

Preparing a Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume

Curriculum Vitae (CV) and resume are terms used by employers to refer to the professional document that you submit to them to describe your skills, experience and personality. For the purposes of this handout, we will use the term CV. It is essentially a marketing tool, which should demonstrate to the employer that you have the personal qualities they are seeking in an employee. It is important to keep in mind the reason you are creating this CV. For most of you the objective will be to obtain a job interview.

When preparing a CV it is important to remember there is no 'correct' format. Every individual you ask, and each book you refer to, will have different suggestions on how to set out a CV. Likewise, each employer will have their own ideas as to the 'type' of CV they prefer to read. This handout therefore, has been designed to assist you in the preparation of your CV, by suggesting general guidelines you may follow if you choose.

Some initial steps to follow

Brainstorming

To develop a CV, you need to have information about yourself readily available to draw from. This may require you to do a self-evaluation by writing down all the experiences, achievements and skills you have developed over your life. Don't be discriminatory at this point, even if you think this information may be irrelevant write it down anyway. Keep all this information, as you can use it again as a blueprint for developing further CVs.

Targeting

The next step is to determine your market audience. In other words, who you are sending your CV to. This will involve identifying the needs of your prospective employer, and taking into consideration the type of position, industry, company and culture. All information collected in your brainstorming exercise will not be used for each CV you send out. It is essential that you highlight your experiences and skills particularly relevant to the position you are applying for, by adapting your CV accordingly.

Headings

Headings throughout the CV are a good idea, as they make it easier for the employer to find the information they require. The information you have decided to include will determine the headings in your CV. Remember, because every person is unique with different life experiences, CVs are going to differ tremendously in both their content and headings.

It is advisable to place information under each heading in a 'reverse' chronological order. Another good idea to have the most important aspects of a section right under the heading so it cannot be missed or skimmed over. If it is not possible to do both, you may wish to create other sub-headings.



OK. Rules for constructing CV's
-framework-first, then fill in
the missing pieces... there
seems to be quite a few of
those... I need help!

Content

Much of the content will be determined through the brainstorming exercise. Below are some ideas for those sections most commonly included in the CV.

Personal Details

- Name and contact details such as telephone number and address are essential. You may also wish to include an e-mail address or fax number if these are more convenient. Some people choose to put contact details on the cover page and launch straight into 'career objective' or 'education' on the first page, thus cutting down the length of their CV.
- Other personal details such as date of birth, gender, marital status, health and nationality are optional you may choose to include in this section. As a general rule it is useful to consider whether your application would be advantaged by adding any of these details. If so, obviously include such information, if it does not matter either way, there is a good chance you can quite safely leave such information out.

Career Objectives / Personal Statement

This statement is optional and can be useful if you know exactly what type of position you want. Be warned that if you make it too specific, it may limit your opportunities. On the other hand, if you make it too general, you may give the impression of not knowing what it is you want to do. Preferably it should be short statements outlining such ideas as your employment goal, what industry you want to be in etc. If you choose to exclude the personal statement you should indicate your reasons for applying for each position in the covering letter.

Education / Academic Achievements

In this section you need to list the educational institutions you have attended, dates of attendance and certificates, diplomas or degrees gained. It is usually a good idea to start with your most recent and highest qualification (providing it is the most relevant to the position applied for). If you are a recent graduate without much work experience,

there is a good chance your education will be your most marketable asset, and you will want to put this section at the beginning of your CV.

Tertiary - When outlining papers/courses remember to give their full titles in addition to course numbers. Don't forget to include any scholarship/awards or positions of responsibility at the end of this section. Draw out aspects within particular papers of pertinence to the position in your covering letter. Remember the structure of courses at university has altered through the years. Also now, as in past years, the same subject areas vary considerably from one university to another. It is highly unlikely employers will know exactly what you have studied in the papers you have taken, even if they have graduated from VUW. If you are asked to give grades then do so; it's generally a good idea to include them either in the body of your CV or in the form of an academic transcript. If you have attached an academic transcript it may not be necessary to include all papers and grades in your CV, you may just wish to highlight those particularly relevant to the position you are seeking.

Secondary - Don't overlook the significance of this section in your CV. This is particularly relevant if you have no work experience. Some employers reading your CV may not have been to university themselves, but all employers have some experience of schools and many are still in contact with them through children at school. Keep sections on secondary education separate from university, plus include any awards gained or positions of responsibility achieved. Many employers consider that a pattern of recognised ability as a child will continue through adulthood. For mature people or those who have a longer record of work experience, this section of your CV will be fairly brief or left out altogether.

