

## Curriculum Vitae

Pronunciation: [kuh-**rik**-yuh-luhm **vahy**-tee]

*Curriculum vitae* is a [Latin](#) expression which can be loosely translated as *[the] course of [my] life*.

1. Also called **vita**, vitae. A brief biographical résumé of one's career and training, as prepared by a person applying for a job.
2. (*italics*) *Latin* . the course of one's life or career.

### **What makes a good CV?**

A good CV should be:

- **targeted** to the job you're applying for
- **simple, clear and concise** - using no more than 2 easy to read fonts on plain white paper
- **short** - 2 sides of A4 paper (possibly with an extra sheet for research publications if you have done a PhD). The CV shouldn't be bound
- for **design jobs**, the CV could be creatively presented to showcase your work
- **free from spelling, grammatical and typing errors** – give it to someone else to check

- **accompanied by a covering letter.** The CV and covering letter should be in the same font, layout and on the same paper

### Five basic principles for a good CV

- **Concentrate on the essentials**
  - A CV must be brief: in most cases one to two pages are sufficient. In any event, do not exceed three pages.
  - If your work experience is limited, describe your education and training first; highlight work placements during training
  - If language skills are important for the job you are applying for, fill in the Europass Language Passport available on this site and attach it to the CV.
- **Be clear and concise**
  - Use short sentences.
  - Concentrate on the relevant aspects of your training and work experience.
  - Explain any breaks in your studies or career.
- **Adapt your CV to suit the post you are applying for**
  - Before sending your CV to an employer, check that it corresponds to the profile required.
  - Do not include work experience or training which is not relevant to the application.

- Highlight your advantages according to the specific needs of the prospective employer. **Beware:** do not artificially inflate your CV; if you do, you are likely to be found out at interview.
- **Take care over the presentation of your CV**
  - Set out your skills and competences clearly and logically, so that your advantages stand out.
  - Pay attention to details such as spelling and punctuation. NB:
    - Print your CV on white paper.
    - Retain the suggested font and layout.
- **Check your CV once you have filled it in**
  - Remove any spelling mistakes, and ensure it is laid out clearly and logically.
  - Have someone else re-read your CV so that you are sure the content is clear and easy to understand.

## What should you include?

A CV should normally contain the following information, but **layout will vary depending on which information is most relevant.**

- **Personal details:** name, address, phone, date of birth, nationality (international students)
- **Education:** postgraduate study, first degree, school qualifications, listing the most recent first
- **Work experience:** relevant first, then other work experience - including unpaid
- **Skills:** computer literacy, driving licence, languages etc
- **Extra-curricular activities:** including student societies, sports teams
- **Interests:** including sports, hobbies
- **References:** personal tutor, employer, (voluntary work supervisory, work placement supervisor), project supervisor

## WRITING A CV / RESUME

If you are looking for a job, then it is very important that you understand how to offer yourself in the best way to an employer.

This is done by writing a 'CV' (curriculum vitae - Latin for 'life story'), called in some countries a 'resume'.

## **WHAT IS A CV RESUME FOR?**

A CV resume is quite simply an 'advert' to sell yourself to an employer. You should send a CV to an employer when they ask for one in a job advert, or when you are enquiring if any jobs are available. So the purpose of your CV is to make you attractive, interesting, worth considering to the organization/company and so receive a job interview.

An employer may have several hundred enquiries about a single job. He or she will only choose a few people who appear suitable for interview.

**Therefore, your CV must be as good as you can make it.**

## **GENERAL ADVICE**

A CV should be constructed on a word-processor (or at least typed), well laid out and printed on a good quality printer. Do use bold and/or underline print for headings. Do not use lots of different font types and sizes. You are not designing a magazine cover! **Do use** plenty of white space, and a good border round the page. **Do use** the spell-check on your computer! (Or check that the spelling is correct in some way) **Consider** using 'bullets' to start sub-sections or lists.

As you are using a computer or word-processor, you can easily 'customise' your CV if necessary, and change the layout and the way you write your CV for different employers.

Picture yourself to be a busy manager in the employer's office. He (or she) may have to read through 100 CVs in half an hour, and will have two piles - 'possibles' and 'waste-bin'.

