

# City of Glasgow College

## Trade Union Education Centre

### CV Writing



## **What to include in your CV in 2020**

While the structure of a CV is flexible, bending to your unique skill set and experiences, there are particular sections that employers expect to see on your CV regardless.

Here are the sections you must include in your CV:

### **Name, professional title and contact details**

The first part of your CV, positioned at the top of the page, should contain your name, professional title and contact details. Under no circumstances should you title your CV with 'curriculum vitae' or 'CV' as it's a waste of valuable space. Treat your name as the title instead.

When it comes to your contact details, your email address and phone number(s) are essential. Once upon a time, it was customary to include your full address on your CV. Today, you simply need to list your town and county.

If you like, you can also include a link to your LinkedIn profile in this section – but only if it's up to date!

Here is an example of how your name, professional title and contact details might look:

***Forename Surname | Professional Title***

*Location: Town, County*

*Phone: 01234 567890*

*Email: name@example.com*

## Personal profile

A personal profile, also known as a personal statement, career objective and professional profile, is one of the most important aspects of your CV. It's a short paragraph that sits just underneath your name and contact details giving prospective employers an overview of who you are and what you're all about.

You should tailor your profile to every job you apply for, highlighting specific qualities that match you to the role. Aim to keep your personal statement short and sweet, and no longer than a few sentences. To make the most of this section, you should try to address the following:

1. Who are you?
2. What can you offer the company?
3. What are your career goals?

## How to structure a personal profile

We know writing a personal statement can seem quite daunting. But honestly, once you've started writing it, the rest will come naturally. Here's a breakdown of the basics of creating your statement.

The most important thing to remember is that statements are usually around four sentences in length, and no more than six. Aim for anywhere between 50 and 200 words, and you're golden.

Like the length, the grammatical person you're writing in also has some flexibility. You could choose to write in the third person which can appear more objective, for example, 'Project manager seeking... skills include...' Or you could write in the first person which tends to be more personal: 'I am a project manager seeking... **My** skills are...'

It honestly doesn't matter which person you choose, just pick the one you're comfortable writing in. As long as you keep it consistent, you can't go wrong.

## Does my personal profile need a title?

The simpler your CV layout, the better. The last thing recruiters want is to trawl through a bundle of words trying to pick out your good bits like they're the orange ones in a packet of revels.

You don't really need a title for your personal statement. It sits under your name and contact info and before the first chunk of your job or education history. So it's pretty obvious it's an introduction to you.

Secondly, make the spacing a little bigger and try increasing it to 1.5. As it's the first thing a recruiter will read, you want this to be as clear as possible. It's often a real decision maker.

## **What to include in your personal profile**

When drafting your personal statement for your dream job in 2020, split it into three sections: who you are, what you can offer the company, and your career goals.

**TIP: Bullet point things you might mention under each of these sections, then list the qualities that position you as the ideal person for the job.**

### **Part 1**

In the 'who you are' section you might state that you're:

- A recent graduate with a 2:1 degree in Creative Writing from the University of Surrey seeking an entry-level position in...
- A highly-skilled mechanical engineer looking to resume a position in...
- An ambitious purchasing manager looking to progress into...

### **Part 2**

In the 'what you can offer the company' part, you're selling your absolute top skills and strengths. You should also back them up with evidence. If you're tweaking your CV for a particular job, use the job spec to create your statement. For example, if the employer is looking for someone with attention to detail and you've got experience meticulously proofing essays or presentations etc., then say so.

If you're crafting a more general personal statement, be sure you include key achievements that make you stand out. For example, if you're looking for a position within graphic design and you've got extensive Photoshop experience working on a major campaign, not only can you claim you have these skills in your personal statement, but you can back them up too – perfect!

The important thing to remember here is not to litter your personal statement with a trail of buzzwords. You might well be an 'extremely driven strategic thinker with excellent communication skills and extensive experience in marketing', but all you've

really done here is told the recruiter that you've worked in marketing with no proof of your other claims.

To top it off, you've also revealed this information in an extremely boring way. Recruiters will have heard a million times before; when it comes to selling yourself, you don't want to write something as bland and soggy as overcooked rice; you want to lovingly craft a seafood paella.

Try to highlight real, relevant skills and back them up with evidence to make the statement strong. Try something like this for the middle section:

- During my degree, I have developed an excellent eye for detail, due to the heavy demands of assignments and research. As a result, I am also able to work under pressure. Especially when balancing my educational workload with my volunteering placement at local nursing homes
- Knowledgeable engineer with a wide skill-set, including condition-based maintenance, through working on automated systems such as...
- Through utilising my communications skills when working in managerial positions at large corporations, I have developed successful working relationships and resultantly, an advantageous professional network

### **Part 3**

The final section of the personal statement is to highlight your career goals. More than anything this shows the recruiter that you're a professional worth investing time and money in. Take a look at these examples:

- I am looking for a challenging, fast-paced environment within media to utilise my written knowledge and develop my creative skill set further
- Looking to re-establish a career in a progressive organisation which requires engineering expertise, after taking maternity leave to care for a new-born
- I am looking to secure a challenging role in a market-leading automotive company where I can bring fresh strategic vision and value to the business

## **Dos and don'ts**

Here's a quick breakdown of the key points to remember when crafting that all-important statement.

