

Examples of non-work experiences that can be used as a basis of relevant and impressive experience, instead of work-related experiences:

- voluntary work
- fund-raising
- grants and funding applications
- committee membership of societies and clubs
- organising things - at school, college, university, local community
- campaigning for a cause
- collecting things
- making things
- running a part-time business
- teaching and helping people
- caring for people
- creating things - art, writing, photography, sculpture, etc
- languages
- sports and fitness
- games and competitions
- organising events and outings
- entertaining and performing
- computers and telecoms
- music and singing
- theatre and dance
- local politics and trade union activities/responsibilities
- becoming expert and accumulating knowledge in anything
- reading
- travel
- thinking and philosophising
- meditating and religious pursuits
- overcoming personal difficulties - turn these to a positive advantage and statement of determination, experience and emotional maturity

Remember, not all achievements in a CV (or any of them, in the case of young people at the start of their careers) need to be work-based.

Obviously if you have examples of some impressive work achievements that fit well with the new employer's requirements then use them, however you might have some impressive achievements outside of work which relate strongly to what the employer is seeking. Think about it. Ask friends for some feedback if you find it difficult to think about yourself in this way. Everyone's got some impressive things about their own background which can be worded to form impressive achievements in their CV.

Employers are seeking evidence of behavioural and attitudinal characteristics, not just work skills, responsibilities and projects.

For certain types of job vacancies these particular achievements, suitably worded, would strike a powerful chord with the interviewer.

These days, 'life skills', emotional intelligence and maturity, tolerance, wisdom, triumph through adversity, and other good character indicators, are much sought-after attributes. In some cases more sought-after than job-skills and specific work experience. If you possess any of these attributes, then incorporate them as experiences or achievements into your CV. For many of the best employers these characteristics are more significant than qualifications. Everyone can get qualifications - but not everyone is a proper grown-up rounded person. ('Grown-up' here means emotionally mature and well balanced - nothing to do with age.) Qualifications are absolutely no indication of personal integrity or character or 'grown-upness'. Employers need above all, proper grown-up rounded people - people of character.

Your achievements of course convey your character, as well as your capabilities.

Non-work achievements relate to all sorts of working attributes for example organising, communicating, project-management, coordinating, managing people, entrepreneurialism, determination, patience, planning, selling and marketing, purchasing and production, creating things, developing and building things, technical competence and expertise, research and knowledge-management.

Thinking about achievements in this way is usually necessary for young people starting their careers, when they obviously do not have much of a work track-record. Looking for relevant non-work achievements is also relevant for people seeking to change careers.

Hobbies and voluntary work are often a rich source of achievements.

Many people, especially those yet to find work which really excites them or enables them to use their own personal capability and potential, are likely to have put significant energy and enthusiasm into a non-work activity or passion.

It might be as secretary or treasurer for the local sports club, a school governor, a campaigner for a cause or charity. You might run a website for the local community group, or for a society or club.

In fact, most people's work achievements pale into insignificance alongside the things they've achieved outside of work.

You are likely to be the same.

Think about the special impressive things you've done so far in your life - and use them to create some powerful achievements statements for your CV.

The reason most people don't do this is that most people are very modest and self-effacing. They don't like to 'blow their own trumpet'. This is normally fine and actually very admirable - until it comes to writing a CV.

If you are one of these people who prefers not to think about all the great things you've done, you owe it to yourself to adopt a slightly more outgoing and extravert mind-set for half an hour or so, and think about your own achievements that should be in your CV.

Think hard about all the good things you've done - things that you take for granted - there will be many things that represent just the sort of achievements and evidence that the employer is hoping to see in a good CV.

Don't wait to be asked - think about it, identify your achievements, shape them into impressive statements with scale and context, and put them into your CV.

Everyone has a few very impressive achievements in their past - they just need thinking about and then orienting into descriptions that fit the personal qualities and capabilities that the interviewer and employer are seeking.