**So yours must be easy to read, short and attractive.**

**There are two communication principles to remember:**

**\*'Keep it simple'.**

**\*'If they didn't hear it, you didn't say it'.**

So, when you have written a first attempt at your CV, get someone else to look at it, and tell you how to make it better. Ask your friends, your tutors or teachers, your career office, family friends in business. **What you have written may seem simple and obvious to you, but not to an employer!** Go through it again and again with a red pen, making it shorter, more readable, more understandable!

**Before you start**

Sit down with a piece of paper. Look at the job(s) that you are applying for. Consider how your skills, education, and experience compare with the skills that the job requires. How much information do you have about the job description? Sometimes employers do not give enough information. Ask for more detail if needed. Spend time researching detail about the job(s) that interest you and information about the employer - their structure, products, successes, and approach - from:

Their own publicity, reports and publications

A library (business reports, trade papers)

Their website

Newspaper reports

The Internet

## **WHAT TO INCLUDE**

### **Personal details**

Name, home address, college address, phone number, email address.

Do you have your own web homepage? Include it (if it's good!).

### **Education**

Give places of education where you have studied - most recent education first. Include subject options taken in each year of your course. Include any special project, thesis, or dissertation work.

Pre-college courses (high school, etc.) should then be included, including grades. Subjects taken and passed just before college will be of most interest. Earlier courses, taken at say age 15-16, may not need much detail.

### **Work experience**

- List your most recent experience first. Give the name of your employer, job title, and very important, what you actually did and achieved in that job. Part-time work should be included. Give enough relevant information about your previous

employers and projects to interest the reader, but not enough to send them to sleep.

- The best candidate CVs summarise a wealth of knowledge and experience in a concise and engaging fashion.
- List your duties, responsibilities and the reporting structure you worked within and any unusual features of your role or project or experience. Focus on the **benefits of the experience** you have gained, rather than on the features of it. Avoid exaggerating any facts or information
- Consider preparing different CVs, each with a different emphasis if you are targeting different types of job or employer.

### **Interests**

They will be particularly interested in activities where you have leadership or responsibility, or which involve you in relating to others in a team. A one-person interest, such as stamp-collecting, may be of less interest to them, unless it connects with the work you wish to do. Give only enough detail to explain. (If you were captain of a sports team, they do not want to know the exact date you started, how many games you played, and how many wins you had! They will ask at the interview, if they are interested.) If you have published any articles, jointly or by yourself, give details. If you have been involved in any type of volunteer work, do give details.

## Skills

Ability in other languages, computing experience, or possession of a driving licence etc. should be included.

Social skills and competences

What are we talking about?

Social skills and competences refer to living and working with other people, in positions where communication is important and situations where teamwork is essential (for example culture and sports), in multicultural environments, etc.

Describe your social skills and competences, e.g.: team spirit; good ability to adapt to multicultural environments, gained through my work experience abroad; good communication skills gained through my experience as sales manager.

Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminars, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.).

Organisational skills and competences

What are we talking about?

Organisational skills and competences refer to coordination and administration of people, projects and budgets; at work, in voluntary work (for example culture and sports) and at home, etc.

- Describe your organisational skills and competences, e.g.: leadership (currently responsible for a team of 10 people); sense of organisation (experience in logistics);
- Good experience in project or team management.

Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminars, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.)

Technical skills and competences

What are we talking about?

Technical skills and competences refer to mastery of specific kinds of equipment, machinery, etc. other than computers, or to technical skills and competences in a specialised field (manufacturing industry, health, banking, etc.).

Computer skills and competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe your technical skills and competences, e.g.: good command of quality control processes (I was responsible for the implementation of quality audit in my dept);</li> </ul> <p>Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminar, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.).</p> <p>What are we talking about?</p> <p>Computer skills and competences refer to word processing and other applications, database searching, acquaintance with Internet, advanced skills (programming etc.). Describe your computer skills and competences, e.g.: good command of Microsoft Office™ tools (Word™, Excel™ and PowerPoint™);</p> <p>basic knowledge of graphic design applications (Adobe Illustrator™, PhotoShop™).</p> <p>Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminar, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.).</p>
Artistic skills and competences	<p>State here your artistic skills and competences which are an asset (music; writing; design, etc.) e.g.: carpentry</p> <p>Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, seminars, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.)</p>
Other skills and competences	<p>State here any other skill(s) and competence(s) which are an asset and are not mentioned under earlier headings (hobbies; sports, positions of responsibility in voluntary organisations), e.g.: trekking</p> <p>Specify in what context they were acquired (through training, work, voluntary or leisure activities, etc.)</p>
Driving licence(s)	<p>State here whether you hold a driving licence and, if so, for which category of vehicle, e.g.: Scooter, Bike, Car, Heavy Vehicle.</p>

## **References**

Usually give two names - one from your place of study, and one from any work situation you have had. Or if this does not apply, then an older family friend who has known you for some time. Make sure that referees are willing to give you a reference. Give their day and evening phone numbers if possible.

