WRITING A CV - PERFORMERS

WRITING A CV FOR PERFORMERS

Whatever your area of performance you will need a CV to promote yourself. A CV is a *marketing* document. You can choose what to include and what to leave out, but it should reflect your personality and show your experience. This is almost certainly the first chance you have to make an impression so make sure you present yourself well.

You will probably need more than one CV depending on the recipient – eg casting director, agent, etc. Tailor it to the individual or at least to the *type* of employer you are approaching:

- Write it with the employer in mind. Use only the most relevant information about your career, training and skills.
- Be truthful and present an accurate portrait of yourself.
- Be positive.

If you have a long list of roles to include, consider having one CV for your film and TV roles and another for your theatre roles or vice versa. If you have more than one CV available you can indicate this – eg Theatre CV also available on request.

Your CV should be concise and well laid out. Keep it short – ideally one side of A4 only – and use the space wisely, which takes thought and planning. Make sure it looks professional:

- It should be typed on good quality paper
- Check the spelling, grammar and punctuation (don't just rely on spell-check!)
- Make it easy to read - avoid long sentences and leave plenty of space on the page
- Choose a modern font – Arial is a safe bet – and don't use more than one
- Capitals, italics, etc. can be used for emphasis – but be consistent and don't overdo it.

Employers will be looking for the following information:

- Physical attributes
- Whether or not you are an Equity member
- Spotlight number (actors only)
- What work you have done of the kind that they produce
- Who you have worked for that have industry credibility
- Where you are based
- Whether you can be contacted easily.

England Helpline
08080 300 900*

Scotland Helpline
0808 100 8094

www.skillset.org/careers

*Also available to callers from Wales and Northern Ireland

matrix
EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund
Equity 75 years of performing for you 1930 2005
Ulf Union learning fund
skillset
The Sector Skills Council for the Audio Visual Industries

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Your CV should always be sent with a **covering letter.** Remember:

- This is a business that is largely about people so it should be addressed to the right person – research this thoroughly beforehand.
- Don't photocopy standard letters and hand write the names in afterwards – this looks shoddy.
- Avoid gimmicks and don't try to be funny – this rarely works – eg don't send your last Rolo. This isn't original and agents/employers can buy their own sweets.
- Your letter should be brief and to the point. Don't repeat information on your CV but make sure the experience on your CV supports your description of yourself.

Your CV must also be accompanied by a **photograph** which should be:

- current – it must look like you and not be misleading, ie not overly glamorous (if you can't look like this at 9am it is the wrong photo)
- in black and white (although presenters' photographs are normally in colour)
- 10" x 8" (254mm x 203mm)
- clear and in focus.

Your photograph should emphasise your face, so keep your clothing neutral.
Take both dark and light clothing along with you for the session. Most performers will only need a headshot. Some artists, such as dancers, will also need full length shots (referred to as 'body shots').

When looking for a photographer ask your friends and colleagues for recommendations or look through Contacts or Spotlight for names of photographers on pictures you like.

Remember to factor in the cost of having your picture reproduced. If you want your photos returned, enclose a large enough stamped addressed envelope (SAE) with the correct postage.

Overleaf is a suggested layout for your CV. These notes are intended as a guide, not as fixed rules.

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A suggested layout for your CV

At the top just have your **professional name** in large bold lettering, followed by your primary **contact details**, ie yours or your agent's. Don't write Curriculum Vitae – it's obvious what the document is. Then:

Physical details: eg height, hair and eye colour, measurements / size / build.
Playing age: eg 20 – 35, 50 - 65
Voice type (if applicable): eg Soprano, Tenor or voice range.
Spotlight number
Equity member/Equity student member
Website
Where you trained.

Experience
Start with your most recent work. You don't have to include everything, only work which is relevant. You can summarise other experience at the end, if there is space. Include the title, role, and where performed/company, along with the name of the Director and/or Choreographer if you are a dancer, and, if applicable, the Musical Director, eg:

Date	Production	Role	Director	Company
2005	Hamlet	*Rosencrantz*	John Brown	The Gate Theatre
2005	Holby	Tom	Alison Davies	BBC

You can split this section by medium – eg Theatre; TV and Film; Concerts; Radio, etc.
Start with the area which is most relevant or in which you have the strongest experience.

Training
Where you trained and/or specific professional training is likely to be of more direct interest to the employer than your qualifications, so list these first.

Listing your qualifications is optional – you must decide whether or not they are pertinent to the role you are applying for. Put the most relevant first, together with the place and date they were taken. Training and qualifications should come after your experience.

Also mention any awards or relevant competitions.

Styles: (for singers/dancers)

eg Pop, classical, jazz, gospel, etc.

Special skills:
List your key skills, starting with performance skills and then other skills – eg accents, musical instruments, sight reading, combat abilities, swimming, driving, etc.

Be honest and make sure that the skills you are including are up to date – eg don't include horse riding unless you are very experienced and confident you can ride any horse that is put in front of you.

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