Curricula Vitae (CVs) versus Resumes

What this handout is about

This handout explains what a curriculum vitae (CV) is, how it differs from a resume, and how you can decide which one to use. It also includes a list of campus resources, helpful online tips, and recommended reference books. (Please note that this handout covers American usage of the terms "CV" and "resume." The word "resume" may also be spelled "résume" or "résumé.")

Before you start

To decide whether to submit a CV or a resume, you will need to determine which of them most appropriately fits the criteria provided by the employer, grant agency, or scholarship or internship committee who will be reading your application. Often, the application instructions for a particular position will state whether a CV or resume is requested. If you are unsure, it is worth your time to contact the agency and ask which would be most appropriate for the position.

What is the difference between a resume and a CV? What do they typically include?

Let's start with a quick overview of resumes, since they are more familiar to most American writers than CVs. A typical resume is a general and concise introduction of your experiences and skills as they relate to a particular career or position that you are aiming to acquire. As such, a resume may have to be altered for each position that you are applying for so as to emphasize those skills and experiences most relevant to the work. Resumes are usually no more than one page in length. They are often accompanied by cover letters, which provide a permanent written record of the transmittal of the resume (what is being sent, to whom it is being sent, and who sent it).

A typical resume will include the following information:

- *Name and Contact Information:* your residential address might be most appropriate, especially if you do not want your current employer to know that you are looking for another job!
- *Education:* a listing of your degrees or certifications and educational institutions or programs.
- *Work Experience:* names of the companies or organizations that you have worked for, the location of each company, the dates worked, your job title, and duties performed.

In contrast, a CV is a fairly detailed overview of your life's accomplishments, especially those most relevant to the realm of academia. As such, these documents have their greatest utility in the pursuit of a job in academia or research. Because academic researchers are often working on and completing many projects and teaching responsibilities simultaneously, it is wise to think of a CV as a living document that will need to be updated frequently. A typical CV for someone in the beginning stages of his or her graduate school career might only be two or three pages in length, while the number of pages of a more seasoned researcher's CV may run into the double

digits. In both CVs and resumes, information within sections is usually organized chronologically.

A typical CV will include the following information:

- *Name and Contact Information:* contact information for your current institution or place of employment may work best, unless you do not want your colleagues to know that you are job-hunting.
- *Areas of Interest:* a listing of your varied academic interests.
- *Education:* a list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation. You may also include the titles of your dissertation or thesis here.
- *Grants, Honors and Awards:* a list of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service.
- *Publications and Presentations:* a list of your published articles and books, as well presentations given at conferences. If there are many of both, you might consider having one section for publications and another for presentations.
- *Employment and Experience:* this section may include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences.
- *Scholarly or Professional Memberships:* a listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member. If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section.
- *References:* a list of persons who write letters of recommendations for you, which includes their contact information.

Additional considerations

Use common sense when formatting

There are no universal guidelines for how to format or organize a resume or CV. However, some commonsense guidelines may apply. If you are concerned that your resume or CV might appear too busy or misaligned, click on Print Preview in your word processing program and evaluate the consistency of your use of space in the document.

Fonts and font sizes: go with the flow

It is a good idea to stick to commonly used fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial when creating a resume or CV. Fonts such as Bauhaus or Old English Text might have their place in other writing projects, but these might distract the reader and pull their attention away from the content you want them to read. Perhaps with the exception of your name, the use of a uniform font size throughout the document will also keep the reader focused on your accomplishments.

Seek and evaluate examples

Many professors and professionals have posted their CVs and resumes to online faculty web pages, bulletin boards, and employee profile pages on corporate websites. These documents, often posted as Adobe PDF files, are useful templates for designing your own CV or resume. It is best to search for a CV or resume of an individual who shares your field, discipline, or interests, as it will provide you with a model that most closely approximates what your final document might look like.

"Curricula Vitae (CVs) versus Resumes." *The Writing Center Curricula Vitae CVs versus Resumes Comments.* N.p., n.d. Web. 07 Nov. 2014.

For more information go to our Virtual Career Center, www.indianatech.edu/careercenter careercenter@indianatech.edu or call 260.422.5561 ext. 2217 or 1.800.937.2448