

## Tips & Guidance – Writing a CV and Personal Statement

### Writing a CV

It's important that you have a CV ready which details key information about your work experience, skills and education. To get started, the recommendation is to create a 'Master CV Template'. Although this process may be time consuming, the point of this exercise is to have an in-depth point of reference that will allow you to more easily tailor your CV to specific jobs for future applications (where you can add and delete information as appropriate).

### The format

When trying to stand out from the crowd, it might sound counter-intuitive to present your CV in a simple format – but simple is often better. Fancy formatting isn't always compatible with employer's application systems and so there's a chance that the way you formatted your CV isn't exactly what will be presented to your prospective employer. It's also important to consider the style and industry of the company you're applying to and remember that what looks exciting and creative to one person could be a confusing read for another. It can make a big difference to the success of your application if your prospective employer doesn't have to work hard to find the information they need.

In the interest of keeping it simple, your CV should also be all one font type and font size - although section headings can be made slightly larger in order to effectively separate the sections of your CV. Choose a font type that is easy to read (like Arial) and a font size no smaller than 10. You can individualise your CV with things like a colour theme or a logo of your initials but try to make sure you chose professional colours that don't distract away from the content of your application and are not too hard to read.

### Key points to include

#### 1. Contact Details

The top of your CV should be your name, phone number and your e-mail address. There's no need to put your address here because you will generally enter this on the employer's system when applying – plus, it saves you some space.

#### 2. Personal profile

Next should be your 'personal profile/bio'. This section should be a short overview of yourself. Use this as an opportunity to write something to describe your experience and skills in a succinct way. An example could be:

"I'm an experienced Customer Service Manager, Trainer and Analyst with a history working in banking and finance industries. I'm skilled in performance management, reporting, learning and development". You could also use this section to talk a little bit about what you're looking for in a role such as:

"I'm looking for a change from the financial sector to a more customer focused sector in a role where I can really make a difference."

### 3. Key achievements/Skills

Listing your key achievements/skills is entirely optional. If you do have some things that you're proud of achieving in your career, this would be a great place to list them. A key achievement could be a time when you exceeded targets, introduced a new process or won a company award etc. An example:

“Successfully implemented new data recording system across 200 national services – resulting in average of 30% productivity increase”.

You might prefer to use this section to list your key competencies instead. These could be skills that you've acquired throughout your working experience such as leadership, working to targets, project management etc.

### 4. Employment history

Take some time to sit down and really think about your experience and employment to date. Start by making a list of the jobs you've had and then detail the months and years you worked there. Your career history should be ordered chronologically with your most recent job role first and your oldest job role last. The likelihood is that your last 10 years' experience will be the most relevant for the job you're applying for so, for any roles within the last 10 years, you should describe your roles in detail and list all your key responsibilities. For any roles over 10 years you can simply provide job title, employer name and dates.

It's important not to assume that your prospective employer knows what your role consisted of based on the job title you held alone so, where possible, do not use abbreviations and don't shy away from listing experience you might consider 'a given'. It's also helpful to write a very short description of the company you worked for (e.g. what industry was it in, what services did they offer, who were their clients etc.)

### 5. Education history/qualifications.

This should include any specific qualifications you have attained and at what level you have achieved the qualification. E.g. if you have an NVQ in Social Care, you should include whether this is an NVQ Level 2, 3 or 5 – especially if this qualification is going to be essential for the jobs you're applying for. If you do not state a qualification level, you risk not being shortlisted by employers because your CV hasn't evidenced that you have the right level of qualification to be considered for the role.

This section is also a great opportunity to showcase any key training you've completed or workshops you've attended at the companies you've worked for or through employment assistance agencies/programmes.

### 6. IT Skills

Many roles now require candidates to have some basic IT skills. List here any IT applications you are comfortable using/have experience with e.g. Microsoft Office, In-house systems etc.

## **Things not to include**

Do not include personal information like your photograph, your age, marital status, how many children you have etc. By not including these things, your prospective employer will be unable to make assumptions about you outside of what's relevant – which is your skills and experience. If you're proud of any hobbies that you have and you feel that including them will add value to your application, then do so - but you should avoid listing your hobbies or the things you like to do for the sake of including them. Instead, try to include what personal objectives you have achieved through these hobbies and how they have furthered your knowledge, experience and personal growth.

You should also avoid providing reference information on your CV and instead state 'references available upon request'. References are something employers should only request once you've been offered a job.

If you need some help getting your CV started, you can use the following, basic format:

**Full Name**

Telephone:

Email:

## **Personal Profile**

## **Key Skills/Key achievements**

## **Employment History**

**Job Title**  
**Company Name**

**Dates to and from**

Brief overview of the company and what your role was on a day to day basis

My Key Responsibilities included:

- Key Responsibility 1
- Key Responsibility 2
- Key Responsibility 3
- Key Responsibility 4
- Key Responsibility 5

**Job Title**  
**Company Name**

**Dates to and from**

Brief overview of the company and what your role was on a day to day basis

My Key Responsibilities included:

- Key Responsibility 1
- Key Responsibility 2
- Key Responsibility 3
- Key Responsibility 4
- Key Responsibility 5

### Other employment

Job Title, Company Name, Dates to and from  
Job Title, Company Name, Dates to and from  
Job Title, Company Name, Dates to and from

### Education

### IT Skills

*References available upon request*

## **Writing a Personal Statement**

Most job applications request for you to write a supporting letter/personal statement and most employers will tell you specifically what they'd like you to include. If they have not provided you with specific guidance, you should create a supporting/personal statement which shows how you meet the essential criteria. However, try to avoid this being a duplication of the information on your CV.

You should open with an overview of why you're applying for the role and what interests you about the company. It would be great to reference things you've come across in your research about the company such as their values or mission statement and how you yourself align with that. You can write about things you've achieved in previous roles and how they represent the essential skills and experience required for the role.

A top tip would be to use either the essential/desirable criteria on the job description provided as headings and under each heading write an example of how you meet each criteria.

Make sure that everything is formatted neatly and simply and try to remember not to overcomplicate the language you use.

**A template you could use is as below:**

### **Use the first paragraph to introduce yourself and light detail about where you've worked before**

*E.g. "I have worked on the Customer Accounts Team for The Guinness Partnership since August 2016. I work on a range of accounts, but mostly focus on; New Tenancies, Homeownership and Non Residential. We help customers manage their rent account from the very start ensuring that they are were the need to be."*

### **Then write a little but about yourself**

*E.g. "I am a hardworking, passionate and punctual individual. I pride myself on my time keeping and ability to get tasks completed in time given. I thoroughly enjoy working in a team and have the ability to build positive and professional relationships with my colleagues....."*

**Write a little bit about why you're interested in the role**

*E.g. "I'm applying for this role because I want to develop my understanding of [insert here] and I think this will be the next, natural step in my career"*

**Now list the essential (and desirable if you meet them) criteria and tell the employer how you meet each point**

*E.g. "Please see below how and why I feel I meet the essential criteria for this role:*

**Then sign off the statement.**

*E.g. "I appreciate you taking the time to read my personal statement. I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Kind Regards,  
[Insert Name Here]"*