Curriculum Vitae Guide

Curriculum Vitaes vs. Résumés – What's the Difference?

A Curriculum Vitae, or CV, is an elaborate version of a résumé. While a résumé is primarily used as a targeted tool to bring certain skills to light when applying for a specific position, **a CV is intended as a comprehensive overview of one's professional life.** In most cases, an organization will specify if a CV is preferred, and the organizations that typically request them are either academic institutions (when the applicant is seeking a job as a teacher or otherwise academia-related field) or grant makers, when looking to gain a perspective on your experiences and projects. A CV can also be useful as a sort of "mission control" when updating or creating future résumés, because it will contain all of the information about your professional and educational advancements.

Begin by creating a comprehensive list of your important educational experiences, teachers, ensembles, jobs, and training. This can include degrees, private studies, competitions, professional and student performance experiences, teaching, volunteer work, honors, scholarships, and non-musical activity. Include any skills or training that you consider to be special, useful, or relevant. You can include technology skills, language fluency, secondary instruments, library skills, or certifications. At this point in the process, don't worry about whether or not these items will be included on the finished CV – just get the ideas down on paper. You will have the chance to select and organize the content for your résumé later in the process. Use this as an opportunity to consider any gaps in your experience that you may notice, and consider expanding your potential for future opportunities by seeking new experiences or training.

Organize your major accomplishments and responsibilities into groups with headings. Information can be grouped according to each area of specialization, such as teaching experience, performance experience, volunteer work, and education. Information can also be grouped in chronological order. Strategize about which format will best highlight your qualifications for the position, moving the most relevant group of activities to the top. From there, organize the groups by relevance, and the items within each group of activities chronologically with your most recent experiences listed first. For example, if you are applying for a teaching position, any relevant teaching experience may be the first group to appear on your résumé; however, if you're applying for an administrative position, any office experience that you may have should likely take precedence.

Formatting

The first page should include your name, address, phone number, fax number (if you have one), and email address. Because your CV may consist of many pages, **ensure that you put your name at the top of every page** – perhaps as a header – and that you use page numbers on all pages except for the first. When including your email address, also consider the professional image that you are seeking to create for yourself, and try to avoid using an email address with a cute or funny nickname. This might also be a good opportunity to check your voicemail message and ensure that it is similarly professional in decorum. Below are some formatting tips:

- 11 pt. font and 1 inch margins are standards.
- Use fonts that are easy to read.
- Avoid any font size under 10 pt.
- Create contrast by using different-sized fonts, boldface, lines, and shapes to distinguish between groups, headings, and subheadings.
- Make sure your résumé looks good on both color and grayscale printers.

- **Once you have decided on a format, it is important to remain consistent within your chosen parameters.** Make sure that all headings are formatted the same way, along with all spacing. It is this attention to detail that will help to distinguish you among other applicants, and it will give the panel a positive impression of you before you have begun to play.

Your CV should appear neat, nuanced, and easy for the reader to access the specific information they are looking for. Do not use a form or template to construct your CV! As you make updates, your formatting needs are subject to change alongside your experience, and templates can restrict the ease of future restructuring, additions, and content-specific formatting. Additionally, a CV constructed using a form or template will not stand out from the countless other "cookie cutter" documents that your potential employer is likely to review. Common categories on a CV may include the following:

- Academic background
  - Postgraduate work
  - Graduate work/degrees, majors/minors
  - Thesis/dissertation titles
  - Honors
  - Undergraduate degree(s), majors/minors
- Professional Licenses or Certifications
- Academic or Teaching experiences
  - Courses taught or introduced
  - Innovation in teaching
  - Teaching evaluations
- Technical and Specialized Skills
- Professional or Academic Honors and Awards
- Professional Development
  - Conferences or workshops attended
- Research or other scholarly activities
  - Journal articles published
  - Conference proceedings
  - Books
  - Chapters in books
  - Magazine articles
  - Papers presented
  - Workshops that you've presented at
  - Work currently under review
  - Works in progress
- Grants
- Service
  - Academic
  - Professional
  - Community
  - Volunteer work
- Academic or Research Interests
- Affiliations or other organizational memberships
- Foreign Language Abilities
- Consulting work
- Professional or Educational References

More information

Now that you've got all of these items neatly organized under your headers, here's how you should go about listing your skills for the purpose of clarification.

Academic background: When communicating your academic background, list all of your degrees in reverse chronological order from undergraduate work on. Note the name of the institution from which you received each of your degrees, along with the date that you received it. For programs that are currently in progress, list the date that you anticipate receiving your degree. It is also standard to provide the name of your thesis advisor, along with the title of your thesis itself.

Once you've discussed your academic achievements, your CV's format can be a bit more free-form. Allow your strengths and professional achievements, along with the qualifications for whichever position to which you are applying, to shape the way you organize the remainder of your headers.

Honors and Awards (Grants, Fellowships, Patents, etc): Unless you do not have many at this point in your career, place your honors and awards near the top of your CV. This is an opportunity to list various research and dissertation-supported grants, fellowships, awards, and patents that have resulted from your work in your field.

Research Experience: Use this as an opportunity to briefly describe your postdoctoral, doctoral, and graduate research, along with the techniques that you used in order to further that research. List the names of the institution, professor, project, and dates, and briefly describe any contributions that you made to the project.

With regard to teaching experience, this tends to be a more targeted element of a Curriculum Vitae, and you may place this in a different location depending on the target institution (i.e. a large research university or a small teaching college). It can also speak to your strengths as a candidate, and it should include information about what you taught, where, and when, along with the titles that were conferred upon you, such as Teaching Fellow, Lecturer, or Professor.

Publications and Presentations: The location of this header may also depend on how often your works have been published. If your publication record is substantial, you may choose to feature it more towards the top of your CV, but if it is either too lengthy or too short, you can either place it as a separate document at the end of your CV or towards the very end.

You may also choose to divide this into two categories, including Publications (i.e. books, abstracts, or reviews, with standard bibliographic formatting) and Papers and Presentations (accompanied by the appropriate dates, locations, and titles of the work). Avoid listing abstracts along with papers, for they are a separate section and may give the reviewing panel the impression that you are attempting to "pad" your CV.

Related Professional Experience: While this may appear to be a "catch-all," use this as an opportunity to relay any experiences that relate to teaching, research, and administration, such as conference organizing, tutoring, and committee work. This is also another opportunity to target your CV to the institution reviewing it.

Languages: When discussing your language proficiency, it is important to assess your skills realistically. You can denote your skills in a number of ways: native, fluent, proficient, or working knowledge.

Other optional sections: This can include any professional organizations of which you are a member, scholarly associations, or travel/study abroad opportunities that you have experienced.

References: Most academics tend to operate within small, informal networks, and thus the names of your references will convey significant information to most readers. This section is often the last one on a CV, and **be sure to include your full name, title, institutional address, telephone number, and email address.**

While three references are typically expected, you may include more if you feel that the evaluations of these individuals would add valuable insight to your application. Furthermore, **make sure that your references are aware of the fact that you have included them as a reference, and send them a copy of your CV so that they can reference it if asked.**