

# CV's – An Introduction

## Curriculum Vitae

Your CV is your ticket to an interview. A CV is a document intended to give a brief (one to two A4 pages) but full account of your life in relation to your education, work experience, and general interests. Make sure you keep a copy. More information by clicking on the links below.

**Tip:** If possible, try to avoid using a template from MSWord. This could mean hundreds of other CVs will look the same as yours and even more importantly if the employer is not using the same version it could mean that your CV is not readable, or the fonts and layout of your CV will be destroyed.

**Add: CV Video & CV Pack**

## Visual Impact - Layout is Critical

- A C.V. should **always** be **word processed** on good quality **white paper**.
- A C.V. should be easy to read, it should present the important facts about you both **clearly** and **concisely**. Research tells us that an item of advertising material has about a second and a half in which to attract the reader's attention. Try the arms length test - hold your CV at arm's length and see what kind of an impression it makes.
- Place the most **relevant** information **first** because CVs are often not read from beginning to end.
- Make good use of spacing, margins, indentations, capitalisation and underlining, be **consistent** with your use of these.
- Use **bold type** or italics to emphasise words and subject headings (do not over do it!).
- Make sure that the C.V. is **letter-perfect**. Errors, typing mistakes, stains, unexplained abbreviations, technical jargon or buzz-words are **not** acceptable. Have your final draft critiqued or **proof-read** by someone in a position of responsibility.

Remember, your CV is your marketing tool. Your aim is to entice the employer to interview you. Think carefully about the format you choose and make it appropriate to the different positions you apply for. CVs can appear in any one or a combination of the following formats.

## Academic CV's

**Before putting pen to paper, you need to ask yourself:**

- What are the requirements of the post?
- Where would your experience fit in with the current teaching and research programme?

- What do you want from this position?
- How can you get the information you need?

#### **Where would your experience fit in?**

- What are the department's current undergraduate and postgraduate courses? Where would you fit in?
- Where could you add to their scope?
- Where could you make connections with other departments or institutions?
- Would you be willing to teach a variety of courses, perhaps outside your area of specialisation?

#### **What do you want from this position?**

- How productive and distinguished is the department by reputation? Quality ratings?
- What are their major recent publications?
- How often and in what books or journals are they publishing?
- What is the workload? (Contact hours? Additional duties? Administrative support?)
- What is the culture of the organisation and/or department?

#### **How can you get the information you need?**

- **Talk to your supervisor**
  - Discuss your career goals with your supervisor
  - He/she may be familiar with an external department/college
- **Informal enquiries:**
  - Ask relevant, pointed questions!
- **Networking**
  - Conferences and seminars
  - Contacts
  - Visit

- Informational interviews
- **Internet:** Website, Google etc.

### **Who shortlists applications for academic posts?**

- The selection of candidates for academic posts (through screening, shortlisting of written applications, interviews, seminars and other methods) is usually handled by a committee. It is useful to be aware of who may be on the committee as it is important to understand who you are pitching your CV to.
- In UCC, the **Selection Committee** for an academic (non-professorial) appointment would typically comprise of:
  - The President (or his nominee) as Chairperson
  - The Head (or Acting Head) of the relevant department
  - A permanent academic member of the relevant department
  - A permanent academic member of one other department
  - An external assessor
  - HR representative

### **What is essential in candidates for academic posts?**

- Essential criteria:
  - Doctorate, specialisation in relevant area, ability to contribute to undergraduate teaching and on a range of material outside area of specialisation
  - Teaching experience or demonstrated teaching potential
  - Personal contribution and commitment to excellence in teaching
  - Appropriate research achievement
  - Relevant research interests that do not overlap with other research being carried out in the department
  - Proven ability or demonstrated potential to attract funding through competitive research grants
  - Evidence of ability to work on personal initiative as well as part of a team
- You will need to meet the essential criteria in order to be eligible to apply and this information will need to be clearly documented on your CV.

### What is *desirable* in candidates for academic posts?

- Desirable criteria:
  - Demonstrated ability and willingness to work in a *collaborative* environment
  - Proven *administrative* experience
  - Commitment to the long-term development of the discipline within the college
- The desirable criteria can frequently be used to differentiate and short list candidates as not every candidate will have these criteria. It is crucial then to clearly illustrate on your CV how you meet some or all of the desirable criteria.