## **Length**

Maybe all you need to say will fit onto one sheet of A4. But do not crowd it - you will probably need two sheets. Do not normally go longer than this. Put page numbers at the bottom of the pages - a little detail that may impress.

## **Style**

There are two main styles of CV, with variations within them.

### **Chronological**

Information is included under general headings - education, work experience, etc., with the most recent events first.

### **Skills based**

You think through the necessary skills needed for the job you are applying for. Then you list all your personal details under these skill headings. This is called 'targeting your CV', and is becoming more common.

But it is harder to do. So take advice on whether it is OK in your country and culture, and how to do it best.

## **Optional extra**

- It can be good to start with a Personal Profile/Objective statement. This is a two or three sentence overview of your skills, qualities, hopes, and plans. It should encourage the employer to read the rest. It is easy to do more harm than good in this first impression summary. Use the key words and terms that are relevant to the job you are applying for. Check that you have only stated what you actually substantiate later in the CV. Avoid clichés at all costs; if you use words such as dynamic, ambitious, or career minded, provide evidence to back up what you are saying. This section can be best when punchy bullet points of your 3-6 most impressive achievements are listed e.g.
  - Experience of the analysis and valuation of rail maintenance work from pre-contract stage to final account settlement.
  - Confident in the preparation of complex and detailed final account variation claims of up to £5M in value
  - Extensive experience in the preparation of monthly management figures, and also monthly reports for managing director on past, current and future project status.

## **Presentation**

You may vary the style according to the type of job, and what is accepted in your country and culture. So a big organization/ company would normally expect a formal CV on white paper. But, just perhaps, a CV applying for a television production job, or graphic designer, could be less formal - coloured paper, unusual design, etc!

Consider using a two column table to list your educational qualifications and courses taken.

## **Covering letter**

When sending in a CV or job application form, you **must** include a covering letter. The purpose of the letter is:

To make sure that the CV arrives on the desk of the correct person. Take the trouble to telephone, and find the name of the person who will be dealing with applications or CVs, and address your letter, and envelope, to that person by name. (In a small company, it may be the managing director. In a medium size company, it may be the head of section/department. Only in a large company will there be a Personnel or Human Resource Department.).

To persuade the person to read your CV. So it must be relevant to the company, interesting, and well produced.

To clearly say what job you are interested in. If you are sending in a 'speculative' CV hoping that they may have work for you, explain what sort of work you are interested in. Do not say, 'I would be interested in working for Widgets Ltd', but say 'I believe my skills equip me to work in the product development department/accounts office/whatever'. When sending a speculative CV, you may try telephoning later to push your enquiry further.

To say why you want that particular job with that particular employer.

To draw attention to one or two key points in the CV which you feel make you suited to **that** particular job with **that** particular employer.

Start your letter with an underline heading giving the job title you are interested in. (If you saw the job advertised, say where you saw it.)

Use the style and pattern of a business letter suited to your culture and country. Ask for advice about this. Try to find sample business letters so that you can follow style and layout. The letter should only be on one side of A4 paper. It must be polite and easy to read.

Also mention when you are available for an interview. Ending your letter with a request for specific extra information may give a positive response.

## **Application forms**

To apply for some jobs, the employer will send you an application form. You should still use a covering letter, and send your CV also unless told not to. Application forms need as much care to write as CVs. Remember the lessons earlier on this page. Here are some short guidelines:

**Plan** everything you will say on a separate piece of paper. Or make a photocopy of the form, and practice completing it first.

**Only complete the real form** when you are exactly sure what is the best thing to say.

It must be very neat and clear, and in black pen so that it can be easily photocopied.

You should 'angle' your answers to the company, in the same way as explained for your CV.

Do not say in answer to any question - 'see my CV'. They do not want to try to read both at the same time.

Take a photocopy to keep, so that you can remember exactly what you said. If you are called to interview, take this copy with you into the interview.

## **Other points**

Keep copies of all letters, applications forms, and CVs sent, and records of telephone calls and names of those you spoke to.