### **Do**

- Get straight to the point – recruiters don't like to read waffle!
- Provide evidence of your skills and experience, but be brief! Offer just enough to hook the recruiter
- Remember that you're marketing yourself
- Make the statement look purposeful – you need show you know what you're talking about, without sounding too arrogant
- Reflect the job specification in your statement
- Be real! Recruiters ultimately want to know you as a person and what you can bring to the table
- Proofread for spelling and grammar
- Read it aloud to make sure it flows properly. Probably best to get someone else to run an eye over it too

### **Don't**

- Overuse buzz words – You might want to chuck a few in there. But, a hyperbolic stream of empty qualities and meaningless words is just off-putting
- Mix the grammatical person – remember either first person or third, not both
- Be boring – you want to sound unique with noteworthy qualities
- Copy from your cover letter or copy your cover letter from your statement – that's just lazy
- Ramble!

## Complete personal profile examples for 2020

Here are a few final examples of personal statements for you to gloss over. Hopefully, it'll spark some inspiration for your own.

*'I am a recent graduate with a 2:1 degree in Creative Writing from the University of Surrey seeking an entry-level position in copywriting. During my degree, I have developed an excellent eye for detail due to the heavy demands of assignments and research. Over the last year, I have also balanced an editing position at Surrey's media society. Here, I devised content ideas and managed a small team of writers. This proves that I have potential to excel within a professional writing field. I am looking for a challenging, fast-paced environment within media to utilise my creative knowledge and develop my writing skill-set further.'*

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*'A highly-skilled mechanical engineer looking to resume a position in industrial construction. Extremely knowledgeable with seven years industry experience. Possesses a wide skill set, including condition-based maintenance, through working on automated systems on large-scale building projects. Looking to re-establish a career in a progressive organisation which requires engineering expertise after a short career break to take care of a new-born.'*

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*'I am an ambitious purchasing manager looking to progress into a senior purchasing position within the automotive sector. Having developed communication skills when working in managerial positions at large automotive corporations, I've nurtured successful working relationships. As a result, I possess an advantageous professional network. Due to over 12 years of experience within this industry, I am fully equipped with commercial awareness and product knowledge. My hopes are to secure a challenging role in a market-leading automotive company where I can bring fresh strategic vision and value to the business.'*



## Education and qualifications

Like your experience section, your education should be listed in reverse chronological order. Include the name of the institutions and the dates you were there, followed by the qualifications and grades you achieved.

If you have recently left education, you may write your degree, A-levels or GCSEs (or equivalents) like so:

***Institution name – Dates attended (from – to)***

***Qualification/subject – Grade***

If you have a degree, you could list a few of the most relevant modules, assignments or projects underneath.

For professionals that are a little further along in their careers, or have many certificates in their repertoire, you can lay your qualifications out in this way:

***Qualification, grade – Institution – Year***

## Additional sections

There is a range of additional sections that may strengthen your CV and highlight your skills. Here are just a few you can include if you have room:

**Key skills:** If you're writing a functional CV, or have some abilities you want to show off to the employer immediately, insert a key skills section underneath your personal profile. You should aim to detail four to five abilities at most.

**Hobbies and interests:** If you feel that your CV is lacking, you can boost your document by inserting a hobbies and interests section at the end. This can help to show how well you fit into the company or the industry. For example, if you're applying for an environmental job, why not include that you have a big interest in climate change activism?

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Be careful though; avoid listing hobbies that don't add value to your CV or are run-of-the-mill, like reading. Draw on interests that make you stand out or are relevant to the job.

**References:** Like including an address on your CV, adding your referees to the end of your CV is no longer standardised. You can include a line that reads '**references available on request**', but if you don't have room, it's acceptable to remove it altogether.

## Formatting and spacing guidelines

If you're unsure of how to format your CV, it's worth downloading a few CV templates to familiarise yourself. After all, formatting and spacing your CV is equally as important as the content.

Here are some formatting and spacing tips to bear in mind:

**Length:** The standard length of a CV in the UK is two pages. However, one size doesn't fit all, and so for some professionals, one or three pages may be more appropriate.

**Headings:** Each section must be introduced by a big, bold heading to ensure an easy read.

**Font type:** Most employers will receive your CV in a digital format, so choose a clear font like Calibri or Arial. You can use a different font type for your headings, but keep it professional and easy-to-read too.

**Font size and page margins:** The body of your CV should be between 10 and 12 point font, and your headings between 14 and 18 points. Keep your page margins around 2.5cm, but never reduce them to less than 1.27cm or your CV will appear cluttered and hard to read. White space ensures clarity and professionalism.

**Proofreading and consistency:** Your formatting must be consistent throughout your CV to keep it looking slick. Don't spoil your polished look by including typos and inaccuracies; proofread like a pro to capture every mistake or invest in intelligent spellcheckers like Grammarly.

**Tailoring, keywords and ATSS:** It's perfectly acceptable to keep a generic copy of your CV for your own records, but if you're applying for a job, it must be tailored to the role. Not only will this show employers why you're a match, but it will help your application beat the ATS robots too.

**Saving the file:** It's likely you'll send your CV via email or through a job board like CV-Library. Save your CV as a pdf file to ensure recruiters can open it on any device. A pdf will also maintain formatting, so you can be sure that employers will see your CV as you intended.

## **What not to include**

There are a variety of details that you shouldn't include on your CV. Here are a few of the common ones:

**A headshot:** In many countries, it's common practice to include a photo of yourself on your CV. But the UK is not one of them.

**Age and date of birth:** The only dates that should be on your CV are from employment and your qualifications. Your age doesn't affect your ability to do the job, and it's illegal for employers to ask about age under the Equality Act 2010.

**Marital status:** Like your age, your marital status and dependents don't affect your ability to do your job. These details are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and it's against the law for employers to ask about them, so don't include them on your CV.