

Grad Student and Postdoc Career Guide: Academic CVs to Industry Résumés

An Introduction

When you come from a primarily academic background and consider job searching outside of the academy, a key core step of the process is to convert your application documents to formats that will be successful in a nonacademic context. You must take the same experience that has described an academic trajectory and translate that to a background that qualifies you for work in industry. As you begin, know that you are moving from a document recognized widely in one field (academics/research) to a document that will need to shift drastically if you are applying to different industries. The academic CV is a representation of you as an academic and field expert. Your comprehensive listing of experience serves to prove your scholarship and expertise. The industry resume is a document that highlights your skills and experience *specifically tailored* to one job or type of work. You may have many versions of your resume if you are applying to different types of positions. So, to start strong, it is important to realize you are creating a whole new document. The good news: your CV can act as the beginning of what we call a "master resume" from which you can pull information to create individualized, tailored resumes for any number of nonacademic positions.

Mindset: From Academic to Industry

CVs are centered on you as an academic and researcher; resumes are a broader category of documents that showcase how you fit one specific role, no matter the field.

CVs are a comprehensive list of your accomplishments and experience from the perspective of *one, very specific* field --higher education (and, more broadly, research). You can think of CVs as the academic version of a resume. They are organized in a way that makes sense to those oriented toward the priorities of academia and research. As research, publishing, teaching and service are the primary responsibilities of academics, those are the building blocks of a CV. Now, of course, CVs take into account the type of institution one is applying to, but tailoring tends to involve rearranging the same information; with resumes, some information may be left off altogether.

Resumes, on the other hand, are used for every field from marketing to manufacturing to management.

Therefore, to understand what you'll need to include, you must start with the job description and see your resume as a piece of *marketing* material (read: brief, targeted, essential information-only) to appeal to the audience who posted that job ad. You need to filter your experience through that lens;

A NOTE BEFORE YOU START: "CV" is the term used globally referring to what we in the US call a resume. When asked for a CV, consider context. If you are applying to an academic or research position, an academic CV is appropriate. If you are applying to almost any other role, a resume may be what the company is actually looking for.

what experiences, accomplishments and - most of all- demonstrated skill sets are they looking for? For more information on reading the job ad to understand what you should include in your resume, check out the section called “Decide How to Tailor Your Resume: Mine the Job Ad”.

Where to Start: Gather Your Content in a Master Resume

1. Chronologically list all past positions you have held (paid and unpaid). Include the position name, company/organization/department, location and date range during which you were in that role. You have a good start here working from your CV. Add any additional positions you have had beyond what you have included in your CV. It is appropriate to include positions held in undergraduate years if they were roles that may be relevant to the type of work you want to pursue now. Do not include experience during high school. Additionally, positions from more than 12-15 years ago should not be included unless they are extremely relevant to the field you are planning to enter.
2. Under each role, list all responsibilities related to that role. Choose the responsibilities from your list that are of highest relevance to the opportunities to which you are applying and focus on building those out.
3. For your prioritized responsibilities, list any achievements related to those responsibilities, quantify those achievements where possible (i.e. number of people you led, number of classes you taught, amount of funding raised, percentage of efficiency/income gained, number of publications produced, size of event planned, etc.)

*This information will become the most important content in your resume and having it all in one document will make tailoring easier as you build a library of “evidence” of your contributions.

Building A Resume: Formatting Considerations

One of the most noticeable differences between a CV and resume is the length. While CVs work to demonstrate a both a depth and breadth of experience in academic pursuits and grows with your experience, a resume must be packed with only the most relevant, current experience and skillsets important for the exact job to which you are applying—again, think of it as marketing material (where brevity and relevance of information are of utmost importance).

