

10 CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN ACADEMIC CV



1. **Differentiate between a resume and a CV.** At times, these terms may be used interchangeably; however, in academic settings, they refer to two different documents serving specific purposes. A resume is a brief document summarizing knowledge, skills, and abilities; a CV (curriculum vitae) is your professional “life story” – a running list of your academic accomplishments.
2. **Include the “right” components.** Readers will expect to find typical categories, sections, and/or headings on your CV. Refer to [10 Considerations for Your CV](#) for some ideas; however, choose the wording and order of sections that showcases your fit for each position.
3. **Target your CV.** Highlight your most relevant education and experiences for each position, institution, or discipline. *For example*, a graduate school may prioritize a research program and publications; a community college may hire based on teaching expertise. Use job postings or informational interviews to ensure that your applications closely match expectations.
4. **Be convincing.** Just like a resume, your CV is more than a shopping list of tasks and responsibilities. Use concise but powerful statements that clearly convey your potential value to the organization. Enhance clarity by integrating keywords from the job posting, defining potentially confusing terminology, and spelling out acronyms.
5. **Stand out amongst a crowd.** Academics often work on teams for research, publications, and/presentations. If you were not the lead author/researcher/presenter, use bold or italics to ensure that your name pops when listed amongst your colleagues on your CV.
6. **Capitalize on international experience.** Many academics travel for learning opportunities, work, research, presentations, consulting, and other special projects. Clearly communicate the “value-add” from international experience by highlighting cultural competence, language fluency, and international networks. Ensure that unfamiliar terminology is clearly defined and contextualized.
7. **Customize your approach for international applications.** Investigate country-specific CV norms, employment rules/regulations (e.g., visa requirements), and regional expectations for job applicants. Use your professional network or search online for CVs that have worked effectively in the country and institution to which you’re applying.
8. **Address employment gaps.** There are endless reasons for taking a break from work (e.g., gap year travel, parental leave, illness, accompanying a partner to a country where you weren’t permitted to work). To make gaps less obvious on your CV, while remaining truthful, consider listing years and omitting months (e.g., 2017 – 2018 could represent a term from 2 to 23 months; similarly, a job ending in 2017 and another beginning in 2018 could represent no gap at all or a gap of almost 2 years). For longer gaps, consider explaining in your cover letter or using explanatory titles for the sections with gaps (e.g., “Relevant Professional Experience” implies that you have omitted your non-academic experiences, resulting in less concern about gaps).
9. **Keep it current.** You are unlikely to update your CV after each presentation, course, or publication, so consider setting a reoccurring task reminder (e.g., monthly, quarterly) for regular updates, ensuring that your CV won’t take long to customize when interesting opportunities arise.
10. **Use your time wisely.** According to one [source](#), “a single tenure-track opening will generally draw triple-digit numbers of applications, and maybe 40% of those will be obviously unqualified.” Invest your time/energy into applications for jobs or projects that are a good fit, ones that you are interested in and qualified for. Customize your CV and cover letter to make that fit obvious to decision-makers.

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604.856.2386
info@lifestrategies.ca
www.lifestrategies.ca