to-face and telephone enquiries, resolving routine issues and escalating more complex queries appropriately.

Rewrite one of your own CV bullets

Current version:

Improved version:



Show Evidence



Don't just claim a skill - prove it.

- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Organisation
- ☐ Problem-solving
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Initiative
- ☐ Adaptability
- ☐ Working independently
- ☐ Digital skills
- ☐ Customer or stakeholder relationships
- ☐ Leadership where relevant
- ☐ Skills specifically requested in the vacancy

EXAMPLE

Instead of 'Excellent organisational skills', show the evidence: Balanced university deadlines with 15 hours of part-time work each week while completing assignments to schedule.



4

Education & Layout

Make your CV easy to read and easy to trust.

- ☐ Degree title and university are correct.
- ☐ Dates and classification are accurate where appropriate.
- ☐ Relevant modules/projects are included only when useful.
- ☐ Professional qualifications or training are included.
- ☐ Headings are clear.
- ☐ Fonts and spacing are consistent.
- ☐ There are no huge blocks of text.
- ☐ Important information is easy to find.
- ☐ The pages do not look overcrowded.

REMEMBER

Your degree is part of your story - not your entire story.



5

Proofreading & Final File

Small mistakes can undermine a strong CV.

- ☐ Name, mobile number and email address are correct.
- ☐ LinkedIn link works if included.
- ☐ There are no spelling or obvious grammar mistakes.
- ☐ Tenses, dates and capitalisation are consistent.
- ☐ Job titles and organisation names are accurate.
- ☐ Unnecessary jargon has been removed.
- ☐ The requested file format is used.
- ☐ The document opens correctly.
- ☐ There are no accidental blank pages.
- ☐ The filename is professional.

BETTER FILE NAME

Firstname_Surname_CV.pdf or Firstname_Surname_JobTitle_CV.pdf

Final CV Scorecard

15

Give yourself one point for every YES.

QUESTION	YES
Is my CV tailored to this vacancy?	☐
Can a recruiter quickly understand what I offer?	☐
Are my most relevant skills easy to find?	☐
Have I demonstrated evidence rather than just making claims?	☐
Have I included achievements where possible?	☐
Is my experience relevant and clearly explained?	☐
Is my education section proportionate?	☐
Is the layout clean and professional?	☐
Is the CV easy to scan?	☐
Have I checked spelling and grammar?	☐
Are my contact details correct?	☐
Does my LinkedIn profile support my CV?	☐
Is the filename professional?	☐
Have I checked the final uploaded version?	☐
Would I interview me based on this CV?	☐

Your score: ____ / 15

13-15: READY TO APPLY

Give it one final check against the vacancy and submit.

10-12: NEARLY THERE

Strengthen the few areas where you answered no.

BELOW 10: TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

Work through the checklist before you rush to submit.



The SWM Careers 5-Minute CV Review

5

Short on time? Ask these five questions.

1. Have I tailored this CV to this particular job?

☐ Yes

2. Can the recruiter quickly see evidence that I meet the main requirements?

☐ Yes

3. Have I demonstrated what I've achieved rather than simply listing responsibilities?

☐ Yes

4. Is everything clear, accurate and easy to read?

☐ Yes

5. If I were the recruiter, would I want to know more about this candidate?

☐ Yes

FIVE YES ANSWERS?

You're much closer to being ready to apply.



One Final Reminder

Your CV doesn't need to make you look like the perfect candidate. It needs to help an employer understand who you are, what you can offer, why you're relevant and why they should want to know more.

QUALITY BEATS QUANTITY

Five carefully targeted applications can be far more valuable than dozens of generic ones.

Need Another Pair of Eyes?

SWM Careers offers practical, personalised support with CV reviews, applications, interview preparation, career coaching, graduate job searches, career planning, career change, confidence and personal development.

SWM CAREERS

Guiding Your Next Step