Writing the Academic CV

SEAVER COLLEGE CAREER CENTER
Pepperdine University

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http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/studentaffairs/careercenter

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Creating Your CV

What is a CV?

- The Curriculum Vitae or CV can be translated as "the course of one's life/career" and provides a comprehensive overview of your academic background and professional accomplishments.
- A CV is often needed to apply to **graduate programs**, **employment in academia or international organizations**, and in **certain professional fields**.

When to Use a Curriculum Vitae

- In the United States, a CV is used primarily when applying for academic, scientific or research positions. It is also applicable when applying for fellowships or grants.
- When asking for a job in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or Asia, expect to submit a CV rather than a resume.
  - Keep in mind that **overseas employers** often expect to read the type of personal information on a CV that would never be included on an American resume, such as date of birth, place of birth and nationality. An International CV also typically includes a personal photo as well.
  - **U.S. law** regarding employment applications **does not apply outside the country**.
- This packet deals with writing your ACADEMIC CV. For instructions on how to write an International CV, please see our "International CV Guide."

Resume vs. CV

- Many of the rules of writing a resume can also be applied to writing a CV.
- A CV is a longer and more detailed synopsis of your background and skills.
  - The CV includes a greater range of information.
  - Experience and Education dictate the length of your CV.
- A two to three page CV is common for most seniors and graduate students.
  - The focus is more on **academic** achievements such as educational background and training, research interests, published works, teaching experience, field experience, academic honors/awards, and other related professional experience.
- Like a resume, a CV should include your name, contact information, education, skills and experience.
- In addition, a CV includes research and teaching experience, publications, grants and fellowships, professional associations and licenses, awards and other information relevant to the position or program to which you are applying.
- Start by making a list of all your background information, and then organize it into categories.
- Make sure you include dates.

Review CV Samples

- It's often helpful to look at samples before you begin writing.
- In this packet you will find a guide for the important components of a CV.
- A sample student CV and sample CV template are also posted on our website:
  http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/studentaffairs/careercenter

The following components are important to include when writing your CV:

HEADINGS WITHIN A CV	DESCRIPTION
Personal Information	Your contact information should be listed at the top of the first page and should include address, phone number(s), and email address. In the footer of your CV, place your name on the left side and page number on the right side of all pages.
Summary of Qualifications (or Achievements)	Since the CV is often lengthy and more detailed than a resume, it is helpful to include a section that summarizes your most important skills and accomplishments. This can be written in paragraph or bullet-point format but should be limited to one concise paragraph or 5 bullet-points.
Education (Include your thesis information here - coursework can be listed in a separate section)	List your institution, degree, major or field of concentration, and date at which degree was received or will be completed. If relevant, include the title of your thesis and the name of your advisor here. You may include a brief description of your thesis and skills or methodology (if applicable) or attach an abstract of your thesis to the CV. You can list your classes in a separate section (called "Relevant Coursework")—courses should be broken down into topic subsections and include the course title (not course number).
Experience (Can be listed in separate sections: Teaching Experience, Research Experience, Professional Experience, etc.)	Describe all teaching, research, and professional work experience that is relevant to your professional objective. Only provide detail on experiences that are related to your professional objective. You can condense any unrelated professional experiences.
Publications/Presentations (Can be listed in two separate sections)	Any publications or presentations should be included on the CV. These should always be written in a bibliographical format. Items to be included under publications include books, articles, unpublished or forthcoming manuscripts, research papers or book chapters.
Professional Affiliations	These can be both scholarly and professional memberships in organizations. Any leadership roles should be stated.
Honors/Awards/Grants (Can be listed in separate sections)	List name of honor or award and the year it was received. You can list grants here or in a separate section. Include the name of the funding agency and/or grant and the project(s) it is funding.
References	Name, title, organization/affiliation, relationship and contact information of people who have written letters of recommendation for you.
Other sections that can be included:	Community Involvement/Volunteer Experience, Technical Skills (Computer Skills), Travel/Exposure to Cultural Experiences, Foreign Language Skills, Research Interests

Other Things to Keep in Mind
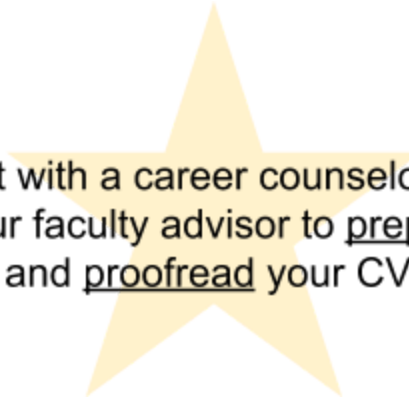
Important Notes:
- Your CV should be well organized and consistent. Be sure that all information is correctly lined up and organized in an effective manner. It is extremely important to make your CV as easy to read as possible.
- When writing your CV, be **descriptive** and **quantify** when possible.
- Target your CV to each program or position to fully support your professional, academic or research objective.
- **Research the program or position** that you are applying to so that your CV is relevant to the requirements of the program or position.
- **Proofread** your CV more than once. Ask for help from your career counselor, advisor, writing center and other colleagues.
- **Look at examples** of CVs on our website, in our Vault career library, and from faculty to get ideas for layout and content.
    - Our website: http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/studentaffairs/careercenter/
    - Vault Library: http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/studentaffairs/careercenter/vault.htm

Highlighting Your Thesis or Dissertation
- Including a **one- or two- paragraph abstract of your thesis** is recommended but optional.
- If you do provide an abstract, write "(See Abstract Attached)" in the Education section of your CV after the name of your thesis title.

