CVs for Academic Positions in the UK

Academic CVs follow the same principles as any other CV, but are likely to require some extra elements. This guide is designed to help those putting together a CV for an academic post to ensure they cover all the relevant information a potential employer of academics will need to see.

GATHER THE FACTS

It's a good idea to make a list of all the key information you may require, including dates, job titles and other details, before you start. Although you may not use it all in your CV, this is useful preparation for interviews and application forms and will also help you when you come to tailoring your CV for future positions.

Refer to documents like your original certificates, publications, letters of jobs offers, previous CVs, your University transcript etc. to ensure your information is accurate.

Information to gather:

- Research interests - think about how your interests and experience relate to the vacancy and how this could be expressed succinctly.

- Qualifications
    - PhD: title, date, institution, supervisors' names, examiners' names (if not yet submitted, expected submission dates)
    - Bachelor's and Master's degrees: title, date, institution, grade achieved
    - Any other relevant awards, e.g. teaching qualifications, technical qualifications

- Publications
    - Monographs – reference fully
    - Articles / contributions to edited collections - reference fully
    - Other – reference fully

- Employment / Teaching Experience - courses you teach and what your responsibilities are for each, e.g. unit leader, seminar tutor, essay and exam marker etc. List job titles, employers, dates and the key experiences that might be relevant to the position you're applying for.

- Conference Papers Given / sessions organised / sessions chaired - Check dates, paper titles, conference titles, venues. List conference sessions you have been responsible for organising.

- Competencies and Skills - List any other roles that you fulfil as part of your academic job, such as editorship of a journal, administrative roles etc.

- Grants awarded – details of any funding awards received from internal and external sources, including PhD funding, conference grants and research leave awards. Include any nominations made on your behalf, even if unsuccessful.

- Referees - List the names, postal addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of two referees who know your academic work well and/or have observed your teaching.

Compare what you've gathered with the job specification and think about which elements will show you match the person specification. This will help you decide on the layout and arrangement of your CV. It will also help when you come to write your covering letter.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CN CAREERS NETWORK

DRAFTING AND EDITING

There are three areas of experience that employers of academics will want to see on an academic CV:
- Teaching / lecturing
- Research
- Administration

Most academic positions will include elements of all three but take some time to consider the job description and person specification for which you are writing your CV. This will help you to structure your CV appropriately; making sure the most relevant information is easily discernable.

Ensure you follow any application process guidelines carefully and include what is requested.

Remember to be consistent in your formatting; it is usual to write the information under each heading in reverse chronological order.

Drafting and editing can be time consuming. You may have to write several drafts before you are happy with the result. This section gives some general guidelines and an outline example format for an academic CV for UK employment.

General guidelines:

- **Structure** – There are three areas of experience that employers of academics are likely to want to see: research, teaching/lecturing and administration. Structure your CV to highlight the most relevant areas for each position. You can decide the most appropriate order and the way you break different sections down.
- **Style** – There are no hard and fast rules. The example that follows shows the typical key sections and some advice on what to include. However, it is important to adopt your own style, while paying attention to the general guidelines. Using CV templates in word-processing packages can be restrictive – best to start with a blank document.
- **Length** – Academic CVs are usually longer than conventional, commercial sector CVs. Their length depends on the number of publications, conference papers or teaching posts etc. you have to include; it is acceptable to attach appendices with more details of research projects, publications etc. (where relevant) and this can bring your CV up to around five sides of A4 paper. If your CV is much longer than five pages, you may need to remove some of the oldest or least relevant publications etc, in order to draw attention to your most recent or relevant work.
- **Paper** – If you're intending to send your CV by post, use good quality white/cream paper.
- **Layout** – The CV should be concise, clear and easy to read. Avoid long, wordy paragraphs. Break up the text with headings, bullets, bold type and margins. Employers read CVs very quickly – do the key points of your CV stand out if the CV is only scanned for a few seconds? View it from a distance – does it look neat and professional?
- **Active words** – When describing your experiences, use active words such as organise, manage, persuade, improve, direct, recommend, plan, rather than passive words such as 'involved in' or 'required to'.
- **Spelling and grammar** – Check and double check – don't just rely on the spell checker.
- **Feedback** – After drafting your CV, bring it along to Careers Network for some impartial feedback or ask your supervisor or academic contacts for their comments before sending it off.

