

What is a *Curriculum vitae*?



A CV is a marketing tool and may be one of the most important documents you write in your professional life. It is the sum and substance of your work history and education and indicates a particular career direction. It should demonstrate credibility and be interesting. Because your CV is like a personal advertisement, it should convince a potential employer that you are an outstanding candidate for the job and that you will contribute to the organization. Your CV has to sell you in short order. While you may have all the requirements for a particular position, your CV is a failure if the employer does not instantly come to the conclusion that you "have what it takes." The first hurdle your CV has to pass - whether it ends up in the "consider file" or the "reject file" - may take less than thirty seconds.

To prepare a successful CV, you need to know how to review, summarize, and present your experiences and achievements on one page. Unless you have considerable experience, you don't need two pages. Outline your achievements briefly and concisely.

Your CV is your ticket to an interview where you can sell yourself!

What your *Curriculum vitae* should include

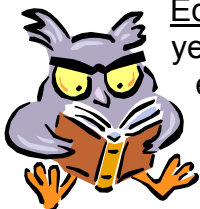
Personal data The only required information is your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Be sure to provide both permanent and current address, and the telephone numbers.

Career objective An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you are hoping to do. A concise statement indicating your career goals is recommended if you have specific career desires. Otherwise, include your objective in your cover letter to a specific employer or for a specific job.

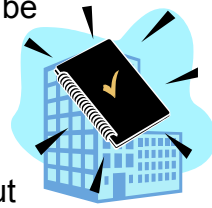


Summary of skills/professional expertise A concise statement highlighting your strongest skills and areas of professional expertise can be an advantage to you, especially if you have a mix of experiences in your career history.

Education One rule of thumb is that unless you are more than five years out of school, your education section should precede your experience section. List the names of the institutions you attended with the most recent listed first. List the degree received plus your major area of study. Include special programs from your university, such as junior year abroad, a six-month internship, etc. Indicate either the degree name or the degree initials. Indicate the area of specialization or major after the degree title. Include the thesis topic in *italics* if it relates to your professional goals. Mention academic honors including a brief explanation of honors or awards that are not self-explanatory, particularly for international students. It is not necessary to include your grade point average unless requested by an employer.



Work experience Internships and volunteer experience can be considered in this section if they relate to your professional goals, or you can create a section called "Additional or Related Experience," or "Community Service." In a CV, work and education may be listed in chronological order however many employers prefer the reverse chronological order (put your last job first and work backward to your first). It should include title of position, name of organization, location of work (town, state), dates of employment, describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements. When describing work experience, summarize your accomplishments rather than listing job tasks. Students and recent grads often fail to make an effective presentation of their experience because they use too narrow a definition of work experience. First of all, relevant "work" experience is in no way limited to paid employment. Also consider including nonpaid work, volunteer work, part-time and temporary positions, internships, unstructured work, self-employment, odd jobs, and miscellaneous informal services you may have provided to your academic department or a favored professor.



Publications List those publications that relate directly to your career goal. Employers most interested in publications will be teaching hospitals, research organizations, consulting, and international organizations. It is usually recommended to create a separate list and indicate on your resume that publications are available upon request.

Computer skills It is advisable to provide information about your computer skills.



Languages If you are fluent or conversant in several languages, list the languages you speak and/or write as follows: "Fluent in French, proficient in Japanese, knowledgeable in Spanish." Think carefully about your level of proficiency. Do not overrate your skills as you may be asked to demonstrate your language ability during an interview.

Interests One or two lines about your outside interests, hobbies, or travels can sometimes add interesting information to the interview and may spark conversation. You may add key or special skills or competencies, leadership experience in volunteer organizations Generally, avoid information about your marital status, children, or age in this section (unless you feel it is relevant to the work you will be expected to do).



References You can write "References Available upon Request" if you have space. Employers will ask directly for references, so prepare a list with names, titles, addresses, and telephone/fax numbers. Ask people if they are willing to serve as references before you give their names to a potential employer. Give careful consideration to your choice of references, as some will be more appropriate to an employer than others.

