



Decoding the perfect CV

What Life Sciences Recruiters Really Look For?

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BCF, Ghent
November 2025

My name is **Natalija Vukadinović**, Senior Talent Acquisition Partner at **Fortrea**, and someone with a genuine passion for helping Life Sciences professionals present their best selves on paper.

Over the years, I have reviewed thousands of CVs across Clinical, Quality, Regulatory, and Drug Safety roles - and what I have learned is that a CV is so much more than a career summary. It is your personal marketing tool, your scientific poster, and sometimes even your first experiment in communicating your impact. In today's session, I want to take you behind the scenes - to show you what recruiters really look for, how your CV is evaluated, and what makes candidates stand out in a competitive and highly regulated industry like ours.

My goal is simple: that you walk out of this session empowered, clearer, and with the confidence to craft a CV that truly reflects your scientific contributions and career story.

Let's decode the perfect CV together.



The Harsh Truth!

Must have: name, contact information, summary, current role, job title(s), dates, skills section.

Good to have (if you have more space): hobbies, early career, long(er) paragraphs.

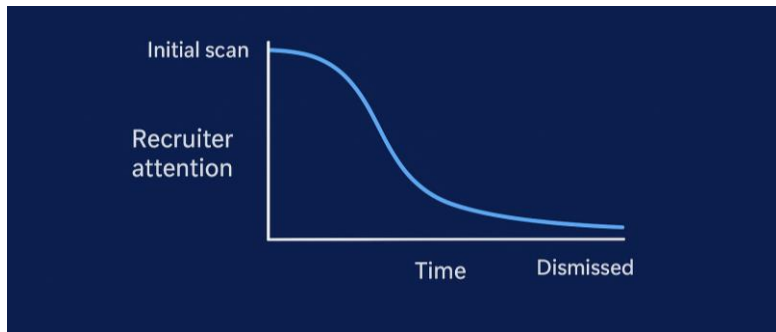
Recruiters don't read - they scan for signals.

Avg initial scan: 30 seconds

Decision threshold: Under 60 seconds

Top scan points: job titles, keywords, impact metrics, therapeutic areas

Biggest “scan killers”: dense text, unclear layout, no metrics, vague language...



Your CV doesn't get read first - it gets triaged!!!!

“How to Write a CV: The Most Essential Tips to Follow”

“The Ultimate CV Writing Guide 

Top Tips You Should Know | Indeed”

“The 10 Rules of CV Writing - How To Write a CV“

Don't add a photo to avoid bias.

PDF format is not readable by ATS.

Don't use words like “Managed”, “Solved”, “Completed”.

Add lots of decorative graphics. The more clip-art, color gradients, and icons, the more “professional” it feels.

Use creative fonts like Comic Sans or cursive script. It proves you are unique.

Use tiny fonts to fit more text.

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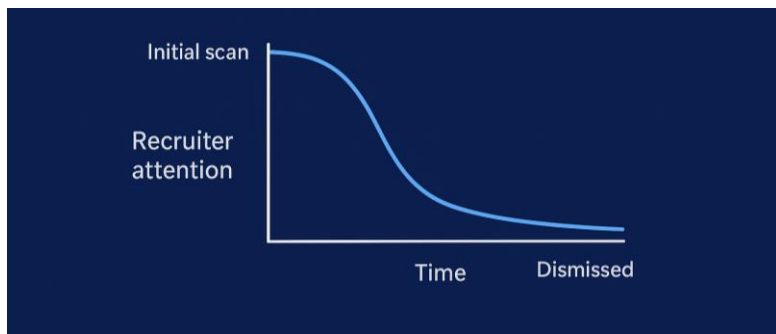
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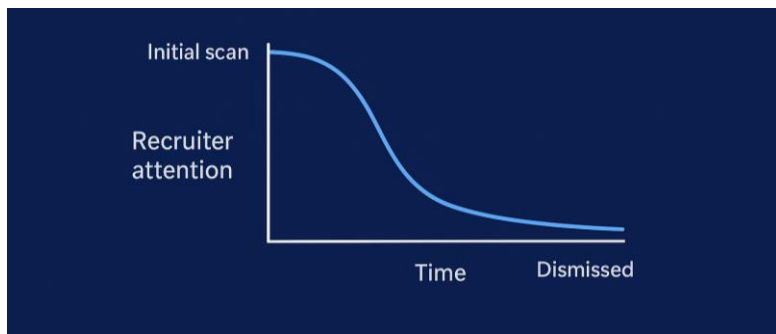
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Add lots of decorative elements like clip-art, color gradients, and icons, that make it feel “personal”.

Use creative fonts and cursive script. It proves you are unique.

Use tiny fonts to fit more text.

Focus your resume on what the reviewer needs to see, not on personal stylistic choices. Put yourself in recruiters' shoes and it will become easier to make small adjustments that significantly improve your chances of getting noticed.