CV and Resume Section Comparison

CVs	Resumes
Contact Information	Contact Information
Education (including description of dissertation and advisor’s name)	Professional Summary (if applicable)
Research	Education (move down if less relevant than experience, leave advisor/dissertation off)
Teaching	Skills
Publications	Experience (2-3 tailored sections)
Presentations	Projects (technical)
Awards and Grants	Research/Publications (if relevant for role)

Service	
Outreach	
Work Experience	
Research Interests	
Professional Development	
Performances (arts)	
Exhibitions (arts)	

Formatting: Broad Tips

- Keep your formatting consistent to quickly “train” the reader to find the information they are looking for
- Two Pages Maximum: front and back of one sheet, even if you have extensive experience.
- Use short phrases/fragments: No pronouns (I, me) and eliminate unneeded articles. No full sentences.
- Match tense to current involvement with the role or project
- Use bullet points to describe experiences and organize lists
- Arrange sections in order of relevance to the role: Those most relevant should be closer to the top of the document.

Content: Broad Tips

- Focus on skills
- Keep your readers in mind: ATS (algorithm looking for key terms), HR (generalist), Departmental manager (field expertise – most likely)
- Remove information that doesn’t pertain to the job
- Have someone else (non-expert, non-academic) proofread to make sure your descriptions are adequately accessible
- References in a separate document

Content: Describing Your Experience

Include your title, the organization, location and the time frame (month, year- month year) during which you were involved with that experience.

Example:

Teaching Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder – English Dept., Boulder, CO 2015-2018

This becomes your position heading. Describe your experience in a bulleted list under your position heading. When possible, emphasize experiences with accomplishments instead of just making a list of job duties.

When crafting descriptions of your work, follow this basic formula:

Skill + Task + Result/Accomplishment
(Specific skill performed to contribute to what task that resulted in which accomplishment)

Example:

Led team of 6 to produce 3-part video series highlighting impact of university/community partnership on regional environmental initiative; series featured on university website and resulted in 2 follow-up interviews

Another significant consideration when listing your experience on a resume is the fact that many (if not most) of the people/software reading your resume will not have done academic research, publishing or teaching. When writing to an academic audience, you can safely assume your audience at least generally understands what is involved in doing the common types of work in academia (what being a "research assistant" or "teaching assistant" means or the steps it takes to get a paper published or win a grant). That isn't so outside of academia. Therefore, instead of simply listing positions you've held, you need to explain *in terms relevant to the desired position* what you accomplished in that previous role, what skill sets you used and how you made an impact. That's where the bullet points come in.

Decide How to Tailor Your Resume--Mine the Job Ad:

1. Minimum and preferred qualifications tell you which skills and experience you need to highlight in your resume and cover letter. They are also your main hints for which keywords your document will be scanned for. Include relevant skills in your job descriptions and skills sections as appropriate. Always address each minimum qualification (esp. in government applications. If you don't mention it, the reader cannot assume or infer that you have it.)
2. Job responsibilities will inform what your experience headings should be called. To highlight relevant experience, summarize the 2-3 areas of largest responsibility in the role and organize your experience under those headings, translating transferable skills in your bullet points into terms that make sense for those areas.
3. The company description will give you clues about how the company sees their impact in the marketplace and their culture. These elements can help you decide what tone to use in your cover letter and may indicate elements of the company's identity that compel you to work with them. Those details are also important to mention in your cover letter to stand out from others who are submitting form letters.

Know What You Are Qualified to Pursue: Identifying Your Skills Outside of Academia

You'll need to spend some time deconstructing the projects you have completed and the roles you have held to identify various skill sets gained through your academic work. You have already begun this process if you began by creating a master resume. This process can be used for two purposes: deciding what types of work to look for and creating a skills section in your resume.

- Choose one position you have held and consider what roles you played within that position
- Choose one role. What are your responsibilities and accomplishments connected to that role?
- Choose one responsibility. What skills do you use (or are you developing) through performing that responsibility?
 - processes and procedures
 - software, modeling, coding
 - data analysis
 - project management
 - hiring, supervision
 - Communication
- First, identify all skills and your level of proficiency with the *general population*, then choose relevant skills for the role

Examples

As we hope it has been clear throughout this guide, tailoring is key to a great industry resume. Any example of a graduate-level resume without a reference to what type of job it has been created for is incomplete at best. General examples always need some tweaking to take them from generally-well-organized to stand-out-fantastic. Therefore the two following examples to are paired with the job description for which they were written. These examples are provided by Versatile PhD. Access premium content including many more examples through our CU Boulder subscription to which you can gain access through the link below.

