

In 1482, Leonardo da Vinci wrote a letter that is credited as the first CV. He was looking to land a job as a military engineer from Ludovico Sforza—the ruler of Milan, Italy—whom Leonardo referred to in his letter as "Most Illustrious Lord." The multitalented artist, scientist, and engineer created a 10-point list of his abilities, focusing on skills that were relevant to engineering. For instance, his fourth point (translated into English) read, "I have ... types of cannon, most convenient and easily portable, with which to hurl small stones almost like a hail-storm; and the smoke from the cannon will instill a great fear in the enemy on account of the grave damage and confusion." Only at the very end—after laying out his knowledge of bridges, moats, and catapults—did Leonardo see fit to add that "I can execute sculpture in marble, bronze and clay. Likewise in painting, I can do everything possible."

Leonardo's CV is a model in how to communicate your credentials. He was organized, concise, and confident in his abilities. He also put the most relevant information front and center. Modern scientists, almost all of whom will need to craft a CV at some point during their careers, can learn from his example.

A polished CV—or curriculum vitae, which roughly translates to "the course of my life"—is essential in academia. It's indispensable for job and grant applications, performance reviews, speaking engagements, and numerous other academic activities. CVs provide a far more exhaustive list of a scientist's academic accomplishments than is typical in a resume, often listing degrees, positions, publications, and presentations; teaching, mentoring, and service activities; and other relevant categories.

It's important to craft a CV that you can post on your website and send to colleagues on short notice. So, with that goal in mind, we list four tips for writing a compelling and informative CV. We will also give you advice about creating an online "extended CV"—including a Google Scholar profile and professional website—to make your hard work easily accessible to a broad audience.

- **Tip No. 1: Introduce yourself.** Most CVs start with your name, current title and affiliation, and contact information. Some scientists also mention their date of birth, family details, and other personal information at the top of their CV, but in our experience that is not necessary or relevant. You should include a link to your website if you have one. You may also want to include a short summary of your interests and expertise to give readers a sense of who you are and what you can bring to the table.
- **Tip No. 2: Order matters.** For the remainder of your CV, think carefully about the order of your sections. There is a greater chance that readers will look at and remember items that are placed toward the beginning of a document—a phenomenon known as the primacy effect. So you'll want to start with the sections that are most relevant to the job you're applying for or that feature your

most significant strengths. Often, that will mean starting with your position history, degrees, publications, grants, and awards, although if you're applying for a teaching position, you may want to place teaching and mentoring experience ahead of your publications and grants. Place less important sections—such as invited talks, conference presentations, service activities, and society memberships—lower down. Within each section, we recommend specifying the year you accomplished each item and listing the items in reverse chronological order. But don't just take our word for it. The norms may differ in your field and you should ask your own mentors and colleagues for additional advice.

- **Tip No. 3: Highlight important information.** CVs are long—sometimes more than 10 pages in length—so it is fair to assume that some readers might skim your CV or stop reading at some point. If you selectively highlight words and phrases using bold typeface, that can help ensure that your reader doesn't miss the most important information. For instance, in your teaching experience section, you might want to use bold typeface for the title of your position and regular typeface to describe the tasks that you were responsible for and where you conducted the work. We also recommend including hyperlinks to your papers, pre-prints, and other key documents because that will help readers who are interested in taking a closer look at your work.
- **Tip No. 4: Update your CV.** It's important to add items to your CV as you publish papers, receive grants, and carry out other academic activities. It is a good habit to update your CV after each accomplishment to ensure you don't forget to add it. Keep in mind, though, that a long CV isn't the ultimate goal: It's equally important to delete items as the accomplishments on your CV start to add up. If you don't do that, it'll be harder for readers to pick out your most important accomplishments and it might appear as though you're "fluffing" up your resume with minor items. For instance, your summer research job during college might look good on an application to grad school, but over time you'll want to omit that item. To get a sense of when to delete certain kinds of information, check out the CVs of colleagues who are at the same career stage as you. Doing so may also give you an idea of items you can add that you hadn't thought about.

That concludes our list of tips for creating a CV, which is all that Leonardo needed when he applied for jobs in the 15th century. But we all live in the 21st century, so we also need to think about how to disseminate information about ourselves online. A colleague may scour the internet to find out about another scientist after they hear a great presentation, read an exciting paper, or meet someone new at a conference. And a strong online presence might lead to an invitation to give a talk or collaborate. To take advantage of these opportunities, you need to create a professional online presence.

As a first step, we strongly encourage creating a Google Scholar profile, which only takes a few minutes. The platform will list all your publications automatically based on the name that you use in your profile. (But do a quick check to ensure there are no errors!) The default setting orders publications based on how many citations they have received, which will allow web viewers to quickly find your most impactful work. Your Google Scholar profile will update automatically over time when you publish new papers.

