

This leaflet does not constitute any form of policy on behalf of SPVS and is not intended to be instructional, but merely informative and hopefully helpful.

Writing a CV for a Job in Veterinary Practice



CV WRITING

The purpose of writing a CV is to give a clear, concise overview of information which is relevant to you in order to maximise your chances of obtaining an interview; not a job, an interview because it's at an interview that prospective employers have the chance to find out more about you, to work out whether you're the person they're looking for – and, of course, you get the chance to decide whether the job that's on offer is the right one for you!

With this in mind you should keep the CV short and to the point, leaving out any information that is not strictly relevant to this job. So, whilst you can write a 'general' CV, it's always a helpful to adjust it for each application and to individualise it to the job in question. It should be no longer than 2 sides of A4, typed and neatly presented.

Remember that you want to make your CV stand out from a pile of others, so it's important that the first half of page 1 grabs the reader's attention; if that doesn't happen your CV may never be read fully at all.

It is usual not to write Curriculum Vitae as a title as it is obvious that that is what it is. Use your name as the title and don't forget to add your post nominals.

Writing a CV cont

Personal Information.

Give your full name, indicating which of your first names you prefer to be known by. You may wish to include a photograph. Then give your telephone number and e-mail address as well as any links to professional type social media accounts such as LinkedIn. Make sure that you can be reliably contacted on the phone number you give; if your mobile signal can be unreliable at your home address for example, it is worth also including a landline. Your date of birth, marital status and nationality aren't usually included in modern CVs, though you can choose to state them if you wish. For most veterinary jobs it is likely to be relevant whether you have a driving licence or not, and if it is full and clean then say so.

Employment And Education History.

It is up to you whether to give your employment or education history in reverse or chronological order. As a general rule, most employers would prefer it to be reverse as this gives the most relevant information first. Give the dates and then your job title and practice name. Say what type of practice/work it was, e.g. 100% Small animal in a mixed practice. Then write a few sentences about the job (bullet points can be very effective). Try to make this something that relates specifically to that job and, rather than describing what your role entailed, make the comments skills based, explaining any skills you developed, your day-to-day responsibilities and any particular initiative you may have shown. Above all be positive about whatever you've done and highlight anything about which you're especially proud.

If this is the first job you are applying for after graduating then you may not have any relevant employment history. In this case it is probably better to start with your latest degree. You may have relevant experience from holiday jobs which might make you stand out above other applicants. Just because it is not directly related to veterinary practice does not mean it is not relevant, but you must present the information in the light of the benefit it will bring to you when you begin working as a vet. Remember that veterinary clients are customers and a lot of what veterinary surgeons do each day involves dealing with people. As a result, any jobs that provide customer service type experience or help develop communication skills are valuable for roles in veterinary practices, so make sure you include these and explain why you believe the experience and skills you gained are transferrable to the job you're applying for. For example, if you worked in a shop during the holidays you could present that as experience dealing with people and providing customer service, though there is probably little benefit in listing how you controlled stock levels or arranged displays. It's also a good idea to include details of where you saw practice, again stating what experience you gained at each.

It is unlikely that your prospective employer will be especially interested in much of your school history. You may feel you want to include your A-level results but really this is irrelevant once you have reached university, certainly anything further back than this would be a waste of ink!

Areas Of Interest.

As a new graduate, one way that you might make yourself stand out from your competition is to express a particular interest in some area of veterinary work. You may wish to write a few sentences about your final year elective. Again, keep it brief and to the point. Make sure that you stress the relevance to the job you are applying for. If you have been involved in charity work or done any volunteering mention these too and highlight the skills you developed whether they be directly veterinary / animal related or more leadership / problem-solving based for example. You can include details here of memberships of any veterinary societies that you may have.

Hobbies And Interests.

List them, maybe with a standard, e.g. Played Hockey for the University. Employers like to know something about the way you may choose to spend your free time because they'll be aware of the potential for you to join clubs and develop a social life in the local area which may help you settle in.

References.

Modern CVs rarely contain details of referees, though it's important that you make sure you do arrange for a couple of people to be available to be approached by a potential employer. You don't need to state that references are available on request; simply be able to provide contact details should you be asked for them. Ideally your referees should be people who can attest to the truthfulness of your CV and who will be able to talk about your skills, competencies as well as provide some insight about your character. A previous employer, or a senior member of the team at a previous practice would be a good choice, or perhaps your tutor from University or a veterinary surgeon with whom you did EMS.

Write A Covering Letter.

The point of this document is to introduce yourself and draw attention to your CV. Remember you are aiming to secure an interview. Once again, make sure it's positive and don't be tempted to re-write the information from your CV but talk more about the person that you are (so it can almost be thought of as a 'personal statement') and explain what it is about the particular job that you're interested in and why you have decided to apply. Remember that employers would like to employ someone who wants to work at their practice so make it specific to the role – there is nothing worse than a covering letter which feels 'generic'! And, if you're sending out your CV 'just in case there may be a role available' rather than applying for an advertised job, explain this and talk about why you have decided to approach the practice and why you believe you may be a useful person for them to know about.

Finally, it sounds obvious, but check the grammar and spelling meticulously.

Good Luck!

Further information and resources for SPVS members

[SPVS New Graduate/Student Leaflets:](#)

So...you have chosen your dream job. Now what??

Preparing For and Going to an Interview - Advice and tips

[How to Improve EMS](#) - Practical advice and top tips for students.

[Top Tips for loving life as a GP vet](#) - A series of 6 podcasts Listen here

[SPVS Salary Survey](#) - covering everything from basic earnings, bonuses, dividends and overtime, to benefits such as accommodation, car allowances and pensions.

<https://spvs.org.uk/graduate-support/>