



# 7 Obvious Mistakes To Avoid On Your Medical CV



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# Contents

Introduction	3
The 7 Obvious Mistakes	5
What Not To Put On Your Medical CV	9
Forget What You Learnt In School	10
What You Must Include On Your CV	15
Write A Goldfish-Proof CV Summary	18
Dealing With Gaps	21
CV Format Sample	24
CV Checklist	30
Worksheet	31
Contact Us	33

# Introduction



Everyone has an interesting story to tell, and your CV is the way you tell the story of your career. The careers landscape for healthcare professionals is changing, and your CV needs to reflect that.

The purpose of this guide is to give you a foundation of information to work from when you're considering the next career step or applying for a new job. At Beat Medical, we provide our candidates with ongoing, career management advice - as well as providing a professional recruitment service.

Having the right career management skills goes a long way towards building up your dream career - planning it how you want it to be, rather than 'going with the flow' and ending up in the same place you were years ago in terms of job satisfaction, financial reward, and overall happiness.

Of course, if you have any questions along the way, please call me on 1800 633 505. We're happy to help in any way we can.



**Shaun Hughston**

Founder - Beat Medical

# The 7 Obvious Mistakes



# 7 Obvious Mistakes To Avoid

For doctors, nurses and other medical professionals, it might seem unlikely that the formatting or structure of your CV can do much to hurt your job prospects. But as recruiters, we know that there are some things that hiring managers get sick of seeing, and that sometimes they can't see past these mistakes to the capable healthcare professional the CV represents.

A good resume is like a key – it should open doors for you by demonstrating to prospective employers that you're worth speaking with. If you're not having any success with your job applications, it might not be that you don't have the right qualifications, but perhaps that you don't know how to best communicate them.

A medical recruitment agency like Beat Medical helps make sure your resume ticks all the boxes before any potential employers see it. We know what employers are looking for, and what will make them pass on you. The following are some of the major things we look at to make sure your resume won't include anything to turn a potential employer off. They might seem simple, but they are mistakes that people make over and over again.

## 1. Missing Personal Details

This seems obvious, but it's important to be contactable by phone and email. Make sure your phone details are correct, and that your message bank is active with a professional sounding message. Provide a personal email address; one which includes your first and last name is best. Inappropriate 'joke' email addresses are not suitable on the CV of a healthcare professional.

## 2. Irrelevant Career Goals or Summary

This is your chance to show a prospective employer you're interested in working with them specifically, but many people let themselves down by not tailoring their CV to the particular job. You need to customise this section for each application, aligning your goals and experience with the medical job on offer. You can use this space to both outline your career goals and summarise relevant employment history and highlights. Remember, this section should be unique to each job you apply for, and relevance is paramount.

## 3. Too Long

As medical professionals, it won't take long in your career for your list of education, courses and training to get very long. Your resume is a summary of your education and employment – try and keep it to two pages. Sentences should be short and to the point. You don't need to include every training course in your CV – trim it down by including only your relevant study; tertiary, specialist training, management courses and post-graduate studies that relate to the position advertised.

## 4. Grammar Mistakes

While your spell check and grammar check should pick up most mistakes, one of the big ones we see is when candidates switch between tenses. You should use the past tense consistently when referring to previous experience and study.

## 5. Not Following Instructions

It won't always be the case, but sometimes specific instructions are given to reduce the pool of applicants – if you don't follow them, you've failed the first test. A very simple example is when employers ask candidates to outline why they are interested in this particular job – many recycle their regular CV and ignore that request, which may instantly put them out of the running.

## 6. Inconsistent Fonts & Formatting

Formatting doesn't need to be fancy; all you need to concern yourself with is consistent formatting. Capitalisation, italics and underlining should be used sparingly and only to emphasise important points. Fonts should be plain and in a size that's easy to read.

## 7. Irrelevant Information

Hiring managers want to be able to scan your CV and pick out all the relevant information quickly. This is made harder for them if you clutter it up with sporting achievements, hobbies, family information, health background and other irrelevant information. If you are going for the job of a doctor, nurse or other health professional – mentioning sporting achievements or family situations is not going to particularly help your chances.

