

Post Graduate Planning

Olin's resource for internships, summer research, jobs, graduate school and more...

Guide to Curriculum Vitae Writing

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This guide is based on How to Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae, Acy L. Jackson and C. Kathleen Geckeis, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2003.

Guide to Curriculum Vitae Writing
Olin College, Office of Post Graduate Planning

Version 2, September 27, 2005, L. Frusztajer

I. What is a Curriculum Vitae?

A curriculum vitae, also referred to as a CV, Vita or Vitae, is a detailed biographical description of your educational and work background. It differs from a resume, a one page description of your work experience and educational background, not only in length, but also in detail.

Though much of the information that you include in a CV is similar to what you would put in your resume, a CV goes into more detail to characterize your experiences and interests so that the reader has a fuller picture of who you are.

The term *curriculum vitae* means “the course of one’s life or career.” Traditionally used among higher education professionals, the CV is now increasingly applicable for under-graduates applying to graduate schools, fellowships, as well as for applicants seeking employment in research, teaching and management.

II. The Document: What are the major components of a CV?

The major components of a CV, described in more detail in Section IV, below, include:

- professional / career / research objectives
- education
- coursework
- honors / achievements / awards
- research
- instrumentation experience
- specialized experience
- publications / presentations / works in progress
- work experience
- background
- community service
- co-curricular experience
- interests
- travel

III. Process: How to develop the content of your CV

Identify Competencies and Skills

Competencies are what you do well. They include all of the things that you have learned as a result of acquiring a skill through education, training and experience. A skill defines the level at which you can perform a competency.

The competencies and skills that you have learned as a result of formal training and education are not only transferable to other settings, but are also valuable tools in developing an effective CV.

Step 1: Identify your competencies

A competency is what you know as a result of your education and training. It reflects content and knowledge. Some examples of competencies include:

- accounting
- communication
- economics
- humanities
- language
- mathematics
- natural sciences
- physical sciences
- quantitative reasoning
- social sciences

Step 2: Identify your skills

Skills reflect what you do with what you know, or the degree to which you perform a competency, technique or craft. For example:

- written or spoken language
- information procession
- observation
- research
- analysis
- organization
- problem solving
- logical reasoning
- evaluation

Step 3: Determine levels of proficiency

When you include a skill, you should describe the levels or degrees of proficiency you have achieved in using it.

Example 1

Skill: improvisation (music composition)

Level / Degree of Proficiency: Gifted trombonist; expert in creating extemporaneous jazz idioms using folk elements indigenous to southeastern United States; master in use of counterpoint rhythms

Example 2

Skill: foreign language

Level / Degree of Proficiency: Conversant in Latin; proficient reading Swahili and French

IV. The Components: What to include in your CV and how to state information

The components included in a CV should reflect your own experiences and aspirations. Your CV need not include entries for all of the components listed below. These should serve as a guiding framework for creating a full picture that fits your own situation.

The order in which these components appear should reflect the significance that you attribute to them. Arrange them so that the most important information appears at the beginning and the least important at the end of your CV.

Professional / Career / Vocational / Research Objectives: The first component of a CV states your objectives or the reasons that you are distributing your CV. Connect your goals, which should be logically and clearly stated, to those of the program or position for which you are applying. Be specific in stating what it is you would like to do.

Education: This component should provide graduate and professional schools and prospective employers with a brief but thorough understanding of your academic background. You should indicate the following:

- graduation dates
- degrees and the dates they were received
- diplomas
- certificates
- names of universities, colleges, professional schools or other institutions that you have attended
- your majors and minors along with your grade point average for each
- your cumulative grade point average for each institution attended as well as for each degree

Highlight significant academic achievements, such as strong grades in specific courses, as well as any extensive background you have in areas outside your major / minor. If you are an undergraduate and a candidate for honors or high honors in your major, include that information in the education component.

