

Writing a Curriculum Vitae

Objectives

1. Understand the purpose of a curriculum vitae (CV).
2. Develop a CV that emphasizes your strengths and achievements.

Purpose of a Curriculum Vitae

In the United States, the curriculum vitae, also called an academic résumé or CV for short, is a summary of one's personal history and professional qualifications submitted as part of a job, graduate school, or internship application process. In Latin, the term means "the course of one's life." CVs are similar to résumés; however, they do not have page limits and often include additional categories with more in-depth information. CVs are most commonly requested for academic positions and graduate school applications. However, any employer may ask to see your CV.

It is important to note that the term "CV" is often used to refer to what Americans generally think of as a résumé in countries outside of the U.S. If an employer from a foreign country asks to see your "CV," they are most likely looking for your résumé. Be sure to clarify which format they are requesting.

Layout

CV layouts often resemble résumé layouts and include much of the same information traditionally found on a résumé (with some additional categories). It is important to design your format to be readable and pleasing to the eye. Just as you would with a résumé, list the most relevant information first. You may want to use italics, underlining, and bold features to highlight and emphasize certain category headings, position titles, organizations, etc. However you choose to format your document, make sure to be consistent throughout. To view example CV formats, visit the FSU Career Center Library and browse through the *Curriculum Vitae Binder* (call number: VA A5).

Basic CV Categories

While there is no standard formula or template for preparing a CV, certain information should be included. The following basic categories provide the foundation for a strong CV:

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Identification

Your name, full address, phone number with area code, and email (make sure it is professional) should be the first items on your CV. If you are at a temporary address, you can include this in addition to or in place of your permanent address, depending on your circumstances.

Career Objective

A career objective is not necessary for your CV, but if you decide to include one, make sure to state your objective as concisely as possible. The career objective can focus on skills, education, population of interest, career area, type of organization, position title, or functional area. For additional assistance writing an objective, view the "Writing A Résumé" guide available at The Career Center or online at: www.career.fsu.edu/Resources/Career-Guides.

Education

List your degrees and/or trainings in reverse chronological order (most recent to least recent). Include the name of the degree, date of graduation, and name and location of the institution. You may also include your GPA, the title of your dissertation or thesis topic, and the name of your major professor.

Experience

List teaching, research, and related experience, including graduate assistantships, internships, and postdoctoral fellowships. List your position title, name of the organization, the organization's location, dates (month and year), responsibilities, and accomplishments. Describe your experiences with short, results-oriented phrases using action words. The *Action Word List* on the next page provides examples to help you design your descriptions.

Action Word List

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| accomplish | clarify | devise | hire | measure | promote | structure |
| account | collect | diagnose | implement | meet | propose | submit |
| achieve | communicate | direct | improve | mobilize | provide | supervise |
| act | compete | discover | increase | model | publish | supply |
| administer | complete | document | influence | motivate | purchase | synthesize |
| advertise | compile | draft | initiate | negotiate | qualify | talk |
| advise | compose | draw | inspect | operate | raise | teach |
| analyze | conduct | edit | install | order | read | test |
| appraise | contribute | engineer | instruct | originate | recommend | train |
| appeal | control | entertain | interpret | organize | recruit | translate |
| arrange | coordinate | establish | interview | paint | repair | travel |
| assemble | correct | estimate | invent | perform | report | tutor |
| assign | counsel | evaluate | investigate | persuade | research | type |
| assist | create | exercise | judge | photograph | review | understand |
| attend | dance | exhibit | landscape | plan | schedule | verify |
| audit | delegate | experiment | lead | play | select | write |
| authorize | demonstrate | explain | learn | predict | sell | |
| budget | decrease | facilitate | listen | prepare | serve | |
| build | decide | formulate | make | present | solve | |
| calculate | design | furnish | manage | preside | speak | |
| catalogue | determine | guide | manufacture | produce | staff | |
| chart | develop | handle | market | program | start | |

Length

The length of your CV will vary depending on your unique experiences. As you become more experienced, your CV will grow. Keep in mind that the relevance of the information contained in your CV is more important than the number of the pages filled. Unlike a résumé, it can be as long as it needs to be!

Personal Data

Generally, personal data such as one's marital status, ethnicity, birth date, health, height, and weight are not included on a CV. Inappropriate information can detract from your professional qualifications and achievements, so it is best to leave this type of data off your CV.

Additional CV Categories

In addition to the basic categories mentioned previously, other items can be included. The important thing to remember is that a CV should be designed around your strengths and achievements. Some optional CV categories you may want to include are listed on the next page.

Vitae Critique

Finally, you may bring your CV to The Career Center for a critique by a career advisor. No appointment is necessary. Bring an electronic and paper copy. You can also use The Career Center's computer lab to make changes as needed.

Summary

Writing a CV is very similar to writing a résumé in the United States but may include additional categories and information. Strong CVs are clear, concise, and include relevant information for the position to which you are applying.

Optional CV Categories

Academic Preparation

- Academic background
- Education/educational background
- Educational overview
- Professional studies
- Degrees

Thesis

- Master's project
- Comprehensive areas
- Dissertation
- Dissertation title

Professional Competencies

- Professional highlights
- Course highlights
- Proficiencies
- Areas of knowledge
- Areas of expertise
- Areas of experience
- Professional experience

- Professional overview
- Professional background
- Teaching experience
- Experience summary
- Experience highlights
- Research experience
- Administrative experience
- Consulting experience
- Related experiences
- Project management

Academic and Professional Service

- Association leadership
- University service
- Leadership
- Committee leadership
- Departmental leadership
- Activities
- Scholarly presentations
- Conference presentations
- Refereed/non-refereed

- Invited
- Convention addresses
- Workshop presentations
- Programs and workshops
- Conference participation
- Conference leadership
- Publications

Memberships/Affiliations

- Professional organizations

Professional Certification(s)

- Certificates
- Licensure
- Special training

Teaching Interests

- Academic interests
- Research interests
- Educational interests
- Professional interests

Do's and Don'ts for CV Writing

Do:

- Be clear, concise, careful, and consistent
- Refer to positive accomplishments and skills
- Have your CV critiqued by various people
- Proofread your CV many times
- Print copies on high-quality paper in neutral colors such as white, gray, or cream
- Update your CV regularly
- Tailor your CV for each submission (consider organization, audience, and position you are applying to)

Don't:

- State salary requirements
- Give reasons for leaving employers
- Offer negative information
- Include irrelevant information
- Forget to proofread (no spelling or grammar errors!)
- Present a disorganized format

Additional Resources

Select Career Center Library Resources

| | |
|---|----------------|
| <i>CV Handbook: A Curriculum Vitae Owner's Manual</i> | VA C61 |
| <i>Curriculum Vitae Binder Florida State University</i> | VA F552 |
| <i>How to Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae</i> | VA J31 |
| <i>The Academic Job Search Handbook</i> | V H41 |
| <i>The Compleat Academic: A Career Guide</i> | IIB 19-3030 D3 |
| <i>The Curriculum Vitae Handbook</i> | VA A5 |
| <i>The PhD Handbook for the Academic Job Search</i> | VD C6 |

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