

Guide to medical CVs and portfolios

At some stage during medical training you may need a CV. You will certainly need a CV within your application portfolio when attending interviews for specialty training. This leaflet provides advice on how to prepare a medical CV and portfolio.

CVs

The first rule of CV writing is that you must produce a CV targeted to the requirements of each post you apply for. Your content must be relevant and add value, demonstrating your skills, qualities and experiences that make you suitable for the role. Always follow any other rules and guidelines (for example: content, order of sections, length) that may be published by the organisation you are applying to.

CV sections

Personal details

Keep this to the minimum – name, address, one email address and telephone number, GMC number and registration status. Be wary of giving demographic information such as date of birth, gender, nationality, marital status. Many job advertisements will tell you exactly the kind of personal details not to include – always follow any published rules or guidelines.

Personal statement or career goal

It is becoming common to see CVs start with a short personal statement (some people use titles such as 'Career Goal', 'Career Objective' but the content is usually similar in nature, whatever the section is called) – this is three or four lines that acts as an introduction to you and what you have to offer. As with the CV in general this must be tailored to the particular role being applied for and make a strong first impression. Be wary of saying too much and being too general.

Education and qualifications

This is an opportunity to highlight any key achievements from your medical degree (and your intercalated degree, if applicable). Don't just list the modules you've taken, but highlight relevant projects or pieces of work, prizes and other academic achievements.

As you progress through your medical career, A levels and GCSEs (or equivalent) become less relevant. These should be displayed in a concise manner on one or two lines. When you leave foundation training to apply for specialty training there is a strong argument for leaving your pre-university qualifications off your CV as they do not feature in any person specification or selection criteria.

Employment history

When applying for specialty training each of your foundation rotations needs to be listed, but don't rely on just giving a list of your duties. Consider your achievements and experiences that highlight your skills and strengths as a doctor. Use active, positive language to describe yourself and your achievements, rather than passively describing the role.

If you have worked prior to (or during) your degree, then it can also be listed but describe the roles in ways that are relevant to the position you are applying for by highlighting related skills and personal qualities.

Audit, research, presentations, publications, teaching and leadership

These sections or headings are likely to feature in your CV – however, you may need other sections depending on the nature of the job and the person specification. For example, some person specifications may explicitly mention clinical governance or IT skills. For each of these sections make sure your content is relevant and adds value to your application. Don't just list what you've done but consider how you've done it and provide examples of your skills and qualities.

Interests and hobbies

It is good to draw on your experiences from outside of your medical degree or work as a doctor. Don't be bland and list generic hobbies that don't say anything particularly interesting. It is very common to read statements like 'socialising with friends, reading, going to the cinema' or similar that don't add anything of real interest or value. Person specifications for specialty training posts mention achievements outside of medicine and extracurricular activities from University, such as organisation of clubs or societies so include this information with details of the personal skills and qualities you have demonstrated.

Layout and organisation

Generally your content will be in reverse chronological order so you are starting with the most recent content in each of the sections. Make sure all your content is aligned and you use consistent layout, fonts and font sizes across each section. Avoid gimmicky fonts or paper.

Your CV is also a demonstration of your written communication skills, presentation skills and attention to detail so it has to look good without any mistakes. Always check your spelling; don't rely on the spell checker and ask someone else to double-check it for you. If you email your CV or submit it online, convert it to PDF first.

When are they used?

As medical students your CV will not be used to shortlist or rank you for your Foundation Programme post. However, the Foundation School or trust to which you are subsequently appointed may wish to see your CV after the UK FPO recruitment and selection activities.

If applying for the Academic Foundation Programme, it is more than likely you will need a CV.

When you become foundation trainees your CV is similarly unlikely to be used in the shortlisting process for specialty training posts, and therefore will not contribute to the decision to invite you to interview or selection centre. However, most specialties will require you to attend interviews with a portfolio of evidence and your CV will usually be the first document within your portfolio.

When applying for posts after completion of specialty training, or non-training posts, the use of CVs in the application process varies from NHS trust to trust. Some NHS trusts rely solely on an online application form (usually via the NHS Jobs website) and explicitly state that a CV will not be accepted. Other trusts will use a combination of application form and CV, and some employers may just use a CV.

It is vital that you maintain your CV and keep updating it with your achievements, skills and experience as you progress through your foundation and specialty training.

Links and resources

You will find useful resources, more guides and examples on the following websites. Not all the websites will discuss medical CVs specifically, but many of the hints and tips about general CVs will also be relevant and useful.

Medical Careers

www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career_planning/plan_implementation/your_cv.aspx

East Midlands Postgraduate Medical Education

www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/page.php?area_id=147

UK Foundation Programme Office

www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/foundation-doctors/deaneries-foundation-schools

British Medical Journal – use the articles tab

www.careers.bmj.com

NHS Jobs

www.jobs.nhs.uk

NHS – Specialty Training person specifications

specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/specialty-recruitment/person-specifications-2013/

Our website

www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers/cv

Portfolios

There are two kinds of portfolio that you will need to maintain as a foundation doctor. The first is your Foundation e-Portfolio – this contains all the evidence of your progress towards completion of the Foundation Programme. There are two systems in use currently depending on where you undertake your Foundation Programme training. The resources section links to the UK Foundation Programme Office website where you can access further information and see example documentation of the kind of content you need to keep in your e-portfolio.

It is important to note that when you attend interviews or selection centres for specialty training they will not have access to your e-portfolio. However, there may be parts of the e-portfolio that is suitable content for your other portfolios and the user guide for the e-portfolio shows you how to export your content.

The second kind of portfolio is your Application Portfolio (may also be known as Evidence Portfolio or Evidence Folder). This is the portfolio you will need to take to interview or selection centre to act as documentary evidence that you meet the person specification and have the skills required for the post. If you apply for more than one specialty training post, you could find that you need more than one application portfolio as different specialties may require different content or have it organised in different ways. Portfolio guidance published by each speciality training programme each year so you can see the evidence required and start to build your portfolio.

At the time of writing, portfolios are required by most specialties (with the exception of general practice) and specialties are getting much better at clearly defining what needs to be in the portfolio, what format it should take and what kind of evidence you should include. Many specialties publish checklists that you need to use to show what is in your portfolio – these can be useful resources to work with as you progress through foundation training to identify the kind of achievements and evidence you should be looking for.

Even if you are currently undecided about which specialty to apply for, you should be aware of the different requirements and start building up your portfolio of evidence.

Links and resources

NHS – e-portfolios
www.nhseportfolios.org

UK Foundation Programme Office – guides and documents for Foundation Programme e-portfolios
www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/foundation-doctors/e-portfolio

Medical Careers
www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/postgraduate_doctors/e-portfolios.aspx

General Medical Council – good medical practice
www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice.asp



We're here to help, get in touch:

Careers and Employability Service

The University of Nottingham
Portland Building, Level D West
University Park
Nottingham NG7 2RD
United Kingdom

t: 0115 951 3680

e: careers-team@nottingham.ac.uk

www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers

 [CareersUoN](#)

 [@UoNCareers](#)

 blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/careers

This publication is available in
alternative formats:

t: +44 (0)115 951 5559

e: alternativeformats@nottingham.ac.uk