

## How to Write a Curriculum Vitae

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Modified from a presentation by Dr. Harry A. Dailey



### *Public disclaimer...*

There are many excellent sources of information about CV preparation on the web. In preparing this presentation material from the following websites was used:

- [www.quintcareers.com/curriculum\\_vitae.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/curriculum_vitae.html)
- [graduate.dartmouth.edu/careers/services/vita.html](http://graduate.dartmouth.edu/careers/services/vita.html)
- [www.career.vt.edu/ResumeGuide/Index.html](http://www.career.vt.edu/ResumeGuide/Index.html)
- [gecd.mit.edu/jobs/find/prepare/cv](http://gecd.mit.edu/jobs/find/prepare/cv)
- [www.ischool.utexas.edu/careers/resume\\_resources.php](http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/careers/resume_resources.php)

It should be noted that all of these have slightly different suggestions about what belongs in a CV. This usually represents particular biases or field specific information.

## What exactly is a curriculum vitae ?

- “A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a summary of your educational and academic background. Its purpose is to outline your credentials.”
- “... the curriculum vitae is, as its name suggests, an overview of your life's accomplishments, most specifically those that are relevant to the academic realm. In the United States, the curriculum vitae is used almost exclusively when one is pursuing an academic job. The curriculum vitae is a living document, which will reflect the developments in a scholar/teacher's career, and thus should be updated frequently.”
- “...one of the primary functions of a CV is to provide a succinct chronicle of your past experiences and training. In a sense, a CV is a multi-purpose, personal application form for employment, educational opportunities, honors and awards, membership or participation in an organization.”

## How is a CV different from a resume?

- The most noticeable difference between a CV and resume is the length. Resumes are usually limited to a page while CVs often run to three or more pages.
- Resumes typically start with a statement and utilize bullet points whereas CVs do not.
- Resumes tend toward brevity while vitas lean toward completeness.

## Will one CV do for all applications?

- The simple answer is “no”. In general it is wise to maintain an inclusive CV that has all possible relevant information and then pull from this document information that is appropriate for the particular application document.
- Different applications will require different forms of CVs. For instance, grant applications have very set guidelines that are specific to the agency. NIHs CV differs considerably from that of NSF, although many smaller funding agencies may accept the NIH biosketch. In completing these forms follow the directions exactly and if you are confused contact the agency.
- Job applications will need more complete CVs than are allowed by NIH and NSF.
- Depending upon the job, a resume may be requested.

## What should be in a CV ?

- Start with **Personal Contact Information**, ie name, address, phone and e-mail. For women who have married and may have changed professional publishing names during the course of their careers, inclusion of the maiden name may be considered.
- Next is the **Academic Background**. Applications may differ on the order (i.e. most recent first vs. most recent last), but in general it will be recommended that you list the most recent experience first.  
Under this section list, with relevant dates and institutions, postgraduate work, then graduate degree(s), followed by undergraduate degree(s).  
For your graduate and postgrad work list your mentors and dissertation/thesis title(s).  
Some individuals recommend listing academic honors in this section, but I prefer to see all “honors” listed together in a separate section.  
If you have earned special certificates or licenses that are related to your professional career, they can be listed here also or under a separate heading.

### *CV contents continued*

- The next section is **Honors and Awards**. Things listed can include competitive or honorific fellowships, scholarships, poster awards, honorary degrees, teaching awards, etc. They should not include honors unrelated to your professional life (i.e., best in show, largest bass caught, etc) nor honors from high school, etc. If appropriate, they may include “community-related” awards (i.e. Gold Medal for organization of the Athens AIDS Hospice, etc) that demonstrate your involvement as a professional in your “community” .
- The organization of the remaining CV is generally variable, but may include the following sections:

**Teaching Experience** (if appropriate) List courses taught and/ or developed by title, not ID number. The purpose of this section is to document your experience as a teacher and indicate your areas of expertise. Give the focus of the course and your role, e.g. instructor of record for lecture-based class, presented lectures and directed exercises for lab sections, etc . Be brief !

### *CV contents continued*

- **Research Experience**. I find such a section of value only if I am looking for a lab employee, not for an academic position. Your publications list will demonstrate your accomplishments in research for academic positions. If you are applying for an industry position or postdoc a brief listing of techniques, etc. with which you have good competency is of value. Once again, be brief. There is no need to use complete sentences.
- Information related to both of the two sections listed above can and will properly be addressed in your teaching and research interests statements that will accompany your application dossier.
- The next sections are the heart of your CV. They will include **Publications** and **Grants and Patents**. You will also want to include **Presentations**, but unless these are invited presentations as opposed to things such as poster sessions, etc. they carry less weight. So you will want to clearly identify which presentations are invited.