At some point in your career, you'll also want to create a professional webpage for yourself or, if you are a principal investigator (PI), for your entire research group. This is particularly important when you are making a career transition—for instance, if you're applying for postdoctoral positions, going on the faculty job market, or pursuing a nonacademic career. But the sooner you build a page the better, because it will take time for your website to appear at the top of search results when someone searches your name.

A website will allow you to provide more details and context about your work than you can otherwise include on your CV. For instance, you could add a biography section, research and teaching statements, and links to materials or computer code that you have created. If you're allowed to do so, you may want to provide an option to download your publications, as that will make it easier for scientists who don't have library journal access to read your work. You can also provide an option to download your CV, and you can link to your Google Scholar profile and any other relevant online presence (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, GitHub, ORCID). And if you are the PI of a research group, create profiles on your website for trainees to help them highlight their own work and accomplishments.

Bottom line

The goal of your CV—as well as extended information that appears online—is to highlight your accomplishments and make your work easily accessible. Invest the time to make a clear, compelling CV. Keep it up-to-date and honest. And build a web presence so that your work is available to colleagues around the world.

Do you need inspiration to get started? Take some time to look at the CVs and websites of colleagues who you admire. Also, feel free to check out what we've posted online: Jay's, Leah's, and Neil's CVs; Jay's, Leah's, June's, and Neil's Google Scholar profiles; Jay's and Neil's personal websites; as well as Jay's, Leah's, June's, and Neil's lab websites. You're welcome to borrow any of the formatting ideas for your own materials. Best of luck!

Writing an academic CV (Curriculum Vitae) is both a science and an art. There is a scientific method to structuring your CV as much as an artistic tune to how you build your profile. More importantly, an academic CV helps (in most parts) define you—and your research.

Since my postgraduate days at Delhi University, I have drafted and re-drafted academic CVs multiple times and continue to do so. As a student and an academic, it presents your work to a broader audience without them having to really talk with you.

Before proceeding further, I want to caveat that this blog reflects my biases and academic interests. I am a student of politics. As a result, this blog may reflect that element. However, these general comments will help you build a CV even if you are a student of sciences, even if you are studying business administration, or even if you are doing engineering.

Although you may not be a politics student, your CV will follow the same format.

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What is an academic CV?

An academic CV summarises an individual's education, research experience, skills, publications, and conferences. This document is typically used when applying for a fellowship, grant, scholarship, academic position, and job.

An outstanding academic CV should emphasize credentials and competence in a particular field. It should be brief and easy to read. A typical Academic CV comprises academic degrees, research activities, papers, commentaries, teaching experience, affiliations with professional bodies, competencies, languages, and references. More importantly, it should be clean and easily readable.

Some things to understand before writing an academic CV

1. It takes time to master your skills in building a good CV.

While writing an academic CV may seem straightforward. It isn't all that easy. One aspect is doing things (like writing papers and presenting at conferences), and the other is knowing how to present them.

Both of them matter. Let's say your CV presentation is good, but if there is nothing in it, there is a problem. If you have done things, and your CV is haphazard, there is a problem.

2. When creating your academic CV, always remember its purpose.

Ask yourself: What do you intend to achieve out of it? It means you need to know why you want this CV. If you are applying for an academic position, your CV should reflect that.

If you are applying for a research position, your CV should reflect that. It means your formatting should allow people to make sense of your competency. Therefore, constantly **tailor your CV for its purpose.**

3. Never include your biodata.

When I first began writing my resume and CV in 2018, many people I knew used to include whether they were married. I say, nobody cares. Some even add all the details about their family, brothers, sisters, and everyone else they know.

We should avoid this. More importantly, we should refrain from using these details as they seem unprofessional. This information does not serve any purpose.

4. Understand the difference between a resume and an academic CV.

At the outset, both these documents are requested by organisations for different purposes. When I was working in a data firm, briefly, I used to maintain a resume.

But there are differences between a resume and a CV:

- i. **Length:** A resume is about one (or at max two) pages long, whereas a CV is substantially long.
- ii. **Scope:** A resume broadly works to fit the company one is applying, but a CV is broad in scope.
- iii. **Format:** A resume formats everything in reverse chronological order, while a CV is formatted in detail.
- iv. **Purpose:** A resume is typically for landing a job, whereas a CV can be for various academic positions, grants and fellowships.

5. Your CV should speak for itself.

As a student, you should list all your academic qualifications properly. Ideally, you should include all your degrees, institutions, and graduation dates in reverse chronological order.

You should highlight all your research experiences. It may be your RA positions, internships, or writings. You must make sure that you know things in your field. Detail all your research papers, projects, and publications.

If you have any teaching experience, it is a big add-on. You should add them all. Detail all the courses you have taught so far, in what institutions, and in what capacity. You should all flaunt your research skills. If you know STATA, R, and other statistical tools, FLAUNT IT! (In my case, I don't have any!).