CV Optimization Techniques

1. Signal Catching Reading Patterns

F-shaped pattern

Best for CVs where clarity, speed, and professionalism matter more than visuals.

The goal is clarity, fast scanning, and easy information retrieval.

Exactly what it sounds like - the reader's eyes move across the page in a shape of the letter "F."

How to do it?

Front-load the important, high-impact information at the top half of your CV and use: Clear job titles, A sharp professional summary, Metrics, Therapeutic areas, Skills.

Relevant tools and systems must appear above the fold (top third of the first page).

Have clear section headers.

List your work experience in reverse-chronological order.

Use bullet points that begin with strong action verbs.

Show impact.

Write a resume that can tell a story a recruiter outside of industry can also understand!



F-Pattern

1. Signal Catching Reading Patterns

F-shaped pattern



2. XYZ Formula

Accomplished X by Y, resulting in Z.

X - What you achieved (the task or result)

Y - How you achieved it (the action you took)

Z - Why it mattered (the measurable outcome or impact)

This is especially valuable in pharma roles (R&D, QC, QA, regulatory, medical affairs, production, PV) because hiring managers want evidence-based achievements, not task lists.

Examples

Handled lab samples.

OR

Processed 100+ lab samples daily (X) by following strict testing protocols (Y), ensuring 99% accuracy in results (Z).

Recorded test results.

OR

Recorded and verified test data (X) using LIMS software (Y), improving data reliability and audit readiness by 20% (Z).

Labeled specimens

OR

Labeled and entered information for 300+ patient samples each week (X) using EMR and LIMS software (Y), keeping labeling mistakes at zero (Z).

Don't forget: Write a resume that can tell a story a recruiter outside of industry can also understand!

Summary

How to Get Your Resume Noticed



“

“It always seems impossible
until it's done.”

”



Natalija Vukadinović

Senior Talent Acquisition Partner | Black Belt in
Strategic Sourcing 🏆 | Happy to Share CV & C...



Thank you!

Best Roles for F-pattern in Pharma

1. Clinical Research Associate (CRA)
2. Medical Science Liaison (MSL)
3. Regulatory Affairs
4. Quality Assurance / Quality Control
5. Pharmacovigilance
6. Lab Scientist / Research Scientist
7. Biostatistics / Data Science (within pharma)
8. Manufacturing / GMP roles
9. Medical Writing

XYZ CV Writing Style Examples

1. Quality Control (QC)

Performed HPLC testing on raw materials.

Improved analytical throughput (X) by optimising HPLC run times (Y), reducing sample processing time by 20% (Z).

2. Quality Assurance (QA)

Reviewed batch records.

Reduced batch record deviations by 15% (Z) by introducing a new pre-approval checklist (Y) for QA review (X).

3. R&D Scientist

Worked on formulation development.

Developed a stable oral formulation (X) using DOE-based optimisation (Y), achieving 24-month shelf-life targets (Z).

4. Production/Manufacturing

Operated bioreactors.

Increased upstream yield by 12% (Z) by adjusting agitation and feed-rate parameters (Y) during 200-L bioreactor runs (X).

5. Regulatory Affairs

Submitted regulatory dossiers.

Accelerated approval timelines (Z) by coordinating cross-functional data collation (Y) to deliver two CTA submissions ahead of schedule (X).

6. Pharmacovigilance (PV)

Processed ICSRs.

Improved case processing efficiency by 25% (Z) by implementing a triage workflow for high-priority ICSRs (Y) across global safety databases (X).

7. Medical Affairs

Supported KOL engagement.

Enhanced scientific engagement (X) by creating evidence-based briefing decks (Y), leading to a 40% increase in KOL participation (Z).

Interesting Keywords for Various Job Groups

1. **Clinical** (CRAs, CTAs, Study Coordinators) - Recruiters look for: Study phases (I–IV), Patient recruitment numbers, Monitoring KPIs (SDV %, site visits), Therapeutic area exposure, TMF, CTMS proficiency..
2. **Pharma/Quality** (QA, QC, QMS) - Recruiters look for: CAPA ownership (and results), Deviation reduction, Audit readiness contributions, GxP compliance experience, Batch release support, documentation quality..
3. **Regulatory Affairs** - Recruiters look for: Submission types supported (NDA, MAA, IND, CTA), Document ownership (briefing docs, SmPC, labeling), Agency interactions, Regional experience (EU, US, APAC)..
4. **Drug Safety/Pharmacovigilance/PV** - Recruiters look for: Case volumes processed, Quality compliance, Argus/Safety databases, MedDRA coding, Signal detection exposure..

The answer is in the job description!

Useful Tools

1. [Find LinkedIn Jobs Posted in the Last Hour \(Before Anyone Else\)](#)
2. [Top Websites to Find a Job Anywhere in Europe](#)
3. [Resume Templates](#)
4. [Laszlo Bock: XYZ formula](#)