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How to write a Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The CV (resume, in American English) is meant to introduce you and your background to somebody who does not know you and barely has time to get to know you. It should present you in the best possible light, in a concise and well-structured manner. There are plenty of resume-writing guides out there, that can teach you to the smallest details how to write one. Their regular problem is that they do not agree with each other when it comes to details. This is why we have put here together a number of generally agreed guide-lines, plus some specific details that could help EE students. A regular CV for business purposes should definitely not go over one A4 page. If you intend to use it for academic purposes and not for a job, the CV can pass that limit, on the condition that you use the extra space to describe academic activities, like conferences, publications list, etc. A well-written CV shows first what is most important, but contains all relevant information. To this goal, we advise you to adapt it to your target (specific type of job or scholarship). Cut information from your CV only as a solution of last resort, but pay attention to the order in which you present it in your CV.

Print the CV on plain-white A4 paper, save some of the same type for the cover letter - did we say that you should never, but never! send a CV without a cover letter - and find matching A4 envelopes. If the announcement does not say anything about a cover letter, you still should send one. It introduces your CV to the reader, attracts attention to certain parts of it that you want to bring to light, or mentions aspects that for some reason could not be listed in your CV.

To make it look neat, we suggest you use one of the Word pre-made formats, unless you are a computer-savvy and feel confident that you can produce an even better-structured and easier-to-read format. You will be able to introduce your own headers in that format; below we have a word of advice for those most-often met in a CV.

Personal details - here you should include your birth date, contact address, email, telephone number and nationality. In case you have both a permanent and study address, include both, with the dates when you can be contacted at each of them. Personal details can be written with smaller fonts than the rest of your CV, if you want to save space. They do not have to jump in the reader's attention - you will never convince somebody to hire you because you have a nice email alias! If your CV managed to awaken the reader's interest, he or she will look after contact details - it is important that they be there, but not that they are the first thing somebody reads in your CV. You should write your name with a bigger font than the rest of the text, so that the reader knows easily whose CV is he or she reading. If you need to save space, you can delete the Curriculum Vitae line on the top of your CV. After all, if you have done a good job writing it, it should be obvious that that piece of paper is a CV, no need to spell it out loud.

Objective - this is a concise statement of what you actually want to do. It's not bad if it matches the thing you are applying for. Don't restrict it too much "to get this scholarship", but rather "to develop a career in..." the thing that you're going to study if you get the scholarship. If you apply for a job, you can be even more specific - "to obtain a position in... , where I can use my skills in...". You can use a few lines to describe that specifically, but keep in mind that you should show what you can do for the company more than what the company can do for you. Writing a good objective can be tough; take some time to think about what exactly are you going to write there.

If you, the visitor of our site, are who we think we are - a young student, or a person who has just graduated, you should start your CV with your education. Very probably, at this age it is your most important asset. We suggest you use the reverse chronological order, since it is more important what master's degree you have rather than that, very probably, you went to high school in your native town. No matter for which order you decide - chronological or reverse - you should keep it the same throughout the rest of your CV. Try to give an exact account of your accomplishments in school: grades (do not forget to write the scale if it may differ from the one the reader of your CV is used to), standing in class (in percent), title of your dissertation, expected graduation date if you think this is an important aspect. There is no need to write all of the above, but only those that put you in the best light. Are you not in the best 20% of your class? Better not to mention ranking then, maybe you still have good grades, or your school is a renowned one. In any case, do not make your results better than in reality - you cannot know how this information may be checked and the whole application will lose credibility. Cheating is a very serious offense in Western schools.

Awards received - you should introduce this header right after the education, in order to outline all the scholarly or otherwise distinctions you have received. Another solution is to include these awards in the education section, but this might make the lecture difficult - the reader wants to get from that section an impression about the schools you went to and the overall results, not about every distinction you were awarded. Still, these are important! Therefore, here is the place to mention them - scholarships, stages abroad you had to compete for, prizes in contests, any kind of distinction. Here, same as everywhere in your CV, write a detailed account of what happened: do not just mention the year and "Prize in Physics", but rather give the exact date (month), place, name and organiser of the competition. For a scholarship abroad, write the time frame, name of the University, Department, the subject of classes there - e.g. managerial economics - name of the award-giving institution, if different from that of the host-university.

Practical experience - here you should include internships as well. Don't feel ashamed with what you did, don't try to diminish your accomplishments! Nobody really expects you to have started a million-dollar business if you're still a student - even better if you did, though! Accountability is an important criterion for what you write in this section. The account should show what you

improved, where, by howmuch, what your responsibilities were. The idea is that when you applyfor a job you have to show growth-potential. That is, that you provedsome kind of progress from one job to another and that especially atthe last one you were so good, you could obviously do something thatinvolves more responsibility - like the job you are applying for now.The overall result should portray you as a leader, a person withinitiative and creativity - don't forget you have to convince thereader of your CV that you are the best pick for that job.

Extracurricular activities - if you're writing a professional, and notan academic CV, this is the place to mention conferences or any otheractivities outside the school that for some reason did not fit in theCV so far. A good section here can help a lot towards that goal ofportraying you as a leader, a person with initiative, not just a nerdwith good grades.

Languages - list here all the languages you speak, with a one-worddescription of your knowledge of that language. We suggest thefollowing scale: conversational, intermediate, advanced, and fluent.List any certificates and/or results like TOEFL scores, with date.

Computer skills - write everything you know, including Internetbrowsers and text editing skills. There is no absolute need to know C++unless you wanna be a programmer or something. List certificates andspecialty studies as well.

Hobbies - list them if space is left on the page. They look fine in aCV, showing you are not a no-life workaholic, but a normal person.There is no need to have a 20,000 pieces stamp collection, you canmention reading or mountain tracking as well.

You can introduce other headers that suit your needs. Some CV's, forexample, have a summary heading, that brings in front what the authorconsiders to be the most important stuff in his/her CV. A referencessection, where you can list with contact details persons ready torecommend you can be added as well. If it misses, the recruiters willassume they are available on request.

Source: <http://www.eastchance.com/howto/cv-index.asp>