REMEMBER: as students, it is difficult to list all this at graduation. And it's OK. But, if you intend to start an academic career, you must contribute to these elements.

6. Use a good formatting style.

You should always use a suitable format for your CV. You must use a good font. There are many out there. You should look at other people and their CVs. They can be a good source for formatting. More importantly, your headings and subheading should all follow the same format.

One pro-pro tip for academic CV: Visit Oxford or Cambridge University, graduate student listing. Many would have their CVs listed in

their profiles. If you don't find them there, you can always Google those students' names and see if they have a personal website. And trust me, many do have their websites. You should look at their CVs listed on their sites. Download them, and use those CV formats for your own CV.

7. Keep Your academic CV concise.

There are many elements in a CV. Each of these elements requires you to explain parts of it but, at the same time, skip parts of it. Therefore, you need to be concise. You should not detail too much when writing about your educational qualification and professional experience. Instead, you must briefly summarise your degrees, roles and responsibilities, achievements, etc.

8. Make sure that you proofread your academic CV.

It can be embarrassing not to finish well. Your CV must be proofread. Trust me, you can never really be sure about using terms the first time. It gets even more complicated the second time, and so on... But that is about making a CV. It requires you to be careful. Therefore, your CV should always be proofread carefully.

Nine Steps to Writing an Exceptional Academic CV

You may often wonder what you put on an academic CV. Many of us require an academic CV to go abroad. We may have to apply for conferences and workshops. And we don't want to sound silly, right?

The best way to approach writing an excellent academic CV is to follow a format. I have a specific format, which I have redone again and again. And I will continue to do so.

My CV ideally includes a brief title and some personal information, then educational details, then academic interests, professional experience (include here: teaching, research, and volunteering), publications, conferences and workshops, professional memberships, skills (in here: training, languages, software), and references.

Now, I will discuss how to format individual template sections.

1. add your personal information

When adding personal information to your academic CV, it is essential to include relevant details such as name, address (maybe even your college departmental name), professional email, website (if you have one), and some other details (like LinkedIn, or Twitter handle if you want to add—but this is not necessary).

Curriculum Vitae
DANIEL A. WOODS, ED.D.
7669 Chesterfield Road • Baltimore, MD 21201
Home: 410-224-6649 • Cell: 410-224-6647
Email: danwoods@baltimore.k12.md.us

Add ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor IDentifier) if you have it. Here is mine: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1148-5640>, if you need any reference.

Personal information in your CV

- i. Full name
- ii. Professional address
- iii. Email/Phone
- iv. ORCID
- v. Website

Once you have added all this information, you must format it now. There are various ways to format it. You may format all these details to the left or keep them all at the centre. When satisfied with your personal details, you must now add information about your education details.

2. include your educational details

When including your educational details on your academic CV, it is essential to concisely summarise all the academic qualifications. CVs have a specific format for this. Here are some tips:

List all your educational qualifications in reverse chronological order.

For instance, start with your most recent degree and work backwards. Let's say you are a PhD student. Then, add your PhD details at the start, then your Master's (if you have any), and then your bachelor's degree details.

Include all relevant degrees.

You should not add everything that you have done. For instance, you may have gotten a certificate from Udemy. I don't particularly add it here. I don't think you should too. Instead, you should add degrees, diplomas,

the institutions you have attended, the title of the degree, and the year of graduation.

Add awards and honours.

This is important. You not only tell your audience that you have completed these courses but have certain honours to present. In many universities in the UK, getting your name on the “dean’s list” is the highest-level scholarship for a student in a college.

Similarly, in North America, if you have achieved “cum laude”, “magna cum laude”, or “summa cum laude”, then you may add it all. In India, too, there are various institutional awards for the highest academic achievers. Recognising that these awards come with their own problems is essential.

But they still are a mechanism for institutions to recognise one’s abilities (however flawed they may be).

EDUCATION

- **Ed.D., Educational Finance and Policy**, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1988
DISSERTATION: *An Analysis of the Program Cost and Intensity of Service of Public and Nonpublic Special Education in Maryland*
- **M.Ed., Educational Management and Supervision**, Loyola College, School of Management and Administration, Baltimore, MD, 1978
- **B.S., Elementary and Special Education**, Towson State University, Towson, MD, 1976

If you are in PhD, mention your dissertation title.

As a PhD student, it is essential to note your PhD title if your synopsis is passed—otherwise, you may leave it as it is. I tend to mention the kind of coursework that I undertook during my PhD. If you have completed your master’s, try to add some courses you enrolled in. It may give an edge. But, sometimes, crowding your CV too much may backfire.

Keep it concise.

Don't overcrowd your CV. Going into details here may be a good idea if you have nothing substantial to add. But, if you have done too many things, you may keep it simple.

Once you have added your academic records, you must venture into your research interests.

