

LUC WRITING CENTER – HOW TO WRITE A CV

What is the difference between a **resume** and a **CV** (curriculum vitae)?¹ Contrary to popular belief, these terms don't refer to the same document, but instead to different kinds of lists about your work. Both lay out details about your career, job experience, pursuits, activities, etc., but whereas the resume includes the **broad** details, a CV has a **narrower** focus. A resume lists *all or most of your general work experience*, whereas a CV details *specific work* you have done that relates to the desired position. Usually, a job posing requests either a resume, or CV, though employers may ask for both documents.

Craft a job portfolio: Having a resume, CV, and basic cover letter already prepared and on file can help you save valuable time when applying for future jobs. Already having a job portfolio finished allows you to simply add to and edit this from time to time (i.e. make a new version of the job portfolio) whenever applying for a new, specific job position. *Note:* If you are on the job market as a graduate student and/or applying for a university job, seek advice from a professor in your field or a department job officer while drafting your job portfolio.

Guidelines for the CV:

Unlike the resume, the CV shows your prospective employer *what activities and projects you have been doing that qualify you for a particular job position*. It provides a comprehensive overview of relevant works you have created such as essays, presentations, publications, former and ongoing projects or exhibits, computer programs, prototypes, websites, etc. Eliminate all jobs, works, or activities that have no bearing whatsoever on the skill set required for this position.

To compose the most efficient, useful, and succinct CV possible, you should follow these simple guidelines:

- 1) **Use a resume template from Microsoft Word or online websites.**
Templates can improve how your work is aesthetically presented, especially those containing clean lines and interesting font. *Avoid templates using bright colors or using giant font for your name.* See the template website links located on the LUC Writing Center website.
- 2) **Do not use unusual fonts that include such distracting details as flourishes or large, complicated script.** The best fonts to use for your resume are Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, and Helvetica. Fonts like Times New Roman, or Times can appear commonplace and boring, so avoid using them in resumes or CVs unless required.
- 3) **Include your contact details so interested employers can reach out to you.** Highlight your full name, address, phone number, and email address in the header of your document in a large size font. If your document font is the

¹ For more job portfolio information, see “How to Write a Resume,” “How to Write a Cover Letter,” “Resume Examples,” “CV Examples,” and “Cover Letter Examples.”

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usual 12-point size, make your heading at least 32-point font so that it stands out and is visible.

- 4) **Add a Profile section.** Sometimes CVs contain a paragraph at the top providing an overview of the information you are about to provide. It is commonly entitled **Profile**, and summarizes the qualities, skills, and abilities that you possess. End with the phrase *Areas of strength include:* and list basic strong points, or skills that make you a good candidate for this position.
- 5) **Divide the rest of your CV into three sections:** 1. **Education**, 2. **Appointments, Positions, or Experience**, and 3. **Publications, Essays, or Projects**. These are the subject lines most commonly used, though they can vary by discipline and depend on your credentials or application intention. As with the resume, begin each section by describing your *most recent work* or activity. For example, if you have no publications yet, list papers you have written or presented at conferences, or excellent research essays (grade “A”) written for classes relating to this job opportunity (i.e. accounting classes for an accountant position), and specific assignments such as a supervised undergraduate thesis or academic internship.
- 6) **Education.** At the *undergraduate* level, you need to include the name and location of your high school and the year in which you graduated, as well as your GPA. You don’t need to provide details about your preschool, elementary, and middle school education. Similarly, at the *graduate* level, you only need to include the name and location of your undergraduate and any graduate institutions, as well as your graduation year(s) and GPA(s).
- 7) **Appointments, Positions, or Experience.** Explain what you gained from each appointment (i.e. if a teacher recommended you for an unpaid academic internship), or did at each job position or while gaining volunteer experience with an organization. Remember to summarize your work duties in *sentences beginning with verbs, past tense if you have left the job, present tense if you still work there* (i.e. **Worked** on Loyola OWLS for LUC Writing Center website/**Works** on Loyola OWLS for LUC Writing Center website).
- 8) **Publications, Essays, or Projects.** Under the third heading, list the year of the essay/project/exhibit, then the title, followed by a brief description of the class, assignment, or event, including names of supervisors, teachers, project leaders, peers, etc.