

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
CAREER CENTER
GRADUATE SERVICES

USING A CURRICULUM VITAE

A curriculum vitae (CV) is the traditional standard for presenting your qualifications for academic employment. This generally holds true for all teaching, research, and administrative positions in higher education. A caveat here is that many community college jobs request resumes...not CV's. Our advice is that you should probably use a functional resume instead of a CV when applying to a two-year school. Additionally, You should include with your CV a detailed letter of application that specifically addresses skills, knowledges, and abilities required by any job announcement.

A professional CV can be rather lengthy and is typically inappropriate for most other jobs in the public and private sector. Exceptions to this might be jobs that are research oriented or jobs that are a result of "partnerships" with institutions of higher education. *Generally, you should assume that all academic positions at four-year schools require a CV and that other positions should be sent resumes, unless the job announcement specifically requests a CV.*

If you have any doubts about which format is appropriate, consult the human resources office at the institution or speak with a Career Center Counselor.

Static versus dynamic CV's

Graduate students enter the job market as a fairly exclusive and small portion of the workplace population. (Fewer than 9% of all adults hold graduate degrees and only 2% hold doctorates!) One difficulty, however, is that jobs for individuals with advanced degrees are just as rare and typically have very specific demands. Having a single CV that presents you in a single way can be problematic in a crowded job market. Therefore, our recommendation is that you consider constructing two types of CV's: Static and Dynamic.

Static CV's are more general, omnibus collections of your work, research, publications, and presentations. These documents are developed to "cover all bases," and should be seen as your official calling card at professional conferences, meetings, and conventions. Generally, these types of gatherings offer either formal or informal placement services. A good, comprehensive CV is should be left with recruiters or interested faculty.

Finally, you should remember to constantly revisit your CV. Ideally, you should build your first CV upon your arrival at school. Each subsequent semester, you should add to the CV any new skills, experiences, awards, or special training that you have accrued. Being diligent about this makes it much less frustrating when the “big job hunt” begins at the end of your graduate career.

Information to include

Remember that in most cases, the CV replaces the job application form. This means that the CV is your primary means of presenting your qualifications for a position. The exact format will vary a little from discipline to discipline. A word of advice might be to ask a graduate advisor or professor for a copy of his or her CV to use as a basic model. (A generic model is included with this document.) Notwithstanding the issue of style, the following information should be included in every CV.

- Name, address, phone numbers, email addresses
- Objective – A specific position title.
- Academic Preparation – Conferral dates and degree titles of all degrees.
- Work Experience – Include teaching, research, & Graduate Assistantships
- Publications, Presentations, and Papers – include current submissions.
- Performances, Exhibitions, and Compositions
- Current research interests
- Grants awarded, worked on, or revised
- Languages and international travel
- Professional memberships
- Honors and Awards
- Professional service and consultations
- Relevant leadership experience (Being president of the high school chess club is probably not relevant, but being treasurer of the graduate student association probably is!)
- Specific skills – Lab techniques and equipment, computer programs and languages, Technology and other technical skills

The preceding list should not be considered as complete. Again, looking at a CV from an advisor or professor in your specific field may illuminate other areas that should be included.

Remember that phone numbers and email addresses should be “permanent.” Phone numbers should have some sort of voicemail or answering machine. Do not give numbers that call “numeric-only pagers.” If “Hotmail” or other internet-based email is used, remember to check often and avoid bouncing email, by routinely throwing away old messages. Be sure that anyone answering phones is aware that a job search is underway and that they have your full contact information. A well constructed, content-rich CV will do no good, if prospective employers cannot reach you.

Information NOT to include

An otherwise well-constructed CV can quickly become a liability for you if it includes irrelevant information. Generally, the following information should be excluded.

- Age
- Ethnic identity
- Political affiliation
- Religious preference
- Hobbies
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Place of birth
- Photographs
- Height, weight, health

There are possible exceptions to these exclusions. For instance, if you are applying to a sectarian institution, then your religious preference may be relevant. Even in such a situation, it is probably better to omit the information and allow the institution to ask this information in person.

