Create the Best CV for 2023 and beyond

INTRODUCTION   *(Final-Year Students and Graduates of University College Cork)*

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WE ARE THE DIFFERENCE

EMPLOYABILITY

PLACEMENT

ADVICE

UCC | Career Services
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

INTRODUCTION

The information below will guide you to create a CV that is right for you in 2023 and beyond and target the job or career area you wish to apply to. The tips and guidelines are applicable to all students of University College Cork. **The sample CV's are, targeted to Final Year undergraduate and Postgraduate Students graduating in 2020.**

WHAT IS A CV – WHY DO I NEED ONE?

Whether you are applying for a summer internship, voluntary experience, a graduate programme or a postgraduate course, it is crucial that you present yourself positively and professionally on paper. A CV is your personal *Marketing Brochure*. Every CV is different as you want to show the employer why your set of skills make you suitable for the position you are applying for at that moment. In most cases a CV will be your first and only contact with the employer in advance of an interview. *A well written CV is the difference between getting and interview or not*.

TARGETING YOUR CV

- A successful CV is targeted to the specific job criteria set out by the employer. These criteria will be found in the job description and the person specification. Job specifications are frequently divided into *Essential* and *Desirable* requirements. The desirable requirements can be used to narrow down the candidates when there are a large number of high-quality applicants.
- In short you need to find out what the job involves and then think about how you meet the requirements.
- It is a **MATCHING** process
- A targeted CV will highlight the EVIDENCE an employer is looking for: A generic CV will hide it.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR CV IN 2023?

PERSONAL DETAILS

- Name, Contact Address, Mobile No (include the country code .e. +353), Professional Email Address (if using UCC email (make sure it is linked to your name not student number (e.g. markosullivan@umail.ucc.ie
- Include LinkedIn Profile?
- Weblinks to projects etc?
- Marital Status and Gender *not necessary* unless you have specific reasons for including these.

PERSONAL PROFILE

A personal profile, also known as a personal statement, career objective and professional profile can be one of the most important aspects of your CV. It's a short paragraph that sits just underneath your personal details, it gives prospective employers an overview of who you are and what you're all about. It concisely and effectively displays who you are, your skills and strengths relevant to the sector or job role and your career goals. It's like a covering letter only you are marketing yourself in a few short sentences.

EDUCATION

Third level
- Reverse Chronological Order
- Name and location of University, years of study, correct course title,
- Outline details of subjects studied, specific modules, projects undertaken, technical or lab skills acquired if applicable.
- Provide information re: results achieved in specific years/modules/projects.
- Highlight distinctions or awards received e.g. College Scholar

Second Level
- Name and address of secondary school, years of study
- Leaving Certificate points out of 600. Include good grades in relevant subjects

Subject/Module Information
- There are a number of different options re: listing modules:
    a) Course Modules – where you do not have a large number of modules (particularly first year).
    b) Core Modules – allows you to list most relevant modules studied from across the degree programme.
    c) Subjects (Selection) – (be selective)

Projects:
- Provide information on relevant projects undertaken:
- Give Title and a brief Description
- What research did you carry out? What Methods did you use?
- What was the analysis that you conducted? What were your findings?
- What result was achieved? Optional: Include web link to project

EMPLOYMENT

- Different headings can be used to highlight experiences that you have - Work Experience, Professional Experience, Relevant Experience, Engineering, Teaching, Accounting,
- Give a brief description of the company business and size if it's not a well-known name.
- Provide good, clear and concise information re: the duties that you had/have, and the work that you carried/carry out. Use professional and descriptive language to outline this information.
- The information is best presented in bullet point form.
- Resources: www.prospects.ac.uk www.gradireland.com
- Also provide details on what you achieved in any given job; targets met, projects managed, results achieved – give quantitative measures if possible: numbers, budgets, sizes of teams for examples.
- Include any placements, internships, vacation work and voluntary work.

SKILLS

- The length of the skills section will depend upon the content of the rest of the CV.
- The section could be entitled KEY or RELEVANT SKILLS
- Avoid Duplication with the rest of the CV. For example, if you have brought out skills in your work experience, there is no need to repeat this in a skills section.
- A Skills section is useful in certain circumstances – particularly where you are applying for positions where you have no experience, or in areas that are different from your degree background.
- **Transferable Skills:** Skills learned in one field of work that can be easily adapted to a different field e.g. Communication, Teamwork, Decision Making etc.
- Providing some context is also important. Anyone can say they can work in a team, so you need to provide some context that is evidence based
  Technical Skills/Lab Skills etc.
- Do not just simply name the techniques/skills but provide some context that will help you to describe the level to which you have developed it.
- **Job Related Skills:** Skills of qualifications that are directly relevant to a specific job e.g. proficiency in C++, AutoCAD etc.