### Academic Applications

- An academic CV is a summary document of your educational and academic history
- Longer than other CVs – two to four pages (or more!)
- Additional information may be included:
  - Dissertation Abstract
  - Teaching Philosophy
  - Research Interests
  - References

### Sections within an Academic CV

- **Personal details**
- **Education**
- **Funding/Fellowships and Awards**
- **Research Experience**
- **Teaching Experience**
- **Publications and/or Presentations**
- **Related Professional Experience**
- **Languages**
- **Other, e.g. Areas of Specialisation?**

- **References**

### **Personal Details**

Name

Address

Telephone Number

Email Address

Link to LinkedIn Profile

Link to Academia.edu Profile

Date of birth, gender and marital status need **not** be listed.

(Note: only offer information that may be to your advantage!)

### **Education**

- Qualifications in reverse chronological order (omit school qualifications unless specifically mentioned)
- Institutions attended
- Prizes/Educational Distinctions
- PhD Dissertation:
  - Title, Name of Supervisor, Brief Description
  - Often a detailed one/two page summary is attached separately.
  - Science researchers may include this under “Research Experience”.

### **Awards and Fellowships**

- List any research-related grants, fellowships or awards you have received that may supplement those listed under education.
- Don't include secondary school awards, except prestigious national awards.
- If award is not widely recognised, include an explanation and/or indication of the level of competition.

- If you have successfully applied for and received research grants, you might want to create a separate “Grants” or “Research Grants” section.
- Awards or any funding secured merit serious consideration - include any prestigious award offered but not taken up.
- Mention any application that is currently under consideration.
- State funding body, terms, duration and amount.
- E.g. “IRCSET funded fees and €12,000 stipend”
- If award is unfamiliar to the reader, indicate the level of competition
- E.g. “one of six recipients selected from 3000 applicants”
- Mention any competitive support secured in own name, even modest, e.g. to attend conference or visit archive – this shows that your research has been deemed worthy of support.

### **Research Experience**

- Scientists tend to put this section before “Teaching Experience” and include:
  - Postdoctoral research experience
  - Doctoral research experience
  - Undergraduate research experience
  - Recent relevant summer/intern/interim experience
  - Techniques employed
  - Resulting publications
- “Field Research” relevant for some disciplines
- A separate “Statement of Research Interests” may also be included.

### **Teaching Experience**

- Placement of this section depends on discipline and emphasis placed on teaching by target institution.
- How you organise it depends on your individual history.
- If you have taught in a variety of institutions, you may want to create to categories:

- “Positions Held”
  - Include explanation of the role when necessary, E.g. difference between tutor and instructor/section leader
  - Describe your responsibilities using action verbs where possible.
- “Courses Taught”
  - Include explanation of course titles when necessary.
  - **Quantify and describe your experience:**
    - How many students in a class?
    - What year of study were they?
    - How many hours a week over how many terms?
    - If you have taught lecture courses/seminars, what did you cover? What approach did you take?
  - **How can you demonstrate achievement?**
    - Were you invited back?
    - How did your students perform?
    - Did they provide favourable feedback on your teaching?
- Remember, many interviews will involve a presentation/seminar/lecture which is also used as an assessment of your teaching and communication skills as much as of the actual content of the work being presented.

### **Publications and Presentations**

- Placement of this section depends on the strength of your publication record.
- If very lengthy, or not very substantive, put at the end.
- May be divided into:
  - Papers and Presentations

- Books
  - Refereed Articles
  - Abstracts
  - Reviews
  - Other Publications (journalistic, popular etc.)
- Those close to submission/pending a decision from publisher may be categorised according to the following levels: “In Preparation”, “Submitted”, “Under Consideration” (i.e. sent for peer review), “Accepted by” and “Forthcoming”
  - If you have them, flaunt them!
  - Quantity and Quality will be assessed.
  - For a junior post, some publications must be “in motion” at least.
  - Publications should be listed in the same style as in a footnote or bibliography.
  - For humanities students:
    - Do not give your name if single author
    - Start with ‘(with xy:)’; for joint publications

Embolden your name if you are first author of any joint publications

### **Related Professional Experience**

- Committee work
- Editorial work
- Conference organisation
- Research assistantships
- In some fields, important enough to merit separate sections, e.g.:
  - Curatorial or Museum Experience
  - Performance Experience
  - Consulting/R&D Experience
  - Editing, Translating and Interpreting Experience
  - Government or Policy Experience

- University Service
- Administrative Experience

### **Languages**

- List degree of competency, e.g.:
  - “native”
  - “fluent”
  - “proficient”
  - “working knowledge”
  - “reading only”
  - “some reading and speaking”

### **Other**

- Memberships of professional, scholarly associations
- Travel or study abroad
- Personal interests and activities
- If this aspect of your experience is significant, you could include it under separate headings:
  - “International Experience”
  - “Professional Memberships”

### **References**

- Two/three references generally expected.
- If you list them on CV, be sure that they are the ones you want to use for all applications.
- Make sure they have a copy of your CV and additional information and are prepared for informal phone queries.
- Some referees may ask you for help with writing the reference.
- A good reference describes in “enthusiastic detail what is special about your work, and about you as a scholar and as a person”

- It's the applicants responsibility to ensure that references arrive on time.

