Free career resource · CVs and applications

How to write a cyber security CV with no experience, plus a free template

A strong beginner cyber security CV is two pages, tailored to one kind of role, and built around evidence: a short profile that names the job you want, a skills section that matches the advert, and a projects section that shows what you've actually done. You don't need security experience to write one, but you do need to make the link from what you've done to what the job needs.

By the Cyberend team · Published and updated 22 November 2026

THE SHORT ANSWER

- **Two pages, tailored:** one CV per kind of role, adjusted for each advert.
- **Lead with evidence:** put a projects section near the top if you don't have security experience yet.
- **Leave off personal details:** no age, date of birth, marital status or nationality, as the National Careers Service advises National Careers Service. A photo isn't expected on UK CVs either.
- **Free template:** a two-page Word template with guidance in every section, below. No sign-up needed.

Download the free cyber security CV template

The template follows the structure in this guide. Grey notes explain what goes in each section: replace everything in square brackets, delete the notes, and save it as a PDF before you send it.



Free cyber security CV template

Two pages, laid out for beginners, with guidance notes in every section. Word document (.docx), opens in Word,

Download the template

Google Docs, Apple Pages and LibreOffice. No sign-up needed.

What employers look for in a beginner's CV

Whoever reads your CV for a junior role is usually asking three questions: does this person understand the basics, have they shown real interest by doing something about it, and will they be good to work with? Your CV should answer all three quickly.

The fundamentals

Networking, operating systems and core security ideas, shown through skills, study and projects.

Evidence of initiative

Labs, write-ups, CTF events, a home lab or volunteering. This is what separates you from the many applicants who list the same online course.

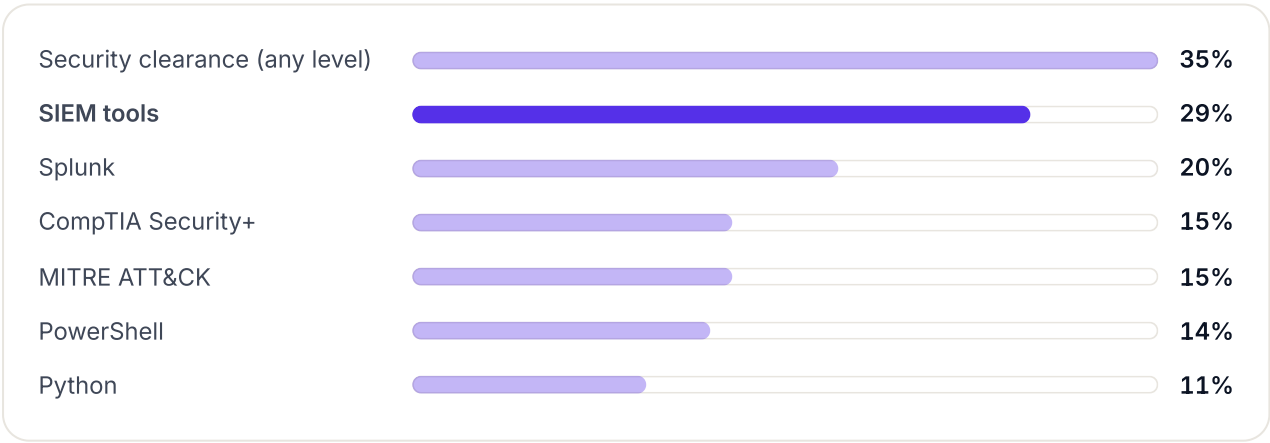
Communication and reliability

Security work runs on clear notes, reports and calm handovers. Previous jobs are good evidence of this.

The specific requirements in the advert

If you have them, make them easy to find. The chart below shows what UK SOC analyst adverts ask for.

How often each requirement appears in UK SOC analyst adverts IT Jobs Watch:



148 UK permanent SOC analyst adverts, six months to 13 November 2026. SIEM tools appear in 29%, Splunk in 20% and CompTIA Security+ in 15%.

Length, layout and format

Two pages at most

One page is fine if you're a recent school or college leaver.