**DON'T INCLUDE**

Just Don't.



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# What Not To Put On Your Medical CV

## **Is my resume ok? Is it what is expected?**

We hear from many healthcare professionals considering a new job, locum work, or those who are wishing to work in the Australian medical system, that they are not confident about their CV. They fear it is too long, too short, in the wrong format, the wrong font, doesn't include the right information, or is not what is expected in Australia.

For the most part, their fear is well founded.

Somehow, amazingly, many CVs seem to really hit every mark of 'what not to do'. Rest assured, though, that it is certainly a problem you can fix.

There is a huge surplus of medical jobs in Australia, so by necessity, many healthcare professionals haven't had to learn the skill of writing a CV. Just a few years ago, you could most likely get a locum job with half a CV written on the back of a banana leaf.

## **What has changed?**

Slowly, the medical employment market is becoming more competitive, and regulated. Many colleges are not increasing the amount of training places available and most employers are heavily formalising selection and employment of locums, even for short term jobs.

There is now a need to really master the skill of getting your CV right.

# Forget What You Learnt In School

Things are changing rapidly in the world of employment and job applications, and it's time to start breaking some rules.

Healthcare professionals, in particular, are prone to all sorts of weird and unique CV formats, ranging from the 'rambling letter' style, through to extremely long and painstakingly detailed documents (it is likely that many of these have actually caused the world's internet to slow when they are emailed).

The bulk of these CV issues are caused by the best intentions. That is, by following previously set-in-stone rules about how your CV should look, and what it ought to contain.

The particular rules or assumptions you are following will likely be a product of your education in this area, or the absence of any training in how to construct a CV.

Since we know healthcare providers aren't particularly keen on rules, let's get to breaking these commonly accepted CV 'rules'.

# Break These 'Rules'

## **1. Your CV Must Contain Your Referee Details**

We lead with this one, because it is by far the most controversial piece of information we present in our CV training. Unless you are specifically asked to by an employer, do not put your referee details on the CV. Doing so takes away your control over who calls the referees, and opens them up to being solicited or harassed by employers or recruiters. When the time actually comes to provide the details of your referees, they will be fresh and ready to talk positively about you. Also, forget about putting 'References Available on Request' – it takes up space, and states something we already know.

## **2. Your CV Must Contain A List of Responsibilities for Each Position**

Sure, you have to provide an idea of what you did in each job, but unless what you're writing is actually adding differentiating value, and making you stand out from other candidates, leave it off. There's not a lot of value to be gained from stating that you completed 972 discharge summaries as a medical intern.

## **3. You Should Use These Powerful Phrases and Keywords**

So, I hear you're a great team-worker. You're capable of working independently, but also as part of a multidisciplinary team. And how you love evidence based medicine, and communicating with people. In fact, you're all about communication and flexibility, and strong time management, and [insert buzzwords here].

Again, unless something positively differentiates you, leave it out. Provide real-world, solid examples of what makes you a different, strong, stand-out candidate.

#### **4. Providing Information about Sport and Hobbies Shows Your Personal Side, or that you're 'well rounded'**

No-one cares about your macrame hobby, or your mixed netball victory over the Westside Possums. The point of a CV is to provide an overview of your professional achievements. It's not your life story.

#### **5. The CV Templates in Word Processing Programs are a Great Place to Start**

We like cookies just as much as most people, but as recruiters, we don't like cookie-cutter CVs. Have a crack at starting a document from scratch. If you don't know how, get your kids to do it. Even if it's not a graphic design masterpiece, it represents the genuine 'you'.

#### **6. You Should Put As Much Detail on Your CV as Possible**

You need to pick what is the most relevant information for the job you are applying for, and cut the rest. There's no need to include irrelevant information, just for the sake of it. People have limited time and attention spans, and just need to see what they need to see.



