



WHAT IS A CV AND WHAT CONTENT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

A **curriculum vitae (CV)** is a more comprehensive document that details ALL your past education, experiences, and competencies, including public presentations, academic writing and professional development. It's designed to introduce you to employers in academics, advanced research, post-secondary teaching and fine arts.

- CVs are focused on academic work with an emphasis on research and teaching
- CVs aim to provide comprehensive information
- CVs are often long: five, 10, 20 or more pages

The terms **résumé** and **CV** are sometimes used interchangeably. However, a résumé is used for work search, and a CV is used when applying for contracts, advanced research or post-secondary teaching positions. For those who use the two terms synonymously, the terms "academic résumé" or "academic CV" are often used to differentiate advanced research and post-secondary teaching documents.

What is the purpose of a CV?

You can use a CV when you're:

- applying for work and/or contracts in academics, advanced research, post-secondary teaching, and fine arts
- applying for graduate school, scholarships, etc.
- showcasing your background prior to a presentation

Information for graduate students

Early in your program, your CV may closely resemble your résumé. Creating a Research Interests section is the easiest way to quickly differentiate your CV from your résumé. While in your program, you should look for opportunities to build these sections of your CV: Research Experience, Teaching Experience, Publications, Presentations, and Professional Affiliations. Talk with your supervisor and other faculty members to uncover the opportunities.

As you progress through your program, your CV and résumé should become clearly differentiated documents.

What content should you include in your CV?

CV's are generally organized according to a chronological format. In other words, the major experience and education sections are listed in reverse chronological order and relevant competencies related to each experience are described immediately beneath the experience. Traditionally, there is often less description of competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes) on a CV than a résumé, though this may be changing.

Required information

- **Personal contact information:** This forms the header of your CV and includes your name, address, phone numbers and email. Make sure you have a professional email address and voicemail message.
- **Education:** This is a list of your educational credentials in reverse chronological order. For each credential, include the name of the degree/diploma/certificate, the institution and the year of completion for each of your credentials.



Once you have started your university degree, it is common practice to remove your high school diploma from your CV. However, if you have had an unusual or unique high school experience that links to your work goal, you may want to include it.

- **Professional affiliations:** This is a list of the professional associations you are a member of or informal professional groups in which you participate.
- **Awards and distinctions:** These include academic awards and related honours, as well as research funding like grants and fellowships.
- **Research interests:** This is a short, bulleted list detailing your research interests, and could include past research or future goals.
- **Research experience:** This is a description of your previous research experience, including personal research and research conducted on behalf of other individuals.
- **Teaching experience:** This is a description of your teaching experience and responsibilities, including courses taught, TA and lecture experiences, curriculum development, experience running labs, and tutoring.
- **Publications:** This is a list of your published work and includes the name of the publications.
- **Presentations:** This is a list of your professional presentation experience, including presentations at conferences, symposiums and in the community.
- **References:** Your references are three to four people who know you, generally from a work or educational setting, and who are willing to be contacted by a potential employer in order to comment on your contributions, personal qualities and work ethic. This section should appear at the end of your CV.

References most often include former or present supervisors, professors and coaches. References must NOT include relatives or friends. For each reference you will include the name, position title, organizational affiliation, location, phone number and email address. Always ask permission of your references to use their information. You may also want to ask them what they would say about you if someone called doing a reference check. It's a good idea to let them know about the kind of work you are applying for. Keep your references updated on your work search progress to ensure they will not be blind-sided by a call they were not expecting. It is also a good idea to provide them with a current copy of your CV.

Reference letters do not replace a personal connection and employers usually prefer to make direct contact with your references. It's important to keep in contact with your previous employers, even if they change jobs, as prospective employers will still wish to speak with them. Put a notation on your CV indicating the context in which you knew your previous employer (e.g., "former supervisor").

Optional information

- **Objective:** This is a brief statement at the beginning of your CV that focuses on how you can contribute to your field of practice.
- **Summary or profile:** This is a brief section near the beginning of your CV that includes four to six statements that strongly connect you to the work or educational experience you are seeking.



Often you will include statements describing your specifically related competencies and accomplishments. Think of this as a summary of the key points from your cover letter.

- **Professional service:** This is a list of academic committees that you have belonged to, as well as your contributions to professional organizations (e.g., Graduate Student Society, graduate student representative on academic committees,)
- **Competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes):** Competencies are your skills, knowledge and attributes related to the work you are seeking and are best presented as bulleted statements beginning with action verbs (such as “developed”, “created”, and “supervised”, etc.) that describe your accomplishments in clear, concrete terms. Traditionally, competencies are only minimally articulated on a CV.
- **Relevant work experience:** This includes a summary of work experience that is relevant to your current goal. Check the application to determine if this section is required or if it would add value to your CV. If so, include your co-op work terms and other experiences like internships, practicums or specific projects. Alternately, you could integrate this into your research and teaching sections.

CV checklist

Use this checklist to put together content for your CV. Next, meet with a Co-op and Career staff member to review your draft together.

SECTION/AREA	COMPLETED?
Required on a CV	
Personal contact information	
Education	
Professional affiliations	
Awards and distinctions	
Research interests	
Research experience	
Teaching experience	
Publications and presentations	
References	
Optional on a CV	
Objective	
Summary or profile	
Professional service	
Competencies	
Relevant work experience	