CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) WRITING TIPS

A Curriculum Vitae (CV)

is a document intended to highlight your education and accomplishments in order to persuade someone of your academic potential (Student Services, n.d.). It is most commonly used in academic settings (such as when applying for research assistantships or teaching assistantships).

Resume vs. CV

Resume versus Curriculum Vitae

As mentioned above, a CV is a more academically oriented document. On the other hand, the purpose of a resume is to showcase your existing and transferrable skills and experiences for employment opportunities. You may be more commonly asked to submit a CV for an academic position (e.g., graduate school application, RA-ship) and a resume for a job application (e.g., summer internship, work learn position, barista job), but this is not always the case (more on this later).

The following table highlights some of the main differences between a resume and a CV:

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Goal — Present a full history of your academic credentials, including teaching, researching, awards, and services.

Length	Audience	Focus	High Priority Content	Lower Priority Content	List of References
Highly flexible	Academics in your field of study	Represents your academic achievements and your scholarly potential	List of publications, presentations, teaching experience, education, honours, and grants	Activities unrelated to academic discipline, teaching, or research	You would typically include the references in the document.

Resume

Goal — Present a brief snapshot of your skills and experiences that communicates your ability to perform the job you're seeking.

Length	Audience	Focus	High Priority Content	Lower Priority Content	List of References
1-2 pages	Employers hiring you for a specific position	Represents skills, job-related experience, accomplishments, and volunteer efforts	Skills and experiences related to the job you're seeking	Technical details unrelated to the field in which you are applying	Do not include the references as part of your resume.

(Student Services, n.d., https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/curricula-vitae)

Writing a CV (or a Resume)

There is no one-size-fits-all answer for which sections you should have on your CV and even in what order you should put them.
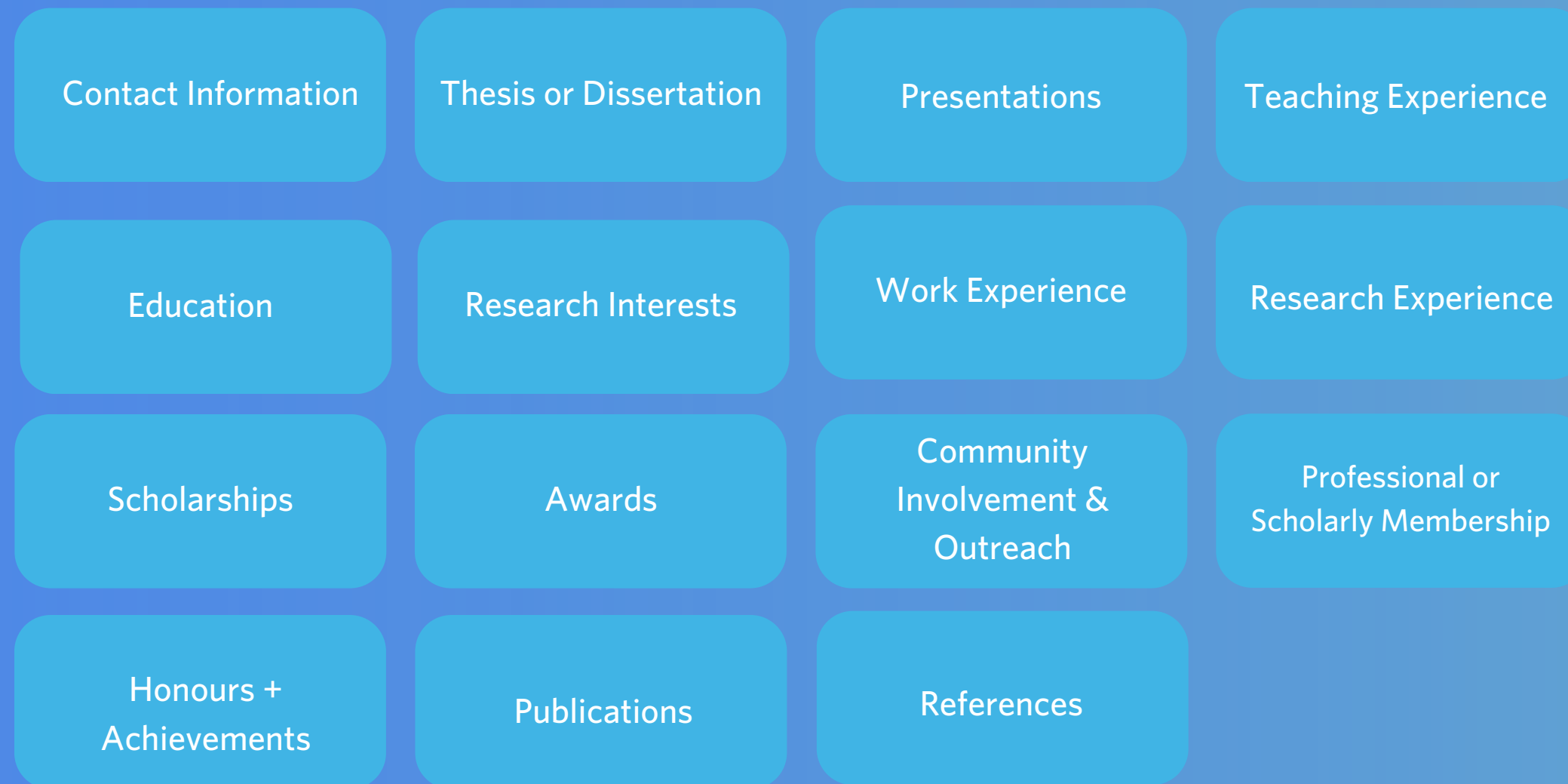
This is because each one of you has a different level of academic research exposure or experience, different levels of relevant transferrable skills to the opportunity that you are interested in, and each opportunity that you are applying to is different.