Access Versatile PhD on the Career Services website here:

<https://www.colorado.edu/career/students/graduate-students/versatile-phd>

Want to see even more examples of advanced degree resumes? Check out this link:

<https://icc.ucdavis.edu/materials/resume/samples#advancedresumes>

Example 1: Humanities PhD Resume for Google Communications Role

Executive Communications Senior Associate

As a member of the Executive Communications team based in Mountain View, you will work closely with senior executives at Google on communications to their teams and to Googlers worldwide. This will involve: creating strategic communications plans and campaigns which feature innovative ways to engage employees and are in tune with Google's culture; writing and creating communications including blog posts, strategy presentations, talking points and more; and, collaborating with internal partners across functions {PR, Policy, Legal, HR, IR, etc) and geographies.

Responsibilities

Develop and edit the content of communications for the SVP & Chief Business Officer, including speeches, emails, blogs, podcasts, strategy presentations, and interviews.

Plan and execute regular all-hands meetings and other employee meetings.

Create innovative communications that inform and motivate employees.

Minimum qualifications

BA/BS degree (In lieu of degree, 4 years relevant work experience).

3 years of professional experience in a fast-paced business, political, media, or non-profit environment.

Preferred qualifications

4 years relevant experience.

Excellent written communication skills (and ideally visual too).

Demonstrated ability to work calmly and maintain good judgment in fast-paced, high-stress environments.

Ability to interact with executives with confidence, and to provide advice on their communications that reflect an understanding of their business and leadership style.

Area

It's our job to help inform and educate users, advertisers, partners, opinion leaders--and our own employees--about the benefits of Google's products, our distinctive company culture/values, and our approach to the big public policy issues of the day. We are looking for quick-witted, entrepreneurial and intellectually curious people to join the team. To succeed here, you'll need to be able to combine creativity with the organizational skills to manage numerous different projects to tight deadlines simultaneously, as well as enjoy pitching to all kinds of journalists, bloggers and commentators (we find it hard too!), or producing internal communications and events for our employees. Things happen quickly at Google and to get stuff done here you need to be an enthusiastic team player - a self-starter who can work cross-functionally and isn't frightened to take risks or try out new ways of doing things.

First Last

123-456-7890 | 123 Main St. | City, ST 012345
first.last@gmail.com | www.linkedin.com/in/xxx

Overview

- Strong writer with an exceptional attention to detail and a high degree of initiative.
- Creative and curious problem-solver with an enthusiasm for experimentation.
- Highly organized and focused: comfortable with competing deadlines and last-minute requests.

Experience

COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA, City, ST 2012-present

Communications Manager/Editor

- Built communications strategy from the ground up: independently launched internal communications campaign, revamped website design and content, and coordinated social media platforms.
- Work across teams to develop communications that inform and motivate musicians and strengthen the organization's culture.
- Advise on executive communications.
- Write and distribute press releases, build media lists and manage media inquiries.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia, PA 2007-13

Writer/Researcher/Instructor

- Independently managed many different projects simultaneously, including a doctoral dissertation, while meeting competing deadlines.
- Collaborated with colleagues across departments to plan and execute regular meetings and special events: managed internal communications, created a website and coordinated media coverage.
- Researched many topics to develop compelling content for a variety of audiences.
- Independently developed and delivered daily presentations to groups of 5 to 50 people.
- Made innovative use of social media and designed interactive websites to enhance student engagement and achievement.

PUBUSHER, City, ST 2012-13

Translator

- Translated a novel and related marketing copy from German to English.
- Collaborated with staff to develop a consistent marketing strategy.

TECH STARTUP, City, ST 2012

Operations Assistant

- Took the initiative to increase efficiency on a large-scale mailing project by introducing web-based productivity tools.
- Created content and designed layout for internal website.
- Wrote internal email communications.

