

Academic C.V. Do's and Don'ts

An academic C.V. is one of the cornerstone documents of an academic job market application dossier. When done well, it can present a concise and yet thorough picture of an applicant. When presented effectively, a C.V. can help land a candidate on the shortlist for a first-round interview.

Without a doubt, it takes some patience and additional thought to distinguish one's C.V. from those of other applicants. But that patience can produce a document that fits better in the context of one's overall materials.

DON'T:

1. **Expect** everyone to read the whole thing
2. **Assume** a publication list replaces the need to include details about your research
3. **Include** a half-page summary of your research
4. **Write "Curriculum Vitae"** at the top
5. **Tack on** employment that is not related to research or academia
6. **Use** subjective claims or adjectives: "exceptional," "ground-breaking," etc.
7. **Include** photos, birthdate or any other personal biographical information
8. **Make it longer** than your advisor's C.V.
9. **List** course numbers without description
10. **Under-sell** yourself!

DO:

1. **Read** other C.V.'s and follow standard formats for your discipline
2. **Tailor** to institutions
3. **Make PAGE ONE** compelling enough for reader to continue
4. **Explain** the significance of your work
5. **Vary** section styles to suit the content and move reader along
6. **Focus** on innovation and impact in each bullet
7. **Be specific** regarding methodologies employed
8. **Quantify** wherever possible
9. **Think a bit more** about font and layout
10. **Proofread** (and invite others to proofread) for consistency and grammar
11. **BONUS:** Keep your C.V. updated on your personal website

EXAMPLE C.V. SECTIONS

Education, Research, Research Interests, Publications, Conference & Workshop Presentations, Poster Presentations, Teaching, Pedagogy Training, Technical Skills, Service, Relevant Professional Experience, Professional Affiliations, References

*Remember that section titles and designations can be customized. If it makes sense to combine sections, do it! Your primary objective should be to make **as accessible as possible** the information that matters to the reader.*

REMINDERS:

- **Fonts matter.** Try to avoid default fonts like Times and Cambria. Use Garamond, Century Gothic, Palatino Linotype, or other easily readable and fonts.
- **Vary the section formats.** Your C.V.'s sections should be consistent but not uniform. Again, the format should make the content as easily legible as possible
- **Tailoring matters.** How you describe research, awards, teaching, etc. says a lot about your self-presentation—and about your understanding of the job/institution.

Introduction to the Industry C.V.

An Industry C.V. (or resume/C.V. blend) is typically a two-page document that includes details about educational background, research experience, and a select list of publications and/or presentations. Experience in industry environments, management positions, and leadership roles is more highly valued in this document than in an academic C.V. Optional sections that complement this information may include: a summary of qualifications, honors and awards, and a technical skills summary.

When to Use It:

- All R&D positions in industry
- Application Scientist/Technical Specialist
- Tech Transfer/Innovation Management
- Patent Agent
- Science Policy
- Research Management
- Medical Writing

Verbs to Use:

Be sure to use verbs that convey action. Avoid language that diminishes your role or importance in a given project:

Weak(er)

- Assisted with; Worked on; Looked at; Helped to; Cooperated with

Strong(er)

- Analyzed, Synthesized, Examined
- Managed, Led, Oversaw
- Created, Produced, Developed
- Wrote, Edited, Revised, Critiqued
- Communicated, Presented
- Collaborated, Facilitated
- Implemented, Launched, Initiated
- Taught, Tutored, Advised

Reading Job Descriptions:

- ❑ Read job descriptions with a pen or highlighter. Circle and highlight key words and qualifications. Use similar words in your documents.
- ❑ Emphasize experiences that are also prioritized in the job description
- ❑ Familiarize yourself with common job descriptions in industry before applying. It can be helpful to see multiple listings to get a sense of the language used.

Tailor to Industry Audiences:

The audience for an industry C.V. likely includes both scientists *and* non-expert H.R. personnel. It's important to communicate your qualifications to both groups.

- **Demonstrate** credibility by including publications and select presentations
- **Highlight** your personal contributions to group projects
- **Match** level of technical language in the document to the job description
- **Emphasize** non-scientific or soft skills (leadership, management, communication)
- **Include** industry-relevant experience (patents, startups, regulatory processes)
- **Quantify** impact, funding, size of teams, etc.
- **Copy Edit!**

Writing a Strong Bullet:

PROJECT: Describe what you did specifically, including the technique or method. Highlight tools or techniques that you employed, especially those listed in the job description.

PURPOSE: Articulate goals of the project in a way that is relevant to the company/industry.

IMPACT: Answer the question: "So what?" Think broadly about tangible/quantifiable outcomes (publications, grant funding, patents, new collaborations, innovation, etc.)

Example Bullets

- Developed novel amino acid sequencing method using fluorescent-tagged antibody arrays; published in *Nature Methods*
- Improved protein sequence accuracy 30% by decreasing valine/isoleucine conflation
- Collaborated with 2 research groups at Harvard University to commercialize new technology; filed patent application with USPTO

Evaluating Job Documents

There's no single right way to evaluate the effectiveness of job documents. However, it can be effective to use a multi-faceted lens to analyze different aspects of documents. The rubric below is one possible way to evaluate job documents. UChicagoGRAD always recommends having a "second set of eyes" review any documents before submission.

Formatting:

- Is the formatting consistent?
- Is the font standard and legible (appropriate size)
- Are the margins standard?
- Is it easy to locate the names of organizations and institutions?

STRENGTHS AND AREAS TO IMPROVE:

Clarity:

- Can you tell what the candidate did in each of his or her experiences?
- Do you think the document will be clear to *each audience*? For all documents, think about experts and non-experts in the candidate's subfield. For industry C.V.'s, think about HR personnel and industry scientists.

STRENGTHS AND AREAS TO IMPROVE:

Effectiveness:

- Overall, what are the most effective attributes of the document that you are reviewing?
- Does the document *efficiently*, but *thoroughly* convey the candidate's experience and skills?
- What are the first two questions that you would want to know the answer to when interviewing this candidate?

STRENGTHS AND AREAS TO IMPROVE:
