ELSEVIER

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC CV

A CV allows you to showcase yourself and your academic and professional achievements in a concise, effective way. You want to have a compelling CV that is well-organized and easy to read, yet accurately represents your highest accomplishments.

▶ Don't be shy about your achievements, but also remember to be honest about them. Do not exaggerate or lie!

Academic CVs differ from the CVs typically used by non-academics in industry, because you need to present your research, your various publications and awarded funding, in addition to the various other items contained in a non-academic CV.[1]

The intention of this informative guide is to provide academics with advice and tips on how best to write a CV for the academic field. The advice and tips provided here are organized into categories as could be used to structure a CV as well. You do not need to follow the format used here, but it is advised to address the categories covered here somewhere in your CV.

To start with some general advice first, you should consider **length, structure and formatting** of your CV.

Length: Since academic CVs must present so much information with regard to research and publications, it is generally acceptable if CVs are more than 2 pages long.[2] It is best not to exceed 4 pages maximum.[3]

Structure: Choose a structure for your CV with the main headings and sub-headings you will use. There are several sources and CV samples available and links are provided to these sources at the end of this document.

In general, however, you should start with providing some brief personal details, then a brief career summary. Your education, publications and research should follow and be the focus for the first section of your CV. Other important categories to address include: funding, awards and prizes, teaching roles, administrative experience, technical and professional skills and qualifications, any professional affiliations or memberships, conference and seminar attendances and a list of references.

Formatting: Your CV should be clear and easy to read. Use legible font types in a normal size (font size 11 or 12) with normal sized margins (such as 1 inch or 2.5 cm margins). Use bullet points to highlight important items and to concisely present your credentials. Keep a consistent style for headings and sub-headings and main text – do not use more than 2 font types in your CV. Make smart, but sparing use of **bold**, *italics* and underlining. Be aware of spelling and grammar and ensure it is perfect. Re-read a few times after writing the CV to ensure there are no errors and the CV is indeed.[4]

Personal Details
Personal details include your name, address of residence, phone number(s) and professional e-mail address. You may also include your visa status, as relevant.

Career Summary
The career summary is *not* a statement of your ambitions or objectives. It is a brief summary of approximately 5 -7 sentences summarizing your expertise in your discipline(s), years of expertise in the area(s), noteworthy research findings, key achievements and publications.

Education
Provide an overview of your education starting from your first academic degree to the most recent degree obtained (reverse chronological order). Include the names of the institutions, thesis or dissertation topics and type of degree obtained.

Publications
The listing of publications is a key part of an academic's CV. It is advisable to list your most reputed publications in ranking of type, such as books, book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, non-peer-reviewed articles, articles presented as prestigious conferences, forthcoming publications, reports, patents, and so forth. Consider making an exhaustive list of all publications in an appendix.

Research
As an academic, your research experiences, your findings, the methods you use and your general research interests, are critical to present in the first part

of your CV. Highlight key research findings and accomplishments.

Honors and Recognitions

Here is a section where you can allow yourself to shine. Share any prizes, awards, honors or other recognitions for your research and work with the year it occurred and by who/which body the award was granted.

Funding

The funding you have attracted for your research and work is recognition of the value of your research and efforts. If applying for positions, institutions also like to see what kind of funding you can attract. As with the honors and recognitions, be forthcoming with what you have obtained in terms of grants, scholarships and funds.

Teaching

This section is straightforward. List your teaching experiences, including the institutions, the years you taught, as well as the subject matters you taught and the level of the course(s).

Administrative Experience

Any administrative experience within a faculty or research institute should be noted on your CV. Do you facilitate (or have you in the past) a newsletter, an event(s), or anything else at your respective institution? If so, and particularly if relevant to your discipline, include it in your CV.

Professional Experience

If you have been employed in industry and it is relatively recent (approximately within the last 5-10 years) and relevant to your academic work, it is important to include it. If relevant, professional experience can explain any gap fills in your academic work and demonstrate the diversity in your capabilities.[5]

Other Skills and Qualifications

As on every CV, academics should highlight key skills and qualifications relevant to your research and academic work. Technical and practical skills, certifications, languages, and more, are relevant to mention in this section.

Professional Affiliations and Memberships

If you belong to any professional group or network related to your areas of expertise, you should mention them in this section. Only list affiliations or memberships with which you are active (within last 5 years, for example). This should not be a lengthy section.

Attendance at Conferences and Seminars

List the most relevant conferences or seminars where you presented or participated in a panel within the last 5-7 years. In an appendix, you can add an exhaustive list of conferences and seminars where you participated by giving a

speech, presented a paper or research, or participated in a discussion panel.

References

It is advised to list at least three contact persons who can provide a reference for your research, work and character. Provide their names and complete contact information. Clearly, they should all be academics and all people you have worked with.[6]

Appendices

As referenced already in some of the preceding categories, it is ok to include an appendix. Appendices enable you to keep the main content of your CV brief, while still providing relevant detail.[7] Items to list in an appendix can include publications, short research statements or excerpts, conference or seminar participation, or something similar and relevant which you would like to provide more details about.[8]

CVs are Not Only for Job-Searching

As a presentation by Wendy Perry of the University of Virginia clearly indicates, CVs are not just for job-searching. This is important to keep in mind when preparing your CV. You will regularly need to update your CV and to adapt it for the various purposes. In Perry's presentation, she highlighted the other frequent uses of an academic CV, including[9]:

- ✔ Awards, fellowships
- ✔ References
- ✔ Publishing
- ✔ Grant applications
- ✔ Public speaking
- ✔ Consulting
- ✔ Leadership
- ✔ Merit/tenure review

Outline Examples of Academic CVs

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/downloads/documents/prospects/IDD/Special%20Interests%20Series/CVs/2005/YourPhDexample%20CV.pdf

http://www.open.ac.uk/careers/cvs-for-PhD-researchers.php

http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1373/Academic%20CVs.html

Sample CVs

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/downloads/documents/prospects/IDD/Special%20Interests%20Series/CVs/2005/Your%20PhD%20Science%20Academic%20CV.pdf

http://www.careers.utoronto.ca/myCareer/resumeInterview/cv.aspx

▶ Also, if you are applying for a position with an academic institution, they may have their own preferred CV outline. Inquire to see if the institution does have a preference and use it.

References

1   http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1373/Academic%20CVs.html
2   http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2011/09/27/38-tips-on-writing-an-academic-cv
3   http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/2011/dec/06/how-to-write-academic-cv
4   http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2011/09/27/38-tips-on-writing-an-academic-cv
5   http://www.careers.utoronto.ca/myCareer/resumeInterview/cv.aspx
6   http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/2011/dec/06/how-to-write-academic-cv
7   http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1373/Academic%20CVs.html
8   http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/2011/dec/06/how-to-write-academic-cv
9   http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/postdoc/docs/CVCoverLetters.pdf