## **The interview**

Learning how to handle an interview is also very important. Take as much advice as you can. Try and 'practice' an interview. Ask a friend, or college teacher, to pretend to interview you.

Be positive, and confident (if you can!) but not over-confident. Be well-informed about the company, its record and achievements, about the job and why you want it. Have questions ready to ask about the company and the job. If you are not accepted, some employers may be kind enough to look at your interview notes, and explain to you how you could improve your CV and interview technique.

Ask - you can only be refused, and it shows you are prepared to develop and learn; they may make a note about you for future reference.

## **Here are some more tips to write an effective CV:**

### **Keep it neat:**

The only fate dirty CVs meet is landing up in the trash bins. So, make sure that your CV is neat and well organised. We talk a lot about the products being user friendly. Make sure your CV is also user friendly. User her is the person who screens the CVs and gives you a gate pass to the interview.

### **Keep it small:**

No one has time to read pages after pages about you. Keep your CV as short as possibly. Try that it doesn't go beyond two pages. After all, certain things should be left to discuss in the interview also.

### **Write short and crisp sentences:**

Long sentences are difficult to read and understand. Use punctuation marks properly to keep your sentences short and crisp.

### **Start with contact details:**

Provide your contact details at the beginning of your CV. After your CV is shortlisted, the first thing a recruiter wants to do is give you an interview call. If your contact details are not easily found or are embedded somewhere in the text on second page, there are high chances of you losing the opportunity to the next candidate. So, provide a phone number and an e-mail address where you can be reached.

**Provide a career summary:**

Your career summary appears on the first screen of recruiter's computer. It should say all about you and the recruiter should be able to decide by looking at these 7-8 lines if they want to call you for an interview or not.

**Work experience is more important than qualification:**

If you have a work experience, qualification takes a back seat. Provide information about your work experience focussing on your achievements which display your skills. If you add some numbers to the achievements, it helps you in increasing the level of interest in a recruiter.

For e.g. if you said, "Settled 4 manufacturing units in 5 states of India during 3 years" it becomes stronger than "Settled manufacturing 4 units in India".

**Educational qualifications:**

Provide your educational qualifications in chronologically descending order. People are more interested in finding out about your recent past. If you have not scored good marks, avoid providing the percentage of marks you scored.

Include the relevant information. Your CV may require a little bit of modification according to the type of opening you are applying for. You may need to expose different facets of your personality and work experience for different openings.

**Avoid un-necessary details:**

It doesn't matter to a recruiter what your father's or mother's name is. Similarly, he is not interested in knowing the number of children you have (until he has to bear their expenses). Cut out these and other such unnecessary details from your CV.

**Avoid abbreviations:**

Most of the times your CV will be screened by the HR people and they are not experts in every domain. So, avoid the use of abbreviations and jargons to make the CV easier for them to read and understand. If they do not understand an abbreviation or jargon you have used in the CV, it might cost you the opportunity, making the whole exercise futile.

**Use more impactful words:**

Use words which display your control over things. For e.g. managed, achieved, counselled, recruited etc.

**Emphasize at right place:**

Learn to emphasize at right place in the CV. If you think, any of your particular achievements gives you a cutting edge over other job seekers for a particular opening, emphasize on it. For e.g. if you are a fresher and you have been a topper of your college or university, it is worth mentioning and emphasizing in the CV. Similarly, if you are an experienced worker and your particular achievement has been acknowledged by your employer, which you think can add

more value to your CV while applying for a particular position, emphasize on it.

### **Check for spellings and grammar**

Try to keep your CV free of any spelling mistakes and bad grammar. They put the recruiter off and can put you in embarrassing situations at times.

### **Avoid using "I," "my" in your CV**

The recruiter knows well that you are talking about yourself in your CV. Avoid the use of words like I, my in your CV. It makes you look egomaniac.

So, as you sit to write your CV, keep these tips in mind and prune out any unnecessary details. It should give you an effective CV.

## **12 things recruiters do not like to see on a CV**

Having seen the tips to write an effective CV, let's take a look at the things which might put recruiters off from your CV.

### **Colorful or glossy paper and flashy fonts**

Your CV is a formal, official document. Keep it simple. Use a plain white A4 size paper and formal fonts like Times New Roman, Verdana, Calibri or Arial. Avoid using flashy fonts like Lucida Calligraphy or Freestyle Script.

However, there are exceptions to everything and they do exist here as well. If you are applying to a position where you are required to demonstrate your creative skills using a glossy paper and flashy fonts might work to your advantage.

### **Resume or CV on the top**

Many people have a habit of giving a heading to their CV. The usual ones are CV, Curriculum Vitae, Resume. The person reading the CV very well knows that it's a CV and moreover your CV will be accompanied by a cover letter which will do the job of introducing it.

When you receive a newspaper in the morning, does anyone need to tell you that it's a newspaper? Does it have a bold heading, NEWSPAPER? No. Looking at the newspaper itself tells you what it is. This applied to your CV also.

## **Photographs until asked**

Photographs until asked - Do not add your photo to the CV until you have been asked for it. For general positions, recruiters are more interested in your skill set rather than your looks.

Photographs are required only for certain types of positions like models, actors etc.

## **Usage of 'I', 'My', 'He', 'She'**

Do not use these in your CV. Many candidates write, 'I worked as Team Leader for the XYZ Company' or 'He was awarded Best Employee for the year 2007'. Usage of 'I' and related terms makes you look like an egomaniac in your CV.

## **Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors**

Proof read your CV until you are confident that it doesn't have any spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. They are big put offs for the recruiters. Moreover, sometimes these mistakes might land you up in an embarrassing situation. A candidate who submitted his CV without proof reading it committed a mistake of wrongly spelling 'ask' as 'ass'. Now you can imagine the type of embarrassment he must have faced during the interview, when the interviewer pointed it out. These mistakes convey your lazy and careless attitude to the interviewer.

### **Lies about your candidature**

Do not lie about your past jobs or qualifications or anything which might have an impact up on the job. You may be able to secure a job with these lies today but tomorrow you may lose it as well.

Not necessary that you have to say everything about yourself. You definitely have the right to remain silent but do not portray yourself as someone who you are not.

### **Abbreviations or jargons that are difficult to understand**

People screening your resume usually belong to the HR department. If they do not understand what the abbreviations and jargons mean, they will simply dump your CV in the trash can. So, avoid over usage of such terms.

However, when you see the people from your domain for an interview, using these terms will demonstrate your familiarity with the area and give you better chances of getting hired.

### **Reasons for leaving the last job**

Leave them to be discussed during the personal interview. For example, some candidates write, Reason for leaving the last job: Made Redundant. Avoid making such statements in your CV.

### **Any past failures or health problems**

Mentioning these would reduce your chances of getting an interview call.

Suppose if you have a gap in your employment because you started your own business which did not do well. In this case, some

candidates might write, Reason for gap in employment: Started own business which did not do well. Do not do this type of injustice with your job hunt.

It is better to leave these to be discussed during the interview, if asked.

### **Current or expected salary**

Leave it to be discussed while negotiating the salary. Mentioning the expected salary or current salary until asked might cost you the opportunity if you look too costly or may get you badly paid if the employer was willing to pay you higher but you appeared as a cheaper alternative.

### **Irrelevant details**

Leave out the details like marital status, gender, passport number, number of kids, age of kids. These are usually irrelevant for the interviewers but at times might be used as a basis of discrimination.

## Difference between CV and Resume

### CVs vs. Résumés

	<b>Curriculum vitae (CV)</b>	<b>Résumé</b>
<b>What is it?</b>	A full list of your professional and educational history.	A summary of your experience and skills that are most pertinent to the advertised position.
<b>How long is it?</b>	Usually many pages; length is not important.	Usually one page only. Multiple pages only for senior-level positions.
<b>When do you use it?</b>	Used for academic positions and research positions in government and industry.	Used for every other type of job outside of academia and research science.
<b>Do you include your publications?</b>	A full list of publications is essential.	Even a partial list of publications is rarely included.
<b>How important is style and layout?</b>	Style doesn't matter that much; content is what matters most.	Style and content are important. Bad style is a real liability.
<b>Should I modify it to match each specific job to which I am applying?</b>	CVs do not need much alteration to fit each specific job opening	Résumés should be adapted to fit each specific job to which you are applying.

## Helpful Weblinks for resume/CV writing

- [http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_magazine/previous\\_issues/articles/0000/how\\_to\\_write\\_a\\_winning\\_resume](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/0000/how_to_write_a_winning_resume)
- <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/guide/cv.pdf>
- <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Europass+Documents/Europass+CV.csp>