# Leave This Off

- Photograph
- Marital status
- Health status
- Hobbies or interests
- Details of children
- Any paragraph longer than 40 words
- Sporting achievements
- Anything negative
- Anything untrue
- Your race or colour
- Date of birth
- Referees names and contact details
- Detailed background of your Medicare fraud activities or legal proceedings
- Religion
- Political affiliations
- Height or weight
- Weird or offensive email addresses
- Irrelevant Jobs
- Irrelevant education
- Salary/income expectations
- Anything spelt incorrectly
- Irrelevant rants about your life
- Lists of every single procedure you have ever done, or considered doing in your life
- References to other job applications

# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## On A Medical CV



# What You Must Include On Your CV

There is no inherently right or wrong format for a CV. In terms of layout, make sure that the font is plain (such as Times or Arial), and that it is appropriately spaced. Use of dot points is encouraged in order to create a sense of white space and encourage ease of reading.

The most important factor to consider is the relevancy of the information on your CV for the position you are applying for. Make sure your CV has an emphasis on the particular skills and experience most relevant to the job. You should end up with a few different versions of your CV for different types of positions.

## **Don't even know where to start?**

Start by gathering up all of your training certificates, and records. Decide what is important, and what is not.

Then, do your best to write down your career history and the main duties for those jobs.

Finally, start writing down anything else relevant - professional memberships, volunteer work, research, and presentations.

Don't worry about format to start - that will come later!



## CONTACT DETAILS

This should include your name, postal address, home and mobile numbers, and email address.



## SUMMARY

This is a three to five line precis of your professional experience.



## KEY ATTRIBUTES

Three to four dot points on what makes you stand out as a candidate for a position.



## CURRENT POSITION/S

List the positions you currently hold, and the name of your employer/s.



## CAREER HISTORY SUMMARY

This is simply a list of the relevant positions you have held, starting from the most recent. List only the job title and employer name. This is just a quick snapshot.



## DETAILED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

This section is the most detailed part of the CV, and is what really goes into detail about your experience, and what you have achieved in each position.



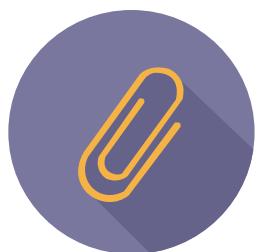
## EDUCATION

List the title of the course, awarding institution, and year. The most recent should be listed first.



## SHORT COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

List relevant courses, with the most recent first.



## PUBLICATIONS, AWARDS & OTHER

List relevant publications in the format convention of your college or discipline. You can also list any awards or scholarships, and volunteer appointments (e.g. on boards)



**Remember** - Many employers or training colleges may ask for your CV in a specific format. If this is the case, always follow their instructions in preference to these guidelines.



A recent article revealed that the average human attention span has decreased from 12 seconds to 8 seconds in the past fifteen years. An experienced employer will read a CV in just a few seconds. You have to get their attention.

# How To Write A Goldfish-Proof Medical CV Summary

A recent article revealed that the average human attention span has decreased from 12 seconds to 8 seconds in the past fifteen years. In contrast, goldfish are thought to have an attention span of around 9 seconds.

While there may be a range of explanations for this, it is something you need to consider when you're applying for your next job.

One of the keys to an excellent medical CV is a concise, well-crafted summary at the start of the document. The reason it is so important is that it gives the recruiter, admin person, manager, or consultant assessing your application a quick snapshot of who you are, and where you're going.

An experienced recruiter reads over a CV in a few seconds, really just looking for keywords. I know it's probably a bit depressing to read that after the many hours you spent on your CV, but that's the reality of a competitive recruitment process.

We get a lot of questions about what to put on your CV summary, and it's actually pretty straightforward. Contrary to a somewhat popular belief, it's not just a space for a career objective, although that is part of it. The conventions for CVs vary from country to country, but if you're writing a medical CV for an Australian employer, this is a good guide.

Think of your CV summary kind of like the abstract of a journal article. You should pretty much get the gist of the document just by reading that introductory paragraph.

### This should be the structure of your CV summary:

- State what your current position is, and how much experience you have had in that position
- Provide a highlight of specific achievements, interests, projects, or research
- Say what makes you different to other candidates
- Give an explanation of what your career objective is
- A statement about your values and how that aligns with your career

It's important that you don't just make it a superlative soup. The reader wants to know genuine information about you in order to make a quick judgement on how to proceed with your application. And, remember, it is a summary, so keep it brief.

