# Developing Your Curriculum Vitae

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## Introduction

At the Employment Center Help Desk at the 2006 Joint Winter Meetings, several candidates stopped by to ask questions about their application materials, especially their C.V.'s. Although each candidate's individual professional experiences will vary widely, some tips apply to everyone. The focus here is on writing one's first C.V., anticipating that candidates with more experience in composing search materials will already know well how to update their C.V.'s.

## About You

As far as organization, put your name at the top, centered and in bold type, with a 16- or 18-point font. Next, include complete contact information for both home and office, especially your e-mail address. It is best to use your e-mail at your current employer; if you have reservations about this, then use a personal account. Only include a cell phone number if you are seldom in your office or do not have a land line; in this case, be prepared to be contacted at possibly some inopportune time(s). At least one postal address is vital, since employers will usually send you affirmative action cards to fill out, formal application forms, or perhaps other information regarding their position vacancies. If you are not a U. S. citizen, this is also a good place to include your citizenship status. This is very important to many hiring organizations, as U. S. citizens are typically given preference.

## Your Education

Next, include your educational background, with most recent degree first. If you are ABD, say so, along with an expected date of completion of your doctoral work. If you are concerned that including the years in which you received your degrees might "date" you, this may be excluded. If you have any time gap(s) in your employment history, think carefully about how you will handle this. A good order to use is the degree obtained, major subject (be specific), year (if desired), and the institution from which you obtained your degree. Listing the years your degrees were obtained is helpful, especially for those applying for entry-level positions.

## About Your Jobs

Next, list your employment history, once again chronologically, with the most recent position first. Search committees often review large volumes of application materials, so it is imperative that your most recent information stand out, as only a cursory look may be given initially to determine if you make the "first cut". It is advisable to list years for the most recent position(s) held for prospective employers to see how current your experience is. For each position, include the employer name, your official title(s), and years you held the position (if desired). Be sure to include important details of your day-to-day duties: Having these early on (and easy to find!) in your C.V. makes it quicker for search committees to sort out "first cut" candidates based on experience.

## Teaching/Research

The organization of your C.V. depends on the type of position you are seeking (teaching, research/postdoctoral, industrial). If you are pursuing teaching-oriented positions, next list courses taught, and courses you are interested in and qualified to teach. Also, make it clear what teaching-related responsibilities you had. For example, did you help choose the text for a course? Did you write the course syllabus, quizzes, or exams? Did you have full control for the course or were you a recitation instructor? If you engaged in any course innovation(s), such as incorporating new software, also state this. For research-oriented positions, list your publications

and conference/colloquia talks given. Use your best judgment here if you have a lengthy list; for the more elite postdocs or tenure-track research-oriented positions, a more complete list may be helpful. If you have received any grant money, this is a good place to state the details. For nonacademic positions, you will want to highlight special background and skills that you have such as software expertise, and projects in which you have been involved. Emphasize the strength of your communication skills. Also, for jobs in industry, a shorter resume is preferable to a C.V., but be prepared to send a C.V. to such an employer if requested later. For help with a resume, there are many useful books and websites, including:

http://careerdevelopment.brown.edu/grads/nonacad_step4.php#resume.

Since the suggested organization diverges some depending on the above-mentioned position types, we shall focus here on teaching-oriented positions for the remainder of this article. For the other position types, look carefully at your experiences and arrange your categories in such a way as to highlight your strengths in order from most to least important. For applicants for teaching posts, after listing your relevant teaching experience, next list your scholarly experience, including published articles, talks, conferences attended, etc. Since tenure-track positions will typically have some research requirement for tenure, employers will want to see that you have potential to sustain a research program in a teaching-intensive environment. Be sure to separate peer-reviewed articles from other articles you may have written of an expository or opinion-related nature. Also, separate articles from professional presentations, and give complete information on titles, journal names, dates of publication, etc.

## Professional Activities

After scholarly endeavors, next list past or current college service activities, and any professional service activities. Again, if you have a lengthy list, pare it down to the most important and/or most recent of these activities. It is generally assumed that candidates for teaching positions will be willing and able to serve their hiring departments and the broader community at the school, so brevity here is a good thing. Next, list honors and awards; if you have received an outstanding nationally-recognized honor, you might want to highlight this achievement earlier in your C.V. Finally, list your relevant professional

memberships (AMS, MAA, etc.), and then a last section for "additional information" or "miscellaneous." Here you might highlight special skills you have or certification(s)/licensure(s) obtained.

## The Vital Last Step: Formatting and Proofreading

For additional information and sample vitae, please visit the following links:

http://www.ams.org/employment/academic-job-search.html

http://careerdevelopment.brown.edu/grads/acad_app.php#cv_sample

http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/ career_stage/graduate_1

http://www.phds.org/career-guide/

Once you have successfully distilled all this information into some organized form, the actual C.V. itself should be neatly formated to make it easy to read.

Generally a 12-point font size is fine, and you may make your categories show up better by capitalizing the entire word or phrase, e.g., "COURSES TAUGHT." Separate each category by at least one blank line, make all categories listed left-justified for margin considerations, and proofread your work multiple times to avoid grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.

Major errors may get by a casual first reading, but they are bound to be caught later, and this can easily spell doom even for an otherwise highly qualified candidate. Also, have a colleague who knows you well read your C.V. and offer a critique. This is a wonderful way to make improvements you might not have thought of on your own.

Print copies of your C.V. on good bond or quality copy paper, avoiding any flashy paper colors. By spending sufficient time crafting and rewriting your C.V., you can help ensure greater success in the job market, no matter what position you are seeking.

Good luck!

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