

Grad Student and Postdoc Career Guide: Curriculum Vitae

Introduction. The curriculum vitae or CV is a document used to present a comprehensive and holistic picture of yourself as a scholar and researcher for informational or application purposes. The CV has a few very basic general formatting rules, and a few basic content guidelines, and past those the scholar is on her own to generate a document that explains who she is and what she's done.

The CV will typically be used for academic purposes: applications to teaching or research jobs in higher education, applications for grants, fellowships, or awards, and sometimes to research jobs in industry or for non-academic positions in higher ed, such as roles in advising, student affairs, program management, etc. You will use the CV only when the job posting asks for a CV specifically, and never in place of a request for a résumé.

This guide has been designed to be used both as a primer for drafting a first or new CV from scratch, beginning with formatting and basic headings, and also as a reference for those who have already created a CV but want to update the appearance, need to tailor the CV for a specific application or type of application, or who have recently begun to gain new types of experiences or accomplishments and need to know how to list them on their CVs.

Getting Started. Writing about your experience for the purposes of a CV requires viewing your work through a specific lens: that of the "Academic Triad". The academic triad comprises the broad headings of research, teaching, and service. These are the kinds of experience that are primarily important to the employers or other search entities that would usually request a CV as part of a hiring or selection process, and it's important to consider your background through this lens as you begin to draft your CV.

The first section of your CV is unmarked (i.e., does not begin with a heading), and contains your personal information. Personal information includes your name, the physical or street address *of your department*, your email, a phone number that will reach you, and any specialized online profiles such as your Github, the URL of your professional or portfolio website, etc. If you have professional social media accounts you may want to include those, depending on your field and the focus of your research. If you are not currently connected to a university, research institute, or other research organization, use your personal street or mailing address in the address component of the section. The address section of your CV is primarily claiming an affiliation with your current department; this is why you use the department address.

Where to Begin: Create these 8 Headings. You've already started! Name and personal information is the first of the 8 sections. Create the following as section headings, under your first unmarked section (Name and Contact Information).

- Education
- Research Interests
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Service

Conference Activity
Publications

Now we're ready to begin filling in these 8 core headings.

But first, a note on organization. How should you format the information in your various experience entries? There are many ways to lay out your CV, and the one that works with your information and looks right to you is the way to go, generally speaking. You need to be consistent with the formatting of your entries between sections, so that you don't confuse the reader, but that leaves a lot of room for individual formatting decisions. I personally like to put dates on the left margin and then start the entry corresponding to that date one or two tabs in.

Education. Education entries, like almost everything else in your CV, will be listed in reverse chronological order with current degree first. List completion dates only, with the text "(expected)" included along with the completion year of your current degree. If you did not complete, or the education experience was a study abroad or other mid-education program, list the date range, and instead of listing the degree, list the type of education experience, e.g. "Study Abroad", "Anna Sobol Levy Fellowship", or even simply "Courses toward the B.A." if you did coursework there but did not complete a degree at the institution.

You can choose a degree-first or an institution-first format, but you'll need to follow that same format in your research and teaching experience entries.

2019 University of Colorado Boulder
(expected) PhD History

You may include the title of your dissertation or thesis, and even a brief summary (1-3 lines), for up to one year post-completion, and thereafter as seems appropriate (typically only if it relates directly to the job you're applying to).

Research Interests. This is one of the more straightforward sections: list 4-7 research interests. Ideally the topics listed both represent some elements of your research experience, publications, and conference activity to date and your future plans as well as fit in well with the target department's current direction or the way the department's research is trending. Present them in a comma-separated list format, in any order.

Research Experience. What is research experience? What counts, and what doesn't? Research experience is, at base, any time that you spend on research. You need not be paid for it to count as research experience, although those paid research experiences are probably the first ones that come to mind as you are drafting this section. It also need not produce any publications to be considered research experience. Some research leads to a dead end; that is one of the understood risks of research. You still spent time rigorously investigating that dead end, and so it counts as research experience. You should include entries for your PhD dissertation and/or master's thesis or capstone research. Any time you spent as a research assistant should also be included in this section. Other projects can be considered on a case-by-case basis as to whether they should be included in your research experience, or whether they would best fit somewhere else.

Research experience should be listed in reverse chronological order and include date range, organization, title (as in, your title if you think about your research as a job), and a brief narrative. In general the narrative should give a brief statement of context if necessary, a description of your research activities, your findings and contribution to the field, and a results statement. Results here are publications, patents, etc—tangible products of the project.

2017- University of Colorado Boulder
present Doctoral Researcher

Project aims to discover the mathematical structure underpinning the seven basic weaving patterns. Isolated strand movement pattern for the seven basic styles and analyzed according to the Elde formula. Compared Elde results for the seven patterns and visualized data in order to demonstrate similarities and differences. Determined basic movement of weaving and algorithm describing it. Applied this test algorithm to other styles of weaving to determine success of model. Resulted in doctoral thesis and four publications.

This narrative can and should be tailored to demonstrate that you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed in the posting, and thus that you are an outstanding candidate for the position.