There are no absolute right or wrong ways to write a CV (or a resume), but it is important to understand some general guidelines for writing them. Some faculty members or hiring committees use the two terms interchangeably and may ask you to submit either a resume or a CV. For this reason, it is important to understand the purpose of both of these documents, which is to show a potential employer how you have the relevant skills that will make you a good candidate for the role.

Although resumes and CVs can serve different functions and be used in different contexts, some employment skills, such as time management and attention to detail, can also be relevant to an academic or research job context. We call these transferrable skills. For example, a research opportunity might involve data entry work which requires attention to detail, or a research job might involve cleaning lab equipment which requires meeting high quality standards of work.

In this example, you may have gained these skills in your job as a shift supervisor at a coffee shop where you were required to keep a clean work environment by making sure that all of the machines and counters were clean as well as creating the shift schedule for employees which required keen attention to detail. Therefore, your resume and CV might have overlapping sections and content.

The typical sections that are found on a CV are:

Contact Information	Thesis or Dissertation	Presentations	Teaching Experience
Education	Research Interests	Work Experience	Research Experience
Scholarships	Awards	Community Involvement & Outreach	Professional or Scholarly Membership
Honours + Achievements	Publications	References	

Sections on a CV

There is no right or wrong order for these sections, and you don't need to include every section. For example, if you don't have any publications (as many undergraduates do not), you do not need to include this section on your CV.

Having said the above, you should place your most relevant and strongest sections on the first page. For students who don't have research experience, your education, research interest, and presentations (delivered in a classroom on relevant academic courses) might be your most relevant sections.

There are multiple resume samples and CV samples offered in the links below as well as more information about each section. The best way of learning about formatting is by looking into these samples: https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/curricula-vitae

Tailoring your CV to the Opportunity

Not all opportunities are the same in the academic and research field. Therefore, there is no straightforward answer regarding when to use which type of document. The key is to read each application/posting carefully or inquire to understand each opportunity that you are interested in applying. You can then tailor your application (whether a CV or resume) to show your relevant academic competencies, transferrable skills, experiences, and achievements to the opportunity that you are applying for. If you don't have at least 70% of what is required for the position, it's probably not the opportunity to pursue just yet. There are a range of different levels of research opportunities. Start with the ones where you can bring relevant transferrable skills, if not previous research experience, to the team.

Where to Learn More:

Here are two handpicked resources for you, one developed in-house by the UBC Career Centre, and the other from Columbia University Center for Career Education. Check them out there:

We are repeating this message again since it's important: there is no one single right way to write a CV or resume. It is important for you to learn about CV and resume writing across different credible resources in a systemic way. It's best that you read through, compare, and contrast content from different resources to help yourself create an application that best showcases your relevance to the opportunities you are interested in.

UBC Career Resource - Curricula Vitae
http://tinyurl.com/nkxxrkns

Another great resource for you to learn about any topic related to your professional and career development is LinkedIn Learning. UBC paid for your free access to this amazing platform. You can access it by CWL. Access LinkedIn Learning from here:

http://tinyurl.com/3ymtndrb

Columbia University Centre for Career Education - CV
http://tinyurl.com/2s3juds9

Once You Have Written Your CV:

What Else Can You Do?

If you have written a CV (or a resume) and would like some feedback on it, or you are not sure if you are on the right track, come and see us at the Career Centre!
Our Career Educators meet students one-on-one through pre-booked appointments to bring your application to the next level,
and to support you on a large spectrum of career-related topics.

We also host in-person drop-in appointments Monday through Friday from 11 am to 1 pm at the Career Centre in Brock Hall.
Check out our services and programming here: https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/make-most-linkedin/linkedin-learning

UBC Career Centre helps you find opportunities, meet alumni and employers, and develop job search skills.