EXAMPLE CV LAYOUT: *3*

Name

[Clearly at the top of the page – you don't need to have "Curriculum Vitae". First name followed by family name].

Contact details
Home address, telephone/mobile and email address (but not a jokey/informal one – change it if necessary).

Academic CVs often include a University address and telephone number also.

Research interests

Brief synopsis, tailored to the position you are applying for, explaining your current interests and future research plans; summarise what you can offer and your career objectives. Make it focused and avoid vague statements. You can explore this section further in your covering letter.

Education

Dates (expected submission dates, if necessary)
        PhD title
        Institution
        Supervisors (including their position or interests)
        Key features of work undertaken (attach appendices with detailed information
        if relevant to position)

Dates   Master's degree title (if applicable)
        Institution
        Grade
        Key features (if applicable)

Dates   Bachelor's degree title
        Institution
        Grade

Dates   A levels (including grades)

Previous qualifications can be summarised.

Include other relevant qualifications (teaching etc).

International school qualifications may need a brief explanation if you are applying to employers outside your home country. Academic prizes and awards can also be included in this section.

Publications

List and reference fully, group into sections if necessary, e.g. journal articles, edited volumes, monographs. Include items currently in press, with expected publication dates.

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Work experience

May be ordered chronologically (most recent first) or can be grouped to emphasise the most relevant to your application. For example, this section could be split into "teaching experience", "research experience", "administrative experience", "relevant work experience", "other work experience" or "voluntary experience".

When describing your experience, use active words, include achievements and emphasize the relevant skills you developed. Give details of work done within particular roles that is relevant to the job description and person specification.

Dates   Employer name
                Job title
                Description (tailor to highlight elements relevant to position applying for)

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Professional memberships

(If applicable)

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Technical / other skills

(If applicable)

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Conferences

Dates   Title
                Details of papers given or sessions organised / chaired

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References

It is normal to list two academic references and one non-academic reference. Include name, relation to you (e.g. supervisor), address, contact number and email address.

Appendices

Attach extra information, if relevant, such as research proposals, publications, awards etc.

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COVERING LETTERS

When composing a covering letter to submit with your CV, it is important to remember that the two documents should complement each other and amendments made to one, will impact on the way the other is received. Covering letters are usually no longer than a side of A4 paper. Remember your CV is there for the employer to refer to for further details; don't use your covering letter to reproduce the same information. Use your letter to draw attention to the key points of your CV.

Your covering letter should focus on what you have to offer the department or institution to which you are applying, rather than what you'd like to gain from working there. It should succinctly highlight your academic success and achievements, in relation to the post being advertised.

Open by explaining what you are applying for and briefly introducing yourself and what attracted you to that employer and job (avoid directly restating phrases from their recruitment literature).

Explain how your research interests complement those of the department and give examples that show you have the right combination of skills. Examples might include some details of modules you've taught, conferences you've participated in, successful collaborations or projects you've been involved in.

Include a closing paragraph with your availability for interview, if necessary and that you look forward to hearing from them etc.

Keep your letter succinct, relevant and enthusiastic in tone. Ensure it complies with formal conventions, e.g. Sign off with "Yours sincerely" if it is addressed to a specific individual and "Yours faithfully" when you don't have a name, include your address and the date at the top.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For example academic CVs and covering letters see:
- *Applications, CVs and Covering Letters* (AGCAS booklet, available in Careers Network)
- www.prospects.ac.uk > "Jobs and work" > "applications, CVs and Interviews"
- www.vitae.ac.uk > "Researchers" > "Careers" > "Marketing yourself"
- www.le.ac.uk/careers > "Applying for jobs"
- *CVs and Covering Letters Folder* (Reference folder available in Careers Network)
- Careers Network web pages for Doctoral Researchers: www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/pgr

Face-to-Face help:
- *CV Clinic* - a personal CV and covering letter checking service running most days during term. See www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers > "what we offer" for details of availability and how to book a slot. Look out also for ADEPT CV clinics in your College
- *CV writing for PhD students* - workshops (90 minutes long), offered in Colleges. See www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/pgr > "events" for dates and details
- *ADEPT /PhD Careers Week* – an annually run week (usually June) of careers events for Doctoral Researchers. See www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/pgr > "events" for dates and details