3. add your research interests

While not many tend to do this, I find this section helpful for beginners. It gives a sense of what it is that you research and what it is that your audience can know about you in advance.

It is also the most straightforward section of your CV. All you have to do is to enlist all your research interests. Let's say you are someone interested in the Indo-Pacific. Some of the research interests could be the things that revolve around it, the debates you may contribute to, and maybe some areas (and countries) you may find fascinating.

Once you have added your interests, you must make a case for your professional experience.

4. add your professional experience

The format for professional experience should begin with a clear section title, either "Professional Experience" or "Work History". After that, you must list all your work experiences in reverse chronological order, from the most recent job to the oldest.

1. Each job should then be added with a job title, company/organisation name, date of employment, a brief description of your roles and responsibilities, and key achievements (if you have any).
2. Use bullet points to make your information easily accessible to all.
3. Highlight also parts of sentences that you want your audience to focus on.
4. You should be able to demonstrate the impact of your role on a broader organisational goal, wherever possible.
5. Use the same font and formatting style as you would in your earlier sections.
6. Align each subsection with equally consistent formatting.

ACADEMIC /TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Associate Professor, Goucher College, Baltimore, MD, 1997 to Present

- Teach Educational Psychology, Foundations of American Education, and Classroom Management to classes averaging 20 students. Supervise Student Teachers at Gettysburg Area High School.

Adjunct Instructor, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 1997 to Present

- Teach Current Trends in Education, Students with Special Needs and Diverse Learning Styles, and Learning Theory and Human Development to graduate students in class sizes averaging 20 students.

Senior Lecturer, Coppin State University, Baltimore, MD, 1991 to 1996

- Taught course on the Nature and Needs of Exceptional Children to classes of 25 to 30 undergraduate students.

Lecturer, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1984 to 1996

- Taught course on Adapting the Secondary Curriculum for Special Education Students to graduate students in class sizes averaging 15 students.

There are two to three elements within the section on professional experience. Although I follow the two-element format, a broad three-element format is as helpful. The three elements are teaching experience, research experience, volunteering, and internships.

Teaching Experience:

This subsection should ideally include all the teaching roles that you have undertaken at various settings. This may include you teaching in schools, colleges, and universities. You may need to add the kinds of courses you dealt with. You also must make sure to add other broader formatting styles referenced above.

Research Experience:

This subsection deals with all the research roles you were involved with. This may include you working as a “Research Assistant” for a professor at your university. It may also be related to you working in a company, a think-tank, or a non-profit organisation, in some research role.

It should give a sense of what your work entailed, what kind of projects you worked on, your contributions to it, and how you benefited from it. But you must make sure to keep it crisp.

Volunteering and Internship Experience:

This is another essential subsection within the professional experience. It deals with all your internships and volunteering roles you undertook during your college and professional lives. This may include you working for an NGO as a volunteer. It may also include you joining a company as an intern—paid or unpaid (if unpaid, demand your pay!).

You need to make a brief mention of all that. As students, this is an essential space for us. We would have volunteered and interned much more than working at a place.

After you add your section on professional experience, you need to move on to publications.

An advertisement for Zety, a resume builder. It features the Zety logo on the left, a central image of a resume, and a red button on the right that says "BUILD RESUME NOW". Text to the right of the resume image reads: "Are colleagues landing new jobs? Smart candidates use a resume builder to 'wow' recruiters."

5. add your academic publications

To add your publications to your CV, you need to create a dedicated section titled “Publications” and list them out.

Here are some pro tips on how to add your publications to your CV:

1. **Make a separate section for your publications**, usually after your educational background, research interests and work history.
2. **List all publications in this section** in reverse chronological order. Starting with the most recent one, you must add all the articles.
3. **Follow a specific** formatting style (usually a bibliographic format), which includes publication title, journal title, volume, issue number, pages, DOI (Digital Object Identifier), date, and co-authors, if any.
4. **Highlight your role:** if you are the primary author, co-author, editor, etc.
5. **It would be best if you also created subsections.** This section should include journal articles, book chapters, book reviews, and select commentary.

After adding your publications, you need to focus on conferences and workshops.

6. add conferences and workshops you have attended

As a part of academic life, we are constantly involved in engaging with the academic world around us through conferences and workshops. It is one of the most critical elements of an academic's life.

You have to follow most of the generic comments presented above. However, you need to keep in mind to mention conferences and workshops, along with dates and their locations.

PRESENTATIONS

- Woods, Daniel, A. (1990), "Staff Development for Mid-Career Faculty." Presented at the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals and Assistant Principals annual conference, Columbia, MD.
- Woods, Daniel, A. (1989), "Youth Suicide Prevention." Presented to Carroll County Public School Special Education Teachers in Inservice Day, New Windsor, MD.
- Woods, Daniel, A. (1984), "Creating Effective Schools," seminar at the Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities Inservice Conference, Columbia, MD.