### *CV contents continued*

**Publications** will include all of your research publications. Do not list letters to editors, abstracts or items that are not profession-related. Each entry should follow the same format and include all authors names and initials, date of publication, full title, journal title (use accepted abbreviations, not complete title), volume number and page numbers. In doing this, select an accepted format and follow it throughout your document.

Manuscripts accepted for publication should be listed as above, except put “in press” for the date. You may wish to add a subheading for manuscripts submitted. People have mixed feelings about such a section, but for an entry level position, I think that it is appropriate to demonstrate your most recent accomplishments.

Some applications may have specific requirements on publication formats and if these are mentioned, follow them exactly. To save time it may be useful to maintain your publications list in something like *EndNote*.

### *CV contents continued*

Optional things to consider are to underline your name in each listed publication and/or number the publications. You may wish to list book chapters and reviews under a separate subheading from refereed publications.

Publications may be listed as most recent first or oldest first. In general if you listed education and positions by most recent first, you would be consistent by listing most recent publication first.

**Presentations** is a section where you list things such as seminars, oral and poster presentations. While an invitation to speak at a major conference is noteworthy, a long list of poster and meeting abstracts is less interesting to many CV reviewers. I would suggest that this section be subdivided into “Invited Presentations” and “Meeting Abstracts”

For each entry give the meeting name, location and date along with author list and full title. Once again, list these chronologically as you have in other sections.

### *CV contents continued*

**Grants and Patents** is next and should include any grants or patents that you have received. For grants (including fellowships) list the agency, dates of award, amount of the award, the grant PI (if you are not PI, list your role), and title of the grant proposal. Once again, list these chronologically as you have done with publications, positions and training.

You will want to subdivide this section into “Active” and “Completed” awards and may wish to add an additional section of “Submitted Proposals Currently Under Review” .

If you have patents they can be listed here. If you have no patents, title the section “**Grants**” .

### *CV contents continued*

- Additional items that you may chose to list are sections on **Service**, **Professional Memberships**, and **Professional Development**.

**Service** may be subdivided into Academic, Professional and Community. Any listed items should be related to your profession. Do not include things such as Boy Scout leader, church deacon, etc. Do list things such as organizer of Cancer Run for Life, Science Outreach to K-12, regional meeting of DNA Sequencers Society, etc. Use common sense here and keep in mind what type of job to which you are applying.

**Professional Memberships** is of interest mainly if it shows your active participation in professional societies.

**Professional Development** includes courses, seminars, workshops, etc. that have contributed toward your training as a leader, researcher, educator, mentor, and/or community-engaged academic.

### *CV contents continued*

- The final section for the CV you use for job applications will be **References**. Applications generally request 3 to 5 professional references. You should carefully consider who you chose as a reference and speak with that person prior to submission listing his/her name. Do not list personal friends, clergy, relatives, etc.

Each reference should contain the proper name, degree and/or title, complete address including phone and e-mail.

You should supply a copy of your CV to your references and when you ask for a letter to be sent, provide the reference with a description of the job.

### **General comments on CVs**

- Your CV represents you so you need to be sure that it makes a good impression. The document should appear professional, i.e. thoughtfully organized, neat, and to the point...with NO spelling or grammatical errors. A short, well organized CV is always preferable to a long rambling document.
- Select a clean and appropriate size font. Some grant applications will specify a minimum size font. NEVER use a smaller font than specified. I like Arial 12 point with single spacing. One inch margins are usually appropriate.
- Don't get carried away with style. Simple is best! Organize the proposal with appropriate headings in **bold**. Do not use multiple font sizes or fancy fonts. Do not try to "stand out in the crowd" by being different or creative with your CV. The best way to stand out from the crowd is with high quality content and a clearly written, neat, error-free document. Employers are looking for content, not fancy or dangerously creative layout. "Creative" CVs quickly find the "circular file" .

### *General comments on CVs continued*

- Be professional, not personal in the CV. You are looking for a job, not a new friend. Do not list family members, pets, hobbies, church memberships, gender or date of birth. Do not include a picture and NEVER list a poem or favorite quotation!
- Do not “pad” your CV. People who review application dossiers are generally not easily fooled and frequently double check information.
- Do not have unexplained gaps in your employment history.
- Spell check and also ask an associate to proofread your CV.
- Have your advisor and/or individuals who have experience in reviewing CVs read your CV and make constructive comments.