### So, a working example might be something like this:

*I have been completing advanced anaesthetics training since 2013 as part of the North Hills Network. I have a special interest in paediatrics, recently completed a research project on XYZ, and was the recipient of the Smith Prize for excellence. I recently completed a fellowship in neonatal anaesthetics in Canada, which gave me a unique level of experience in the field. It is my intention to specialise in paediatric anaesthetics, with a particular emphasis on XYZ cases. I am passionate about accessible healthcare, and I am committed to spending a significant amount of my time in public cases.*

# DEALING WITH GAPS



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# How To Explain Gaps On Your Medical CV

Most people have a gap in their CV, and as a general rule, having a gap in your work isn't a huge problem – depending on how you deal with it.

The extent to which a CV gap will influence your career, or the next job application will depend on whether it's a little gap, or a huge chasm.

Employers are becoming more savvy about looking into the work history of candidates, especially when it comes to medical positions (even for locum jobs). For example, when you're applying for a job as a doctor, you can now expect that an employer or recruiter will verify each of your stated positions, your educational qualifications, and even your publications. The digitalisation of information has made it even easier to find out about your background.

What is crucially important is to make sure you explain the gap, no matter how small or big. You can imagine what the assumption of potential employers and medical recruiters may be if there is obviously a time period missing from your resume :

- Were you fired?
- Did you do some time in prison?
- Perhaps leading a revolution in a little-known Central American nation?

Whatever the reason, don't try to hide it. Even if it is something on the above list, you need to provide at least some information on your CV to let employers know what happened.

The most common reasons for gaps we see on CVs are because of:

- Holidays
- Short breaks between jobs
- Time off to do locum work
- Pregnancy and kids
- Carer responsibilities (e.g. for an elderly parent)
- Personal illness or Surgery
- Another professional interest or career

All of these are quite valid, understandable reasons for having some time off. Of course, if you look at from the employer's perspective, the longer the break, the more questions are going to be asked. It's best to foresee these questions and answer them in your CV.

### **For example:**

- Did you do any medical work at all during the break?
- Did you stay up to date with your medical education and CME requirements?
- Is your professional registration still valid?
- Are you going to have to undergo retraining before you start again?
- So, from a practical perspective, how do you deal with the gap in your CV?

The most simple approach is to treat the gap as any other position or role in your CV. For example, it might appear as the following:

### **Maternity Leave (14th June 2008- 18th April 2009)**

- Maintained CME
- Met AHPRA registration requirements

Another approach is to acknowledge the time away from work, but not provide further information on the CV. You might do this when you took time off for a sensitive reason (such as health issues). For example:

### **Personal Leave (8th January 2004-21st September 2004)**

Naturally, in this case, you will need to be prepared to explain it in more detail to the employer.

Whatever the reason is for your break in work (even if it was leading a Central American revolution), you should approach it proactively, be honest, and whatever you do, don't ignore it!

# CV FORMAT

## Putting It Together



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# Example CV Format

The following pages are an example CV format. As we stated in the earlier parts of this eBook, you need to:

- Make it your own
- Tailor it to the specific job or training program
- Update it regularly
- Follow the instructions for the application process

Of course, the content of the sample is just that - a sample, provided for the purposes of formatting. It obviously contains a mix of different example content, that is far from accurate.

Naturally, we cannot provide a real CV due to privacy reasons.

Keep in mind, this is not a prescription - it is a foundation.

## Dr Bill Sample

123 Main St  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Mobile: 0000 000 000 - Home: 03 0000 0000**  
[billsample@gmail.com](mailto:billsample@gmail.com)

Keep the summary to this length or less.

### Personal Summary

I have been completing advanced anaesthetics training since 2013 as part of the North Hills Network. I have a special interest in paediatrics, recently completed a research project on XYZ, and was the recipient of the Smith Prize for Excellence. I recently completed a fellowship in neonatal anaesthetics in Canada, which gave me a unique level of experience in the field. It is my intention to specialise in paediatric anaesthetics, with a particular emphasis on XYZ cases. I am passionate about accessible healthcare, and I am committed to spending a significant amount of my time in public cases.

