



# ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH: THE CURRICULUM VITAE

*Communicating your academic and research experience*

This tipsheet outlines key features of a curriculum vitae (CV) for graduate students looking to build their CV and/or apply to academic or research positions. If you are an undergraduate student looking to build a CV for a graduate school application, check out the *Curriculum Vitae: Undergraduates Applying to Graduate School* tipsheet.

## **What is a CV?**

CVs are multi-page documents typically used when applying to roles in higher education, advanced research, or high-level administration. As a result, CVs focus on your research, service, and/or teaching experience, and usually only includes work experience when it is relevant to the role you are applying to. Sometimes the terms CV and resume are used interchangeably. When in doubt, seek clarification.

## **What makes a strong CV?**

A strong CV displays your experience in a clear, visual hierarchy that is customized to the role you are applying to and shows why you are suitable for the position. Although CVs can seem like lists of publications, degrees, and presentations, thoughtful formatting decisions can help highlight your accomplishments and skills. CVs can also demonstrate your knowledge, level of expertise, values, and interests. Remember, CVs are not static documents and will change as you build experience and in response to the position you are applying to (e.g., a teaching versus a research position).

## **Tips for designing your CV**

- Use a clear typeface, at least 11-point font size
- Avoid using multiple typefaces
- 1-inch margins
- Left justify text
- Use consistent formatting for section headings and subheadings
- Consider putting your name along with a page number in the document header or footer

## **Discipline-specific expectations**

While there are general strategies for writing a CV, sometimes there are discipline specific rules and expectations. Check with your supervisor, colleagues, or industry experts to learn what is expected in your field or the field you are applying to.



## Key differences and similarities between resumes and CVs

In Canada, CVs and resumes are used for different purposes. In the table below, you will see some of these key differences.

	Resume	CV
<b>Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any experience or qualification relevant to the position</li> <li>In Europe, resumes are referred to as CVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, teaching, and service experience</li> <li>Sometimes includes work experience</li> </ul>
<b>Length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-2 pages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No page limit</li> </ul>
<b>Headings and Sections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customizable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customizable</li> <li>Education and/or professional appointments appear first</li> </ul>
<b>Order of Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reverse chronological order under each heading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reverse chronological order under each heading</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptions of Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used strategically</li> </ul>
<b>Summaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summaries of skills, profiles, or objectives are commonly used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes career summaries or profiles are used</li> </ul>

### Common CV sections and headings

The following is a list of headings typically seen on CVs. This list is not exhaustive and there is no expectation that you will have an entry for every heading listed. Headings and sections used on CVs are customizable and often reflect where you are in your career and your discipline.

#### *Contact Information*


- Your contact information should appear at the top of the first page (a heading is not typically used).
- Consider whether to use your personal address, the address of the institution you are affiliated with, or both.

#### *Career Summary or Profile (optional)*

- This summary can consist of a few sentences describing your field of expertise and/or major accomplishments (funding, publications, etc.).

#### *Education*

- Your most recent degree appears first (usually your highest level of education). Your other degrees follow in reverse chronological order.

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- Include your thesis title, supervisor's name and/or names of committee members, and the year of completion.

#### *Professional Appointments or Employment (if any or relevant)*

- This section can include post-doc training, tenure track positions, or instructorships longer than one year.
- Depending on your discipline, this section could also include employment.

#### *Scholarships, Awards, and Fellowships (if any)*

- Consider adding a line of text that explains the significance of the award (i.e., what criteria had to be met).
- If the award was financial, you may choose to include the dollar amount to communicate the significance of the award. However, sometimes if the award was for a small amount or you do not feel comfortable sharing this information, you may choose not to include it.
- Depending on the nature of the award, you may choose to include it in your education or teaching section.

#### *Research Grants (if any)*

- Consider adding a line of text that explains the significance of the grant.
- You may choose to highlight the dollar amount for the grants you have received.

