What Makes an Academic CV Effective?

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Think About Your Audience

* Busy, with perhaps 100 CVs to read

* Probably not from your university; possibly not even from your country

* Wants specific information about your skills, credentials, and experience

Because the Reader is Busy

* **Make information leap to the eye**
  ▷ list items in reverse chronological order (most recent first) so your best and most relevant qualifications are at the top

  ▷ use fonts, typefaces, spacing to draw attention

* **Organize sections consistently**

* **Be concise**
  ▷ small blocks of text can be read at a glance

Because the Reader is Likely to be from Elsewhere

* Avoid jargon, acronyms, abbreviations

* Describe your responsibilities

  ▷ titles do NOT have standard meanings

  ▷ gives fuller picture of your skills

* Explain clearly

  ▷ if the reader must guess what you mean, s/he may well guess inaccurately

Tell the Reader the Essentials

* **Credentials**

  ▷ education   [degrees, fields, institutions, dates]

  ▷ employment   [employer, title, dates]

* **Accomplishments**

  ▷ research   [topics, projects, results, publications]

  ▷ teaching   [courses, institutions, topics]

Show What Makes You Unique

* your prior experience in your field

* how you approach your work

* prizes or awards that have recognized your accomplishments

Demonstrate Experience

* Aspects of this job you have done before

  ▷ Used relevant methods or equipment? Taught classes on the same topics?

    ▷ Conveys that you will be successful right away

* Work that uses related skills

  ▷ Presented talks or acted as a tutor? Applied similar techniques in a different field?

    ▷ Conveys that you will become effective in this new context quickly

Show How You Work

* responsible, a leader
  ▷ examples of how you successfully led a project?

* lifelong learner
  ▷ any qualifications beyond your formal degrees?
  ▷ special language skills or technical skills?

* organized, pays attention to detail
  ▷ imply this by the care with which you write the CV

Keep it Professional

* Update your CV at least once per year

* Do include all relevant information about your professional qualifications

* Do not automatically include personal information in your CV.
  [e.g., your age, photograph, or family details]

  • follow the norm of the country where you would be studying or working

Keep it Consistent

* Anything you will discuss in your teaching or research statement should match with items from your CV

* If you have a gap in part of your record (e.g., no publications for a few years because you were in a purely teaching job), you can insert a brief sentence (e.g., in the publication list) that reminds the reader to look back at the employment timeline in your CV.

Ideas from 2013 Participants

* **match CV to the application**
  ▷ if applying for a teaching (research) job, list teaching (research) experience first
  ▷ if applying for a job/scholarship involving leadership or administration, include your committee work or administrative roles

* **listing grants and prizes**
  ▷ include honors & awards after your education
  ▷ ok to list awards & grants separately <u>or</u> together

More Ideas from 2013

* online courses

  ▷ list in "education" section after your degrees

* keep track of accomplishments!

  ▷ when participating in a new activity, make notes so you don't have to struggle to remember later

  ▷ write down how each activity was funded, for later reference

Still More Ideas from 2013

* publications under multiple names?

  ▷ Include (original name) at the top of the CV

  ▷ Put a star next to your previous name where it appears in your publication list and have a footnote saying "This paper appears under my previous name." without any further explanation.

  ▷ Put your previous name in boldface type where it appears in your publication list. Put a note at the top of the page saying "The name in boldface is my previous name."

Ideas from 2015 participants

* **CV length?**
  - without publications/talks, usually 3-5 pages
    - some grants request a special length or format
  - publications/talks list length varies by situation
    - sometimes list only most relevant or cited papers
  - create professional website to post a CV and publication/talk list with *full* details and links

* **Non-academic jobs may prefer a resume**
  - 1 page, skills-focused, tailored to the job at hand

More from 2015

* if including grades/scores, give the scale

* graduate students & postdocs supervised

* professional service
  ▷ role organizing (all or part of) a conference
  ▷ professional society membership & service
  ▷ journal reviewer professional service

Your Questions & Ideas ?

* Look at the sample CV template you have been given on the handout.

* Consider what was said in this session.

* What questions do you have?

* What ideas or suggestions do you have that were not mentioned already?

Get Feedback!

