



DofE CV Template – guidance notes

Introduction

The CV template is designed to help you tell potential employers the story of your skills and experience, in a way that's clear, well-organised and easy to read. To help you focus on writing it, the design and structure have already been set up for you. In fact, most sections have been locked down, so you can change the content of each section, but not how they're arranged.

At first glance

When you open the template, you'll see the overall structure of the document (shown right), with space for you to fill in details about yourself. The template is just one page, but will automatically grow to additional pages as you add details to your CV.

Editable areas

Pale yellow highlighted areas (which start and end with [grey brackets]) show the unlocked parts of the document, which you can edit. All the others are locked and, if you try to edit them, a warning message may pop up on screen. The yellow shading does not show when printing or saving as a PDF.

'Click and type' boxes

[Black brackets] are 'click and type' boxes: click once on the box to highlight it; then whatever you type next automatically replaces it. This means you don't have to delete it first, and it reminds you what information to type there. These are used for the details you'd edit most commonly. None of these should be left on the page when you've finished writing your CV.

Other editable areas

You might notice that some areas are shaded yellow, but don't have the black [brackets]. You can leave these as they are if they suit your needs, but you can change them if they don't. For instance, we've provided bold headings (in the boxes) for different categories of skills you might have gained through DofE, but you can change these if there's a better way of grouping your particular skills.

[Full Name] [Address]
[Postcode]
Mobile: [Mobile number]
Email: [Email address]

[Personal statement/summary].

Work experience
[Year] – [Year] [Employer, Role]
[My duties, responsibilities and skills gained].
[Year] – [Year] [Employer, Role]
[My duties, responsibilities and skills gained].

Skills I developed whilst doing my DofE

Communication
[My DofE activity, responsibilities and skills gained].

Team working and leadership
[My DofE activity, responsibilities and skills gained].

Self-motivation, drive and commitment
[My DofE activity, responsibilities and skills gained].

Resilience
[My DofE activity, responsibilities and skills gained].

Technical skills summary
[List skills and practical/vocational training]

Extra-curricular achievements
[List DofE and other outside activities or awards]

Education and academic qualifications
[Year] – [Year] [Subject, result, college/university]
[Year] – [Year] [School, Town]
[#] A Levels/Higher/Advanced Higher; [Subject (grade), Subject (grade),...]
[#] GCSEs grades/National4/5; [A–C or range of grades]

References
[Name, Role/Job, Organisation]
[Name, Role/Job, Organisation]

Working through your CV

Name and contact details

If your details are longer than will fit in one line, Word will wrap the text automatically to a new line, but doesn't always judge this well. If you want to force text to start a new line (e.g. to keep your email address on one line), place your cursor where you want the new line to start, then press <Shift>+<Return> keys (also known as a 'soft return').

Tip: type an extra space after your email address, and Word will make it a hyperlink, which someone reading your CV can click on to email you, when reading it on-screen.

Personal summary introduction

This is the first thing an employer might read about you, so it needs to give a quick sketch that makes them want to read more. Include just your main strengths and ambitions, but don't make it too long: ideally no more than about six lines.

Work experience

Each work entry has two parts: the heading (years worked, employer and your role) and the detail/description of what you did, including your responsibilities and skills gained. Remember to use a 'soft return' (<Shift>+<Return>) to start a new line in either of these parts.

If you have experience of more than two roles (even if they're with the same employer), simply press the <Return> key at the end of the last job description to create the bold heading for another job. There won't be any 'click and type' boxes this time, but it's simple to type the heading entries:

Year <Space> – <Space> Year <Tab> Employer and role

Press <Return> after the heading, then whatever you type next will automatically appear in the description style (non-bold and indented).

Press <Return> again and you'll get another heading, and so on.

If you've had fewer than two roles, just highlight one and delete it.

DofE Skills

You will have gained many skills through your DofE activities, and this section helps you group them together, so an employer can scan the headings to get a quick overview of your main skills areas. We've suggested some headings for you to use, but you can change these if your particular skills could be grouped under different headings.

Technical skills summary and Extra-curricular achievements

Use these to include any other skills or awards you may have gained from, say, an apprenticeship or being part of a sport, group or society in your spare time.

Either or both of these sections can be deleted completely if they don't apply to you.

Education and academic qualifications

As with Employment, include the most recent first, followed by earlier education down to secondary level. If you gained different types of qualification in the same place (e.g. both A levels and GCSEs / Higher/Advanced Higher / National 4/5 from the same school), include each type on a separate line, using a soft return (<Shift>+<Return>) to start a new line.

The headings and descriptions behave like the Employment section: pressing <Return> after the heading (years and school/university) will start an indented details section; pressing <Return> after the details section will start a new heading section. So, you can add extra Education entries in the same way as adding extra Education entries.

Referees

Add more or delete these as you need. Employers generally like to see two referees.

