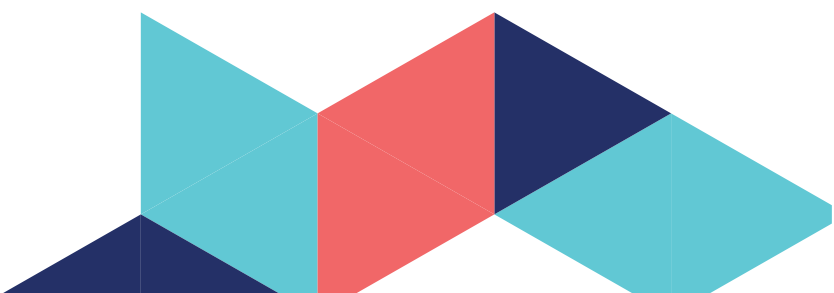




CV Guidance



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Introduction

Your CV

High Impact CV's

If you are using a CV approach that simply lists your achievements, the chances are that you are

- boring the reader
- not impressing them
- not getting many interviews.

In this guide we explain how you can structure your CV to create the highest possible impact, impress the reader, convince them you should be interviewed and ultimately get recruited.

Purpose of a CV

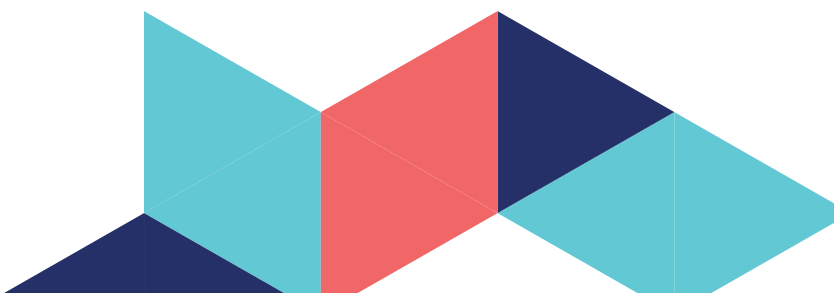
A CV is a marketing product - in this case, we are marketing you.

The purpose of your CV is to interest the recruiter, impressing your potential employer so that you are invited for an interview.

The recruitment agent or the employer will be sent numerous CVs, needing to examine every one of them before deciding who to short list for interview. The process can be tedious and boring, each CV may be merely skimmed over and evaluated within 10 to 20 seconds.

It is important to realise that the employer will choose the candidate who has the best CV for the job, not necessarily the candidate who is best suited for the job.

The primary objective of a graduate-level CV is to demonstrate your motivation, academic achievements and goals.



Recruiters will look to invest in your recent qualifications to prepare you for a position in their company. Employers won't expect you to possess years of experience on your CV, rather that you can demonstrate enthusiasm, motivation and a positive attitude. This can be achieved by including details of projects and dissertations that you have worked on - showcasing skills needed for the role.

The 20 second interview!!

The front page of your CV will be read for about 20 seconds before the reader makes the choice to turn the page and read more or put you in the reject pile.



Let's suppose you get a 20 second speech to impress the employer. So, what would you say in 20 seconds to give yourself the chances of getting to the second round of interviews? Does your CV do that? Could an employer see that:

- You have the skills they require
- You have the experience they require
- You understand their requirements, you know what they are trying to achieve
- You have provided benefit to previous employers/clients

Identifying your target audience

In order to make your CV as effective as possible, you need to identify your audience to meet their goals. Think about key words they have used in the advert, the essential and desirable skills they are looking for. And all of this on nothing generally longer than 2 pages.

Your CV may be shortlisted by a computer, or someone who is not from that specialism. By using key words, they can identify your knowledge, skills and behaviour to short-list you.

What goes on the front page

There are essentially 4 sections require on the first page

- Your name, address and contact details including LinkedIn profile - 3 lines
- A profile of you - 4 lines
- List of skills - 10 Bullet points
- You can also add a summary of achievements - 5 Bullet points

Here's an example for someone with 10 years of experience in the industry.