Nota bene: Some fields are currently formatting research experience as a bare line without any explanation or narrative. If this is a norm in your field or seems to be the norm at an institution to which you are applying, you can format your own research experience in this way if you feel it will give you an advantage.

Teaching Experience. As with research experience above, you may ask yourself “What counts as teaching experience?”, and the answer may depend on your field and perhaps the purpose of your CV. For a general CV, you may choose to include everything: sessional and adjuncting work, assistantships and instructor positions, even tutoring or primary/secondary experience, if applicable. Always pay attention to the requirements of the posting, however. Some departments now prefer that in your Teaching Experience section you only list courses where you were the instructor of record, totally responsible for all elements of the course including curriculum and final marks. At CU, this would mean that only GPTI or sessional/adjunct jobs would be listed as Teaching Experience, and everything else would be listed separately under “Teaching Assistantships”, or else elided completely.

To list this experience, structure it along the same lines as you did your research experience above, keeping in mind a few guidelines. First, always use descriptive course titles, not catalog designations. Those catalog numbers aren’t standardized from one university to another, so they don’t indicate as much to the reader as you may assume they will. For example, someone from another university probably won’t know just by looking that a given course was upper-level or a special topics course, so include that information in your experience description, explicitly, rather than hoping someone will understand the catalog schema. Second, remember that your experience teaching a course varies along two axes. The first is enrollment size (we can call that the x-axis) and the y-axis would be level of involvement. Ideally you want the description of that teaching experience to indicate where on each of those axes your experience falls.

2017- University of Colorado Boulder
present Graduate Part-Time Instructor (instructor of record)
Introduction to Basketweaving

Developed curriculum, reading list, and exercises for 2 sections per term of 25-30 beginning weavers. Delivered lecture-style and hands-on instruction in the 7 basic patterns of basketweaving, led practice labs (4hrs per week), and assessed practical and written assignments and exams. Held office hours (1hr per week), and assigned final course grades.

The above is one way to present a teaching experience entry. This format is especially helpful if most of your teaching experience has consisted of long stretches of teaching the same 1 or 2 courses. If that is not the case, you may prefer to lead with the basics (date range, organization, and title), include a quick narrative as above, and then list the courses either alphabetically by descriptive title or reverse chronologically by most recent date offered, instead.

2017- University of Colorado Boulder
present Graduate Teaching Assistant and Instructor
Assisted with curriculum development, delivered lectures, and graded assignments and exams for 1-2 sections per term, enrollments ranging from 15-45. Held office hours, assisted in writing exams, and collaborated on assigning final grades.
Advanced Basketweaving
History of Basketweaving
Intermediate Basketweaving
Introduction to Basketweaving

Adjunct or sessional work should be listed similarly. Visiting Assistant Professor posts as well as anything that includes signing an employment contract should be listed as "Professional Appointments".

Service. Service falls into three broad categories: service to the department, service to the university, and service to the profession. Service to the department might be sitting on a search committee, running the graduate orientation program, or serving as a graduate mentor. Service to the university might be participating in graduate student government or sitting as the graduate representative to a planning committee. Service to the profession might include serving as the graduate representative for your region to your professional organization or serving as a reader for a journal, as well as many more opportunities in each category.

Service is typically listed very simply. Offer a date or date range, give the service experience a broad title (Graduate Representative for the Mountain West, Association of American Basketweavers), and contextualize if necessary—often you will find the title speaks for itself. As your service section grows, you may find it useful to separate it out by type according to the categories listed above, using them as subsections under a main service heading.

As mentorship becomes more important to the academic job search, candidates often find it useful to move mentorship to its own category outside the Service heading. Often the names of student or professional mentees are listed along with the date range for the formal mentoring relationship, and perhaps the level (undergraduate, master's student, etc), in either reverse chronological order, or alphabetical order by name of mentee. No description of specific mentoring activities need be offered. Do check with current and past mentees to make sure they are comfortable being named on your CV in this way.

Conference Activity. Broadly speaking, conference activity is posters, presentations, and panels organized or moderated. Conference volunteerism should usually be listed in Service, as should professional organization caucuses or committees on which you sit. Once you have more than a few entries in any subsection of Conference Activity, you can break the main section into subsections, such as “Presentations”, “Posters”, “Panels Organized/Moderated” and so on. For each presentation or poster, offer a full citation including author list, title, conference name and city, and month and day or days. For posters, if you have not yet broken the section into subsections, you can include “(poster)” at the end of the entry. If you were the sole presenter of a group presentation or poster, you can include the note “(sole presenter)”

Publications. Publications can be presented all together in reverse chronological order until the list becomes unwieldy, and after that should generally speaking be grouped according to their type and status in subheadings under the main “Publications” heading. What this means is that journal articles (including editorials, letters to the editor, and book reviews appearing in peer-reviewed journals) should all go together, as should books and monographs, relevant non-print materials, and published abstracts. You should also clearly indicate what stage of publication these materials are at.