Curriculum vitae Writing Tips

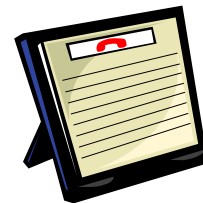
Content

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume.
- Get a friend (an English major would do nicely) to do a grammar review.
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected).
- The use of power verbs denote that you took action. Examples include words like "*accomplished*," "*achieved*," and "*managed*." When reviewers see these action words, they realize that you are a person that takes initiative: you are a self-starter.
- The use of power words helps measure the result of the actions you took. Examples of power words are "*positive*," "*results*," and "*significant*."
- Emphasize your recent work experience. In today's changing world, reviewers don't care what you were doing fifteen-twenty years ago.
- Try to highlight your strengths, and minimize your weaknesses.



Design These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan into an employer's data base.

- Use white or off-white paper.
- Use 8-1/2- x 11-inch paper.
- Print on one side of the paper.
- Use a friendly font (Arial, Times or Courier) size of 10 to 14 points
- Use nondecorative typefaces.
- Choose one typeface and stick to it.
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words
- Do not use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, or shading.
- Do not fold or staple your resume.
- If you must mail your resume, put it in a large envelope
- There is no consensus as to what length your resume should be. The length depends on the depth and scope of your individual experiences. Try to keep it to either one full page or two full pages. Leaving it at 1½ pages isn't as professional as one or two full pages.
- Keep paragraphs brief: no more than five to six lines. If you have a long paragraph on your resume, break it up into several shorter ones. Eliminate every unnecessary word.



Putting your resume/CV on-line Once you are satisfied with your resume/CV you should consider putting it in one of the CSO's electronic resume books. These books can be found at: www.erecruiting.com. Employers are very interested in viewing resumes/CVs on line when hiring. This will also give a larger number of employers the opportunity to view your resume/CV easily and often.

SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME

Address

Phone Number

Email

SUMMARY STATEMENT *(Optional)*

Discusses key strengths

EDUCATION:

Date **Harvard School of Public Health**, Boston, MA

Ph.D Degree Concentration,

Dissertation

Date **Institution**, City, State

MA Degree Major

Thesis

Date **Institution**, City, State

BA/BS Degree Major

POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING *(If applicable)*

FELLOWSHIPS

Dates Field of Research Place Title

INTERNSHIPS/RESIDENCIES

Dates Specialty Hospital

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION *(If applicable)*

Date Type of License or Certification

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TITLE Date

Place, City, State

Description of responsibilities, leadership roles

PUBLICATIONS

Use standard format

PAPERS PRESENTED

GRANTS/AWARDS

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

SKILLS

LANGUAGES

COMPUTER

Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself to an employer and to state your interest in an organization or a particular position. A cover letter is an opportunity for you to highlight aspects of your background that are especially relevant to the potential employer. A cover letter should always accompany your resume/cv.



Cover letters have a standard structure:

opening paragraph, in which you explain why you are writing, what you would like to do, and the kind of job you want. Explain where you heard of the opening or why you selected this employer for an inquiry.

second paragraph contains your description of how your work experience and training is related to the job you are applying for or desire. Remember to mention pertinent data or accomplishments to show that you have specific qualifications in this field or particular type of work.

third paragraph explain why you are interested in working for this organization and in the particular position. Say that your resume is enclosed. State that you will call in a week or so to inquire about the possibility of an interview (if appropriate). End with "Sincerely," or another professional closing.

Cover letter writing tips

Research the organization. Read annual reports, company brochures, and check the organization's website. If possible, contact inside people.



Address your cover letter to the person responsible for hiring. You can call the human resource office or hiring contact and ask for the hiring person's name. Avoid addressing a letter "to whom it may concern." Be sure the name is spelled correctly and the title is correct. A touch of formality is good too: address the person as "Mr.," "Ms.," "Mrs.," "Miss," "Dr.," or "Professor." (Yes, life is complicated.)

