

What Makes a CV Effective?

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Think About Your Audience

- * Busy, with perhaps 100 CVs to read
- * Probably not from your university; may not even be from your country
- * Wants specific information about your skills, credentials, 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

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 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., age, photograph, family details]
- * Follow the norm for the country in which you are applying [in the USA, you would not include personal information]

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:
 - ▶ Today: Read 2 colleagues' CV's (on paper) and write down feedback for them; receive feedback from them on your CV; check with me or other facilitators if questions arise
 - ▶ Tomorrow: Edit your CV (on paper) and explain how you will use the feedback to improve the CV

Directions #1

(Wednesday session)

- * first period: 20min
 - ▶ form a group of exactly 3 people and sit together
 - ▶ give your two partners each a copy of your CV
[please save one clean copy to use tomorrow]
 - ▶ working alone, write constructive comments on your two partners' CVs
- * questions? ask the facilitators

Directions #2

(Wednesday session)

- * second period: 40min

- ▶ give feedback to each person for 10min as follows:
- ▶ hand person #1 the marked up copies of her CV and explain your comments
- ▶ then do the same for person #2; then do person #3
- ▶ at the end, discuss together what you have learned so far

- * questions? ask the facilitators

Directions #3

(plans for Thursday)

* tonight

- ▶ using the feedback you received today, mark up the 3rd copy of your CV to show how you will improve it

* tomorrow

- ▶ you will share this with your partners in tomorrow's workshop

Directions #4

(Thursday session)

- * Sit with your partners from yesterday
- * last night you marked up your CV to show how you plan to modify it
- * 15 min: show each other your plans to improve your CVs and compare ideas
- * 30 min: all-group discussion of **your suggestions and ideas** about CV's and giving feedback about them

NAME

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)?