

WRITING A CV

Commonly referred to as a CV (Curriculum Vitae) is a biographical representation of one's educational and work background. The origin of the term is Latin and means "the course of one's life or career."

CVs are often used for job search in academia, medicine, and research and application processes for graduate and professional schools. The major focus of a CV is on credentials including education publications, abstracts, academic achievements, research, fellowships, internships, and residencies.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CV AND A RESUME?

The primary differences between a CV and a resume are length, content and purpose. A resume is a one or two page summary of your skills, education, and experience written to market the essential skills required for employment. The goal of the resume is to be brief and concise, as the resume reader is supposed to review your skills briefly.

The CV is two or more pages emphasizing your academic background. It is meant to highlight academic-related experience such as teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honours, affiliations etc. Note: Your CV may closely resemble a resume if you have not yet amassed those types of experiences. Focus on elaborating on your education, if relevant, such as describing major project(s), research paper(s) or brief description of relevant learning from courses.

WHAT DO I INCLUDE IN MY CV?

The categories in a CV can be organized to highlight skills and experiences that are most relevant to the position you are seeking. There can be particular conventions for different faculties, so ensure you obtain advice from those in your field. For example, if you are applying for a research position, you should list your Research Experiences and Research Interests first.

The following categories are common to CVs:

PERSONAL DATA

- Name, Address, Telephone Number, Work Phone Number, Email Address, LinkedIn public URL and URL for your personal website (optional)

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Degrees and dates (obtained and in progress, listed current to past), institutions attended, Major and Minors along with GPA (optional), as well as cumulative GPA (optional)
- This section is generally first.

THESIS

- Brief synopsis- no more than a few typed lines, or append a one page abstract in which you describe your dissertation and indicate how it contributes to the field. Indicate name of supervisor

PROFESSIONAL

COURSEWORK

- Provide coursework titles, with brief description so that prospective employers have a clear indication that course content is congruent with job requirements
- Do not include course numbers or abbreviations as they are institution specific.
- List all courses in groups that support and strengthen your professional/ career objectives

SCHOLARSHIPS/ ACADEMIC AWARDS/ RESEARCH GRANTS

- Focus on presenting yourself as a 'fundable entity'. If you have several, put them on the first page of your CV. List from most current to least current awards and include a brief description of why it was awarded, if relevant.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Brief description of courses taught, teaching responsibilities, dates, and awards
- Include course title, Department, Institution, your Position Title, date(s)

TEACHING INTERESTS (optional)

- Areas in which you are qualified to teach undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as areas in which you are able to teach introductory or junior- level courses

RESEARCH/ LABORATORY EXPERIENCE

- Be as specific and precise as possible regarding the description of your research interests. Relate experiences to the area you are applying.
- Include your Role, Institution (Location), Supervisor, Project Information, Relevant Research Techniques
- Include associates, supervisors, and dates (optional)

RESEARCH INTERESTS (optional)

- Include your interests as relevant to your target audience

INSTRUMENTATION EXPERIENCE/ LABORATORY SKILLS

- Describe the relevant technical skills and equipment you have used.

PUBLICATIONS

- Articles, books and chapters of books written and edited. Cite all authors as they appear in publications
- Include journal abbreviations, volume number, inclusive title page numbers and date of publication; indicate if the journal is refereed
- State whether you are the primary, secondary or joint author and use a citation format that is usually accepted within your discipline (APA, MLA)
- Do not repeat the same publication more than once
- If you have several publications, consider using Sub Headings to clarify: Peer Reviewed; Works in Press, Works in Progress; Editorial, Journal Reviews

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PRESENTATION (PAPERS) AND LECTURES

- Title, Place, Date (Optional)
- List in reverse chronological order and provide a brief description
- Highlight any conference awards received

ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Paid and unpaid experience, especially that which is related to the position for which you are applying and demonstrates considerable responsibility (e.g. organizing a conference)
- Administrative positions held within a post-secondary institution
- Membership on academic and professional councils and committees
- Include name of position, dates, department, university, brief description of the type of committee, your contributions/initiatives

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Include non-academic experience and describe your responsibilities using accomplishment statements

ADDITIONAL SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Describe specialized skills – interpersonal, leadership or analytical, as well as their applications and the contexts in which you have used them e.g., quantitative/qualitative research skills, computer-related skills etc

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- List any memberships in organizations/ associations (past and present)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Include volunteer work, committee memberships, etc

TRAVEL

- Include extended international travel as a result of academic study or community work abroad

LANGUAGES

- Include the languages you have and level of proficiency

REFERENCES

- Provide a list, indicate “Available upon request”, or bring to an interview
- You may also attach letters of recommendation; these are sometimes a requirement

PORTFOLIO/ TEACHING DOSSIER (OPTIONAL)

- If not included as part of your application package, indicate “Available upon request” or “Available at Interview”

Adapted from How to Prepare your Curriculum Vitae, University of Alberta

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SUPPLEMENTARY LINKS

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/cvsamples/a/blsamplecv.htm> : Offers samples of a variety of different CVs

<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/cvsamples.pdf> : Good tips and examples of CV's.