

# The Curriculum Vita

A Curriculum Vita, or CV, is a cumulative record of professional achievements, academic preparation, and qualifications in your discipline. It includes primarily research and teaching, as well as papers, presentations, awards, and professional contributions. Your CV is one of the most important parts of an application for academic jobs. However, your CV isn't the only part of your application: its main purpose is to secure an interview. A CV is organized to reflect an understanding of the needs of a particular institution or organization. We've developed the following guide for producing a CV.

## Developing a CV

### **A CV is a multi-purpose, perpetually unfinished document.**

Since a CV is a cumulative record of your academic accomplishments and it's used for a variety of purposes, it's always evolving-- you'll create new categories and add recent accomplishments; there is never a final version.

### **How is it different than a resume?**

A resume is used for non-academic positions. It is carefully tailored to the employer you are addressing: outside of academia. A resume is usually shorter, and includes skills, outcomes and accomplishments related to a specific job.

### **Uses for a CV:**

A CV is the most important academic job search tool. However, it has multiple uses beyond the faculty job search. A CV may also be used for:

- Grant or fellowship applications
- Summer positions
- Academic jobs
- Research positions in industry
- Merit or tenure review
- Publications
- Speaking engagements
- Consulting
- Awards
- Leadership positions
- Sabbatical opportunities

### **Getting started:**

The first thing to know about CV development is that while there is no standard format, there are different conventions for every discipline. It is important to consult with faculty, students, and other colleagues to understand what is expected in your field.

Don't get committed to one version or format!

You may wish to focus your CV for a specific job or grant for which you are applying. As a result, you may find that you develop several versions of your CV. When drafting a CV, keep the following questions in mind:

- A CV is a targeted document: why are you using the CV?
- Type of institution matters: is it all about research, or do they care mostly about your teaching?
- Who is the reader? What do you know about the needs or interests of the employer?

- Length will vary with accomplishments, and purpose of CV use.
- Create new versions, with new categories, as your career progresses.

## **What Goes in a CV?**

A word about honesty...

It goes without saying that everything on your CV should be completely true and accurate. Even the slightest discrepancy can be damaging. Do not state that something has happened if it has not happened yet.

## **A Note on Style & Appearance:**

If your CV is dense and poorly formatted, and you make it difficult to read, you have not communicated what you want me to know. Unfortunately, busy people are looking for reasons to exclude applicants. Don't ignore presentation and style!

- Be consistent with grammar and formatting (bolding, font, etc.).
- Don't use abbreviations or course numbers that are specific only to your institution!
- Proofread, proofread, proofread! Spell-checking is good, but proofreading is better.
- In the business world, short resumes are preferred. There is no set length for CVs. It should be as long as necessary to reflect your achievements to date.
- Use white space, bolding, and indenting to make the CV easy to read.
- Put your name and page number at the top of page 2 or beyond.
- Use 10 point font, nothing smaller. Select one font and stick with it.

## **Content:**

Start with contact information, including name, address, phone number, and email address. A few things to consider:

- Pick one telephone number where you want phone calls. Be sure to have a message that you would want employers to hear. If you prefer that fellow students or others not know about your calls, do not include a lab or office phone number.
- Generally, you should not include personal information such as social security number, marital status, date of birth, height/weight, gender, or dependents. Do not include a picture. Some employers (i.e., government organizations) might ask for inclusion of personal information.

## **Sections/Categories:**

The categories you include will depend on how far along you are or how much experience you have. The education section should come first. Include your degrees (most recent first), school name and location, dates, and any academic awards received at graduation.

Categories that cover your research and teaching experience should come first, depending on the employer and what they are looking for. Separate academic teaching, research, or other experience from other related contributions, such as high school or community teaching.

## **Possible categories to use in your CV:**

- Research: Dissertation summary, Master's thesis, advisor, title

- Research interests: future plans
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Teaching interests
- Papers/Publications
- Presentations/Posters
- Conferences
- Related teaching
- Related experience
- Related research
- Other professional training
- Professional activities: Sheridan Center, Grad rep GSC
- University committees
- Undergraduate activity
- Professional affiliations
- Honors/Awards
- Fellowships/Scholarships
- Skills

### **In Summary:**

- Make it readable
- Remember who will be reading it
- Ask others to read it before you send it out
- Proofread, Proofread, Proofread
- Honesty, Honesty, Honesty

## **Guidelines for Writing an Academic Cover Letter**

There is no standard format for an academic cover letter. The guidelines that follow are only meant to suggest the basic elements of a good cover letter. Students are encouraged to check with other students, faculty, and colleagues in their department to discuss conventions. Also, content and length will vary depending on the position you are seeking.

When possible, **address your cover letter to a particular person**, usually the head of the search committee or the chair of the department to which you're applying. If no contact was listed in the job announcement, don't hesitate to call the department and ask to whom you should address all correspondence.

Cover letters for academic job applications are somewhat different from the standard cover letter you might use when applying for a job in business.

The first paragraph explains why you are writing and where you learned of the position. State your interest in the position. It should be just a few sentences.

A good cover letter will show the employer that you are a good match for the position. Research counts! Knowing how to "read" the job ad, and doing your research about the institution, will help you figure out what to emphasize in your cover letter. The body of the letter will contain a summary of your research experience, and your teaching experience, depending on the job description. If you are applying to a research institution, you'll want to include a summary of your dissertation. If teaching is key, be sure to include information on your teaching experience. If the search committee is looking for colleagues who will contribute to their community

as well as teach and research, mention the faculty committee you served on. In other words, use the body of your cover letter to match your abilities to the specific needs of the department or institution.

Finally, end with information about how you can be contacted. Reiterate your phone and/or email address. State that you are available for an interview.

### **Sample Academic Cover Letters**

["How to Write Appealing Cover Letters"](#) by Mary Morris Heiberger and Julia Miller Vick. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The authors of *The Academic Job Search Handbook* give their advice on how to compose great academic cover letters. The article includes links to sample cover letters and discussion of their merits.

*(Brown University, Career Development Center)*