Format and Quality

When comes to electronic standards, Microsoft Word[®] and WordPerfect[®] are the most widely used word processing client programs. Other programs, such as Appleworks[®], Star Office[®] Nisus Writer[®], etc, allow the user to save in one of these two formats. It is recommended that CV's be saved in either MS Word or WordPerfect format and Rich Text Format (RTF) as well. As more institutions begin to collect and scan CV's and résumés electronically, having an available RTF file will be helpful.

Most contemporary inkjet printers provide very high quality type. The downside of inkjet output is the fact that the inks are susceptible to running when wet. Laser printers overcome this deficit. Commercial copy stores will take electronic files (via email or disk) and make multiple copies professional quality printers. For most applications, however, an inkjet printer will produce acceptable copies.

Always use standard white or ivory 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Colored paper is a “faux pas.” There are several theoretical reasons for this, but the more compelling reason is practical. White paper photocopies without smudging or using excess toner. Colored papers often look hazy after copying. The same goes for colored inks. While royal blue or apple red may look great, there is a greater likelihood that they will pose difficulties in the copying process. Departments will make multiple copies of a CV and distribute it all the members of a search committee.

Do not “double-side” the CV. If the prospective department is photocopying the CV, they may omit the backside of a page. In this case, search committee members will only receive partial information about you.

Always place a cumulative footer at the bottom of the page. A cumulative footer tells the reader which page they are on out of a certain total of pages. The footer is most appropriately placed in the lower right hand corner of the page and may be in smaller font size. The basic format of the footer should be as follows:

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Consult your software manual on the placement of footers within a manuscript. Every page should be numbered, including the first page.

Avoid “fontomania.” Just because you have 128 “TrueType” fonts available does not mean that you should use them all in your CV. The most commonly used fonts are “Times/Times Roman” or “Helvetica/Arial.” (This document is set with a 12 point Arial font.) The actual choice is a matter of taste and preference. Point size should be at least 11 points, but not greater than 12 points. More and more institutions are “scanning” resumes and font sizes below 11 points are much more difficult for the software and hardware to recognize. Do not overuse boldface, italics, and underlining. These features, like headers in a professional article, should guide the eye and help the reader find useful information.

Cover Letters

While the CV is the presentation of your desire for a particular job, the cover letter is a more specific detailing of how you feel you fit the particular requirements of a job announcement. While the cover letter will obviously repeat information that is in the CV, it can further illuminate and explain experience.

Occasionally, you may feel that you do not have “exact” experience or skills. The cover letter allows you an opportunity to point out transferable skills or experience. For instance, a job announcement may ask for experience in managing a laboratory. If you have been a teaching or research assistant, you have often had unofficial responsibility for managing your principle investigator’s lab. A cover letter allows you to point out activities and responsibilities that amount to laboratory management. As a teaching assistant, you can use a cover letter to explain the degree to which you were responsible for course and lecture development, grading, advising, and so on.

Cover letters should be specific about your flexibility and willingness to grow with a new department. Most of all, cover letters allow you to show that you have done some research about the institution. Pointing out that you are aware of the departmental or institutional mission should be a part of the letter. Express enthusiasm, but do it with restraint.

How to get started

Numerous websites and books give very good models and advice about constructing CV's, resumes, and Cover letters. The library at UCR's Career Center maintains several excellent guides for resumes, CV's, and cover letters. All currently registered UCR students are eligible to use the library for no fee. For some individuals, these resources are more than adequate preparation. Another resource is the graduate advisor in your department.

To get advice that is more specific on how CV's and resumes integrate with the overall job search process and broader career development concerns, contact the Career Center at 909-787-3631. You may wish to schedule an appointment with the Graduate Services Coordinator to begin the process of building an effective job search package.

Websites for CV's and Cover Letters

McGill University Career Services advice about CV writing.

<http://www.caps.mcgill.ca/static/student/workshops/cvwrite.html>

A list of "action verbs" from McGill University's Career Center.

<http://www.caps.mcgill.ca/static/student/workshops/cvverbs.html>

JobStar.Org's list of CV sites.

<http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/res-cv.cfm>

Career Builder's Resume and CV site.

<http://www.careerbuildertt.com/carcen/resume.htm>

Monster.Com's Cover Letter "Do's and Don'ts"

<http://resume.monster.com/coverletter/donot/>

JobStar.Org's excellent collection of cover letter resources.

<http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/cletters.cfm>