You must mention your contribution to the conference, such as presenting or organising the conference. You must also highlight your role if you were the chair, panellist, or moderator. This is pretty straightforward.

By this time, most of the formatting on your CV is complete. You have covered all the essential sections of your CV. Now, you are left with adding other details, such as professional memberships.

7. add professional membership affiliations

Joining a professional membership makes an academic's life easier. It helps you connect and collaborate with others in similar fields and interests, participate in conferences, socialise, and discuss your academic interests.

For instance, as an IR student, you may avail yourself of a free ISA (International Studies Association) membership if you are from Global South. Adding this section is relatively simple. Create a new section with all the details about which organisation you are a member of and since when. That is enough.

8. add your skills, languages, and software training

You must create a separate section titled Skills, list all your skills in bullet points, and organise them by category—like language, software, and others.

Then, you need to mention your proficiency in each software skill, such as basic, intermediate, or advanced. Similarly, for languages, you need to add your language proficiency: native, fluent, conversational, or basic.

In the section on others, you need to add if you know something other than your known skills.

9. add academic/professional references

Including references on your CV is unnecessary, as they can be provided separately upon request from potential employers. However, you must remember some essential things if you choose to add.

- 1. You must always choose someone as your referee you can testify on your behalf. It could be your course instructor. It may also be your supervisor. It may be someone you worked with, interned with, or have engaged with.**

2. **You must ask their permission before you enlist them as your referee. You must make sure to tell them that you are using them as your referees.**

3. **There is a specific standard format to add their information. You must add their name, title, workplace, and email address.**

These are some of the tips for adding references to your CV. By now, you may have completed working on your CV.

How to format your academic CV so it looks great?

As much as a website, which functions based on backend technicalities and frontend designs, an excellent academic CV requires a good design. It should look pleasant for the audience. Against that backdrop, I suggest here, three critical elements for CV formatting: templates, fonts, and styling.

1. Choose a good template for academic CV

When choosing a good template for your CV, you must never forget that it should be clean. It should be readable. It should follow a certain logical structure.

There are various websites to look for a good CV template. For instance, you may refer to Zety, Canva, or other CV-making sites. Some of these require you to purchase a good template. Others, you don't need to do anything.

You may take a look at them!

2. Choose a good font for academic CV

Some fonts are ideally best for CVs than others. I have experimented enough with font styling for CVs. Ideally, you need two font styles—one for the headings and the other for content. The best font styling will include one sans-serif font and the other serif font.

Here are some font styles you may use:

1. **Times New Roman + Arial**
2. **Georgia + Helvetica**
3. **Garamond + Verdana**
4. **Cambria + Calibri**
5. **Book Antiqua + Trebuchet MS**
6. **Didot + Lato**

3. Choosing a good style for your CV

Each CV should have its style. Again, several online resume builders offer templates to help you create a professional-looking resume. Zety, for instance, provides tips on building different CV styles. It offers several resume styles you can use to create your resume. Big companies may refer to Zety for enabling their employees to build their CVs. It can also be helpful for colleges to allow students to build their CVs without much hassle quickly.

How do you format your academic CV if you plan your Master's or PhD abroad?

Students planning to pursue their study abroad must have an excellent CV. It should be able to reflect your personality as a whole. Making a good CV is essential because it gives the first impression of you as an individual and an academic. Academic committees reject many of the applications based on their CVs. Therefore, one must be extra careful while making their CV for colleges abroad.

You may follow the advice and tips above while making your academic CV. But along with that, here are some pro tips:

- **You must restrict your CV to a maximum of 2 pages—but always follow the guidelines provided on the application website.**
- **Your CV has to be crisp.**
- **You need to use bullet points and avoid writing lengthy sentences.**
- **It should feel interesting. If you have done the same things as thousand others, then your CV does not serve the limelight.**
- **It should not look haphazard. It must be formatted appropriately and chronologically arranged, and accomplishments and awards must be meticulously highlighted.**
- **You may bold some text within the CV to ensure readers can directly sift through them.**
- **Try to use active voice. It is important to remember that passive voice is generally difficult to read. In all your writings, you must learn to use active voice.**

- **It has to be grammatically sound. Use Grammarly.com or other services that you may deem fit.**
- **Format your CV according to the guidelines provided by the applying university. This is most important. When preparing a generic CV, we tend to use it everywhere without reading the guidelines. You should avoid doing that.**

Generic tips from above and these pro tips will be able to help you create a good CV.

Tips for writing an effective CV

A CV format can vary depending on your field and the specific job you are applying for. Sarah Han, career coach at edX, discusses five steps to help you write a CV and reach your goals.

1. Make an impression within 30 seconds

Your CV is often the first thing a potential employer will see, so it's important that the initial impression is good, or you may not even get a chance to interview. “Start by making your CV easy on the eyes,” Han explains. Here’s how:

- Keep the text concise. Get to the point quickly and clearly.
- Break up text with headings and subheadings.
- Use bullet points to list your skills and experience.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms that the employer may not understand.

