What is a CV?

A *CV* (full form *Curriculum Vitae* which is Latin for "course of life") is an in-depth document which describes the whole course of your career in full detail. It's usually two- or three-page long but can just as well be laid out over 10+ pages, if necessary. A Curriculum Vitae contains details about your education, professional career, publications, awards, honors, and other achievements. In the USA and Canada, a CV is used only for academic applications: academic jobs, grants, research fellowships, etc. A CV is very detailed and comprehensive: many sections, no bullet points, just plain text (after all, CV meaning is *a course of life*, no wonder it's that long!)

Below you'll see a full list of sections to put on a CV.

What to Include in a CV:

1. Contact Information
2. Research Objective, Professional Profile, or Personal Statement
3. Education
4. Professional Academic Appointments
5. Books
6. Book Chapters
7. Peer-Reviewed Publications
8. Other Publications
9. Awards and Honors
10. Grants and Fellowships
11. Conferences
12. Teaching Experience
13. Research Experience / Lab Experience / Graduate Fieldwork
14. Non-Academic Activities
15. Languages and Skills
16. Memberships
17. References

What Is a Resume?

A *resume* (or résumé, from French "to sum up") is a short, concise document used for job applications in the US and Canada. The purpose of a resume is to provide recruiters with a brief overview of the candidate's work history. A good resume should be targeted at a specific job and one to two pages long.

Writing Résumé

A résumé stands as your own personal 'brochure' when introducing yourself to a prospective employer. It needs to highlight your unique selling points in such a way that a prospective employer can't wait to meet you!

It should be concise, accurate and truthful and tailored to the position you are applying for and importantly should be free from spelling and grammatical errors.

1. Layout & Format:
- Make sure that you try to stick to a maximum of two sides of A4 paper. Sometimes this can be difficult, think about the work experience that you have already and relate it to the role that you are applying for. The key is making sure that the content is informative.
- Keep it simple and uncluttered. Use headings and bullet points to assist the reader. Don't add a photo or a border. Stick to one font that is clean (Times New Roman, Arial or Verdana are recommended with a font size of 10 – 12)
- Get someone else to proof – read, perhaps a lecturer; and that there are no spelling mistakes or grammatical errors.

- If the industry you wish to enter is artistic you may want to be more creative but make sure that it still serves as the ultimate document to market your skills, experience and overall suitability to a role.

2. Personal Details:

- This should be your name, address, email, telephone, mobile number and nationality. There is no need to add your date of birth and a photograph.
- This may sound like common sense but ensure that all of your details are up-to-date and correct!
- Your email address should be appropriate and your application could be ignored if it is not.

e.g. Johnsmith@gmail.com – acceptable

metaltillidie@gmail.com – not acceptable

- You may wish to include information for your website or blog or even LinkedIn profile and this isn't a bad idea. Employers will be able to access your work and see what you are capable of and get a sense of your ideas and creativity. This may not relate to every role that you are applying for; a data entry role doesn't necessarily need you to demonstrate your writing skills but more your eye for detail.

3. Personal statement:

- A personal statement can encourage an employer to read the rest of your résumé. It's a summary of who you are It should include: The industry you are interested in, What your unique skills and experiences are, Your areas of expertise.
- Remain original; don't use traditional claims such as 'an excellent team player who is keen to learn'.
- Think outside the box and provide examples, e.g. "Lead and organized a charity event with a team of fifteen people for the University annual fund, resulting in over a thousand attendees and a grand total of £4,000. This has helped fund projects in different departments across the University and enhanced my organization, team and time management skills."

4. Education & Qualifications:

- Start with your most recent education and work backwards. You should detail: your university degree and grade, college and A levels, then school and GCSEs.
- You should list key components from your degree such as modules that you have studied, projects and the topic of your dissertation, to demonstrate how you fit with the specific requirements listed in the job description.

5. Work Experience:

- Once again start with the most recent and relevant; include the name of the company, location and date of employment. Provide a brief description of what the role entailed but do not re-write the job description. Don't mention salary, this is something that can be discussed at interview stage.
- Give examples of your work successes and achievements even if these were in a voluntary role or working in an area that doesn't relate to your chosen career path. Think about experience that shows your work ethic and that you can work in a team. Avoid empty sentences such as 'I work well on my own and as part of a team'.
- Try to relate the skills that you have to the ones advertised in the job ad, if a certain role requires analytical and problem thinking skills then describe this on your résumé with brief task and result examples using . Use the STAR technique:

Situation – What was the situation and when? Task – What were the objectives and aims?

Action –What was it that you did to achieve these?

Result – What was the end of result? What did you learn?

- Cut out cliché phrases, use verbs and prove your actions.
- Focus on your main duties in a role rather than describing your duties, most employers will know the duties of working as a sales assistant and this can come across as monotonous. Instead state where you made a difference in a role.

6. Interests & Achievements:

- This section should be as short as possible but is still essential, not only showing an employer what type of person you are, personality wise, but could also highlight skills that are relevant to a role.

- Without giving too much information, make sure that your interests reflect your personality and who you are. If you are interested in film, perhaps say more about this. E.g.
- Film: Help out in my spare time at a local independent cinema
- Travel: Took part in a voluntary scheme where I helped build a school for a village in Ethiopia Some interests may relate to a job and can show that you are different from other applicants. You may enjoy 'socializing with friends' but so does everyone, what makes you stand out or encapsulates your personality or you as a person?
- Your achievements should be any awards, top classifications, scholarships or impressive facts that may show leadership and successes.

7. References:

- Often references will not be asked for at this stage and it isn't a bad thing to state 'references available on request' as long as you make sure that you do have two references available when asked.
- Your referees should be one academic; this could be a lecturer or tutor and if possible one from your most recent employer.

Other tips:

- Use bullet points – this helps make your résumé/CV look neater and not too bulky.
- Use action verbs - in order to create an active and interesting document. Action verbs demonstrate something that you did

E.g.

- Acquired, allocated, arranged,

- Budgeted, balanced, briefed

- Delivered, developed, directed

- Educated, enlisted, exchanged

There are many examples that can be found on the internet.

Save more than one version - some employers may ask for your résumé/CV in a different format.

Address gaps in your résumé/CV - if you haven't been in employment for more than three months then say how you been using that time. Don't mention anything that you consider as a failure, be positive and say what you have learnt within that time.

Tailor your Résumé/CV – move sections around and if there are certain requirements for a role that you have, make these more prominent. If you need to show that you have previous experience in a particular role, then embolden this point. Try to reflect that you have all or most of the skills that are asked for.

If your résumé/CV results in follow – ups and interviews - you will know that the format and content is correct for your profession , if you are not getting any positive response then review and amend.

Be confident, concise and tell the truth – If there is a specific achievement that you are most proud of, for example a certain grade, then make sure that they are featured first. Appear positive, keep your details brief and make sure that the information you are giving has not been altered to make yourself look more suitable for a role. An employer will reject you based on misleading or inaccurate information.

Never fold your résumé/CV! – Most people send résumé/CVs online, however if you are handing out a paper copy do not fold it when handing to a potential employer. It should be neat, crisp and presented in an envelope or plastic folder. Make sure that you never print double sided - you may think that you are tricking an employer into only one side of A4, but it looks unprofessional and untidy.