### Supplementary Information

- When applying for an academic job, you may be required to attach one or more of the following to supplement your CV:
  - Dissertation abstract
  - Statement of research interests
  - Statement of teaching philosophy
  - Courses taught (descriptions and syllabi)
  - Teaching videos
  - Dissertation sample

## Non Academic CV's

### Academic CV's V Non Academic CV's

#### Academic applications:

- ✓ Detailed
- ✓ Shows breadth and depth of studies
- ✓ Supplementary information
- ✓ No limit on length within reason
- ✓ Focus on specialist skills/knowledge

#### Non-academic applications:

- ✓ Educational details or subject knowledge not always relevant
- ✓ Relevant education only
- ✓ Driven by needs of employer
- ✓ 2-page limit
- ✓ Focus is on transferable skills

### Principles of Non-Academic Applications

- Use reverse chronology
- Consider employment "themes"
- Highlight relevant skills support claims with compelling evidence and specify and quantify information where possible.
- Treat a voluntary role/position of responsibility as a "job" if experience was valuable.

- Consider listing your academic achievements with other achievements in a general “Achievements” section.
- Interests can compensate for lack of paid or work experience and provide evidence that you possess a relevant skill, e.g. social
- Provide one academic and one work-related referee.

### **Sections of a Non-Academic CV**

- **Personal Details**
- **Career Goal**
- **Education**
- **Employment/Experience**
- **Positions of Responsibility**
- **Skills Profile**
- **Interests/Achievements**
- **References**

### **Personal Details**

Name

Address

Telephone Number

Email Address

LinkedIn Profile

Date of birth, gender and marital status need **not** be listed.

(Note: only offer information that may be to your advantage!)

### **Career Goal**

- If trying to make a transition into a different kind of career, a career goal statement can focus your CV and help to persuade the employer that you have given serious consideration to your next move.
- A career goal consists of:

- An indication of where you are trying to reach in your career
- Succinct details of the skills that will take you there
- Example:

“To develop a career as a technical author for engineering products, based on my strong academic background in engineering and my demonstrated ability to communicate properly in writing with various client groups.

## Education

**Fourth Level:** Dates, good synopsis of Research Abstract

**Third Level:** Dates, university attended, courses undertaken, subjects studied each year, and known results. Do mention any prizes, distinctions, academic honours, projects, dissertations, relevant training and work placement.

**Secondary:** Dates, school attended, level reached, final results.

CVs for **technical posts** and all jobs which are closely **course-related** should show **detailed** information on research/coursework. Give **exact** information on equipment used and the systems and methods with which you are familiar. Employers will also be very interested to know details of your final year **project** or **dissertation** and/or **work placement**.

## Employment/Experience

For **each** job (voluntary as well as paid) give: dates of work experience, name of employer, job title and experience gained. Reverse chronological order usually looks best - the same as that used for educational qualifications. Use **action verbs** to describe how you did the job e.g. planned, developed, designed, analysed, supervised, etc. Use the past tense and be concise and comprehensive.

## Positions of Responsibility

If you are making a transition from Academia to Industry then it may be useful to provide information on positions of responsibility you have held e.g. on Academic Committees etc. Although the experiences may not be directly related to the role being applied for, the skills inherent in the experiences will be recognised and valued by employers. For **each** experience give: dates of

experience, title of role and experience gained. Reverse chronological order usually looks best - the same as that used for educational qualifications. Use **action verbs** to describe how you carried out the role e.g. planned, developed, designed, analysed, supervised, etc. Use the past tense and be concise and comprehensive.

## **Skills Profile**

A Skills Profile can be particularly useful when transitioning from Academia to Industry. While an individual may not have much (or any) industrial experience, employers will still be looking for a specific skill set and a skills profile is an excellent way of presenting this information. A Skills Profile must be evidence based and not just a list of generic skills. For example:

### Skills Profile

- **Presentation:** Experience in formal *presentations*, conducted before fellow class members, academics and project sponsors. Sponsors included members of the Economic and Social Research Institute and heads of an international Project management group.