Further Training - Under a separate heading you may wish to include further training such as courses, workshops and seminars. State the title of the course, its duration and the organising body or institution.

Work Experience / Occupational History

List your most recent position first and work backwards. Give dates of employment, name and location of employer, position, responsibilities and achievements. Do not assume that the reader of your CV knows all about the jobs you have had. If your job or duties were particularly relevant to the position you are applying for, give a brief explanation of the skills or responsibilities involved.

If you have worked in a number of part-time or temporary positions, it is not necessary to list details of every position. Some people find it easier to summarise such employment according to industry group or some other relevant form of classification.

Personal Skills & Abilities / Strengths

Skill: "Practised ability; expertise". The great thing about 'skills' when compared to 'knowledge', is that skills do not date. Knowledge however, can become redundant over time. It doesn't matter where your skills are acquired - at home, work, committee meetings, or as a member of a sports team, because once developed you can use them in any environment, industry, profession or occupation. This is why certain skills are referred to as transferable skills.

This section therefore, can be an important part of your CV, as it gives you the chance to highlight your 'transferable' skills. Short, concise sentences relating to abilities or characteristics you feel confident about and have demonstrated e.g. communication skills (both written and oral), ability to mix well with people, organisational skills. It is helpful if you can give a brief example of how you have demonstrated that skill so that the employer has concrete evidence of your ability.



Interests

List additional information about yourself; eg. sporting, social and cultural interests. Give some indication as to the level of your involvement such as coach, committee member or local representative. Often students are tempted to leave this section out of their CV, but employers have stressed time and time again, the value they place on this information. Employers feel that by having access to this type of information they may get some idea of your personality, and an indication of how you may fit into their organisation and work group.

Referees

Referees - are the people you nominate the employer to contact by telephone.

References - are written statements. If you have written references, attach them. Alternatively you may prefer to indicate that references are available on request.

In the past written references were commonly required by employers, today however, verbal referees are requested by almost every employer even if you do have written references. Remember to check with your referee first, to ensure they are happy to speak on your behalf. It is also useful to give your referee a job description for the position you have applied for.

Ideal qualities of a good CV

<i>Unique</i>	<i>Accurate</i>	<i>Well Presented</i>
<i>Brief</i>	<i>Relevant Details</i>	<i>Positive Document</i>

- Your spelling and grammar should always be accurate. Get someone else to do a final check of your CV and covering letter for easily made errors. One small mistake may cost you the interview!
- Unless there is absolutely no other alternative, CVs should never be handwritten. First applications are almost always passed over if they cannot be easily read. (Vic Careers has a list of companies who provide a CV typing service).
- A CV sent to an employer can be a photocopy as long as the copy is clear; preferably copy onto good bond paper.
- A CV should ideally be no longer than the equivalent of two or three typewritten pages, unless your work experience warrants it. You need to tell the employer enough to stimulate their interest in finding out more. It is not your complete life history and may not be read if it is too long, boring, or full of irrelevant details. (Do not feel you have to limit your CV to 2-3 pages if this means you will leave out information that will advantage your application).
- Because you are using the CV as a marketing tool to 'sell' yourself, remember to keep it a positive document, by focusing on what you have to offer the employer. Ensure those skills, experiences and qualifications particularly relevant to the position do not get skimmed over or missed.

This may require you to do some adjusting to the layout, creating extra headings, bolding words etc. If you have good academic grades - show them off, if you don't others will!

- Don't forget to keep a copy of all letters and CVs sent to employers.
- It is helpful to have a reference CV. This is a full version of all the facts about you. This can be rewritten according to the position you are applying for to reflect skills and interests relevant to that position. Once you have prepared a reference CV you will find little difficulty in quickly adapting it for various jobs.

Sample Curriculum Vitae

The CV in this handout is straight forward and chronological. Depending on your background and the type of position applied for, other formats may be used such as functional or combination CV. These formats give you the opportunity to emphasize experience rather than education or to group together certain types of skills or achievements. You can find samples of these in the Careers Resource Library.

Please remember that the following SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE IS ONLY A GUIDE to help you get started as there is no one particular way or form of setting it out. CVs are as individual as the person themselves.