Simple layout

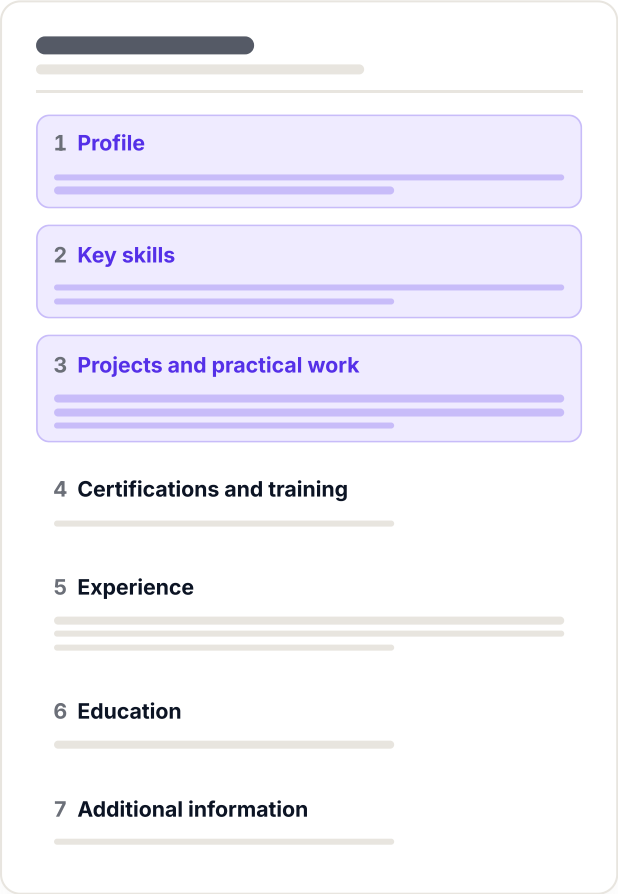
A clear font such as Arial or Calibri at size 11 or bigger, headings and bullet points, and the same style throughout National Careers Service. Avoid tables, text boxes, graphics and skill-level bars: many employers use software to read CVs, and plain layouts survive it best.

Send a PDF

Unless the employer asks for Word. Name the file clearly, such as *Firstname-Lastname-CV.pdf*.

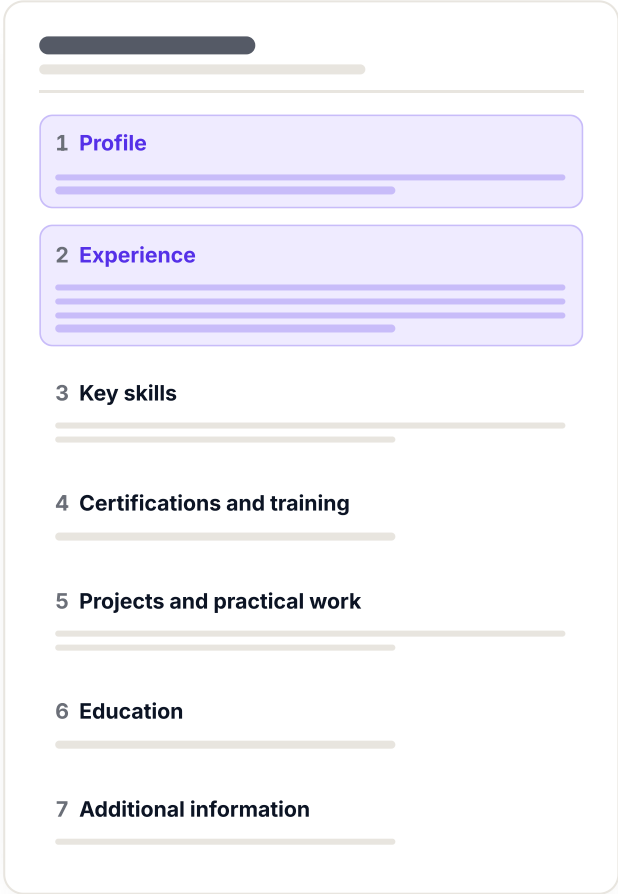
Order sections by strength

Without security experience, put your profile, skills and projects first, then experience and education. Once you have a security job, experience moves to the top.



No security experience yet

The order used in the free template. Evidence comes before job history.



Once you have a security job

Experience moves to the top, because it's now your strongest evidence.

Section by section, with examples

Contact details

INCLUDE

- ✓ Your name and town or city
- ✓ Phone number and a professional email address
- ✓ LinkedIn, plus GitHub or a blog with your project write-ups if you have one

LEAVE OFF

- ✗ Your full address
- ✗ Age, date of birth, marital status and nationality National Careers Service
- ✗ A photo, which isn't expected on UK CVs

Profile

Two to four lines under your name that say who you are, the role you want and your strongest evidence. Name a specific role: “junior SOC analyst” reads far better than “a role in cyber security”.

