

Guide to Crafting a Medical CV



Reading time:
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A well-presented CV creates a good first impression which is important as your potential employers will probably read a great number of CVs and only pick a select few to consider. Nowadays most hospitals or state health departments may force you to use a template or online form making it harder to employ some of these guides.

It is likely that most CVs that your prospective employer sees will all have a very similar format making it difficult to make yourself stand out as a more desirable candidate.

There is no right or wrong way to write a CV, however, there are several important items that your CV must contain:

- Personal details
- Career statement
- Education and qualifications
- Present position
- Career history (ensure that any gaps in employment are accounted for)
- Clinical skills and experience
- Research, if applicable
- Teaching/mentoring, if applicable
- Achievements.

Presentation is key

A successful CV will benefit from some time spent making it look neat and interesting. Use bullet points, easy to read fonts and uncomplicated formatting. Keep fonts consistent throughout. Clear and concise language should be used in order to convey every point as necessary whilst avoiding waffling. The art of keeping things short and sweet should be utilised to present a clear and understandable CV that employers actually want to read. Keep in mind the CV 'hotspot' – the employer's eye will naturally look at the upper-middle area of the first page – so utilise this area to make your mark.

As a doctor or dentist pursuing a non-academic position, it is wise to place your professional experience above academic training. Think about the order of your CV and what YOU want to emphasise. It is recommended to use a chronological format and let the employment manager read your work history in reverse format – usually your most recent work history will be the most relevant and should be available to be read first.

Spell check

Be sure to proofread your CV several times. It would be unfortunate to not get a job due to simple mistakes such as typos and errors in your document. Employers or hiring managers will actively look to find mistakes in your work. If you have not put in the effort to make sure your document is error-free, it is likely that your CV will be put in the 'not getting an interview' pile. Use spell check, and it's a good idea to ask a peer or colleague to look over your work.

Tailor your CV

It is therefore important to review your CV when considering each new role and to tailor it accordingly. Identify and understand exactly what the role entails and what your employers are looking for. Research the company thoroughly and use the job description and skill requirements to your advantage to work out what skills and experiences you should emphasize. There should be no such thing as a generic CV – for each role you apply for you should create a unique CV specifically catered to that role. This doesn't necessarily mean re-writing the whole thing, usually you can easily adapt the sections and details that are applicable to the position.

Sell your skills

Your technical and field-related skills and knowledge that relate to the role play a vital part in obtaining a job. The fields of

dentistry and medicine are constantly being refreshed and updated with new advancements. It is important to demonstrate to hiring managers that you are up to speed with the latest developments in your chosen field. List all of the knowledge and techniques, procedures, medical devices, dental devices, equipment and programs that are relevant to your career. When you go into detail about these skills and knowledge, use action verbs to describe your experiences such as 'examined', 'administered' or 'treated'. For example, instead of writing 'knowledge about dental problems and conditions' use more action-oriented language such as 'experience in diagnosing and treating dental problems and conditions'.

Carefully use key words and industry buzz words to demonstrate that you are up to date and invested/involved in the field. For example, 'ability and knowledge regarding the application of teeth whitening techniques using the most recent dental innovation, but be careful as initial sorting of CV's can sometimes be undertaken by administration staff who may not understand very technical language

Soft skills

When writing your CV, the first things you probably think to include are your qualifications and relevant skills and you would most likely be right. However, skills and qualifications alone are not enough to exhibit yourself as the 'whole package' to your employer and it is likely that they will be looking for 'more'.

As a healthcare professional, it is also likely that your qualifications and skills will be similar to that of the others applying; your peers. If this is the case, it will be difficult for the employer to set you apart as a more desirable candidate. This is where the importance of soft skills (non-technical) comes in. Soft skills are a necessary part of working in healthcare.

Your employer will want to know if you are personable, likeable, and a good communicator to grasp how you will interact with patients, and also colleagues. Interpersonal skills are directly related to your capacity to provide exceptional patient care. You will also need to demonstrate your ability to be organized, show empathy, and have confidence and a positive outlook on life. For example, depending on the position, it may be useful to include any community work you have undertaken.

Make the most of your contacts

If possible, speak with doctors you know at the employer hospital to which you are applying to find out what skills, knowledge or services they are offering. For example, if you find out a hospital had a special community program for patients whose only language is Mandarin, and you speak Mandarin – it would be worthwhile highlighting both facts on your application to demonstrate how you can be an asset to the hospital. It may also be helpful to speak with recent applicants (both successful and unsuccessful) for their perspective and recommendations. If you've managed to maintain some contacts from people in the year ahead of you, ask them for their help.

Recommendations from firsthand experience goes a long way so it pays to listen and learn what you can from other people's experience to better your own application.

Submit applications on time

This one seems obvious, but it is imperative that you submit applications on time. It's a competitive marketplace and unlike university lecturers, the departments and hospitals won't grant extensions. Some process guidelines state that late applications will not be considered.

In summary

- Write more than one CV – ie tailor to each role
- Write in complete sentences
- Quantify your CV – back up with statistics and data
- Pay attention to professionalism
- Make your CV aesthetically pleasing
- Do not lie in your CV
- Do not repeat bullet points
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors.

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