Joe Bloggs

Tel: 01234 5677889

Email: joebloggs@example.com,

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joeblogs-aa13579/> (Links to an external site.)

10 Bloggs House, London, E12 4LP

Personal profile

Highly proficient SENIOR ANALYST PROGRAMMER with 10 years experience building Financial Risk applications for major blue chip clients using OO, C++, Oracle, UML, ADO . Full life cycle knowledge, including RUP, SSADM, and PRINCE methodologies. Now seeking next rewarding opportunity to make a successful impact in a customer focused team.

Skills & expertise

- C++ (8 years)
- Oracle (version xyx, 9 years)
- OO, Rational Rose, UML, OCL
- Meets tight and demanding deadlines under pressure
- This also needs transferable and adaptive skills listing, mapping against those requested in the job description

Key achievements

- Successfully re-engineered existing risk analysis application cutting down the run time from 30 minutes to 10 seconds. This enabled fund managers to real time risk analysis figures resulting in the company being more competitive in the market place, increasing revenues by 50%.
- Trained and mentored junior developers in OO techniques resulting in significant productivity rate increases and less time to market. Increase in speed of development enabled IT to become more responsive to clients demands for change and enhancements.
- Automated manual reconciliation of system data with market data resulting in task being completed with 100% accuracy in 1 minutes, as opposed to 3 hours.

How long should a personal statement be for a job?

Personal statements are all about getting the necessary information across with brevity. You need to keep it concise and straight to the point. A personal statement should be no longer than 150-200 words, or no more than four or five sentences. You may feel that you need to convey more information than you can summarise in this amount of words, however, this is best saved for the cover letter, where you will have more space to go into details about your skills and experience and why you are a great fit for this specific role.

1. Who you are?

How you write your personal statement is up to you, you can write it in third or first person, but do not mix the two; keep it consistent.

You should start off by saying who you are, which may look something like this: "I'm a recent graduate with a 2:1 in Biochemistry from Bangor University, seeking a graduate role in ..."

We recommend including your grade if it enhances your CV. If you don't think it's necessary or you need the space to highlight your skills, leave your grade out, as the person reading your CV can find it in the education section. You can also leave out the institute you studied at if you need this space for other important information, as this will also appear further down the CV.

2. What you can offer the employer?

The next couple of lines should be about your relevant experience. Make a song and dance about any skills that are highly relevant to the role you are applying for; remembering to always tailor your personal statement to the specific job. Once you have outlined your relevant skills, you'll need to show when you've used those skills.

For example:

"During my time at university and my year in industry, I developed excellent time-management skills, work well under pressure and detail orientated. As well as the above skills I have experience of working in a highly regulated laboratory environment"

Top tip: Use terms that employers or recruiters may be searching for. For example, if you're a computer science graduate and have experience with C++, make sure this is stated in your personal statement, as well as in the skills section of your CV.

For graduates, this can be tricky, especially if you are not sure which road you want to take. However, you don't need to panic and show an employer a 10 or 20-year career goal. No one is expecting you to have mapped out your life. You can, however, show what your short-term goals are and detail the skills you would like to develop if you were successful in getting a position in the organisation you are applying for.

For example:

"I am looking for a new opportunity in an innovative company, where I can use and develop both my soft skills and technical skills, whilst using and continuing to expand my knowledge of biochemistry."

Writing a personal statement with no work experience!

If you are entering the world of work after university, but do not have any work experience, there are transferable skills you've learnt while in university or in your extracurricular activities. We would recommend that you identify a mentor and work experience as quickly as possible but here is guidance in the meantime.

Soft skills that employers are looking for include

- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Communication skills
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Work ethic
- Time management

During your university degree or in any extracurricular activities, you will have used some, if not all, of these skills. In your personal statement, cover letter and CV, you need to demonstrate when and how you have used the skills that employers are looking for. They don't necessarily need to be directly related to work.

If you do have some work experience, even if it's not relevant to this role specifically, make sure you mention this in your personal statement. For example, it might have been a part-time job whilst studying, or during holidays, working in your family business or volunteering.