For some roles, having multiple versions of your CV can make sense, and there are many CV examples you can model. For example, if you are applying to be a UX designer, you could create a CV that demonstrates your layout skills as an industry standard. You could create another CV in a text format that can be read by an automated applicant tracking system (ATS), a software that manages job applications and other administrative aspects of the hiring process.

2. Present yourself as a problem solver

Problem solving is a core component of nearly every job. If you want to emphasize that you are solutions oriented, some CV tips include:

- **Highlight the types of problems you are good at solving.** Provide specific examples rather than talking at a high level to give employers the sense that you have experience.
- **Quantify your results.** Where possible, put figures to show the outcomes of projects you’ve worked on, such as the number of customers served, the amount of money saved, or the number of employees trained. This will show potential employers your effectiveness in doing the work.
- **Use data storytelling to show your impact.** Through data you can make your CV more credible and persuasive. Explain how customer satisfaction increased, costs decreased, or employee productivity improved.

“We live in a digital and data-driven world, so you want to include data where it’s possible and applicable,” Han says. “You want to demonstrate how you contributed to business growth through numbers.” Some examples of how to discuss your problem-solving abilities on your CV include:

- "Increased customer satisfaction by 10% by identifying and resolving customer pain points."
- "Reduced costs by 15% by implementing a new inventory management system."
- "Led a team of 10 people to successfully complete a project ahead of schedule and under budget."
- "Solved a complex technical problem that saved the company \$100,000."
- "Improved employee morale by 12% by organizing monthly awards and team-building activities."

Study the job posting to understand what types of problems a new hire would be required to solve and position yourself as being capable of providing relevant solutions. You can learn problem-solving skills in courses delivered by edX.

3. Highlight key information

Identify the skills and experience required for the position you want and tailor the format when writing a CV. “You can increase your chances of getting noticed by hiring managers when your CV has keywords that appear in the job description and when you quantify your experience,” Han says. “For example, instead of saying ‘I have experience with Microsoft Office,’ you could say, ‘I have five years of experience using Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.’”

Exactly what skills should you highlight in your CV? That may vary according to the job description. Han advises: Choose three to five that apply to the role and make sure they include technical skills and transferable skills, also known as employability skills. If you’re applying for a data scientist role, you can highlight your expertise using the Python programming language as well as your ability to communicate and collaborate well.

4. Research the company

To demonstrate that you understand the organization's culture, values, and goals, you need to do some homework. Write a CV that shows how your skills and experience can contribute to their success. The company culture

will also help you determine if you need to use a formal approach or a more conversational tone in your job application.

Start your research by visiting their website and reading their about page, mission statement, and product pages. Look for news articles about the company and follow them on social media. If the company sells a product or service, learn as much as possible about what it produces and try out the products if possible.

“Find people who work at the company on LinkedIn, or reach out to your network of contacts to find out more,” Han says. “By taking the time to research the company, you can confirm that you want to work there and you can position yourself as a strong candidate for the job.”

5. Prepare a new CV for each job

When it comes to your CV, quality trumps quantity.

“Spend time crafting a well-written CV that’s tailored to the specific job you are applying for,” Han suggests. “It makes more impact than just sending a generic CV to many hiring managers.”

Repeat keywords from the job description and reference relevant skills.

“Employers are more likely to take your application seriously when you match or mimic the words in the job description,” she adds. “It indicates that you are familiar with the position and have the skills to meet the role’s criteria.”

To help job seekers, [edX provides resources](#) with links to templates for universal and industry-specific applications. When you tailor your CV to each job, you can improve your chances of getting an interview and landing your dream career.

Career summary

A career summary is a clear and concise, 3–5-line paragraph providing a brief overview of your academic and professional experience, along with some key research findings, key achievements, major technical skills, and career goals.

Education

In this section, you should list—in reverse chronological order—your formal educational qualifications, right from your PhD back to your college degrees, including the thesis or dissertation topics, institution names, and the years you studied there.

Research experience

This section, too, you should arrange in reverse chronological order. List all research positions you have held, right from your time as a research assistant, including dates, job titles, and institution names. List under appropriate sections the projects you have worked on and their goals and outcomes. This is where you would highlight your contributions to the project, your subject expertise, and the technical skills you possess and how you used them.

Teaching experience

All relevant teaching experience, including lecturing, supervision, assistantships, assessments, etc., can be included under this heading in reverse chronological order. Expand on each of your teaching experiences with details about institution, courses taught, grade or level of the class, number of students you handle(d) and duration

spent. When describing your teaching experience, ensure that you list the subjects you taught and not the course codes.¹

Administrative experience

Demonstrate your administrative skills and leadership potential by listing your contributions to events, budget management, committee work, etc. Include numbers to indicate impact, specific details about your accomplishments, and of course, the dates/duration that you were involved in, in this activity.