* From time to time, have a trusted colleague or mentor read your CV and provide advice on how to improve it

* In the rest of this workshop you will:

  ▷ Read the CVs of two colleagues (on paper) and write down feedback for them

  ▷ Receive feedback from those two colleagues on your own CV

  ▷ Edit your CV (on paper) and make notes about how you will use the feedback to improve the CV

Directions #1 (Tuesday October 10 session)

* first feedback period:

  ▷ Form a group of exactly 3 people and sit together

  ▷ Give each of your two partners a copy of your CV [please save one clean copy for yourself]

  ▷ Working alone, write constructive comments on your two partners' CVs. You may continue to work on this between now and the time we meet for the next session on Thursday October 12.

* questions?   ask Sekhar & Elizabeth

Directions #2 (Thursday October 12 session)

* **second feedback period: 45min**

▷ Sit with your two partners from Tuesday's session

▷ Give feedback to each person for 15min as follows:

▷ Hand person #1 both of the marked up copies of her CV and explain your comments to her

▷ Then do the same for person #2; then for person #3

▷ At the end, discuss together what you have learned so far. Think about which ideas you will share with the whole group.

Directions #3 (Thursday October 12 session)

* **10min:** On the clean copy of your own CV, write notes about what changes you plan to make to it. Include ideas from your colleagues' feedback and from the general information in Tuesday's session.

* **20 min:** Contribute to the all-group discussion of your suggestions and ideas about CV's and giving feedback about them.

<u>**NAME**</u>

Contact Information

Education

2010 M.A. in *field* from *University*

2006 Certificate in *Qualification* from *Institution*

2005 B.A. in *field* from *University*

Employment

2010-- Research scientist in *field* at *Institution*

2006-10 Instructor in *field* at *University*

2005-06 Assistant Instructor in *field* at *University*

Awards and Honors

2012 *University teaching prize* or *Scholarship* or *Best paper award* or…

Grants

2011-13 *Government Research Agency* grant #AB333, *Title/Topic*, $*amount*

Research Experience

Research on *topic* (*2012*--)

Studied *question* using *methods*. Obtained *results*. I was responsible for *this part of the analysis and writing*. This work led to publications 1 and 2.

Research on topic (*2010-12*)

Studied *question* using *equipment* and *techniques*. Obtained *results*. I *made measurements* and *analyzed the data*. This work led to publication 3.

Teaching Experience

Instructor in *field* at *University* (*2006-2010*)

Taught Physics 102 (introductory electromagnetism). Delivered the course lectures, wrote and graded the exams, assigned the homework, supervised teaching assistants.

Assistant Instructor in *field* at *University* (*2005-2006*)

Assisted the instructor teaching Physics 101 (introductory mechanics). Helped to grade homework and exams. Led problem-solving sessions for students.

Publications

1. [newest] Full title, authors, complete bibliographic information on publication.
2. …
3. [oldest] Full title, authors, complete bibliographic information on publication.

Note: This is a rough CV sketch that illustrates some items discussed in the workshop. You can also include service, leadership, outreach, languages, technical skills… Words in italics are place-holders for the detail you would insert.

Suggestions for Critiquing a CV

Structure:
- Headings clear and visible?
- Reverse chronological listing (newest first)?
- Concise text?
- Consistent organization?
- Use of fonts, styles, indentation, bullets to make content clear, neat & appealing?

Accomplishments Explained Clearly?
- No use of local jargon
- Ambiguous job titles made clear by a supporting sentence
- The nature of applicant's teaching roles and experience made clear
- Responsibilities, topics, methods in research described
- Publications clearly linked to research topics / projects

Other Special Qualifications Conveyed?   [below, a few possible examples are listed]
- Leadership qualities and roles
- Special efforts to help students or junior researchers
- Technical qualifications and skills
- Language skills
- Work on public outreach or on women-in-science issues

Overall:
- Does the reader come away with a correct understanding of what the person has accomplished and what kinds of skills or experiences s/he has?
- Does the reader feel that all of the necessary information was clearly presented and easy to find?
- Does the reader have a sense that this is an individual with unique and interesting experiences (rather than thinking this CV looks exactly like many others)?