Works already published should be listed together with a full publication citation, in reverse-chronological order of publication. All relevant authors should appear in the citation; bold your own name to emphasize it.

Works under review should be listed together, and identified as being “under review”. The accepting journal or press should be identified for each work, and the full list of authors in order should be supplied, again with your name in bold. If you know approximately when it will be published at this stage, “(forthcoming 2017)” or similar may be used.

Works that have been accepted but are not currently under review or published can be listed in your CV; give them the most complete citation you can, listing journal or press by which the work has been accepted along with all other known information. As with other citations, the full list of authors should be supplied, with your name in bold.

You may have manuscripts that you have been working on for a long time—pet academic or research projects, or the like—and these can be listed under some circumstances, if they are categorized as “in progress.” If you are still a student or candidate, you should be using this category sparingly, if at all.

The process of getting an article or monograph published can be lengthy and involves a lot of steps, but in general if the work has been accepted it should be included on a CV.

Other Possible Headings. There are a number of other possible headings, and I’ll list and give a brief content explanation for some of the more common ones. These headings are listed alphabetically; please don’t feel you need to have any or all of these headings on your CV.

Awards and Honors. This section is for professional awards and honors, offered in reverse chronological order. Indicate the name of the award or honor, the conferring institution, and the year conferred (to the left).

Campus and Departmental Talks. Lectures given on campus or in your department belong here. Offer them in the same citation format as conference presentations.

Certifications. This section is for formal certifications earned through or governed by a discrete professional organization or entity. Certificates earned as part of a degree program should be offered in the Education section under the degree during which you completed them. List in reverse chronological order (for non-expiring certifications) or alphabetical with date earned or date of expiry (for certifications that must be updated).

Community Outreach. This section is for outreach work you have done whether as a part of your research project or in a more general way on behalf of your department, university, or discipline. List as an abbreviated experience entry, with date range to the left, role, organization on behalf of which you were performing the outreach (if there is one), and a brief narrative outlining your outreach efforts and how you accomplished them.

Exhibitions or Gallery Shows or Performances. These sections are typically used by fine artists to list their public exhibitions and shows. List in reverse chronological order with the year/s to the left, and include the name and location. Give the precise date (month and day/s) as a parenthetical statement at the end of the entry.

Extra Training. This could be courses, workshops, seminars, certification courses, etc, that will be advantageous to mention. List them in reverse chronological, year to the left and precise date offered parenthetically at the end of the entry if desired. List the title of the training course, the organization offering it, and the location (City, ST).

Grants and Fellowships. This section is for grants and fellowships, offered in reverse chronological order. Indicate the name of the grant or fellowship, the conferring institution, the dollar amount (if field-appropriate), and the year conferred (to the left). Travel bursaries are grants and thus belong in this section.

Invited Talks. These are speaking engagements you have been invited to by an external organization. Guest lectures in courses do not count. List in the same citation format as conference presentations.

Languages. On a CV, this section is for human languages. Indicate proficiency in parentheses after each language.

Media Coverage. This section is for coverage of you or your work written by someone else and published externally. Offer in citation format, reverse chronologically.

Non-academic Work Experience. Sometimes called Industry Experience, if it primarily is used to present internship experience. This section is for work experience outside academia. Structure it similarly to a Research Experience entry, with a narrative that is very brief and focused on accomplishments.

Patents. These are patents you hold wholly or in part which developed from your work. Offer them either in alphabetical or reverse chronological order, with a full patent citation as used in your field.

Professional Appointments. These are contract positions of one year or more. Graduate and adjunct teaching does not belong in this category. List as you would any other teaching experience entry.

Professional Memberships. This section lists the organizations of which you are a member, usually in alphabetical order or else in order of importance or relevance. Dates need not be listed unless you have been a member for an extraordinarily long time.

References. References should only be listed on the CV itself if the posting indicates that this is required; usually it is a better practice to list references in a separate document. References should be listed in your preferred order unless the posting contains specific guidance. If there are no instructions to the contrary, you may list only the referee's two preferred methods of communication (it's good to offer a backup, just in case).

Related Professional Skills. This will look like the "Skills" section of an industry resume, and is probably less relevant for academic faculty or research positions, but useful to include for higher ed administration roles and other such "academic-adjacent" applications.

Repertoire. This section is for musicians who need to include a repertoire of pieces in their CV. List in any order that seems sensible to you. Columns may be used if desired.

Residencies. This section is for artist residencies. List in reverse chronological order with the year/s to the left, and include a title (typically [type of] Residency unless it is a named residency), the granting or sponsoring institution, and city and state. For shorter residencies (less than six months) indicate the month/day range in a parenthetical statement at the end of the entry.

Teachers or Master Classes. This section/s is for musicians who need to include a list of their instructors and/or master classes they've taken. Instructors are listed simply by name, in either chronological or alphabetical order. Master classes should receive an entry similar to a Residency or Experience entry.

Teaching Areas/Prepared to Teach. For some teaching-focused CVs, it is useful to offer a list of courses or subjects that you have ready to go at any time. Use descriptive course titles, and don't explain; the list alone is sufficient.