Professional experience

Any relevant non-academic experience can be listed in this section. This includes any industry or corporate jobs that you may have had. Provide details such as dates, job titles, organisations, and brief descriptions of your roles.²

Publications

In the early stages of your career, you may not have a long list of published peer-reviewed research papers. But you may still have other publications worth mentioning. You can include, in addition to research papers, book chapters, relevant articles written for newspapers/magazines, reports, patents, etc., in reverse chronological order.³ You could also mention papers that are accepted, under review, or in preparation, ensuring that the status is mentioned within parentheses.

If, however, you do have a good number of publications, then list only the most significant and recent ones in this section and include the

rest as an exhaustive list in an appendix. There is also some merit in adding altmetric information of your articles, especially if you have access to them and you see that they are faring well in the public sphere.

Ensure that you follow a consistent referencing style throughout, highlighting your name in boldface. Remember that most CVs are now viewed digitally. So, it's important to include hyperlinks to your publications so that interviewers can easily access them.⁴

Science Communication

If you have significant experience in scicomm and you are passionate about it, then do include this section. It is after all a very valuable skill, given its growing importance in today's world. You can list activities such as writing blog posts, giving public lectures, undertaking sci-art initiatives, organizing public outreach events, and more. Be sure to highlight the impact of your efforts, such as the number of people you reached or the number of views your work received.

Professional development

Use this section to call attention to the training programs you have attended, certifications you have received, and workshops you have attended, to demonstrate your commitment to professional development and your desire to stay up-to-date in your field. List these in reverse chronological order and include dates and the name of the institute that offered the program.

Awards and honours

In this part, list any fellowships, grants, scholarships, or other funding that you have received. If the award is not well known, then provide context and details such as the award's purpose and selection criteria.

Skills

List all your technical, practical, language, and software skills in this section.

Conferences and seminars

As an early career researcher, you may have attended more conferences and seminars than you have presented at. List all conferences and seminars, including the name and location of the event, dates, and the title of your poster/presentation if applicable. Indicate, in parentheses, whether you attended only or presented too. If the list is too long, then focus only on those events that you presented in.^{5,6}

Professional affiliations

List any professional societies, groups, or associations you belong to, in this section.

References

Provide the details of at least two to three referees. Include their names, affiliations, designations, and contact details. These could be your supervisor or PI or someone who holds a senior position and has worked with you and can vouch for your research, skills, and work ethic. Ensure that you obtain the permission of these individuals before adding their details in your CV.

Step 2: Customize your CV

Once you have created an exhaustive CV containing all your achievements, skills, and contributions, set this aside, and do not apply for any role with this CV. Yes, you read that right. Instead, treat this document as a master CV that you update every few months. Now, to apply for any role, create a copy of this document and tailor it to match the role you are interested in; create a new customised CV that makes a compelling case for why you are ideal for that role.⁸

To do this, you will need to read and understand the job description. What skill set are they looking for? What does the position demand? Start with a career summary highlighting the skills and experiences you possess that are relevant to the job you're applying for.

Applying for a role that involves mostly teaching? Copy and paste your teaching experience and skills on top, above the rest. Applying for a leadership position? Show at the very start of your CV that you have led and you have the skills to lead, highlighting the project- and people-management roles you have performed. Do this with the other sections of your CV as well, removing or condensing the sections that may not be relevant for the role you are applying to. Want to apply to a research-oriented position? Put your research expertise right on top with more details such as relevant technical challenges you faced in your research and how you overcame these.

The key is to isolate and present specific skills and experiences from your career path that match the job requirements, even if that means deprioritizing some of your proudest achievements.^{1,8}

Step 3: Format it

Do not attempt to go fancy with your typeface choices. Stick to one or two typefaces that are easy to read and easy to skim through. Use a consistent format throughout, with a font size that is either 11 or 12 pt. Leave an inch of margin on all four sides.³ Also adjust the line spacing to create more white space and make your CV more readable.

Use boldface or italics to highlight text where necessary, but use them in moderation. Use headers to put your name on every page. Also, mark each page with the page number.¹ Lastly, make sure that no section is split across two pages.

If you are a researcher at an early stage of your career, your CV should be ideally no more than 5 pages long.⁸ Once you are done with your CV, proofread it thoroughly to ensure that there are no errors. Check and confirm that your hyperlinks work. And finally, get a close friend or colleague to go through it once, because they may spot errors that you missed.

Now, with these pointers, go ahead and spend some time crafting that perfect CV. I assure you it is time well spent.

