

In the United States, the curriculum vitae (also known as CV or vita) is similar to the *résumé*, except much more extensive (usually three or more pages in length), more detailed, and with more emphasis on academics and/or research. In countries such as Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, employers often ask for CVs instead of *résumés*; however, the length varies depending upon the country, and often the term *CV* is interchangeable with *résumé*. The following provides information on CVs as they are used in the U.S.

The Basic Difference between a CV and a *Résumé*

The *résumé* is a summary. It should be brief, concise, 1-2 pages of skills, education, and experience. The *CV* is much more extensive, usually longer than two pages, with more emphasis on academics and/or research. For individuals just entering their field, “two or three pages of solid achievements” (Eyler, 2013) is a good length.

When to Use a CV

Curricula vitae (plural) are used mainly in academia and the sciences:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ extensively used when applying for academic positions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• education administration (e.g. superintendents and principals)• higher education (administration, teaching, research) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ science and medicine▪ consulting and research▪ fellowships and grants▪ speaking engagements▪ graduate school applications |
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Information to Include in the CV

As with the *résumé*, the CV could include a variety of headings. Following are a few examples:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ higher education▪ degrees▪ course work▪ teaching experience▪ related experience▪ research experience▪ research interest(s)▪ master’s thesis/project▪ dissertation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ professional associations or memberships▪ awards or honors▪ fellowships▪ conferences▪ professional activities▪ publications▪ papers currently under submission | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ projects underway▪ fieldwork experience▪ languages▪ overseas travel/study▪ certificates/licensure▪ presentations▪ consulting experience▪ other activities▪ references |
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Information That Should Not Go into a CV

Include only relevant information, and, of course, omit information that could potentially lead to discrimination: age, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, height, weight, health, marital status, hobbies (unless relevant), and unrelated interests, for example.

CV Format and Appearance

There is not one standardized CV format. Because different fields have different emphases and formatting, it’s a good idea to look at examples of CVs in your particular field.

One-inch margins on all sides are appropriate. Use a typeface that is professional, easy to read, and not decorative. Use font sizes between 10 and 12 points for the body text. However, for some fonts, 10 pt. may appear too small. Headings may use a larger point size than the body text. Use a header or footer to number the pages (e.g. Page 2 of 5) and include your name with the page number after page 1. You also may want to include your phone number or email address in the header/footer.

Important Elements in the CV

When designing your CV, pay close attention to the following elements:

- Organization
- Headings
- Relevance
- White space
- Details

ORGANIZATION

As with the sections in résumés, the sections in CVs should be organized from most important to least important. At the top should be your contact information (name, email address, phone number, and other contact information). Make sure your email address is professional (Hotstuff@gmail.com is unprofessional); in addition, check that the message on your voicemail is professional. Employers have been known not to leave a message when they hear an inappropriate or unprofessional voicemail.

HEADINGS

Section headings should be clear and specific. Format them so they are distinguishable from the body text (for example, bold, upper case, larger point size). All of the headings should have the same format. For example, if one heading uses all capital letters and boldface, then all headings should have this format. These headings enable you to separate your qualifications into units that readers can find quickly and easily.

Within the sections, you may also want subsections. For example, your publications may include peer-reviewed journal articles, book reviews, writing for local publications, and other types of publications. However, grouping everything under the broad heading of *Publications* gives the same importance to peer-reviewed journal articles as to local publications. Therefore, separating the heading into subsections distinguishes the levels of publications.

RELEVANCE

Although the CV is organized from most important to least important, everything in the CV should be relevant. The facts on the CV tell a story about who you are and what you're capable of accomplishing. Consider the needs of the employers. What facts about you will be most meaningful and relevant to the employer?

WHITE SPACE

Similar to résumés, CVs should be easy to read. Accessibility is a key point to remember. A CV that is text heavy is more difficult to read, but a CV with a good balance of text and white space makes the text easier to read—and to remember. Separate the sections with line spaces and use indentation for the subsections. Use bulleted lists instead of large paragraphs. White space “allows individual accomplishments to stand out on the page” (Clark, 2012).

DETAILS

Other important details in crafting the résumé include the following:

- ***Meticulously edit and proofread your documents.*** Have others review your CVs and application letters before you submit them. One person may catch an error that other readers missed. Remember, though, that you may receive conflicting advice, and the final decision is yours.
- ***Make sure the information is up-to-date and correct.*** For example, while other readers may spot a misspelled word, they may not know if dates or proper names are accurate.
- ***Use action verbs and correct verb tense.*** A current experience uses present tense, while a past experience should be in past verb tense.
- ***Write concisely.*** Avoid clichéd or wordy phrases and extraneous wording. More does not necessarily equal better.
- ***Be honest.*** The information contained within the CV should be truthful and not exaggerated.

Resources

Clark, G.D. (2012, July 6). Fluffy CVs and cluttered ones. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 58(40), A25.
Eyler, J. (2013, January 11). The rhetoric of the CV. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 59(18), D6-D8.