Write it in your own words so that it sounds like you--not like something out of a book. Employers are looking for knowledge, enthusiasm, focus.

Mention someone who referred you to the organization (if possible). Utilize your network of contacts.

Express your professional accomplishments and skills. However, you should not simply restate points from your resume.

Carefully proofread your cover letter for errors.

Be brief. Cover letters are preferably three or four paragraphs that fit easily on one page.

Communicate confidence and professionalism. The cover letter, like your cv, is a marketing tool. It serves as an example of your writing skill and style.

Some common cover letters mistakes:

- Thinking of it as a formality or something extra to attach to a cv.
- Trying to be unique –"I'm the top-notch candidate you're looking for."
- Using gimmicks, literary prose, flashy paper, or colored type.
- Writing lengthy letters (more than one page).
- Not utilizing standard business form.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Your name
Mailing address
City, state, and zip
Telephone number(s)
Email address

Today's date

Your addressee's name
Professional title
Organization name
Mailing address
City, state and zip

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) last name,

Start your letter with a grabber—a statement that establishes a connection with your reader, a probing question, or a quotable quote. Briefly say what job you are applying for.

The mid-section of your letter should be one or two short paragraphs that make relevant points about your qualifications. You should not summarize your resume! You may incorporate a column or bullet point format here.

Your last paragraph should initiate action by explaining what you will do next (e.g., call the employer) or instigate the reader to contact you to set up an interview. Close by saying “thank you.”

Sincerely yours,

Your handwritten signature

Your name (typed)

Enclosure: *Curriculum vitae*

Interviewing Skills



There are important steps to increasing your success at interviewing and getting hired. First, remember that job interviews are two-way communications. Not only are they a tool that the employer uses to evaluate you, but they are also an opportunity for you to assess the job, the organization, and to see if there is a "fit."

Two keys to successful interviewing are advance preparation and practice. The following suggestions will help you prepare for an interview:

Self-evaluation It is important for you to think about yourself and your past experiences in order to be ready to articulate what you have to offer an employer. Consider the following topics:

- How your present and past experience relate to the position
- Your current and future career goals
- What skills and expertise you have to offer
- The skills that you would like to develop or improve
- Location, salary, and lifestyle priorities
- Kinds of people and environments you prefer
- Past experiences you want to highlight such as volunteer work, hobbies, travel



Before the Interview

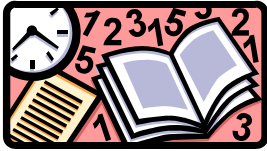


Research the Company - A company's website is an excellent place to begin. It usually gives you information on whether it is international or domestic, what its revenues are, how many locations it has, and the nature of its major products. Most companies are very proud of their websites. Don't be surprised if one of the first questions interviewers ask when you arrive is, "Have you have had a chance to look at our website?"

Practice interviews - Write down a list of possible questions you think you may be asked, then have a friend act as an interviewer and direct them to you in a practice interview situation. Don't stop until you feel comfortable answering each question. Practicing beforehand will make you feel more comfortable and relaxed during the interview.

Dress Professionally - In today's environment, wearing a suit isn't always necessary. Contact the HR Manager of the company or your recruiter, and find out what the dress code is for the company at which you are going to interview. Then dress one level above. For instance, if it is business casual, men can wear dress pants, dress shirt, and sport coat. Women can wear a pantsuit, dress, or a skirt and blouse. Visual impressions are very important. Therefore, if in doubt, always dress on the conservative side.

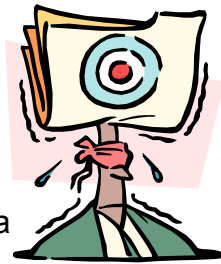




Arrival - Try to arrive at the interviewing location a little early. This gives you time to determine where you need to go, and a few minutes to collect your thoughts. DO NOT arrive late. Nothing destroys your chance at impressing an employer more than arriving late and offering no explanation. If you learn at the last minute that you are going to be arriving late at the interview, call and let the interviewer know. Interviewers understand that things can come up suddenly. You are never considered late if you call and make them aware of the fact.