Don't forget about optimising your CV for online searches

In the digital age, most jobs are advertised online, and it's also where employers and recruiters look for potential candidates. Millions of people have LinkedIn accounts and have uploaded their CVs to various job websites. So, how do you stand out, by 'keyword-optimising' your personal statement and CV?

Often, potential employers and recruiters will use role-related keywords to search for candidates on LinkedIn and job websites. Generally, recruiters are looking to fill a graduate job that requires certain skills or qualifications. So, if you are a biology graduate and a job requires DNA extraction skills, which you have, then make sure you add this information to your personal statement so that you will appear in searches that match this term. It's important to research the accepted industry terms that relate to your skills, so you stand the best chance of high search visibility.

The key skills and expertise section

This section needs about 10 bullet points that prove that you are the person for the job. Highlight in bold the words that match the advertisement. Make sure you also show a broad range of skills rather than wasting too many lines on one area.

You can put multiple skills from the same area on one line. Remember to add personal qualities. e.g Meets tight and demanding deadlines under pressure.

Transferable skills

Everyone has transferable skills even if they don't recognise them as such. Sometimes, your current employer won't make it obvious that the skills you have acquired with them are transferable because they don't necessarily want you to realise how employable you are elsewhere.

Typical transferable skills you may already possess are:

- Reading or writing related skills. This means being able to digest written information and present it in written form as well.
- Computer skills. If you have aptitude with computers and common office programmes then consider this to be a transferable skill.
- Management experience. If you have managed people before then you could transfer this experience to benefit another type of employer.
- Commercial skills. People who can negotiate and handle figures like turn over and gross profit often possess the sort of business acumen which is sought after in many organisations.
- Deadline success. Being able to work to deadlines is something that doesn't happen in all jobs, but if you are used to it then this is a key transferable skill desired in many companies.
- Of course there are other types of transferable skill. Think of them as aptitudes that can function equally well in multiple industrial sectors. Mention them in your CV as you have picked them up throughout your employment history.

Job-related key skills

More specific than transferable skills, job-related ones can get you work with another employer who needs them. Despite this, transferable skills won't necessarily be of use to employers outside of the sector you already work in.

Examples of job-related skills are:

- Mechanical engineering. Being able to work and repair engines is a job-related skill. It may mean you can transfer into related sectors but probably only within similar roles unless you have other transferable skills to offer.
- Accountancy qualifications. Bookkeeping and accountancy roles are on offer within a wide range of organisations which presents plenty of job choice. However, this job-related skill narrows down that choice to certain types of jobs only.

Although there are nearly as many job-related skills as there are jobs, try not to think of them as restricting what you can do. If you do feel trapped by your job-related skills and have trouble breaking out into new areas of work, then acquire some new ones by enrolling on a training course.

Remember that many job-related skills imply transferable ones so they are always worth mentioning. It is best to add any courses or qualifications that are pertinent to your job-related skills in education section of your CV.

Adaptive skills

Ideal skills for CV personal statements or even a cover letter, adaptive skills can also be listed in your work experience if you prefer. Think about the sort of personality you have when discussing your adaptive skills. Some of the key ones to look out for include:

- Team working. Not everyone is a team player, but team working is an important adaptive skill that many employers are looking for.
- Loyalty. Been in your job for a long time and seen it through thick and thin? This is an adaptive skill to mention on your CV.
- Positivity. If you are the sort of person who sees the glass as half full and not half empty, then this shows your positivity. Employers tend to favour positive people so mention this as an adaptive skill.

Employment history

This is where you list your work experience. No essays. Short and sweet, using bullet points. It is here that you are explaining the things you did and what skills you used. You should also add some benefits as well if you can.

Phrases like 'responsible for ordering stock' can make your CV read like a job description. Instead, describe what you did and what the positive outcome was, like, 'by closely monitoring sales trends and stock levels, I reduced out of stock instances by 21%'.

Using 'active' language instead of 'passive' language makes your CV sound more dynamic. An example is changing 'involved in the promotion of the company at industry events...' to 'I promoted the company at industry events...'. This makes you sound like a 'doer', rather than someone who was just 'involved'.

Guidelines

Provide each job, work experience, internship, placement etc., starting with the most recent and work back

1. the company (and web address if there is room)
2. Title of role
3. Dates
4. Summary of impact (again, apply the STAR/PARS technique)

A CV is about marketing yourself, sharing with the reader the impact you made at each employer and the potential impact you can make for a future employer. It all begins with a STAR story.

Example:

Here's a BEFORE and AFTER example, transforming a responsibility statement into an impact based CV - make an enticing STAR story.

BEFORE:

Responsible for the Maintenance Department and all PM activities.

AFTER:

Led the 24-person Maintenance Team to create and implement a formalised Preventative Maintenance program, reducing assembly downtime by 75% while doubling production output.

One of the common mistakes when writing a CV is to write the achievements as a set of skills you learnt quickly and focus on how you benefited personally rather than the benefits you generated for the client.

You really have to dig deep and think about what business benefits you added by applying your skills for your clients. Just remember, in business no one really cares about you – they care about what you can do for their business.

Companies often want to do some of the following:

- Make more profits
- Sell more widgets
- Become more efficient
- Get more customers
- Beat competition
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Enter new markets
- Drive higher quality

Can you consider how you have:

- Solved business problems and met goals.
- Saved the business money.
- Made business processes more efficient.
- Completed projects faster and cheaper
- Implemented changes faster
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Used less staff
- Improved software quality
- Improved capability (this includes staff)

PARS Model for writing achievements/showing impact

Consider the PARS method rather than simply stating the responsibilities you had.

P – What was the Problem you addressed? E.g. Loss of cash

A -What were the Actions you took? E.g. Provided training to staff, introduced double check system

R – What were the Results? E.g. reduced cash loss by 4%

S – What Skills did you use or develop? E.g. managing and leading a team, staff training, negotiation



Additional information

For further information, look at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140709061710-108230503-12-tips-to-improve-your-work-experience-section-on-linkedin/> (Links to an external site.)

For information on PARS, please see <https://www.melissallarena.com/linkedin-challenge-tip-3-fill-linkedin-experience-section%E2%80%8F/> (Links to an external site.)

Ivy Exec's Senior Resume Writer, Laura Hill shares more thoughts on using a PARs strategy (Problem-Action-Result-Skills strategy) to nail an interview...<https://www.ivyexec.com/career-advice/2013/power-stories-fuel-winning-job-interviews-part-2/>

STARS Model for writing achievements/showing impact



The STAR method is very similar, it also lets you demonstrate impact. Simply choose the method you prefer.

- **Situation:** An event, project, or challenge faced
- **Task:** Your responsibilities and assignments for the situation
- **Action:** Steps or procedure taken to relieve or rectify situation
- **Result:** Results of actions taken.

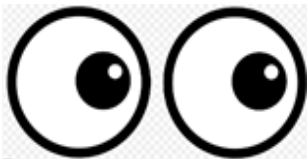
What was the situation?

What task was required? What was needed?

What steps/actions were taken?

What were the results?

Make it easy to read and look good



Don't include so much information that it makes your CV look cluttered. Avoid long paragraphs with very little white space.

Bullet pointed lists and short sentences make your CV easier to read and easier for recruiters to scan for key points.

You don't need to print your CV on bright coloured paper or over a picture. A 'daring' visual approach is only really suitable for creative jobs. Also, don't mix up your fonts for visual effect because it can look messy and disorganised.

Templates

A CV can take any format but remember it must be easy to identify your key points, you have 20 seconds to impress the reader! Here are a couple of basic word documents to get you started.

For those of you in a creative industry (such as journalism, marketing, media, design, programming), your CV should also show your creative talent.

Here are examples of extreme make-overs...

<https://interestingengineering.com/11-examples-of-creative-cvs-for-engineers>
(Links to an external site.)

<https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-professional/careers-blog/gallery/2015/feb/25/the-worlds-most-creative-cvs-in-pictures> (Links to an external site.)

<https://enhancv.com/blog/the-23-most-creative-resume-designs-weve-seen/>
(Links to an external site.)

