

HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT

When it comes to writing a CV, some aspects come easier than others. While you may not struggle with career history or qualifications, one element you may find more challenging is the personal statement. The main function of the personal statement is to make the reader want to read on and represent why you're worth their consideration.



What is a personal statement?

A personal statement is generally the first thing included on your CV, and is a brief personal summary given to prospective employers, helping you stand apart from the competition.

Why do I need a personal statement?

Your personal statement is your chance to sell yourself to the employer, and help you put across the specific skills that make you perfect for the position. Quite simply, it is one of the most important parts of your CV, and a well written personal statement can mean the difference between standing out from the crowd and your application being rejected.

How long should a personal statement be?

Ideally, your personal statement should be no more than around 150 words (or four or five lines of your CV). Any more than this and you run the risk of rambling and taking up valuable space. Remember: it is a summary. It is not a cover letter. So keep it concise, pertinent and to the point. Essentially, the shorter the better.



What should it say?

Successful personal statements often consciously try and answer the following questions: who you are, what you can offer, and what you're aiming for in your career. Try to bullet-point answers to these when drafting to help make sure you've ticked all the boxes. If you're struggling for inspiration, use the job description to help you identify the specific skills the employer is looking for.

For example, if it highlights that the perfect candidate will have excellent business analysis skills, make sure you reflect this somewhere in your statement. e.g. 'Working experience of strategic business analysis with an investigative and methodical approach to problem-solving.'

What tense should it be written in?

Your personal statement can be written in either the first or third person. Just make sure you maintain consistency throughout. So avoid statements that will switch between the two, such as: 'I am a recent business economics graduate. Excellent analytical and organisational skills. I am driven and self-motivated individual that always gives 100% in everything I do. Proven track record of success, at all costs.'

How long should I spend writing my personal statement?

A personal statement should always be tailored to the role in question, which means a new one should be written with each and every CV you send off. This may seem time consuming, however, the longer you spend on an application, the more the recruiter will begin to take notice. Generic introductions will not endear you to anyone, and are a waste of valuable space. Sending off five well-written and tailored CVs has much more value than sending out fifty generic ones.