During the Interview

First impressions - First impressions take only thirty seconds. Establishing rapport, direct and sustained eye contact, a firm handshake, a warm smile, good posture, and introducing yourself in a confident manner are important ingredients. A well-groomed, professional appearance is critical. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake, whether it is a woman or a man. (No one likes a weak handshake.) Always maintain eye contact while shaking hands.



Smile - A smile denotes confidence in a candidate. Try to smile often. Also, don't be afraid to use some hand animation while answering questions. This suggests enthusiasm in a candidate.

Body Language - Use good posture, and look the interviewer right in the eye. Sit up straight. Never slouch.

Speak Clearly - Don't mumble. It portrays a lack of confidence. Speak with assurance. This indicates confidence.

Listen Before Answering - Allow the employer to begin the interview, but be prepared with some opening statements or questions such as, "I understand that this position involves..." or "What are you looking for in a job candidate?" Make sure you understand the question. If not, ask the interviewer to clarify it. Don't be afraid to take some time to think before answering. Interviewers are impressed with someone who thinks out an answer before speaking.



Give Brief Answers - Make your answer concise and to the point. Rambling tends to suggest that you really don't have the answer to the question(s) asked.

Previous Employers - Never, ever say anything negative about your present or previous employers. No matter how much you may have disliked someone, find a way to give your experiences a positive spin.

Be Truthful - Don't lie when asked about something you haven't done. The next question will be "tell us about it."

Know Your Resume - Be prepared to talk about every fact that is on your resume. Many people embellish their accomplishments on their resumes. Avoid this, since the only point of reference an interviewer has about you is the resume you provide to him/her beforehand.

Keep things at a professional level - Sometimes near the end of an interview, the two parties start feeling comfortable with each other. Don't let this comfortable feeling lead you to telling them something about yourself that they really shouldn't know. Always keep things at a professional level.

Look for Something in Common - This is something that has given us an edge in the past. Try to find a common bond between yourself and your interviewer. If you are being interviewed in an office, look at how the office is decorated. Look for something you can identify with. Is his/her college diploma hanging on the wall? Did you attend a nearby school, or perhaps one in the same Division? If so, make a quick comment about it: "Did you attend Penn State? I attended the University of Michigan. What a great football conference." Interviewers sometimes feel more comfortable with people with whom they have something in common. This approach has helped several candidates obtain a position over other qualified candidates. Above all, be sincere.



After the Interview

Back in Touch - Ask the interviewer when s/he expects to get back to you on her/his decision.

Get Everyone's Business Card - Before you leave, be sure to get the business cards of all of the people with whom you visited. If you cannot do that, ask a secretary for their names and e-mail addresses.

Thank the Interviewer - Verbally thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you, before leaving. Within a day, send thank-you letters to all of the interviewers with whom you spoke. This does not need to consist of a written letter sent via snail mail; an e-mailed thank-you works just as well.



Do not give up - Sometimes, within ten minutes of the start of an interview, you will know that the job is not one you want to pursue. If you begin to feel this way, don't give up on the interview. Continue to interview as if the job was the most important thing in the world. This provides you with practice for your next interview, which may be for your dream job! Not all interviews will lead to offers of employment, but, if you approach every interview as if it's the most important interview you ever had, you will come out a winner!

Additional tips



- Focus on presenting a positive, enthusiastic tone.
- If you are asked to describe a weakness, mention lessons learned, and steer away from negative descriptions.
- Think about three or four key points that you want to make about your personal characteristics, skills you have learned, and relevant experiences that demonstrate that you could perform the job well.
- Find specific, rather than general, ex-amples from your experience that illustrate important points about yourself.
- When answering questions, focus on experiences that demonstrate flexibility, adaptability, responsibility, progress, achievement, creativity, initiative, and leadership.
- If the employer signals the end of the interview and asks you for questions, and you haven't discussed some key points, say: "There are a couple of points I would like to mention."