Coursework: Provide complete course titles, with brief descriptions where appropriate, so that prospective employers have a clear indication that the coursework matches the job requirement. Mention grades that you have received to highlight academic performance.

List courses in groups that support and strengthen your objectives.

Honors, Achievements, Awards: List and briefly describe all special recognitions that you have received, including study group participation, community services, departmental awards, athletic awards and / or lists, scholarships, fellowships and memberships in academic organizations.

Thesis Abstract: Summarize your thesis in a brief abstract. Include the full title and date or term of completion.

Research Interests: Be as specific as possible in stating your research interests. Strike a balance between being specific enough to ensure a match between your objectives and those of the program to which you are applying and being general enough not to preclude options if your research interests are flexible. This is a difficult balancing act.

Research and / or Laboratory Experience: Provide detailed descriptions of your work. Be sure to give the title of each project. List the names and titles of professors or others who have supervised your research.

IV. The Components -- *continued*

Instrumentation Experience: If you have used standard instruments in a laboratory, describe that use. If you have used state-of-the-art instruments, it is appropriate to describe both the instruments and the extent to which you have used them.

Specialized Skills: Use the information that you developed on your competencies and skills to include interpersonal, leadership, organizational or analytical skills you have as well as their applications.

Publications / Presentations / Works-in-Progress: Provide appropriate bibliographic descriptions. Though classroom presentations would not normally be included here, there are occasions when students are selected to give presentations because of superior classroom performance. These experiences should be listed.

Work Experience: List all of your work experiences, including internships, summer jobs and campus employment. Give brief, but detailed descriptions of your responsibilities. Include titles, names of the organizations, locations and dates of employment. For example:

Coach, Junior Tennis Teams, Hutto High School, Bainbridge, GA. Summer 1994

Research Assistant, Dean of Students Office, Bowdoin College. Wrote computer program for housing lottery. 1994

Background: This component might include information regarding citizenship, prolonged residence abroad and / or unusual educational or work experiences.

Community Service: Include volunteer work, contributions to a community and / or membership in university-wide committees.

Co-curricular Activities: List and describe campus programs and activities in which you have been an *active* participant, such as student government, athletics, academic clubs and language clubs.

Interests: This section includes avocations such as bird-watching, stamp collecting, chess, rugby and music.

Travel: Include extended international travel as a result of academic study abroad. Do not include brief visits abroad as a tourist. If, on the other hand, you have had extensive domestic travel that is related to your objectives, list that here. When appropriate, list cities, states, regions, or countries alphabetically. For example:

ACADEMIC STUDY ABROAD

Sea Semester, Greece, summer of 2000

Semester spent on a schooner to study marine life and to maintain ship

References / Letters of Recommendation: This component is optional. If you choose to include references, include only names and titles of people you have asked to write recommendations for you. If appropriate, you may simply indicate the following on your CV:

References available upon request

Curriculum Vitae Sample 1

SARAH SCHMIDT

2 Ridgeway Road
Memphis, TN 45208
205-555-5555
sarah_schmidt@yahoo.com

University of Tennessee
135 Forest Street
Memphis, TN 02238
205-555-5555
sarah.schmidt@utenn.edu

CAREER OBJECTIVE

Short Range: A mechanical engineering position in product development, including design, testing, and project scheduling

Long Range: M.Sc., Ph.D.

EDUCATION

B.S., 1996, University of Tennessee, Memphis, TN; major in Mechanical Engineering; GPA 3.7; cumulative GPA 3.2

Summer 1992, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL; studied computer science and environmental geology

COURSEWORK

Engineering

Principles of Engineering
Mechanical Design
Vector Calculus
Materials Science I, II, III
Non-Linear Dynamic and Chaos
Design for Manufacturing

Related Coursework

Entrepreneurship
Leadership in Organizations
Science Fiction of the 20th Century
Foundations of Democracy
Orchestration: The Big Band Era

