

Curriculum Vitae

Carroll College Career Services

A Curriculum Vita ("CV" or "vita") is a comprehensive, biographical statement emphasizing your professional qualifications and activities. Because a CV is similar to a resume, you may find the "Resume and Cover Letter Construction" guide helpful. An advantage to the CV format is the significant freedom to choose the headings and categories for your information and the strength reflected in their arrangement. A curriculum vitae is often required for those applying to graduate or professional programs, employment with international firms, or when promoting oneself within professional and academic fields.

When are Curriculum Vitae Appropriate and Who Needs It?

A CV should only be used when specifically requested. This might occur in the following instances:

- Applications for admission to Graduate or Professional Schools
- Providing information related to professional activities (e.g., applications for professional memberships and leadership positions, and presentations at professional conferences)
- Proposals for fellowships or grants
- Applications for positions in academia, including
 - Institutional research and consulting
 - Higher Education positions in teaching, research and administration

Cover Letters for CV's

Although a vita is a complete record of your accomplishments, a cover letter should accompany your vita to personalize your experience. Cover letters for positions that request a CV may exceed the one-page rule, but clarity and conciseness are important. The goal of the cover letter is to highlight and elaborate on pertinent themes using your own writing style. Remember that the quality of your writing will be examined.

What Makes a CV Stand Out?

You'll generate a better response with your curriculum vitae if it is well organized and is packed with relevant information to match and support your professional, academic or research objective.

Best Strategies for Curriculum Vitae

Prioritize and list the most relevant academic, research, volunteer or work history experience first within the curriculum vitae.

1. Include an Objective and Summary of Qualifications section at the top of each C.V.
2. Incorporate the strategies of resume writing techniques

These strategies will prove to be extremely effective and have boosted the acceptance rate of students applying for highly competitive graduate programs – many of which accepted only one to twelve students out of 300 to 600 applicants. These strategies have been endorsed by experts in the field.

Preparing effective C.V.'s presents a unique challenge due to length, which can make them boring and result in important data being buried or lost in such a long document. As a result, prioritizing your top skills and experience to be presented in the first or uppermost section of your C.V. makes sense. Then detail additional educational, employment or academic experience.

In this way you will maximize important criteria which you do not want to be overlooked by academic or hiring committees.

Possible Sections to Include in Your CV

1. Heading Name, address(es), and phone number(s), e-mail address is an expected point of contact; avoid “cute” e-mail names
2. Education: Listing of academic degrees beginning with the degree in progress or most recently earned. Include: name of institution, city and state, degree type (B.A., B.S., M.A., etc.) and area of concentration, month and year degree was (will be) received. Note: You may wish to include the title (using the format appropriate to your particular academic field) of your thesis. If you are an undergraduate and your GPA is 3.5 or higher, it is appropriate to include it. You should include ALL relevant workshops, seminars, conferences attended, etc. Note the title/topic, date, and source (sponsoring organization, presenter, etc.)
3. Certifications: List all relevant certifications and the year received.
4. Honors and Awards: Receipt of competitive scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships; names of scholastic honors; teaching or research awards.
5. Relevant Experience: Listing of positions (part-time, full-time, internships, volunteer, temporary and permanent) related to the type of work sought. Include: department, firm, agency, or organization; complete name; city and state; job/position title; dates; also include a brief description of your activities/duties, using strong action verbs. List these in reverse chronological order.
6. Other Experience: Groupings of other experiences (including volunteer work) can enhance your CV. Your experience can also be broken into other categories such as: Teaching, Counseling, Administration, Volunteer, Community, Internship, etc. Entries within each section should be in reverse chronological order.
7. Professional Associations: Memberships in national, regional, state, and local professional organizations should be listed. Also list significant appointments to positions

or committees in these associations. Student memberships in professional associations are appropriate.

8. **Publications:** Give bibliographic citations (using the format appropriate to your particular academic discipline) for any publications that you have authored or co-authored, such as an Honors Thesis. In fine arts areas, this can include descriptions of recitals and art exhibits.
9. **Presentations:** Give titles of professional presentations (using the format appropriate to your particular academic discipline); name of conference or event; dates and location; if appropriate in your discipline, also include a brief description. Presentations should be listed in reverse chronological order.
10. **Recent/Current Research:** Description of research projects recently conducted or in progress. Include the type of research and a brief description of the purpose.
11. **Institutional Service:** List institutional committees you have served on, including offices held, student groups for which you have been an officer, or special academic projects you have assisted with.
12. **Courses Co-Taught:** List the names of courses you have helped a Carroll professor teach, institution and dates where taught, and brief course descriptions.
13. **Community Involvement:** Appropriate and relevant volunteer work, church work, community service organizations, etc.
14. **Educational Travel:** Names of countries, dates, purpose (typically, only include if relevant to the position/grant for which you are applying).
15. **References:** Optional to end vita with statement "Available upon Request." Alternatively, you can indicate that references are provided on the Grad School Application.
16. **Qualifications or Skills:** A summary of particular or relevant strengths or skills that you want to highlight. Typically, this is not included as a separate section, but addressed in other sections. Occasionally, however, it may be appropriate to list special computing or language skills.

Detail

Remember, you want to be honest, and you also want to impress. Provide sufficient detail to do so. For example, on papers presented, give the full reference on each. Such understatement as only listing the convention is needlessly modest (or it may be interpreted as lazy) and does not convey the important information. On the other hand, don't over burden the document with detail that is unimportant. Have someone who knows what to look for read it and get their feedback. When describing your background be descriptive, use numbers and paint a broad range of your experience. As you can see, Sandra's after CV starts off much stronger and summarizes her top skills at a glance.

What Not to Put In

Don't try to overly personalize your vita--leave that for a separate letter or an interview. It is unprofessional to include your hobbies, your high school activities, and the like. Occasionally, persons do foolish things like putting their favorite poem on the first page of his vita. That alone will kill any chance of admission to some programs. Remember that if you are qualified, there are also a dozen others who are too. The slightest little stimulus could be reason enough to weed out your application. Poor attention to form, detail, content, or "what not do say" could be the stimulus.

Padding

One of the cardinal sins in vita writing is padding. Padding is defined when a reader reacts to the vita as more form than substance ("Who is he trying to kid?!"). Thus, it refers to an audience reaction, not a specific vita writing behavior. The reaction is most likely when the importance or substance of the item is not obvious. This is especially true in the professionally related activities and projects underway sections. Make sure these sections are legitimate. For example, never list umpteen projects underway if you don't have any publications. People will never believe you even if it is true. You can list papers you have submitted for advanced coursework; the best place to do this is in the Relevant Experience/Coursework section. It may not seem fair, but "padding" is an audience reaction, not a specific vita writing behavior. Most students have few, if any, publications; the most common is an Honors Thesis, although many Carroll students have presented papers at professional conferences.

Proof Reading and Editing

Have your CV and cover letter critiqued by several people, including someone experienced at reading resumes and cover letters for their impressions and suggestions. Make the appropriate changes and present the revised version for critique. At least three revisions are usually needed to produce a solid product.

Printing Your CV and Cover Letter

Your CV and cover letter should be word-processed on white [or perhaps ivory] resume paper. The envelope should always be a standard, business-sized of matching color. Unless your writing is extremely neat and easy to read, you should type your envelopes, by full name and title, specifically to the person you identified in your cover letter.