

Careers and Employability Service

Writing a Personal Profile or Career Objective

Introduction

Personal profiles or career objectives are focused, short paragraphs, found at the beginning of CVs. Their purpose is to capture the reader's interest by providing an overview of your skills and experiences in two to three sentences. A well written personal profile/career objective needs to be short and punchy, yet focused and informative. It should make the reader want to find out more about you, so you will need to write in a confident, positive manner, using 'action' words and demonstrating your enthusiasm.

What is the difference between a personal profile and a career objective?

The personal profile highlights your current situation, skills and experience. A career objective also includes the type of employment that you are seeking.

How long should the personal profile/career objective be?

Two to three sentences in which the following is explained:

- Sentence one: what you are currently doing including two to three of your most proficient skills
- Sentence two: Highlight your most appropriate or significant experience. If you are targeting a specific profession or employer, include any relevant experience to enhance your application
- Sentence three: Focus on why you are sending the CV or highlight the type of employment that you are seeking

How does the personal profile/career objective differ from a covering letter?

The major differences are length and depth of detail provided. The personal profile is succinct and focused, providing a positive introduction to the CV. The covering letter gives further details about your relevant experiences and skill, along with your reasons for applying to the employer in question. There will be overlaps so use similar, yet not identical words and change the perspective of the messages that you include to avoid repetition.

Do I have to include a personal profile/career objective?

No. If you enjoy writing concisely, using punchy, descriptive words, then it's worth having a go. If you find this a challenge, then concentrate on writing a well-constructed CV, without a personal profile.

Example Personal Profile/Career Objectives

- Adaptable and ambitious business studies undergraduate with good problem solving and team working skills. Proven experience in finance and customer service, having worked for two summers for HSBC and Barclays. Seeking a graduate career in retail banking where my analytical and communication skills can be further developed
- Modern languages graduate who enjoys working in a fast paced environment and adapts easily to new situations. A keen linguist with experience of using French and English in the marketing industry. Keen to establish a career in marketing and gain a professional qualification to enhance opportunities in this sector
- Versatile and well organised computer scientist with a keen interest in identifying problems and implementing effective solutions. A good communicator who has worked as a student ambassador in a large, inner city secondary school and developed strong interpersonal skills with young people and adults. Seeking a career where my problem solving and people skills can be utilised in an IT setting.
- Final year Biologist with good communication, team work and time management skills. Experienced in laboratory work and proficient in conducting experiments. Looking to start a career in the pharmaceutical industry where my passion for scientific analysis can be expanded.