How to create a curriculum vitae that is compelling, well-organized and easy to read
A good CV showcases your skills and your academic and professional achievements concisely and effectively. It's well-organized and easy to read while accurately representing 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(opens in new tab/window) typically used by non-academics in industry because you need to present your research, various publications and awarded funding in addition to the other items contained in a non-academic CV. Here are some tips. They are organized into categories that could be used to structure a CV. You do not need to follow this format, but you should address the categories covered here somewhere in your CV.

Tools you can use

- •

If you're looking to demonstrate the impact your research has had, PlumX Metrics are available in several of Elsevier's products and services, giving you an overview of how specific papers have performed, including where they were mentioned in the media, how other researchers used them, and where they were mentioned on platforms from Twitter to Wikipedia.

- •

You can also use Mendeley Careers to discover job opportunities based on the keywords and interests listed in your CV and the articles you've read in your Mendeley library.

- •

If you're looking for more specific guidance on how to take control of your career in research and academia, Elsevier's Research Academy(opens in new tab/window) has entire sections dedicated to job search(opens in new tab/window), career planning and career guidance.

General tips

Start by considering the **length**, **structure** and **format** of your CV.

Length

- •

2 pages is optimal for a non-academic CV, but research positions offer more flexibility on length(opens in new tab/window)

- •

Include research-specific details that emphasize your suitability, like relevant publications, funding secured in your name, presentations and patents to the employer.

- •

4 sides is a reasonable length. Academic recruiters may accept more if the additional information is relevant to the post.

Structure

Next, choose a structure for your CV.

- •

Start with the main headings and sub-headings you will use.

- •

In general, you should start by providing some brief personal details, then a brief career summary.

- •

The first section of your CV should focus on your education, publications and research.

- •

Also address: funding, awards and prizes, teaching roles, administrative experience, technical and professional skills and qualifications, professional affiliations or memberships, conference and seminar attendances and a list of references.

Dr. Sheba Agarwal-Jans talks about writing an academic CV for Elsevier's Researcher Academy (free registration required). Watch [here](#) (opens in new tab/window).

Formatting

- •

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).

- •

Bullet points can highlight important items and present your credentials concisely.

- •

Keep a consistent style for headings and sub-headings and main text – do not use more than 2 font types.

- ●

Make smart but sparing use of **bold** and *italics*. (Avoid underlining for emphasis; underlines are associated with hyperlinks.)

- ●

Be aware of spelling and grammar and ensure it is perfect. Re-read a few times after writing the CV. Spell check can be useful, though some suggestions will not be accurate or relevant.

Composing your CV

Personal details

- ●

Personal details include your name, address of residence, phone number(s) and professional email.

- ●

You might also include your visa status if relevant.

Career summary

- ●

Use about 5 to 7 sentences to summarize your expertise in your disciplines, years of expertise in these areas, noteworthy research findings, key achievements and publications.

Education

- ●

Provide an overview of your education starting from your most recent academic degree obtained (reverse chronological order).

- ●

Include the names of the institutions, thesis or dissertation topics and type of degree obtained.

- ●

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.

Publications

- •

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

- •

Your research experiences, 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 awards

- •

Indicate any prizes, awards, honors or other recognitions for your work with the year it occurred and the organization that granted the award.

Funding

- •

The funding you have attracted for your research and work is recognition of the value of your research and efforts.

- •

As with the honors and recognitions, be forthcoming with what you have obtained in terms of grants, scholarships and funds.

Teaching

- •

List your teaching experience, including the institutions, years you taught, the subjects you taught and the level of the courses.

Administrative experience

- •

Administrative experience on a faculty or at a research institute should be noted.

- •

This might include facilitating a newsletter, organizing events or other noteworthy activities at your institution or beyond.

Professional experience

- •

Include any employment in industry that is recent (within the last 5 to 10 years) and relevant to your academic work.

- •

Professional experience can explain any gaps in your academic work and demonstrate the diversity in your capabilities.

Other skills and qualifications

- •

Highlight key skills and qualifications relevant to your research and academic work.

- •

Technical and practical skills, certifications, languages and other potentially transferrable skills 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 you have been active with within the last 5 years.

- •

Keep this section short.

Attendance at conferences and seminars

- •

List the most relevant conferences or seminars where you presented or participated on a panel within the last 5 to 7 years.

- •

In an appendix, you can add an exhaustive list of conferences and seminars where you participated by giving a speech, presenting a paper or research, or took part in a discussion panel.

References

- •

List at least three people who can provide a reference for your research, work and character. Check with them first to make sure they are comfortable recommending you and aware of the opportunities you are seeking.

- •

Provide their names and complete contact information. They should all be academics and all people you have worked with.

Appendices

- •

Appendices enable you to keep the main content of your CV brief while still providing relevant detail.

- •

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.

Final note

CVs are not only for job searching. You will need to update your CV regularly and adapt it for the various purposes:

- •

Awards, fellowships

- •

References

- •

Publishing

- •

Grant applications

- •

Public speaking

- •

Consulting

- •

Leadership