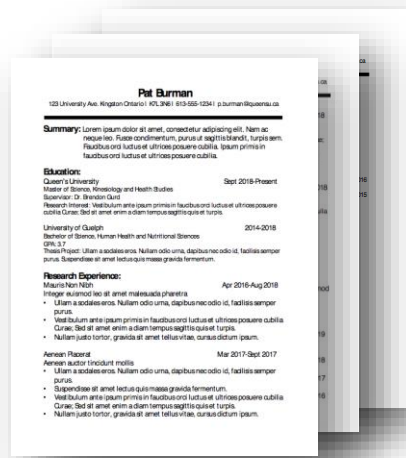




# CURRICULUM VITAE: UNDERGRADUATES APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

*Communicating why you will be a successful graduate student*

This tipsheet outlines key features of a curriculum vitae (CV) for undergraduate students looking to build their CV for graduate school applications. If you are a graduate student looking to build your CV, check out the *Academic Job Search: The Curriculum Vitae* tipsheet.



## What is a CV?

A curriculum vitae is primarily used for applications in higher education or advanced research. It is a multi-page document that provides a selective overview of academic qualifications, research, technical, and teaching skills, as well as other relevant experience. Confusion can occur when the term CV is used as a synonym for resume. When in doubt, ask for clarification or make an educated guess based on the context.

## CV as part of a graduate school application

Sometimes graduate schools ask for a CV as part of their application requirements. As an undergraduate student applying to graduate school, you may be unsure of what should be included on a CV – especially since you are just beginning to develop your research experience. Remember that the expectations for a CV are based on your level of experience. As someone applying to graduate school, be sure to tailor your CV to the field of study you are applying to and highlight your relevant skills and experience related to research and teaching. This experience may include:

- Relevant coursework and/ or projects
- Laboratory experience
- Presentations
- Research papers
- Service work (roles in clubs, student government, or as a volunteer)
- Part-time work, internships, and similar roles

*Think of your CV as an opportunity to communicate why you will be successful in the program you are applying to!*



## CVs versus resumes

Differences	Similarities
Resumes are usually 1-2 pages in length, whereas CVs can be longer	Both documents are customizable through headings, section order, and descriptions
CVs often include customized headings for higher education and advanced research contexts	A summary or profile can help the reader find focus within both a resume and a CV
CVs sometimes omit work experience if not directly aligned with future programs or roles	Both require name and page numbers on each page
A profile or summary section is not customary on a CV, but may be an advantage	Describing experience in terms of accomplishments (rather than responsibilities) can make both resumes and CVs more convincing and memorable
	Both follow reverse chronological order within sections
	Both documents benefit from descriptions that provide evidence of relevant competencies

### Sample CV headings and sections

Consider using the following headings or sections on your CV.

- Summary or Profile
- Research Interests
- Education
- Academic Awards, Scholarships and Distinctions
- Publications (separate refereed and non-refereed)
- Presentations (include title, name of conference, date, and location)
- Research Experience (include project title, name of supervisor, date, and role)
- Academic, Professional or Relevant Experience
- University Committees or Committee Work
- Professional Development
- Professional Certifications
- Affiliations and Memberships
- Technical or Specialized Skills
- Languages (include proficiency level)
- Additional Experience (e.g., entrepreneurial, business, or administrative experience)
- Community Service
- Volunteer Experience and Extra-Curricular Activities

### Tips for creating a CV for graduate or professional program applications

- Research your target institution’s expectations (e.g., CV format or specific language such as “Community Engagement”).
- Use your familiarity with the program requirements and your strengths to guide your choice of sections, headings, and descriptions.
- Customize the headings and sections on your CV to best describe your experience.
- Review CVs or LinkedIn profiles of current graduate students in the program. This can be helpful for identifying what experience you should highlight.



- Be aware that some CV sections (e.g., publications, teaching, conference presentations) may not yet be relevant for you if you are designing your first CV.
- You may think that you need to omit part-time jobs if they are non-academic; however, descriptions of these experiences can showcase relevant skills.
- Although a CV is a multi-page document, be prepared to be selective about content. Unless instructed otherwise, omit high school information.
- Include coursework relevant to the program you are applying to, and be sure to highlight pertinent competencies.
- Keep your CV up to date (e.g., take time to update after a new presentation).
- Seek feedback from people in the discipline (graduate students or professors). This can be a great way to learn a field's conventions and/or expectations.
- Proofread for grammar and spelling mistakes (e.g., correct titles, dates, etc.).

**Additional resources, including some books about global norms and examples of CVs from different countries, are available at Career Services.**