Writing your Thesis (or Dissertation) Abstract
- This should be included as a separate page at the end of the CV.
- Briefly summarize content, placing your work within its scholarly context, and noting its contribution to the field.
- Your abstract should be:
    - **Comprehensible** to people outside your field
    - **Scholarly** enough to interest people in your field
- Indicate if your dissertation is published in ProQuest UMI Dissertation database

Meet with a career counselor and
your faculty advisor to prepare
and proofread your CV.

10 Top Tips to Ensure Your CV Has IMPACT

Adapted from thecvclinic.com

TIP 1: Target your CV

Prospective employers/programs are concerned with finding the right candidate. Consider carefully the requirements of your target job or graduate program and make sure your CV highlights the relevant skills and experience.

TIP 2: Structure your CV so it is easy to read

An initial scan of a CV is usually only **20 or 30 seconds**, so have your information clearly laid out with the **most relevant skills and experience** highlighted. Use headings and sub-headings to divide information and keep the format crisp.

TIP 3: Create content that sells

A good design will get attention, but it's really the content of your CV that determines your success. Provide plenty of information to help sell your skills and experience. Give concise descriptions of your roles and responsibilities, including key information such as research experience, publications, teaching experience, class projects and fieldwork/internship experience.

TIP 4: Focus on achievements and contributions

Highlighting your relevant skills and achievements will really put you ahead of the competition. Use active verbs to showcase your experiences and accomplishments.

TIP 5: Quantify and qualify your achievements

Create powerful success statements by quantifying your achievements. Give an indication of the scale and scope of your contributions by including details of the numbers of people/sites involved in particular projects. Highlight any special features, i.e. first research investigation in this field.

TIP 6: Use strong marketing "power" words

Use power words in your statements such as: achieved, delivered, led, implemented, pioneered, introduced, initiated, increased, improved. See our Action Verbs guide for more active verb choices.

TIP 7: Sell the benefits of your skills

Many CVs provide a list of duties without explaining the benefit of those skills. If one of your key skills is the ability to motivate teams, explain how this has benefited your employer's bottom line-- i.e. you have improved team morale and motivation, resulting in increased staff retention which has in turn reduced recruitment costs.

TIP 8: Provide examples to support your claims

If you claim to be a good communicator, for instance, support this by providing information on the types and levels of people/organizations you've dealt with and how you have communicated. Example: Delivered presentations to audiences of up to 500 people.

TIP 9: Ensure perfect presentation

Poor presentation can undermine the best content, so make sure your spelling, grammar and layout are **PERFECT**. Be sure to proofread and have someone else read your CV to double check for errors.

TIP 10: Keep your CV highly relevant and concise

A successful CV is relevant and targeted to a specific program or position, so you should only include information which supports your suitability for the role. There are no right or wrong CV formats so re-order your CV to highlight experience most relevant to your current target.

Sample Curriculum Vitae Headings

CONTACT INFORMATION
Name (bold and larger font than the rest of the CV)
Mailing Address
Phone Number
Email

SUMMARY STATEMENT (Optional)
Include a brief list of the highlights of your candidacy.

EDUCATION
List your academic background, including undergraduate (and graduate) institutions attended.

Graduate Institution, City, State
Degree, Major
Date of Graduation
Dissertation Title (and brief description or "abstract attached")

Undergraduate Institution, City, State
Degree, Major
Date of Graduation
Thesis Title (and brief description or "abstract attached")

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE
List in reverse-chronological order; include project name, supervisor, position details and dates.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
List in reverse-chronological order, include course title and professor, position details and dates.

FIELDWORK/INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
List in reverse-chronological order, include organization name, supervisor, position details and dates.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
List in reverse-chronological order, include company, job title, position details and dates.

FELLOWSHIPS
List internships and fellowships, including organization, title and dates.

LICENSES / CERTIFICATION
List type of license, certification or accreditation and date received.

PUBLICATIONS/BOOKS
List all publications in bibliographical format of your industry (MLA, APA, etc.)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS
List all professional affiliations and your role within each organization. If you have not yet joined the professional affiliation of your industry consider doing so—it's a great way to connect with professionals in your field and to keep up-to-date on current topics of the industry.

SKILLS/INTERESTS
Include your skills (language, technical, computer, statistical, grant writing, etc.)