

WRITING A CURRICULUM VITAE

Understanding the Differences Between a Resume and a CV

- Curriculum Vitae – “Life’s work”
- Resume – “Summary”

A curriculum vitae, or what is commonly referred to as a CV or vitae, is a comprehensive document used to attract a professional interest. A CV is commonly used for:

- Applications to Graduate or Professional Schools
- Applications for Positions in Academia, Research, Science, Advanced Health Professions
- Proposals for Fellowships or Grants
- Scholarship Applications

Overall, a curriculum vitae and resume share the same purpose. They are both documents used as a marketing tool to summarize and highlight experiences, skills, accomplishments and abilities related to your career objective. Having a good understanding of resume writing is very helpful in writing a CV. You can utilize Alumnae Career Services for information about writing an effective resume.

There are, however, distinct differences between a resume and a CV. While a resume is a brief one to two page document, a CV is a comprehensive and detailed document. Generally, a CV is two or more pages in length, depending on experience level. Also, while every college student should have a resume, only certain students need to possess a CV.

Sections on a CV

While there is essential information needed on a CV, such as identifying information and education, there are no other specific sections required. Depending on experience and academic field, a student can use a variety of sections to best demonstrate his or her abilities. The following are some examples of section titles that are commonly used on a professional CV.

Contact Information

List your full name, complete address, telephone number, email address and URL if you have one (professional, LinkedIn).

Do not list date of birth, marital status, number of children or any personal information.

International students, if there is anything in your CV which may make an employer question whether you have U.S. work permission, list U.S. citizenship or permanent residency if you have it.

Education

In reverse chronological order, with the expected or most recent degree first, list the name of colleges and universities attended, the city and state of each institution, degree(s), major(s), area(s) of concentration and year of graduation or expected graduation date(s).

Dissertation or Thesis

Provide the title and a brief description of your work. This can be listed under the Education section. Ask your advisor/professor to review this section for feedback.

Honors and Awards

Any type of scholarship, fellowship, assistantship, honorary society, teaching or research awards. This can also be included in the Education section if you prefer. If you received awards from another country, give a brief explanation if this is helpful. For example, "Awarded to the top 1% of students graduating nationally."

Research Experience

Use reverse chronological order. This example has "Research Experience" and "Teaching Experience. You might use other categories or say simply "Experience." If you're applying to an institution which stresses teaching, put the teaching category first. Include text with an overview of your research, conclusions, techniques, other responsibilities, etc. You could also include an optional Research Interests section with specific areas in which you intend to pursue research.

Courses Taught/Teaching Experience

List the name of the course taught, co-taught, or teaching assistantships, institution, date of teaching and a brief course description. Use your advisor and department on how to specifically word this section. Depending on experience, you might have more detail on this section, or a brief outline. For individual pursuing teaching, a separate section on teaching and/or academic interests is appropriate.

Related or Professional Experience

Listings of positions not specifically in one's field of study, but contribute good skill sets (section common for non-traditional students that have a good amount of professional experience, but not directly related to new course of study). When describing experience, list organization, department (if any), your title, city, state, dates and a description of transferable responsibilities and accomplishments and skill sets.

Certifications/Licensure/Endorsements

List all relevant certifications, licensure and endorsement, and the year received.

Languages

List all languages you read and speak, and note the skill level (native, fluent, proficient, basic knowledge).

Grants Received:

Include the name of the grant, name of granting agency, date received, title or purpose of grant and any other pertinent information.

Professional Affiliations/Membership:

Memberships in national, regional, state and local professional organizations. List significant appointments or committee work in these associations. If a current student, or recent graduate, student memberships are appropriate.

Publications:

Give bibliographic citations, using the format appropriate to your particular academic discipline (if you don't know your format see your advisor or department). Examples of publications can include pamphlets, chapters in books, research reports or any other publication that you have authored or co-authored.

Presentations

Title of presentation, name of conference or event, dates and locations. Consult advisor and department on how to specifically cite presentations and what presentations are appropriate for a CV.

Community Involvement, Leadership and Extracurricular Activities

Appropriate and relevant volunteer work with organizations, student groups, alumni associations, or civic or political groups can be of interest, but if you have too lengthy a section it might signal that you are not serious enough about your scholarship. Occasionally you may be concerned about reaction to disclosing political or religious activities/affiliations. In such cases, you can use more general phrases, such as "the Pennsylvania Senatorial primary," rather than identifying a campaign by the candidate's name.

Educational Travel

Names of countries, dates, and purpose of travel. Can also be listed under education if a study abroad program.

Institutional/Academic Service

List institutional committees you have served on, including offices held, student groups you have supervised or special academic projects you have assisted with.

Research, Technical and Computer Skills

This section is usually in the form of a simple, specific list. If you are listing laboratory research skills, include only the more specialized and difficult ones you have mastered. List the most relevant skills first.

Additional Information

This is the place to put interesting information that does not fit elsewhere. You may include foreign languages, (unless they are highly relevant to your career goal, in which case they merit their own section), unrelated employment, and interests that show other accomplishments (such as artistic endeavors, competitive sports, extensive travel).

References

On a traditional CV, reference names and contact information can be included. You can also just write, "References Available Upon Request" at the end of your CV. For resumes, or combination CV/Resume, do not include references, but you can write, "References Available Upon Request" at the end. If you are responding to an advertisement that asks for references, it looks professional to include them on a separate sheet from your CV or resume.

Curriculum Vitae Appearance Checklist

A curriculum vitae can be one of the first samples of your professional background an employer will view, therefore, you want to present the best possible document. Just because a CV is a multi-page document, doesn't mean that it should not be clear and concise. In fact, because of its length and detail, it is essential for a reader to be able to quickly scan through a CV to get an overall impression of the candidate and his or her experience.

A good CV is always a work in progress. Continually make changes and edits to include up-to-date information. Ask people that are both familiar, as well as unfamiliar, with your work and background for reviews (advisor, professors, CPD, etc.).

- **Adequate Margins** – Typically one inch, however, no smaller than ½ inch margins.
- **Font** – Besides the larger font for your name, your CV font should be between 10 and 12 point for readability. Also use a traditional business font style such as Times, Times New Roman, Palatino, Arial and other book print fonts.
- **Style** – Use different styles such as underline, bold and italics to call attention to specific areas of your CV. Be careful not to use too many different styles – it is best to limit it to one or two styles, otherwise the highlighting effect is lost.
- **Sections** – Subdivide your CV into categories, or sections, to assist the reader in conceptualizing the overall nature of your experience.
- **Spacing** – Be consistent throughout your CV with spacing.
- **Absolutely no Misspellings** – Proofread for spelling, grammar and typographical errors and don't rely only on a computer spell check system.
- **Clear and Concise** – Delete unnecessary words, sentences and irrelevant information. Avoid the use of personal pronouns. Skip any graphics or pictures.
- **Consistent** – Review dates and numbers for accuracy.
- **Use Verb Tense Consistently** – Use the past tense to describe work you are not currently doing and present tense to describe work you are currently doing.
- **Explain Specific Information** – Departments, program names, acronyms or any type of information that only people familiar with the project or organization would understand.

Adapted from resources from University of Pennsylvania Career Services and University of New Mexico Office of Career Services

Sample CVs - <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradstud/cvsamples.php>