

## Writing a Curriculum Vitae for a Research or Higher Education Job Search

### A C.V. or Resume?

Ph.D. candidates seeking faculty positions (or research positions in higher education) should prepare a curriculum vitae (also known as “C.V.” or, more informally, as a “vita.”) instead of a resume. A C.V. and a resume have similar functions, but distinctly different formats.

- A resume is concise, focused summary (usually one or two pages) of personal, educational, and experience qualifications; it is intended to demonstrate an individual's strongest relevant qualifications for a particular position or type of position.
- A C.V. is a comprehensive and detailed statement (generally three or more pages) listing all professional activities, such as teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, research grants, descriptions of courses taught, research interests, lists of reference, etc. Typically a C.V. is accompanied by a one-page “philosophy of education” or “philosophy of instruction” and a statement of “research interests” or “research objectives.”

Besides serving as a job search tool, your C.V. can be used in many other ways, such as: a supporting document with a grant or contract funding proposal; a supporting document for an annual review by your employer; an accompaniment to an application for membership in a professional society/organization; or a background statement for an introduction at an important presentation.

### Typical Section Headings

Headings help you to organize your skills and experience in a meaningful manner and make it easy for the reader to access information as well. There are several standard categories of information, and sub-headings can also be used to highlight important accomplishments or categorize types of experience. Common headings include:

- Identifying/contact information
- Education
- Employment Experience (may be categorized—“teaching”, “research”, etc.)
- Professional Affiliations
- Honors
- Publications and Presentations
- Civic and Service Activities
- Other important items specific to your situation

### Section Contents

- 1) *Identifying Information:*  
Name, phone numbers, addresses (campus/temporary and permanent/home) and email (if applicable). Your name should be the first line of text.
- 2) *Career Objectives:* (Optional).

- 3) *Educational Background:*  
 Listing of earned academic degrees beginning with the most recent, continuing education courses, etc., and institutions, dates of completion of degrees or certificates, GPA or type of degree (“summa cum laude” “with distinction”) major/minor, areas of concentration, titles of master's thesis and doctoral dissertation.
- 4) *Summary of Relevant Work Experience:*  
 Typically, this information is listed in reverse chronological order. However, it is also common to categorize experience by topic (“TEACHING EXPERIENCE”) or to use subheadings in the EXPERIENCE section ( “Teaching Experience” or “Courses Taught”). Within topical areas, positions are listed in reverse chronological order. List only positions (part-time, full-time, temporary and permanent) which relate to the type of work sought. Descriptions should include position, employer name, department/firm/agency, city, state, dates of employment, and type of employment. Responsibility statements should be described with active verbs and should be results-oriented whenever possible.
- 5) *Listing of Publications Authored or Edited*  
 Bibliographic citations of articles, pamphlets, monographs, chapters in books, research reports, etc. that have been published.
- 6) *Papers Presented at Conferences:*  
 Description of paper, title, name of conference, dates and location, and perhaps two categories: presentation by competition; and presentation invitation and consulting. List in reverse chronological order. Also list workshops conducted in this category.
- 7) *Professional Association Memberships:*  
 Names of local, state, regional and national professional associations in which you have current membership (in alphabetical order).
- 8) *Professional Service:*  
 Leadership positions you've held in associations at any level: memberships on major committees, task forces, boards; elected offices you've held, etc. Give dates.
- 9) *Awards and Honors:*  
 Membership in professional honorary societies; receipt of competitive assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, etc.; teaching or research awards. Give dates. List the most recent first.
- 10) *Recent and Current Research* (if applicable):  
 Description of research projects recently conducted or in progress: type of research, purpose, etc.
- 11) *References:*  
 You may wish to list your references at the end of your C.V. List full identifying information, including full address, title, telephone, and email address. You could add this statement; "The following persons have written letters of recommendation on my behalf..." You would then proceed to list the names, titles, departments, and institutional addresses and phone numbers of those individuals. This can be important since the search committee members may know the persons under whom you have worked and may be impressed by your

list. They can then call these individuals to ask about you, rather than waiting for a letter.

### **Notes on Organization**

Be consistent in style, format, font, and grammar. Do not mix styles in any category. Similarly, state the name of the senior project author or director for all activities.

Do not list a citation or activity more than once. Some people think these multiple listings of essentially the same activity strengthen their C.V. Actually, the reader is more likely to be irritated by what will be perceived as either careless editing or intentional padding.

Do not mix chronological order. If you are starting with your present employer in the employment history section, list each preceding position in reverse chronological order. Do this throughout the C.V. List more recent publications and degrees first--then proceed to list earlier items.

Finally, be consistent in grammar. Don't mix sentence structure. Bullet points should be parallel in structure. Use active, not passive, voice.

### **Notes on Format and Style**

The more work applicants have done, the longer their C.V.s are likely to be. In academia, it is acceptable for persons with master's degrees to have three- or four-page C.V.s, if their experience, research and publication output justifies that length. However, good C.V.s are still summaries—well-organized summaries. Don't force the reader to sift through every detail of your academic and professional experience to uncover the relevant elements.

Everything on the C.V. should be up-to-date and absolutely accurate. Because a C.V. quickly becomes obsolete as you complete various research projects, join professional associations, and progress in your studies and career, you should carefully review your C.V. several times each year to improve and update it. It is acceptable to include the date your C.V. was written or updated (month and year) in a footer.

Follow these simple rules for form and style for best results:

- Style: Short phrases; succinct word choice; action verbs; results-orientation.
- Paper size: 8 1/2" X 11".
- Margins: 1" minimum on all sides.
- Grammar: parallel, consistent. Error-free spelling and typing, of course.
- Font size: 10-12 (use a standard font).
- Reproduction: clear photocopy on white or cream paper; black ink only.
- Name and page number on each page ("page 2 of 5", for example).