After the interview, write a brief thank you letter. Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview and learn about the organization, re-confirm your interest, and re-emphasize how your background and skills might be of interest to the organization.

Some Interview Questions



You can expect to be asked some of the following types of questions in an interview.

Case Questions are often used by consulting companies to assess analytical and problem solving skills. The interviewer presents a situation and asks you to discuss possible solutions. A sample case question is, "Describe a managed care company that you think is successful and explain why. What do they do that works? What are their potential problems? What is your outlook for their future? What suggestions do you have for their future?"

Behavioral or situational questions are used to assess how you would behave in different circumstances and to predict your behavior in future, similar situations. An interviewer may ask, "Tell me about a time when a team you were working on was unable to proceed due to some interpersonal conflict. How did you respond, and what role did you play on the team?"

Role-play questions entail the interviewer asking you to put yourself in another role and decide how you would handle a specific problem.

Industry-specific questions are questions regarding the latest trends or issues in the industry. An interviewer may ask, "If you were a CEO of Microsoft's main competitor, what actions would you take in the on-line services market?"

Brain teasers are quick questions where the obvious answer is not necessarily the right answer such as, "Which would you rather receive: fifty thousand pennies or a 10x10x10 room filled with pennies?"

General questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your key experiences and accomplishments?
- How would you rank your achievements?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How would your friends describe you?
- Explain your reason for leaving your current job.
- What are the most important things to you in a job?
- What do you value in a supervisor?
- How would you describe your management style?
- What appeals to you about this job and organization?
- Describe the ideal position in our company.
- What qualities do you think make someone successful in our industry?
- What would you like me to know most that is not on your resume?
- Explain your understanding of the issues and trends in your specialty and in the overall industry.
- Why are you qualified for this position?
- Give an example of a situation where you demonstrated leadership.
- Give an example of how you worked on a team.
- What questions do you have about the organization? Questions for the interviewer are queries that usually focus on the culture or mission of the organization, and job responsibilities. This is not the time to bring up questions about salary, benefits, and vacation about which you can inquire after you have been offered the job.

The Phone Interview

Due to a company's geographic location, travel costs, and divergent schedules, a phone interview may often be your initial contact with a prospective employer. Therefore, we're offering some phone interview tips.



Objective - The idea behind a phone interview is to gain an invitation for a personal interview, and to gather more information for future steps in the process.



Preparation - Have a pad, pen, and a copy of your resume near the phone. Use a phone in a quiet area. Avoid any background noise. Also avoid using a cordless phone, because they tend to transmit poorly.

Speaking

- a. Smile and be enthusiastic. Your enthusiasm will carry through to the interviewer.
- b. Speak in a conversational manner, and be sure to speak loudly enough to be heard. Speak with some inflection and tone.
- c. Let the interviewer do most of the talking. When s/he asks you a question, expound upon the answer. Use the opportunity to sell your skills and experience.
- d. When the interview is over, let her/him know that you are very interested in scheduling a personal interview at her/his place of business.



References

- <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Admins/offstuds/intro.html#resumes>
- <http://www.jobweb.com/catapult/guenov/res.html>
- http://www.careersoar.com/interviewing_tips.asp
- <http://www.wetfeet.com/asp/article2.asp?aid=246&atype=Resumes>
- <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/res-def.htm>
- <http://topechelon.com/jobseekers/sixresumerules.htm>
- <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/>
- <http://safetynet.doleta.gov/resume.htm>
- <http://www.wetfeet.com/advice/resumes.asp>
- <http://www.impactonline.org/about/advice/resume.jsp>
- <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/clet-ex1.htm>
- http://www.virtualville.com/employment_agency/interviewing.html
- <http://www.jobsontheweb.com/tips.htm>
- <http://careers.altavista.com/intvTips.html>
- <http://web.mit.edu/personnel/www/policy/2-5.html>