## **Interests and Achievements**

Provide information on interests, hobbies, membership of clubs/societies, professional associations, or voluntary organisations, and positions of responsibility held. Do not merely list your interests; it is important to provide context and evidence in relation to your extracurricular activities.

**Refrain** from listing political, religious and potentially controversial groups, because they don't belong on a CV.

## **Referees**

Typically one academic, and one non-academic. Provide names, roles, organisations, and contact information of each referee. As a matter of courtesy you should keep referees informed of the positions you have applied for. Give each referee a copy of your C.V. so that he/she is aware of your full academic record, interests and work experience. Never put forward a person as a referee if you have not obtained their permission.

# Cover Letters

- This is how you make your first impression.
- Importance accorded to cover letters (and the accepted length) varies with discipline.
- Don't merely restate information on CV – show how your experience meets the department's stated needs.
- Pre-application research is essential.
- Address letter to a specific person.

## Academic Cover Letter Template

**First Paragraph:** State how you learned of the job (very important if a professor/colleague referred you to it) and describe your current status in an academic/postdoctoral position.

**Second Paragraph:** Give brief synopsis of recent research work to date, eliciting interest, and indicate your future research project(s)/plans.

**Middle Section:** Describe your research and teaching qualifications in light of their specific relevance to the job. Refer to job descriptions and pre-application research. *Order within section will depend on importance accorded to teaching.*

If your area is not directly relevant to needs of post, outline how you are willing and qualified to teach in required area.

Show how you can compensate for any obvious weaknesses.

Suggest new courses you'd be interested in developing.

**Concluding Paragraph:** Note your enclosed documents, e.g. CV and other materials.

Summarise your why you are particularly interested in the position – give genuine and substantive reasons.

Ability	Facilitated	Piloted
Accompanied	Finalised	Pinpointed
Accelerated	Financed	Pioneered
Achieved	Formalised	Placed
Acquired	Formed	Planned
Active	Formulated	Played
Administered	Founded	Pleased
Advised	Generated	Popular

Ambition	Governed	Practical
Analysed	Graduated	Praise
Appreciate	Handled	Prepared
Approval	Harmony	Presided
Aspired	Headed	Prestige
Arranged	Helpful	Procured
Assembled	Hired	Produced
Assisted	Honest	Proficient
Budgeted	Honour	Progress
Built	Humour	Promoted
Capable	Imagination	Prompted
Clarified	Implemented	Proposed
Commanded	Improved	Proved
Completed	Improvised	Provided
Composed	Increased	Punctual
Comprehensive	Induced	Reasonable
Conceived	Influenced	Recognition
Conducted	Ingenuity	Recommend
Confidence	Integrity	Reconciled
Conscientious	Initiated	Reduced
Constructed	Innovated	Regulated
Controlled	Inspired	Reinforced
Converted	Installed	Related
Co-operated	Instructed	Reliable
Co-ordinated	Insured	Reorganised
Correlated	Integrated	Reported
Created	Intensified	Represented
Decided	Interpreted	Researched
Delegated	Invented	Responsible
Demonstrated	Judgement	Revamped
Dependable	Justified	Reviewed
Designed	Lasting	Revised
Detailed	Launched	Satisfied
Determined	Led	Scheduled
Developed	Licensed	Secured
Diversity	Located	Served
Devised	Loyal	Serviced
Discovered	Maintained	Simplified
Displayed	Managed	Sincerity

Directed	Manufactured	Solved
Distinctive	Marketed	Sparked
Doubled	Mastered	Stability
Earned	Mediated	Stimulated
Economy	Merit	Streamlined
Educated	Monitored	Structured
Effected	Motivated	Substantial
Effective	Mutual	Succeeded
Efficient	Negotiated	Success
Eliminated	Nominated	Superior
Enacted	Normalised	Supervised
Encouraged	Notable	Supported
Energy	Obtained	Taught
Engineered	Officiated	Thorough
Enhanced	Operated	Thoughtful
Enthusiasm	Opportunity	Tolerant
Evaluated	Ordered	Trained
Exceeded	Organised	Transferred
Excellence	Orientated	Transformed
Exceptional	Originated	Understanding
Exclusive	Overcame	Unified
Executed	Participated	Used
Exhibited	Perceived	Utilised
Expanded	Perfected	Verified
Expedite	Performed	Vital
Experience	Permanent	Vivid
		Wisdom
		Won
		Wrote