INTERESTS/ACHIEVEMENTS

- Some students are unlikely to have a vast amount of work experience. Employers therefore look more closely at your extra-curricular activities.
- Highlight your interests & achievements - sporting, academic, work related etc.
- Provide information on <u>current</u> interests and Membership of Clubs, Societies or voluntary organisations, with level of participation and positions of responsibility e.g. club treasurer. Include events organised or attended, awards or recognition received
- Use subheadings if necessary. This can be useful from the point of view of presentation and clarity in this area.
- Training courses taken outside UCC

OTHER INFORMATION

- Foreign languages and level of fluency
- Driving License

REFEREES

- In general, 2 references are required. Usually at this point, students will use 1 work reference and 1 academic reference, from University College Cork.
- Ask permission first before including their details on your CV.
- Keep the referee's informed about positions you are applying for.
- It is also a good idea to give a copy of your CV to the referee's.
- If names of referees are not required – put in "Names of Referees will be supplied on request.

FREQUENTLY ASKED   QUESTIONS

Do I need a Personal Profile?

If you use a profile, it is up to you to make sure that it adds value to your CV and is distinctive instead of using generalisations about team working and communications skills. A covering letter is a very good place to provide evidence of where you have developed these skills. A "personal profile" can be a very useful tool for those with a more complex history, particularly mature students. There are some genuine reasons why you might not choose to have a personal statement, but it shouldn't be that you can't be bothered to write one! It actually depends on your job search status. If you're applying for a specific job role and attaching a cover letter to your CV, you may actively choose not to have a personal statement.

Photograph, Yes or No?

It's a personal choice to add a photograph to a CV or not, unless of course the employer asks for one. Many European countries do require a photograph. Increasingly students and graduates are choosing to upload a photograph, it can be positioned very neatly onto the page and it does make it easier for the employer to remember you. If you use one, make sure it is professional. Check worldwide CV's in the country-by-country profiles on www.prospects.ac.uk.

Can I have more than one type of CV?

Yes, you can.   You should target your CV to the role you are applying to e.g. a PhD student will focus on research carried out and written academic articles when applying for research positions; the same student will concentrate on using industry language when applying to organisations.

I have too much Work experience to Fit in my CV?

Include the most relevant/recent. Summarise the rest with a sentence "Other employment/experience/interests includes…." You may choose to leave out experience that isn't relevant. If you have had a lot of part-time jobs you could summarise this experience, rather than list every place you have worked.

Do I put in or leave out Disappointing Exam Results?

It won't work if you put in a "Second Class Honours" if you attained a Second Class Honours Grade 2 – or putting in nothing if you got a Third Class Honours. The key is to highlight modules/subjects that you received high grades in. If you received poor grades for first and second year, there is no need to put them down for a graduate CV. However, some employers, notably Law companies do like the included. Concentrate on the positives.

I have no positions of Responsibility

Remember that responsibilities don't only come with formal titles. You should identify situations in which you have contributed – e.g. through coursework, voluntary work, travel or personal interests.

I have only ONE Interest, I have little or nothing to put Under this heading?

Generally speaking, people who have a keen interest and commitment to one activity – a sport for example are often involved in many ways. Explain your role in organising social activities, fundraising events, motivating and training teammates, responsibility for the club's finances etc.

Do I put in my DOB, Marital Status, Gender, Nationality? Work Visa Status?

You are not obliged to put your DOB, Gender or Marital Status on a CV. If you have an unusual name, you may decide to clarify on the CV. If you are an international student, you may want to highlight that fact keeping in mind to market your ability to communicate through English and a second language. Also, you might consider putting a link to your work visa status information, highlighting to the employer your you can start work immediately.

Do I need to disclose if I have a disability?

You are under no obligation to disclose your disability on your CV. If you choose to do so in a covering letter - BE POSITIVE – highlight your ABILITY – e.g. if you have a hearing impairment, your active listening skills may be strong – you pay attention to detail – you have excellent eye contact/body language – remember you are **SELLING YOURSELF** – not your disability. Check Disability Support Service Website for further details on disclosure www.ucc.ie/en/dss/

"Unemployment" in My CV? How do I address it?

Unemployment is often best explained by highlighting the positive use you made of your time e.g. developing keyboard skills and so on… You may have taken on voluntary work during COVID that have developed key skills. Alternatively, you may be able to date the work experience you have done through the years rather than months and years which may highlight gaps. Or alternatively the time could be absorbed into a period of part-time work.