Saving and sending your CV

Save with a meaningful name, and save often

When you open the template its filename will appear in the top bar as “DofE CV Template.docx” so save it with a name like “(Your Name) CV.docx” into a folder where you can find it again. Then remember to save (usually <Ctrl>+S) regularly as you work on it.

If you’re using a public or shared computer, remember to save this somewhere where you can find it again, such as a flash drive or to the cloud.

Send your CV by email as a PDF

You don’t know what software will be used by the person reading your CV so, if you send it by email as a Word document, it might look different to them than it does to you. It’s better to save it as a PDF, which will always look the same on any computer or device. Most versions of Word have a ‘Save As...’ option to save a copy of your document in PDF format.

Using Word styles

You’ll notice that different part of text use different formats, such as larger type or bold. These help the reader understand the structure of your CV at a glance. Normally you shouldn’t need to change any of the text formatting but, if you do, or accidentally change it and need to change back, it’s useful to know that all the text formatting used comes from the Word ‘styles’ for this document. These are listed in the Styles bar at the top of the Word window:



In this example, you can see that the Personal statement/summary is selected, and the ‘Introduction’ style is highlighted in the Styles list. This indicates that the Introduction style is used for this particular part of the document. You’ll also notice listed the styles used for, say, Heading 1 (for all the section headings), Experience Heading and Experience Detail, and so on.

The Normal style is used for most of the descriptive text in the document.

To apply a style, simply select the relevant text then click the style you want to apply to it.

All the styles in the CV template are known as ‘paragraph styles.’ This means they apply to an entire paragraph (everything up to the point where you pressed <Return>, shown in the document with the ¶ symbol if your document is displaying hidden characters and formatting symbols (the ¶ button on the ‘Home’ menu, ‘Paragraph’ section). This means it’s enough to click in the middle of the relevant paragraph (you don’t have to highlight all the text) and your chosen style will be applied to all the text in that paragraph.

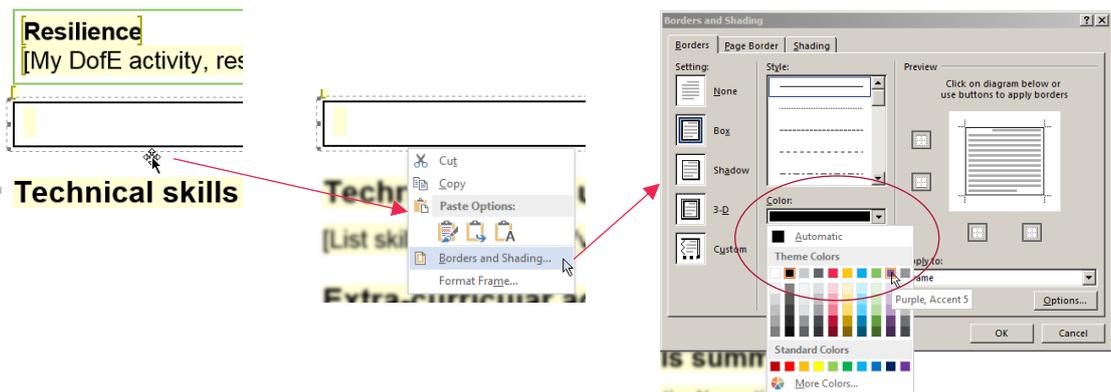
Advanced editing

The instructions above will usually be enough, but sometimes you might need to make bigger changes, which need more advanced techniques.

Adding another Skills box

If your skills need another heading to show their range, you can add another box. It's fairly simple, as long as you follow these steps carefully:

1. Click to place your cursor before the 'T' in 'Technical skills summary'
2. Press <Return> to create a new paragraph (between the last skills box and 'Technical skills')
3. Move your cursor up into the new empty paragraph you just created
4. In the 'Styles' bar at the top of the Word window, click on the 'Skills Spacer' style (you should see the spacing of your new paragraph close up)
5. Press <Return> and a new skills box will appear for you to type in. Make sure you give it a heading (in bold) before describing your skills under that heading
6. Change the border colour of the box to complement the other boxes:
 - a. Position the mouse pointer over the box border, so it shows a four-headed arrow
 - b. Right-click and choose 'Borders and Shading...'
 - c. In the Borders and Shading box, click the 'Color' option and choose a different colour from the top row shown under 'Theme Colors', e.g. purple or grey (The Preview outline should change colour to reflect your choice)
 - d. Click 'OK'



Unlocking the document

There may – very occasionally – be cases where you need to change some of the entries that have been locked, and it's simple to unlock the document if necessary:

1. Click 'Review' on the menu bar
2. Click the 'Restrict Editing' button to show the restriction options to the right
3. In the 'Restrict Editing' box that appears to the right, click the 'Stop Protection' button (this box may already have popped up if you tried to edit one of the locked areas)

Note: this may not be available on all versions of Word (particularly on Macintosh)