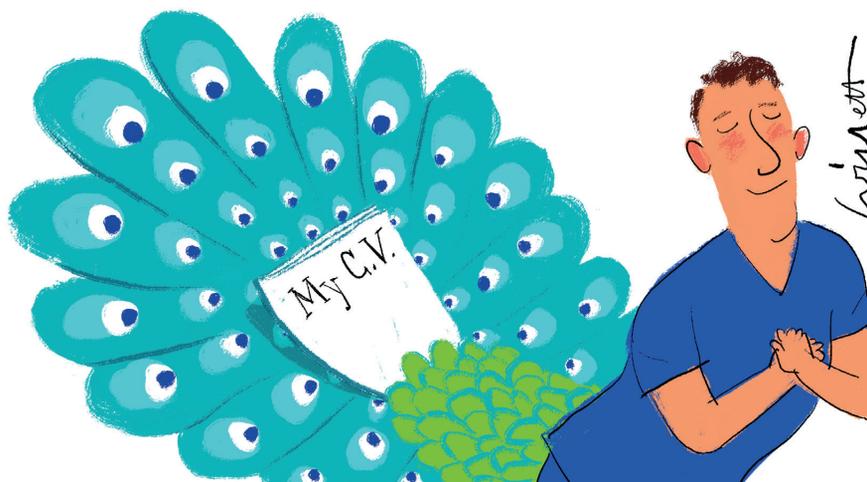


How can I add polish to my CV?

Three experts explain to **Abi Rimmer** how doctors can finesse their career records to be a standout candidate



Be precise to stand out

Liz O'Riordan, consultant breast surgeon

"Getting a job used to be all about the CV, but no one wants to see it anymore. It's all done online through long, detailed application forms with strict word counts. But you do still need a CV. So how can you stand out from the rest?"

"When I was applying for a consultant job, my husband suggested I copy the business world and condense my CV onto two sides of paper. It had a huge impact at shortlisting visits. When the medical director said that he didn't want my CV, I could offer him a single piece of A4—it looked impressive and made it easy for him to remember what I could bring to the post.

"Use the application form as a guide. Start with your career aims—focusing on patient centred, high quality care and governance. Include small sections for research, management, and teaching. Instead of listing every audit, paper, and poster you've ever done, summarise the totals and give details of the two or three most relevant for that post. If you're going for a senior post, you don't need to include your early training posts.

"Finally, ask someone who's recently been successful to show you their application form—keep asking until someone agrees."

See Liz O'Riordan's CV template in the online version.



Your CV is a living document

Sophia Bourne, learning and development consultant for the BMA

"Your CV fulfils many purposes. It's a selling document, making that important first impression; it's a career summary; and it's a reminder of your entire working life.

It must follow a standardised format—recruiters like a familiar layout—but you have some control over how you present yourself within it. It is tempting to include everything you've ever done, but this risks it being an unappealing chronology of your working life. Medical CVs can range from two to eight pages in length, depending on your experience. The key is to keep your information relevant, succinct, organised, and written with the reader in mind—most CVs have less than two minutes to impress.

"For recruitment purposes, your CV must present you as the best candidate for the role. While retaining the essential information, you can expand or contract examples, and reprioritise elements according to the requirements of each post. This way, you can ensure that relevant experience, credentials, and achievements stand out to the reader and are easy to find. Review your CV now and ask yourself, 'Does this represent me?' Ask a friend to read it and tell you if they recognise you in it. Is it easy for a recruiter to see what you offer?"

"Remember, your CV is a living, breathing document—nurture it throughout your medical career."



Inject some personality

Fizzah Ali, neurology registrar and editor-in-chief of Medical Woman magazine

"Consider your CV the electronic equivalent of a first impression. It should reflect your professional life while being condensed, tailored with consideration, and presented with personality.

"Start with the basics. An introduction should be brief, mentioning your current roles. A list of qualifications is essential and some elements of your employment history may need to be elaborated on—for example, if flexible working has led to longer placements.

"Lists of oral and poster presentations, publications, and courses should be trimmed. Select the most relevant for the role. I also include a few lines on extracurricular activities.

"Once the framework of your CV is in place, give special consideration to the skills and experiences the role you are applying for requires. Often, we are presented with a set of essential and desired criteria for a post and these can be weaved in and elaborated upon.

"Presentation is important; a lengthy CV may bring a sense of achievement, but an employer wants to see the relevant highlights.

"Remember, as trainees we have access to professional careers advice, as well as constructive feedback from more experienced colleagues."

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