#### *Publications (if any)*

- Your publications should be subdivided based on the type of publication. Subheadings may include articles published in peer reviewed journals, book chapters, book reviews and publications in non-peer reviewed publications (e.g., editorial).
- Articles published in peer reviewed journals should appear first.
- You can indicate the status for each publication in brackets: submitted, under review, revised and resubmitted, accepted, or forthcoming.
- Depending on the number of your publications you have, you may choose to put this section at the end of your CV.
- In some disciplines it is common to number each publication in the left margin.
- Keep the format of each publication consistent throughout. For example, author(s), year published, title, publication title.

#### *Conference Presentations (if any)*

- Denote whether it was an oral presentation, abstract, or poster presentation.
- Include the title of your presentation, the title of the conference, location, and the date.
- Keep the format of each presentation consistent throughout.

#### *Teaching Interests (optional)*

- This section can include a short list of topics or subjects you are interested in teaching.



### *Teaching Experience (if any)*

- Subdivide your teaching experience based on the institution, department, and the role (instructor, teaching assistant, etc.).
- Include the course title, code (optional), year, and/or session.
- You may also choose to include the topics covered in the course.
- Include details so that the reader can understand your role. Consider adding aspects of your role, such as grading, lectures, course design, tutorial facilitation and so on.
- If you have instructor experience, consider including the number and length of the lectures.
- Specify the type of delivery (in-person, hybrid, or online).
- Supervision or co-supervision experience can appear here or under its own heading.

### *Research Experience (if any)*

- Research assistant roles appear in this section.
- Some people choose to describe the research project as well as their role and any specific data collection or techniques used.

### *Service Work or Academic Service (if any)*

- Here, you can include roles on hiring committees, student government or unions, on research ethics boards, as an ad hoc reviewer for an academic journal, and so on.

### *References*


- Include your references at the end of your CV.
- It is recommended that you have three academic references.
- For each reference, list their full name, mailing address, telephone, and email address.
- It can be helpful to identify your “teaching reference” if one has been requested.

### *Other Headings You May Choose to Use:*

- Research Related Press and Media
- Knowledge Translation Pieces
- Invited and Symposium Talks
- Certifications
- Professional Memberships
- Patents
- Extracurricular Activities

### **Tips for customizing CV headings**

- While the order of headings on a CV is customizable, education and/or professional appointments appear first so that the reader can quickly locate you in your current role.
- Depending on the role you are applying to, you may choose to put the most relevant heading(s) before others that are less relevant.

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- For example, if you are applying to a teaching position, you may choose to list your teaching experience immediately following your education and before research experience and/or publications.

### **Helpful hints and tips for writing and updating your CV**

- Ask other academics (colleagues or supervisors) in your field for feedback on your CV.
- Keep your reader in mind. The person who is reading your CV is likely reading many CVs and will skim read first. What can you do to ease their review and make your CV stand out? Consider using some of the tips suggested in this tipsheet.
- What do you want the reader to know about you? Asking yourself this question can be a helpful way to consider what information to include and where on your CV.
- Make sure your document has a clear and consistent visual hierarchy. Is it easy to locate the most important information? Are you using a consistent style or format for your publications and presentations lists?
- Sometimes people bold their name in publications with multiple authors, to stand out.
- Update your CV regularly. Making updates as they occur can help make sure experiences or details are not missed.
- A master CV can be a helpful way to keep track of your experience, while customizing other versions for different positions.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **The Professor Is In**

This website blog is a helpful resource for learning more about academic applications.

<https://theprofessorisin.com/>

The corresponding book, *The Professor Is In*, can be found in the Career Services Information Area and can be signed out for a two-day loan.

#### **Creating your academic CV**

The University of Toronto's booklet for masters and PhD students includes additional tips for writing CVs as well as examples of CVs from different disciplines.

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/Creating-Your-Academic-CV.pdf>

#### **Academic job search – CV part 1 & 2**

The University of California, Berkley series on academic jobs, includes a specific page on CVs. This page provides tips for formatting CVs and suggestions for making the document as readable as possible.

<https://career.berkeley.edu/PhDs/PhDCV>

#### **University Affairs**

University Affairs is a digital Canadian publication where you can find articles with suggestions on writing CVs in the Careers Café section. Consider starting with the article below.

<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/careers-cafe/should-i-put-on-my-cv/>