**RESUMES & COVER LETTERS**

**What Is a CV? Curriculum Vitae Definition and Examples**

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A CV (short for the Latin phrase curriculum vitae, which means “course of life”) is a detailed document highlighting your professional and academic history. CVs typically include information like work experience, achievements and awards, scholarships or grants you’ve earned, coursework, research projects and publications of your work. You may be asked to submit a CV when applying for jobs in academia or a job outside the US.

If you need help determining how to write a CV, it can be helpful to consult a template. In this article, we will provide additional background on the document along with an easy-to-follow CV example template to ensure you craft a powerful curriculum vitae that stands out to employers.

**CV vs. resume**

A CV and resume are similar in that they’re both documents that summarize your professional history, education, skills and achievements. They’re also both documents you might provide an employer for consideration for an open position.

It is important to note that in the United States and most of Europe, resumes and CVs are not interchangeable. A resume is a shorter-form document that provides a concise overview of your previous roles, skills and details about your education. (The French word résumé translates to “abstract” or “summary.”) A CV, on the other hand, is typically a longer, more detailed document focused largely on academic coursework and research.

There are a few exceptions, however. In India, South Africa and Australia, the terms CV and resume are interchangeable.

**Related:**[**What’s the Difference Between a Resume and a CV?**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/difference-between-resume-and-cv)

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[**Create your resume**](https://my.indeed.com/resume)

**How to write a CV**

While your CV should be specific to your background and tailor to the job for which you're applying, there are several steps you can take to ensure you write an effective CV. Most CVs include the following information:

* Contact information
* Academic history
* Professional experience
* Qualifications and skills
* Awards and honors
* Publications
* Professional associations
* Grants and fellowships
* Licenses and certificates
* Volunteer work
* Personal information (optional)
* Hobbies and interests (optional)

**Related:**[**How to Write a CV: Tips, Template and Example**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv)

Here are seven steps for writing a simple CV:

1. **Include your contact information.** This includes your full name, phone number and email address. Including your physical address is optional.
2. **Detail your academic history in reverse-chronological order.** This can include your post-doctoral programs, graduate school, undergraduate school and high school. Only include your most recent two educational experiences. Dates attended is optional.
3. **Record your professional experience.** List the company or organization, job title and dates employed starting with your most recent job. List your job duties, experience gained and achievements. Use numbers to measure your impact when possible.
4. **Include relevant skills and qualifications.** This can be in a separate skills section. Reread the job description to highlight the most important skills employers are looking for. These can include both hard and soft skills that make you the best candidate for the job.
5. **List honors and awards.** Use this section to outline your achievements in the field related to your application. Start with the award name followed by year awarded, the organization that gave you the award and details about the award such as how often the award is given, how many people receive it, etc.
6. **Include relevant publications and presentations.** Include relevant citations of presentations, papers, studies, books or other publications important to your professional history. For publications, include authors, date published, summary, volume, page and DOI number. For presentations, include the title, date and location of presentation.
7. **List your professional associations and affiliations.** This should include the name of the organization, geographic location or chapter and dates of active membership.

Some employers, especially post-secondary institutions, may offer their own CV template and CV examples to help make sure you include all required information in the format they prefer. Before you submit your application, look for any special CV guidelines the employer has outlined. For example, some institutions may require you to list only relevant coursework, fieldwork, dissertations and professional references.

**Related:**[**Curriculum Vitae (CV) Format Guide (With Examples)**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/cv-format-guide)

**CV example template**

Joe Smith  
1234 Main Street, Atlanta, GA 30308  
770-555-1234  
joe.t.smith@email.com

**Education**  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree, 2018  
University of Texas College of Science, Austin, TX

**Professional experience**  
University of Southern California  
Professor, Herman Ostrow School of Veterinary Sciences | 2012–2018

* Taught multiple undergraduate and graduate courses in veterinary sciences.
* Fostered student commitment to lifelong learning and excellence in veterinary sciences.
* Acted as a student advisor to first-year veterinary school students.

**Skills and qualifications**

* Team leadership
* Seminar instruction
* Fluent in English and Spanish
* Specialization in livestock science research and development

**Awards and honors**

* AVMA Advocacy Award, 2018
* AVMA Animal Welfare Award, 2016

**Publications and presentations**  
*Yang, J., Sanchez, C., Patel, A., Johnson, L., (2017) “Study of cocoa product component theobromine and danger to canines.” Journal of Modern Veterinary Medicine. 272: 1234-56789.*

**Professional associations and affiliations**

* American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (2013–Present)
* American Veterinary Medical Association (2011–Present)

**Related:**[**What To Include in Your CV**](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/what-to-include-in-your-cv)

**Final thoughts**

If you’re practiced in writing resumes, you may be tempted to shorten your CV to keep on one page. However, because CVs require so much information, they’re typically multiple pages in length. In other words, don’t cut crucial details to save space.

Before submitting your job application, be sure to thoroughly review your CV for any errors or inconsistencies. Consider asking a trusted colleague or professional mentor to review it as well—especially if they are experienced in the industry you’re applying to. A second opinion can be useful in helping you craft a well-polished CV.