### Key Attributes

- Completed advanced training in XYZ
- Awarded the Smith Prize for Excellence
- Finished basic logbook requirements within 12 months
- Completed EMST, ALS, HUET, and AME courses

Choose attributes that **differentiate** you from others.

### Current Appointment

- Anaesthetics Advanced Trainee - Hills Hospital

If you are quite junior, and have a short work history, you could use this section to list out terms you've completed.

### Career History Summary

Anaesthetics Advanced Trainee - Hills Hospital (2012- Present)

Anaesthetics Basic Trainee - Hills Hospital (2011-2012)

Resident Medical Officer - Bayside Hospital (2010 - 2011)

Intern - Bayside Hospital (2009 - 2010)

## Professional Experience

### **Anaesthetics Advanced Trainee - Hills Hospital - Melbourne (January 2012- Present) - Full Time (38 + hours per week)**

- Established a study group for new registrars
- Assisted in developing a new clinical protocol for XYZ
- Participated in ABC procedure
- Manage daily peri-operative clinics, example, example
- Clinical skills used, developed in the position

Include Position Title,  
Employer, Location, Month/Year  
(from/To), Hours Per week.

You can list out  
clinical skills, but don't take up  
too much space in this section  
for that.

### **Anaesthetics Basic Trainee - Hills Hospital - Melbourne (January 2010- December 2012) - Full Time (38 + hours per week)**

- Include position details here

Junior doctors may include  
terms completed

### **Critical Care Senior Resident - Bayside Hospital - Brisbane (January 2009- December 2009) - Full Time (38 + hours per week)**

- Include position details here
- Include position details here
- Include position details here

Reduce information for older  
positions

### **Intern - Grove Hill Hospital - Melbourne (January 2008- December 2008) - Full Time (38 + hours per week)**

- Include position details here
- Include position details here
- Include position details here

## Education

### **Master Of Medicine (Anatomy) - Melbourne University (January 2012- Present)**

- Include subjects completed
- Achievements (e.g. high grades)
- Research projects

### **Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery- Melbourne University (January 2003-January 2007)**

- Include subjects completed
- Achievements (e.g. high grades)
- Research projects

## Short Courses & Workshops

- Advanced Life Support - ABC Training - 5th January 2015
- Helicopter Underwater Escape Training - Careflight - 10th February 2014
- Emergency Life Support Course- 7th January 2013
- Add relevant courses as necessary

Add more information on each course if you wish

## Publications

Smith A, Jones T, Patel C, et al. Warfarin-based treatment to prevent symptomatic deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism or death in general medical inpatients is not supported by best evidence. Int Med J. 2014;44:1424–65.

List as many publications as are relevant to the application.

## Awards & Scholarships

- **Smith Award For Excellence -2008**

Awarded by the excellence institute for XYZ project.

- **2nd Year Medical Student Scholarship - 2007**

Awarded for research into ABC, and completion of a project on XYZ.

## Community Involvement

- Board Member - Kids Medicine Limited - 2005-Current
- I spend one week per year on community outreach on various pacific islands

# CV Checklist

- ✓ Make sure it has basic contact details
- ✓ Follow any specific instructions provided for the application
- ✓ Tailor your CV for each application
- ✓ Use your CV to positively differentiate - avoid using cliche keywords
- ✓ Ask yourself - does it add value? If not, take it off!
- ✓ Stay away from CV templates from word-processing software
- ✓ Address CV gaps proactively
- ✓ Leave your referees off - they will thank you for it
- ✓ Get someone else to proofread it before you send it off

# BONUS- CV Worksheet

**What are 10 words you would use to describe yourself, and what makes you different?**

**What skills/achievements differentiate you from other people at the same level as you?**

**Where do you see your career heading?**

# CV Worksheet

**What is at least one achievement you're proud of in each job you have had?**

**What adds value on your current CV? What doesn't?**

**What do you need to change on your CV right now?**



## Contact Us

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