

Curriculum Vitae

What is a Curriculum Vitae?

Curriculum Vitae (also referred to as “CV,” or “vita,”) is a Latin term translated as “the course of one's life or career.” In the United States, a CV differs from a resume by content. A resume is used to apply for non-academic positions in the United States and emphasizes skills. A CV, on the other hand, emphasizes one’s scholarly identity and is included in the application process for faculty and (sometimes) administrative positions in higher education.

While the CV's conventional purpose is to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of your academic background and experiences/accomplishments, its strategic purpose is to entice the reader to invite you to an interview. While there is not one standard format, the information that follows is intended to help you design a CV in a way that enables search committees to immediately and easily identify your most relevant and important attributes.

What do faculty members do?

- Teach undergraduate and graduate students
- Serve on committees that further the aim of the institution
- Write proposals to bring in external research funds
 - ...to support graduate students
 - ...who perform research
 - ...which is published in refereed journals
 - ...which leads professors to speak at and organize national and international meetings in their fields
- Provide consultation to enhance contacts with the industrial world and broaden their knowledge

What do search committees want to know about you?

- Who is this? (name, institutional affiliation)
- Is this candidate qualified for this opening? (degrees awarded)
- What has this candidate done in the field? (experience, publications)
- Who can tell me more about him/her? (references)

Perspective of the Search Committee

An advertisement for a faculty or administrative position can generate hundreds of applications from interested candidates. Given the volume of CVs to review at the beginning stages of the search process, search committee members are initially focused on eliminating candidates from the pool. At this stage, each CV will be scanned for about 10 seconds or less. CVs that are selected from the initial screening process will be of those candidates warranting further consideration for an interview.

While your CV will contain much detail, your challenge is to make it “scannable” so that readers can, within 10 seconds, see the major strengths and qualities you bring to the position. This can be achieved by the following:

1. Organization
2. Clarity
3. Consistency of Format

Organization

Good organization means presenting the most relevant and important information in a way that pulls the reader's eye directly to it rather than making the reader search for it. Consider the following:

2015 **Doctor of Philosophy**, Chemical Engineering

Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA

Dissertation: Your dissertation title

Advisors: Names of your advisors

2010 **Bachelor of Science**, Chemical Engineering

Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

In this example, the eye is drawn to degree. Since every other candidate for a faculty position will have a Ph.D. or Master's degree, highlighting degree will not help to differentiate you.

Search committees are more interested in where you received your education. In contrast, consider this example:

PhD **Lehigh University**, Bethlehem, PA

Chemical Engineering, May 2015

Dissertation: Your dissertation title

Advisors: Names of your advisors

BS **Drexel University**, Philadelphia, PA

Chemical Engineering, May 2010

In this more favorable example, the eye is drawn to the institutions from which you received your education. *Where* you received your education, the nature of your dissertation, and the names of your advisor(s) are the three most important features of your CV. Make sure this information is not visually obscured. Incorporating adequate white space between categories and text will also make the CV easier to read.

Clarity

Clarity refers to making sure the content of your CV is understood. Use language that is concise and unambiguous and note the following:

Avoid acronyms unless the conventions of your discipline dictate otherwise. Check with your faculty advisors as different disciplines have different rules.

Explain the magnitude/selectivity of honors that may not be familiar to all readers. Make sure the importance can be understood by your audience.

Example:

IBM Fellowship for Dissertation Research 2009-2010

One of three selected from among 2,000 applicants nationally.

In this example, the second line clarifies the selectivity of an honor which may not be familiar to all readers. Honors that are more common, such as Phi Beta Kappa, would not need explanation.

Use formatting options such as **bold**, *italics*, and bullet points to set apart sections and sub sections. Don't go overboard as overuse of these formatting tools can make the CV look too “busy” and difficult to read. The goal is to make the document easier to read, not overly distracting.

Consistency in Format

Use consistent spacing, fonts, font size, and use of bold and italics among similar items.

Note: There is not one standard format. Emphasize the points considered to be the most relevant or important in your discipline and conform to the standard conventions of your field. Faculty advisors can provide excellent assistance in this area.

Categories of Information and Order

Your **identifying information** (name, address, phone, and e-mail address), **education**, and **dissertation information** will always come first on your CV. Thereafter, the categories of information to include and the order in which to place them depend on the following:

- The nature of the position to which you are applying.
- Individual strengths.
- What is most important to the institution.

Research institutions, for example, will be highly interested in your research experiences. For this reason, highlight your research experience by placing it toward the top of the CV.

In contrast, four-year colleges and community colleges (or other institutions that stress excellence in teaching) will usually place greater importance on teaching abilities. When applying to these types of institutions, place teaching experiences and abilities toward the top of the CV.

The Center for Career & Professional Development

A sample CV template follows:

Sample CV Template

(One inch margin at top)

Jane Applicant

(Use 14-16 pt. font and boldface for name)

Office Address		Home Address
Office Phone	URL	Home Phone
Email Address		

EDUCATION

Ph.D. **Lehigh University**, Bethlehem, PA
Chemistry, May 2015

(Font size for body of CV
should be 12 pt.)

Dissertation: (Title of dissertation)

Advisor(s):

(Highlight universities
attended, dissertation title,
and advisor(s) with spacing
and boldface.

(One inch
Margin
on both
sides)

B.S. **Drexel University**, Philadelphia, PA
Chemistry, May 2010

HONORS

National Science Foundation Fellow, Lehigh University

Date

Phi Beta Kappa

Date

Phi Lambda Upsilon, honorary chemistry fraternity

Date

Dean's list, Drexel University

Date(s)

(List honors in reverse chronological order)

(Clarify the magnitude/selectivity of honors which may not be familiar to all readers)

**RESEARCH
INTERESTS**

List in bullet point format if there are several.

(You may also be asked to list this information in a separate document)

**RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE**

Research Assistant, _____ Department, Lehigh University

Date(s)

(List in reverse chronological order)

(State project goals)

(Indicate methods used)

(List the results obtained)

**TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**

Teaching Assistant, _____ Department, Lehigh University

Date(s)

(List in reverse chronological order)

(Highlight development of courses, design of experiments, and any independent teaching activity. Specify courses taught and dates)

(Include your accomplishments and unique contributions)

(Do not list course numbers)

(Avoid stating, "Responsibilities included" or "Duties included." Instead, begin the descriptions of your experiences with action words – see list)

(One inch margin at bottom)

Jane Applicant
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(Always list your name at the top of additional pages, and include page number after the first page).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Include conferences/workshops attended, other activities. Include dates)

AFFILIATIONS/ MEMBERSHIPS (List memberships or committee work in professional associations)

PUBLICATIONS/ PRESENTATIONS (Unless the conventions of your discipline dictate otherwise, this section is typically listed at the end)
(List in reverse chronological using standard bibliographic documentation format appropriate for your field)

REFERENCES (List name, title, institution, address, phone number and email address of 3-5 references.)
(Make sure your references are aware you have listed them and provide them with a copy of your CV)

Other possible sections:

Academic Service
Grants
Employment
Study Abroad
Volunteer Experience
Languages
Laboratory Skills
Licenses/Credentials
Papers Presented
Skills
Areas of Specialization
Community Service
Translations
Exhibitions
Practica
Citizenship

Do not include:

Personal information such as marital status, race, or religion.

Note – Sections can be combined to create greater impact.

Length:

No limits but try to be as concise as possible. For recent graduates, typically 1-3 pages.

Body of CV:

Blocks of text (as opposed to bullet points) are acceptable on a CV. Be as concise as possible.