CAREER CHANGER PROFILE

✗ Weaker

Hard-working and passionate individual looking for an opportunity to start a career in the exciting field of cyber security.

✓ Stronger

Former retail team leader moving into security operations. Built a home lab with Microsoft Sentinel and wrote up three investigations on my blog. Studying for CompTIA Security+. Looking for a junior SOC analyst role in Manchester.

The stronger version names the target role, gives evidence a reader can check, and says where.

GRADUATE PROFILE

✗ Weaker

Computer Science graduate with a strong interest in cyber security and excellent communication skills.

✓ Stronger

Computer Science graduate (2:1) whose dissertation tested phishing detection rules against 2,000 sample emails. Regular CTF player. Looking for a graduate security analyst role.

It swaps claims anyone could make for a specific piece of work and the role being applied for.

Key skills

Group skills so they're easy to scan, and only list what you could talk about in an interview. Mirror the advert's words where they're true for you.

SKILLS SECTION

✕ Weaker

Cyber security, hacking, networking, Microsoft Office, teamwork, problem solving, fast learner.

✓ Stronger

Security: alert triage, phishing analysis, MITRE ATT&CK, vulnerability scanning
IT: Windows and Active Directory, Linux command line, TCP/IP, DNS
Tools: Microsoft Sentinel, Wireshark, Nmap, PowerShell (basic)

Grouped, specific skills are quicker to scan, and saying “basic” where it's true is honest.

Projects and practical work

For beginners, this is the most important section. Two or three projects with a line or two each, and a link to a write-up, show more than any list of courses. There's more on writing these **below**.

Certifications, experience, education and extras

Certifications and training

List the certification, the issuing body and the month you passed. If you're studying for one, say so honestly, for example “CompTIA Security+, in progress, exam booked for March”. Include free Skills Bootcamps and substantial courses, but leave out short videos and badges that took an afternoon.

Experience

Most recent first, with your job title, employer, town and dates. Under each, two or three bullets that show what you achieved, especially anything involving procedures, systems, access, fraud, data, pressure or explaining things to people. See **rewriting past jobs** for examples.

Education

Your highest qualifications, where you studied and when. If a module, dissertation or project is relevant, add one line about it. Older or lower qualifications can be summarised in a single line.

Additional information

Optional, but useful for volunteering, membership of security communities, languages and a driving licence if the role needs one. If you don't have room, cut this section first.

MENTIONING SECURITY CLEARANCE

If an advert mentions security clearance and you're likely to be eligible, one honest line helps, such as “Lived in the UK since 2015 and happy to undergo security vetting”. Never claim clearance you don't hold. Clearance is sponsored by an employer, and SC normally needs five years' UK residence Home Office Careers.

How to describe projects

A good project entry answers three questions in a few lines. Link to a write-up so the reader can see more if they're interested.

PART 1

What you set out to do

One line on the goal

↓

PART 2

What you actually did

Name the tools you used

↓

PART 3

The result, or what you learned

Plus a link to the write-up

PROJECT ENTRY

✕ Weaker

Completed lots of TryHackMe rooms and learned about SOC tools.

✓ Stronger

Home SOC lab | Mar 2026 | link to write-up

Sent logs from two Windows virtual machines to Microsoft Sentinel and wrote three detection rules for suspicious sign-ins. Simulated a password-spraying attack, detected it and wrote a one-page incident report.

The goal, the tools, the result and a link: everything an interviewer needs to start a conversation.

Projects that work well for beginners include:

Home lab

A lab that collects and searches logs, with a write-up of something you detected.

Phishing analysis

An analysis of a real phishing email you received, with the indicators you found and how you checked them.

Learning path, written up

A completed learning path on a practice platform, written up as what you learned rather than a list of badges.

CTF write-up

A CTF event, with a write-up of one challenge you solved.

GRC sample

A sample risk assessment or a Cyber Essentials gap analysis for an invented small business.

Security script

A small script that automates a security check, shared on GitHub with a clear README.

Keep it legal

Only include work done on your own systems, deliberately vulnerable labs or platforms that give you permission. Testing systems without permission is an offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 legislation.gov.uk, and putting it on a CV will end an application.

Rewriting past jobs for a security CV

You don't need to pretend a past job was a security job. You need to describe what you did in a way that shows the habits security teams want: following procedures, protecting access and data, noticing when something is wrong, and communicating clearly. The figures below are examples; use real ones from your own work.

RETAIL SUPERVISOR

✕ Instead of

Responsible for opening and closing the store.

