

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

CURRICULUM VITAE – GENERAL TIPS

What is a CV?

A *curriculum vitae* (also known as a *vita* or CV) provides a detailed description of your academic credentials and achievements. You should tailor your CV to the type of position for which you are applying. Research your prospective employers and make sure that you address yourself to their needs and expectations.

A CV differs from the more concise resume, which summarizes your skills and experience in relation to a specific career objective. Most employers outside of the United States ask job applicants to submit a CV. However, within the United States usually only teaching or research positions at colleges, universities, or research institutions require a CV instead of a resume.

How does a CV for a position outside of the US differ from a CV for a position within the US?

Outside of the United States, CVs are typically more personal, and can include such information as marital status, nationality, gender, or even a picture. However, it is important to note that different countries have different norms regarding CVs. You should consult online resources for CV writing through Googling the country's and industry's CV requirements. This will help you to get a better understanding of what the firms in a particular country you are applying to expect out of a CV.

What should I include?

Your CV is your on-paper persona. It must be appealing and convince a potential employer of your qualifications. Here are guidelines for what information should be included:

Personal Information

Name, address, telephone number, email, possibly also your LinkedIn URL (if maintained by you)

Work Experience

Dates, position held, main accomplishments, name and location of employer, type of business or sector

Education and Training

Dates, degree awarded, principal subjects covered, name and type of educational organization, level in national/international classification, dissertation or thesis title(s), awards, fellowships, and grants

Additional Skills and Information

Mother tongue, other languages (including the level in which you read, speak, and write in those languages), organizational skills, technical skills, computer skills, artistic skills, trainings, conferences

What should the layout and style be?

Your CV is a document that is unique to you. There is no 'right way' to present the information on your CV, but there are some common-sense rules you should follow.

Common Rules

- Put your name clearly at the top. Use a large font, in bold, and center it at the top of the page.
- You don't need to write "Curriculum Vitae".
- Choose an attractive, professional font and stick to it.
- Use 11-point font or larger for the main part of your CV. Slightly larger is appropriate for headings. Slightly smaller is OK for contact details.
- Use **bold** text for emphasis (and headings) but avoid underlining or shaded boxes – they can look messy.
- Avoid large white areas.
- Don't waste space needlessly on addresses. They will not get you the interview; they just need to be clear. A smaller font, and addresses running across the page, will look neater and take up less space.
- Use bullet points.
- Use a full page before continuing to the next.
- Use a good quality printer and paper if sending a hard copy.

How should I organize my CV?

It is essential that you present your qualifications and achievements in a clear, concise, and organized fashion. Use topical headings and consider their order; what comes first will receive the most emphasis. New job seekers usually open with their academic preparation, drawing attention to their degrees. Experienced job seekers, however, may begin with their current position and previous work experience. There are no universal rules for the CV, so check with your adviser to find out what the conventions are in your discipline. Many CVs are posted online, so you may wish to look for examples from people working in your field.

Formatting is also critical. It should support and not obscure the content of your CV. Consider your audience and make your CV easy to read. Names, titles, and dates should appear in the same place within each entry. Be consistent in your use of punctuation, type face, and indentation. Also, liberal use of white space and judicious use of bold type can help make your CV a swift and pleasant read. Finally, meet with a career adviser to review your CV, and show it to your peers and professors to solicit their feedback.

How long should my CV be?

Content determines the length of the CV. Thus, a student or junior professional may write a CV that is two to four pages in length; however, senior professionals may produce a CV that runs six or more pages.

More Quick Tips

- Font – Suggested fonts are Times New Roman, Arial, Book Antiqua, Century, Garamond, and Verdana.
- Addresses – Put address details centrally under the name in order to effectively underline the name.
- Reverse chronological order emphasizes your recent activities.
- Dates – The 09/11 format looks messy and requires time to process for the reader. Use whole years.
- Check for spelling mistakes.
- Use bullet points to describe your work accomplishments at each job, starting with an action verb in the past tense (for prior jobs).

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