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Senior Thesis. "Manufacturability of Cooling Systems for Data Center Server Systems," Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Tennessee. Thesis Advisor, E. L. Baum, Ph.D. 1995 – 1996

Research Assistant. Bonney Center for Mechanical Engineering, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL. Summer 1992

Supervisor, Dr. James L. Lee, Received NSF Grant
Examined materials properties of high temperature tolerant resins

MEMBERSHIP

Young Engineers Society, American Engineering Association 1995

HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Stella Florence Pettypiece Memorial Price in mechanical engineering for outstanding performance in first year engineering 1992

Clarence Charles Zess Mathematics Price for Excellence in Calculus 1992

Captain, National Championship Swim Team 1991

All-America, high school swimming 1990, 1991

Deborah Wingert Athletic Scholarship (swimming), University of Tennessee 1992 – 1994

COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Varsity Swim Team, University of Tennessee 1994 – 1996

Big Brother / Big Sister, University of Tennessee 1994 – 1996

Tutor, Mechanical Engineering Department, University of Tennessee, Fall 1995; assisted students in Design for Manufacturing

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Assistant to the Manager, Welsh Electric Company, Tuscaloosa, AL

Coordinated warehouse inventory with showroom inventory, Summer 1996

Coach, Tuscaloosa Swim Club, Tuscaloosa, AL, Summer 1995

Coach, United Swimming Clinics, Mercersburg, PA, Summer 1993, 1994

Curriculum Vitae Sample 2

MARIA VALESQUEZ COLON

(permanent)
2723 Willow Park Drive
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 555-5555

(until June 20, 2006)
University of Rhode Island, Box 8028
Kingston, RI 02881
(401) 555-5555

EDUCATION

B.A., June 2006, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI
Major in geology (GPA 3.4) with primary interest in oceanography.
Cumulative GPA 3.3.

COURSEWORK

Geology

Physical Geology
Oceanography
Mineralogy
Geology
Coastal Geology
Structural Geology

Related Sciences

Chemical Principles I
Chemical Principles II
Calculus I
Computer Science II
Physics I
Physics II

Other

Economic Principles
Introduction to Philosophy
Psychology
Intermediate Portuguese
History of Egypt
Mass Media

HONORS

Dean's Award, six of six semesters
Phi Eta Sigma, honor society for first-year students, 1993
Recipient, The Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation Scholarship for
National Merit Finalist studying chemistry or related science

SPECIAL SKILLS

Language: Fluent in Spanish; conversant in French and Portuguese
Computer: Languages: C, C++, DB2, Visual Basic, Java, COBOL

LABORATORY EXPERIENCE

Researcher: The Sediment History of the Pettaquamscutt River and Its Relation to the Narrangansett Bay, RI. Dr. J. King, advisor. Fall 2004

Research Assistant, Lake Ontario Coastal Survey, Colgate University, Department of Geology. Dr. C. McClennen and Dr. P. Pinet, advisors. Fall 2005

Researcher, Coastal Geomorphology, cuspidal beach formations and their relation to rip currents. Dr. C. McClennen, advisor. Summer 2004

Teaching Assistant, Mineralogy, University of Rhode Island, Department of Geology. Dr. J. Novacek, instructor. Fall 2003

INSTRUMENT EXPERIENCE

- Coulter Counter/Elzone
- Freeze Drier
- S.E.M.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Tour Guide, Enviro Tours, Everglades, FL. Conducted environmental tours of Central America. Summer 2005

COCURRICULAR

- *Certified*, NAUI Openwater I SCUBA diver
- Position #1, Women's Cross-Country Ski Team, 2003 – present; Captain, 2002
- Latin American Student Association, 2003 – present
- Pi Beta Fraternity for Women, 2003 – present
- Cycling Team, 2005
- Geology Club, 2003 – present

TRAVEL

Extensively throughout Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway; resided in Oslo, Norway for two years (2001 – 2003)