✓ Try

Held keys and alarm codes for a store with £40k daily takings, following strict opening, cash and security procedures.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ADVISER

✕ Instead of

Answered customer calls.

✓ Try

Verified caller identity on 50+ calls a day and flagged suspected account takeover attempts to the fraud team.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

✕ Instead of

Did general admin and set up new starters.

✓ Try

Set up and removed system access for new starters and leavers, keeping an access log used in the annual audit.

IT SUPPORT ANALYST

✕ Instead of

Fixed IT issues for users.

✓ Try

Resolved password, MFA and account lockout tickets and escalated two suspicious login patterns to the security team.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

✕ Instead of

Supported teachers in class.

✓ Try

Ran online safety sessions for Year 7 pupils and explained technical ideas to mixed-ability groups.

If you're not sure which path your experience fits best, the **career paths guide** explains what each kind of role values.

Common mistakes

⚠ One CV for every job

A SOC role and a GRC role want different things. Keep a version for each and tweak it per advert.

⚠ Listing courses instead of skills

"Completed 40 rooms" says less than one sentence about what you can now do.

⚠ Claiming expertise you don't have

Interviewers will ask about anything on your CV. "Basic" or "studying" is fine and honest.

⚠ Generic profiles

"Passionate and hard-working" could describe anyone. Name the role and your evidence.

⚠ Skill bars and graphics

"Python: 4 out of 5" tells the reader nothing and can confuse CV-reading software.

⚠ Unexplained gaps that worry you

Gaps are normal. If you want to, a few words such as "career break: caring responsibilities" is enough.

Checklist before you send it

BEFORE YOU PRESS SEND

- [ ] The profile names the role you're applying for
- [ ] The advert's key requirements appear in your skills or projects, where they're true
- [ ] Every project has a working link
- [ ] No age, date of birth, photo, marital status or nationality
- [ ] Two pages or fewer, saved as a PDF with a clear file name
- [ ] Someone else has read it for spelling and grammar National Careers Service
- [ ] You could talk for two minutes about anything on it

Some employers, especially in the public sector, ask for a personal statement or written examples instead of a CV. Follow their instructions exactly: the same evidence works, arranged the way they ask.

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Once your CV is ready, the **entry-level UK cyber jobs list** is a good place to start applying, and the **first job guide** covers the rest of the process. If you still need projects to put on it, the **free beginner roadmap** suggests some.

Common questions

How do I write a cyber security CV with no experience?

Put a short profile naming the role you want, a grouped skills section and a projects section near the top, then your previous jobs and education. Describe past jobs in terms of procedures, access, data and communication, and link to written-up projects as evidence.

How long should a cyber security CV be?

Two pages at most in the UK. One page is fine if you're early in your career.

Should I put a photo on my CV?

No. Photos aren't expected on UK CVs, and the National Careers Service advises leaving off your age, date of birth, marital status and nationality too National Careers Service.

Should I include TryHackMe or Hack The Box on my CV?

Yes, but describe what you learned and link to a write-up, rather than just a rank or room count. One well-explained project is worth more than a long list of completed exercises.

Do I need a cover letter?

If the application allows one, a short, specific cover letter helps a career changer explain the move. Keep it to a few paragraphs: why this role, what you've done to prepare, and why your background is useful.

Sources and method

The advice on what a UK CV should and shouldn't include follows the National Careers Service's official guidance. What employers ask for in SOC roles comes from IT Jobs Watch's analysis of UK SOC analyst adverts (six months to 13 November 2026).

The examples on this page are illustrative, written to show the difference between weaker and stronger wording. Use them as patterns, not text to copy: every line on your CV should be true and something you can talk about.

National Careers Service: How to write a CV Official guidance

Official UK CV advice: what each section should contain, and personal details to leave off.

IT Jobs Watch: UK permanent job title salary statistics Advertised pay

Salaries quoted in UK permanent IT job adverts in the six months to 13 November 2026, by job title. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Home Office: Security checks Published by the employer

UK residency normally expected before clearance: 3 years for CTC, 5 for SC and 10 for DV, though a shortfall is not automatically a bar.

legislation.gov.uk: Computer Misuse Act 1990 Official guidance

The UK law that makes accessing or testing computer systems without permission a criminal offence.

Every figure and link in this guide was checked against its source on 22 November 2026. Live job listings update every few hours.

This is a PDF copy of a free Cyberend guide. Read it online, with today's live UK cyber security jobs, at cyberend.io/resources/cyber-security-cv-guide.