



## CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# The Curriculum Vitae

### Difference between a CV and a Resume

"Curriculum vitae" (abbreviated "CV") is a Latin phrase translating roughly to "course of my life." Conversationally it is often called a "vita." Confusion sometimes occurs around the difference between a CV and a resume because sometimes there is no difference. In other countries a CV is the term used to mean what we typically think of as a resume. Even some people in the US use the terms interchangeably.

Usually, though, CVs and resumes in the US serve different purposes and consequently have different content and format from one another. A curriculum vitae is typically used in academic, scientific, or research settings; focuses on scholarly pursuits; and is longer in length—as long as it needs to be, in fact. Resumes are used for career fields outside academia as marketing documents that often get very quick reviews, so they must summarize and format content in such a way that it can be reviewed quickly—often in seconds. Also, the content of resumes is designed to persuade readers that the job seeker has the skills and experience necessary to do the job. CVs, on the other hand, are a thorough documentation of all scholarship, research, and teaching pursuits.

### When to Use a CV

- Applying for graduate school
- Applying for fellowships and grants
- Seeking an academic position
- International jobs/internships
- Seeking professional association leadership
- Publishing
- Departmental/tenure reviews
- Speaking engagements
- Editorial review boards

### Preparing Your CV

If you're a current student or recent graduate, your CV and resume will likely resemble each other quite a bit because you don't yet have a tremendous amount of experience. The main differences will be moving your honors higher on the page, focusing on research or creative works as opposed to other jobs and activities, and the addition of a publications/presentations section.

Faculty members are excellent resources for CV writing (they have all created their own after all). Examples of Southwestern

faculty and student CVs are available for review in the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD). CCPD also reviews and critiques CVs by appointment. As with a resume, you may need different versions of your CV for different types of positions. If you anticipate using your CV overseas, we recommend you research each country's accepted CV format, which may be different than that commonly used in the US.

Have your CV critiqued and allow yourself a number of drafts before you produce a final copy for any given opportunity to which you are applying. Your CV will grow with your experiences and as your career needs change and develop.

### Basic Structure of the CV

Like a resume, a CV begins with your contact information. And like resumes for students and recent graduates, education is your most important credential on the CV, so that category appears at the beginning of the document.

Thereafter, the structure of any CV includes some of the same categories as a resume but also includes several new ones.

#### IDENTIFICATION

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number including area code
- E-mail address

#### EDUCATION

- Degrees (earned/in-progress, reverse chronological order)
- Professional studies
- Principal teachers

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Focus on the experiences relevant to the opportunity you seek.

- Professional overview/background
- Teaching experience/overview
- Course highlights
- Areas of expertise
- Research experience/overview
- Teaching/research assistantships
- Fieldwork
- Administrative experience

## HONORS

When applying for a scholarly honor in particular, you may want to list the Honors section immediately after Education, toward the beginning of the CV document.

- Fellowships/scholarships
- Academic awards
- Special honors/awards/prizes

## PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, INVENTIONS/PATENTS

Include all, most recent first, in correct bibliographic format so the reader can check details. Include author, title, publisher, place of publication/presentation, name of periodical/conference, volume, issue number, date, and page(s). Show both independent and collaborative work (if applicable).

- Journal articles
- Chapters in books
- Papers presented
- Works currently under submission
- Books papers
- Monographs
- Reviews
- Exhibits/exhibitions
- Arrangement/scores
- Workshop and conference presentations
- Conference participation/leadership

## MEMBERSHIPS

- Professional association memberships
- Memberships in scholarly societies

## PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

- Certificates
- Licensure
- Special training
- Endorsements

## FOREIGN STUDY

- Study Abroad
- Travel abroad
- Languages
- Language competencies

## COMPUTER/TECHNICAL SKILLS

## REFERENCES

Supply the name, address, phone number and email of three (or more) individuals who can comment on your fit to the institution where you are applying. Choose your referees wisely by including persons who know you and your work well. Be sure to ask their permission before submitting their names.

## Tips for Producing an Attractive CV

### DESIGN TIPS

- Be sure your name appears at the top of each page.

- Consistency is important; stay with one style and font.
- Do not print on both sides of a page.
- Do not use script or gothic lettering, bright colors or strange graphics.

### CONTENT TIPS

- Omit references to marital status, children, health, spouse's work, and religious affiliation
- Do NOT include as headings words such as "Personal Information," "Name," and "Address"
- Omit negative words or information. Ensure that you use correct spelling and grammar.
- Update the information in your CV before sending. It is not necessary to include the date of preparation.
- Include content sections relevant to your field (e.g. computer proficiency, scientific instrumentation, etc.).

### LAYOUT TIPS

- **Sections go in order of importance** to the reader. Remember we read from top to bottom and left to right, so the most important content should appear toward the top of every page and front of every line.
- **Length varies.** Include sufficient, well-written detail about yourself to enable a good assessment of your qualifications for the position:
  - Two to four pages for a young professional
  - Four to seven pages for more experienced people
  - While there is no technical maximum, many experts recommend not exceeding 10 pages.
- **Gapping** is common on a CV, as it is on resumes. Gapping is the use of incomplete sentences. For example, instead of writing, "I taught composition for four years, during which time I planned classes and activities, graded papers, and constructed exams. I also met with students regularly for conferences," you might write, "Composition Instructor (2000-2004). Planned course activities. Graded all assignments. Held regular conferences with students." Cutting out unnecessary words allows your reader to see quickly what you have been doing.
- **Parallelism** is also very important to a strong CV. Keep the structure of your phrases and/or sentences consistent throughout your document (i.e. if you use verb phrases in one portion of your CV to describe your duties, try to use them throughout your CV). Particularly within entries, make sure that the structure of your phrases is exactly parallel so that your reader can understand what you are communicating easily.
- **Bullets or not?** One distinction between the work description sections of resumes and CVs is that bullets are very commonly used in resumes and tend to appear somewhat less frequently in CVs. Whether or not you use bullets to separate lines in your CV should depend on how the bullets will affect the appearance of your CV. If you have a number of descriptive statements about your work that all run to about the length of a line, bullets can be a good way of separating them. If, however, you have a lot of very short phrases, breaking them up into bulleted lists can leave a lot of white space that could be used more efficiently. Remember that conciseness and ease of readability should guide any decision you make.