

## Categories to include on a curriculum vitae

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*We know you have questions, so we went to the experts for answers. This column features experienced faculty advisors and student affairs professionals answering questions about choosing a specialty, applying for residency, and any other career-related concerns you may have.*

**Dear Advisor,**

**I am applying for a research fellowship and have to submit a curriculum vitae (CV). What categories and how much of my undergraduate experiences should I include?**

Your CV is an opportunity to clearly identify your qualifications and emphasize your strengths by presenting your training, skills, and achievements. Although you're currently creating a CV to secure a research fellowship, you'll continually revise and update your CV as you progress in your career. Consider it a living document or permanent work-in-progress from this point forward.

The overall appearance of your CV should be organized, neat, concise, and pleasing to the eye. Use consistent spacing, and leave enough white space for easy reading. So first, pick a format you like that's clean, uncluttered, and easily updated. Avoid templates that accompany software programs; they're often difficult to work with or modify. Then choose one professional font, and set 1-inch margins.

Start your CV with your name and contact information, including e-mail and mailing addresses and phone number. Omit unnecessary information such as your social security number, birth date, marital status, or high school achievements.

Because CV's are generally formatted in reverse chronological order, the education section is usually next on a medical student's CV, as it is the most recent and pertinent experience. Include the institution, location, dates, and degrees earned and expected. Other categories to follow should highlight your most important experiences as well as those most relevant to the position you're applying for.

Professional activities such as research projects, publications, and presentations should always be included. However, many medical students lack such experiences early in their career. If this is you, then it's OK to include some undergraduate activities and honors, particularly those that were fairly selective (e.g., you were 1 of 3 people selected nationwide for an award) or point to relevant skills or qualifications. You could also include undergraduate experiences that illustrate a particular theme, such as leadership or community service. Include work experiences that demonstrate pertinent qualifications, such as community service, leadership, interpersonal or communication skills, and teamwork.

### CV categories

- Education
- Professional or work experience
- Publications and presentations
- Honors and awards
- Research
- Leadership

- Community service
- Professional affiliations and memberships
- Licensure and certifications
- Military experience
- Foreign language proficiencies
- Teaching experience
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Note: There is some overlap among categories, so combine and use categories that best fit your experience and achievements.

Sample CVs are available, or check with your student affairs office for guidance, templates, and samples.

Please accurately represent your skills and qualifications. If a publication is “in progress” label it as such rather than “published” in the hopes that it will be by the time your CV is reviewed. Often, these misrepresentations are unintentional, but you’re responsible for presenting a truthful, accurate CV that can be verified if requested.

Last, carefully proofread your CV for misspellings, incorrect grammar, and inaccuracies, and have others review it as well. And submit your CV to your advisor or a mentor who has experience in this area for their feedback. Then you’ll have a CV that best represents you.

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*Have a question you want our panel of experts to address? Send your queries to [careersinmedicine@aamc.org](mailto:careersinmedicine@aamc.org) and put “Ask the Advisor” in the subject line.*

- **Terri Blevins, M.A.**

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