Just remember to ensure that the reader can still skim read your key information in 20 seconds!

Name
Address
Contact details, linkedin

Personal Statement/Professional profile

Think of your personal statement as a mission statement, which sums up to the prospective employer, why you are right for the job. Keep your personal statement brief (no more than 100 words) and avoid buzzwords such as: dynamic, team player and 'CV legend' (a real example). While time-consuming, we recommend tailoring your personal statement to the specific job you are applying for.

Skills/Expertise

- Remember there are transferable, job related and adaptive skills
- This can be set out as 1 or 2 columns
- Ensure it includes the essential and desirable qualities the job advert requests

Qualifications

| | | |
|---|----------------|------|
| Degree (grade) | University | Date |
| Details of relevant modules (if appropriate), you can add any key achievements | | |
| A levels | College/School | Date |
| List of A levels and grades | | |
| GCSEs | College/School | Date |
| List x number of GCSEs, ranging from A-C grades including maths, English, ICT and x (relevant to job application) | | |

Other qualifications/training – only if relevant (most recent first)

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------|
| Title | Education Establishment | Date |
| Content if relevant | | |
| Title | Education Establishment | Date |
| Content if relevant | | |

Employer related history (most recent first)

| | |
|--|----------|
| Job Title | Employer |
| Date range | |
| Impact written bullet points, using PARS/STARS model | |
| Job Title | Employer |
| Date range | |
| Impact written bullet points, using PARS/STARS model | |
| Job Title | Employer |
| Date range | |
| Impact written bullet points, using PARS/STARS model | |

Other achievements and interests – only if relevant

Either as bullet points or as a paragraph

Additional information – only if relevant

Either as bullet points or as a paragraph

References

Can be supplied upon request

Name
Address
Email/Mob/Linkedin

Summary

Skills/Expertise

- Remember there are transferable, job related and adaptive skills

- Ensure it includes the essential and desirable qualities the job advert requests

Summary of relevant qualifications/experience

- Contact could be added here instead

Hobbies

images could be added

Other achievements and interests – only if relevant

Either as bullet points or as a paragraph

Additional information – only if relevant

Either as bullet points or as a paragraph

References

Can be supplied upon request

Personal Statement/Professional profile

Think of your personal statement as a mission statement, which sums up to the prospective employer, why you are right for the job. Keep your personal statement brief (no more than 100 words) and avoid buzzwords such as: dynamic, team player and 'CV legend' (a real example). While time-consuming, we recommend tailoring your personal statement to the specific job you are applying for.

Qualifications

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Degree (grade) | Date |
| University | |
| Details of relevant modules | |

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| A levels | Date |
| College/School | |
| List of A levels and grades | |

| | |
|---|------|
| GCSEs | Date |
| College/School | |
| List x number of GCSEs, ranging from A-C grades including maths, English, ICT and x (relevant to job application) | |

Other qualifications/training – only if relevant (most recent first)

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Title | Date |
| Education Establishment | |
| Content if relevant | |

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Title | Date |
| Education Establishment | |
| Content if relevant | |

Employer related history (most recent first)

| | |
|--|------------|
| Job Title | Date range |
| Employer | |
| Impact written bullet points, using PARS/STARS model | |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Job Title | Date range |
| Employer | |
| Impact written bullet points, using PARS/STARS model | |

Tailor your CV

Avoid sending out the same CV to hundreds of employers. Mass mailshots are too general and unfocused - and employers can spot them.

Instead, tailor your CV to sell your most relevant skills. Consider what skills the employer might be looking for, and highlight your most relevant experience. For example, if you've got experience in retail and care work, and you're applying for a job in a shop, make sure your retail experience is easier to see on your CV than the care experience.

Avoid typing errors, poor spelling and grammar mistakes

Mistakes can make it seem like you haven't put the time in, or you don't think details are important. A tidy, mistake-free CV shows you're professional, thorough and care about how you come across.

It's a good idea to have your CV checked by someone whose English is good, even if yours is good too. Spellcheckers can miss things, like the difference between 'ceiling' and 'sealing'.