Education

Ph.D. in German Literature, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 2013

B.A. in German and English, with Honors, *summa cum Laude*, X College, City, ST, 2006

Example 2: Natural Sciences PhD Resume for Biotech Company

Research Associate Job in City, State

Company Overview:

Based in City, State, Biotech Company, Inc. (NASDAQ: XXXX) is a molecular diagnostics company that optimizes the power of nanotechnology to set a new global standard for medical diagnostics. We are a dynamic and growing organization (> 110 employees) seeking dedicated individuals committed to aggressive growth, scientific leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit. In return, Biotech Company offers an exciting growth environment with competitive benefits and an attractive compensation package.

Position Overview:

We are seeking a highly motivated individual with a strong background in clinical microbiology and molecular diagnostic assay development. This position will spend the majority of the time in the lab environment and will report directly to the Director of Infectious Disease Assay Development. This individual will be a key member of the assay development team and will work in this team environment to create, develop, and commercialize FDA-cleared in vitro diagnostic (IVD) assays.

Key Responsibilities:

- Core activities include DNA/RNA isolation, RT-PCR/PCR, gel electrophoresis, establishing & maintaining bacterial strains including anaerobes.
- Excellent aseptic technique, microbial genotyping and phenotyping.
- Perform assay optimizations studies for performance and reliability
- Key responsibilities for performing and managing verification and validation studies
- Development and implementation of product design and development project for molecular-based IVD assays for human pathogens
- Assist in clinical evaluation planning
- Support clinical evaluations of diagnostic tests at internal and external sites
- Document results in compliance with Good Laboratory Practices
- Organize results logically and present at team meetings and project reviews

Experience and Qualifications:

- BS or MS in microbiology or molecular biology, with 2+ years relevant industry experience or significant academic laboratory experience
- Pathogenic microbiology experience including work in a BL-2 facility
- Experience in the development of nucleic acid-based IVD assays preferred
- Excellent communication skills
- Can-do attitude with a willingness to go the extra mile to assure project success
- Must be able to work in the US on an unrestricted basis EOE m/f/d/v

Street Address
City, State, Zip
Number

First Last

Email Address
Phone

Education

Ph.D., Microbiology, University of Northwestern State	2019
M.S., Microbiology, University of Northwestern State	2017
B.S., Biology University of Northwestern State	2014

Skills

Laboratory: mammalian and bacterial cell culture | genomic DNA extraction | total RNA extraction | PCR RT-PCR | transfection | recombinant virus production | cloning and overexpression of genes | plasmid preparation (ligation, transformation) | virus propagation plaque assays | Western Blotting | immunoprecipitation | silver and coomassie staining | ELISA luciferase gene reporter assay | in-vitro kinase assays | electromobility shift assay | confocal microscopy | flow cytometry | immunofluorescence | BLAST | SignalP 3.0 | ExPASy

Communication: technical writing | peer-reviewed publication | public speaking | teaching international collaboration | negotiation

Experience

Research Scientist

Small Biotech, City, State 2014-2015, 2019

- Awarded Employee of the Year, 2004
- Undergraduate worker trusted to join the company at its inception
- Extracted and purified LPS from candidate serotypes
- Performed oral and peritoneal inoculation of mice
- Maintained cell lines for hybridoma production
- Project manager for ASTM and AOAC disinfectant testing against various bacterial strains
- Attained knowledge regarding NIH small-business grant writing proposals

Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Microbiology

University of Northwestern State 2015 – 2019

Project focused on determining the molecular mechanism the vaccinia virus M2L protein uses to inhibit the activation of the eukaryotic transcription factor NF-KB

- Characterized the phenotype of the vaccinia virus M2L protein's ability to localize to the endoplasmic reticulum during infection
- Created recombinant viruses expressing wild-type and mutant constructs of the M2L protein
- Coordinated generation of a polyclonal antibody against the M2L protein
- Initiated studies using flow cytometry to access for calcium release in infected cells
- Monitored biological, chemical, and radioactive waste flow and handled disposal of waste
- Served as a teaching assistant for four semesters, meeting personally with students to discuss course progress, prepared lectures, developed and graded exams and quizzes

Presented at various conferences including the American Society for Virology in Vancouver and the 17th Annual International Poxvirus and Iridovirus Conference in Grainau, Germany