Prepared by:
Victoria University of Wellington
Career Development and Employment,
PO Box 600, 14 Kelburn Parade, Wellington
Tel: 0-4-463 5393, Fax: 0-4-463 5234
www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/careers/
RP0703

Assistance with career planning and job searching techniques is available from Vic Careers staff.

Victoria

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

*Te Whare Wānanga
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Details

Name: Whitney Smith
Address: 64 Nonsense Street
Karori
WELLINGTON
Email: w.smith@xtra.co.nz
Telephone No: (04) 471 0280
Date of Birth: 7 May 1980

Career Objective

To contribute my knowledge and skill in finance related areas with a particular emphasis on analysis, investment and management. To apply these in an environment in which these skills are valued and valuable. To have and to create opportunities to improve and broaden my skill set to ensure that I continue to be an asset to colleagues and to the organisation.

Personal Skills and Abilities

- **Proven leadership skills and ability to motivate**
2000 Captain of first team at Waterside Karori Netball Club and Coach of Secondary School Cricket teams. In 1999 I was President of Victoria Ski Club.
- **Organisational and planning skills**
The skills of good planning, organising and prioritising were required in the position of Maitre d' in the hospitality field.
- **Strong verbal communication skills**
During my time at University I have actively participated in tutorials and presentations. I am also involved in the University debating team.
- **Ability to work independently or as part of a team**
My sporting background has given me experience in being a member of a number of different teams. I have also been involved with a number of study groups researching and presenting information at University. While employed at Electronics Ltd I demonstrated my ability to work unsupervised and sole charge for most of the day.
- **Computer Literacy**
Substantial experience in online research. Proficient in the use of common Microsoft Office products including Access, Excel and PowerPoint. Experience in the use of desktop publishing packages including Microsoft Publisher and in website design using Dreamweaver and Optiweb. High level of keyboard proficiency and some data entry experience.

Education

Tertiary:

2000 – 2002	Victoria University of Wellington	Bachelor of Commerce and Administration, Economics and Public Policy	
2002	ECON 307	Public Sector Economics	A-
	PUBL 202	Concepts and Practice of Public Administration	B+
	PUBL 306	Theory and Methods of Policy Analysis	B
	ECON 314	Microeconomics: Information and Markets	A
	PUBL 307	Applied Policy Analysis	A-
	MOFI 303	Monetary Economics	B-

2001	ECON	201	Microeconomics	A
	PUBL	201	Introduction to Public Policy	B+
	QUAN	102	Statistics for Business	B
	ECON	202	Macroeconomics	B-
	MOFI	202	Money and Finance	A-
	PUBL	203	Introduction to Public Economics	B
2000	ECON	130	Economic Principles and Issues	A
	FCOM	110	The NZ Commercial Environment	B
	POLS	111	Introduction to Politics	B+
	ACCY	111	Accountancy	C+
	ECON	140	Economics and Strategic Behaviour	A-
	QUAN	111	Mathematics for Economics and Finance	B

Achievements/Responsibilities

Treasurer, Victoria University Students' Association
PricewaterhouseCoopers Accountancy Scholarship
Volunteer - Assisting students with disabilities

Secondary:

1996 – 1999 Hutt Valley High School, Lower Hutt
1999 “A” Bursary – English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography
1998 Sixth Form Certificate - English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography
1997 School Certificate - English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography

Positions of Responsibility:

Fifth Form Representative on the School Council
Member of the 1st XI Cricket and Netball A Teams
Member of the Social Committee

Vacation Work Experience

Nov 2001 – Feb 2002 Electronics Ltd, Wellington - Office Clerk
Assisted with inventory control, handled telephone enquiries, filed customer accounts, other general administrative work.

Nov 2000 – Feb 2001 Good Food Brasserie, Wellington - Waiter
Acting Maitre d', coordinated staff rosters.

Dec 1999 – Jan 2000 Nelson Orchard - Fruit Picker

Interests

I enjoy a good book and going to the theatre. I am actively involved in a number of sports, in particular cricket, netball, tennis and skiing. I have been involved with both cricket and netball since my primary school days and over the years have coached many primary and secondary school teams. I am a member of the Victoria Ski Club and also participate in Theatre Sports.

Referees

Ms B Rich
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Commerce & Administration
Victoria University
WELLINGTON
Telephone: (04) 472 1000

Mr A Turnip
Manager
Good Food Brasserie
WELLINGTON
Telephone: (04) 834 1123

Note: This is a sample CV and all information shown is fictional and intended to provide a few brief examples. Don't be tempted to copy our skills/abilities column.