CV - Part 1 – Overview

The Curriculum Vitae (loosely, Latin for "the course of one's life/career") is usually the first point of contact between you and your future colleagues. Its conventional purpose is to provide a concise overview of your academic background and accomplishments. More to the point, however, the role of the CV is to pique the interest of the reader, get her/him to take a closer look at you and your other application materials, and ultimately invite you for an interview. Although the format of an academic CV is fairly standard and straight forward, there is some variation across disciplines and you should consult with members of your department about any particularities attached to you field. Unlike the resume, your CV grows longer as you become more accomplished. For most ABDs and recent PhDs, 3-5 pages is the norm.

In all likelihood you will need more than one CV, because different positions will place different degrees of emphasis on the various skills you possess (e.g., teaching versus research). PCs make this a relatively painless process, but it does take some time.

Constructing an effective CV is an iterative process. Leave yourself time to get feedback and make changes. If you don't know where to start after reading this file, attend workshops offered by the Career Center on campus, ask your department's graduate assistant for some sample CVs, or look in one of the CV handbooks found in libraries and bookstores. Type up a first draft, and show it to some friends and/or your advisor. Have them scan it for 10-15 seconds, and ask them what they remember. Does it effectively convey the information that you consider most essential? If not, make some changes and try again.

As you prepare your CV, the key point to remember is that the first task facing the members of the search/application committee (your audience) is to winnow the stack of files from the mass they received to the select few, perhaps 15-25% of the total, that they will actually read with care. At this stage in the process, twenty to thirty seconds of initial scanning is about all you can expect. They are not yet looking for who they might want to interview, rather whom they can safely discard. Your job is to make it as easy as possible for them to see the strengths and qualities you would bring the position. The specific elements or sections that make up the CV and how they are arranged are presented later.

Making It Easy for Your Overburdened Audience: Organization, Clarity and Consistency

How do you make it easy for your overburdened audience: organization, clarity, and consistency. *Organization* means that your information is presented in a manner that highlights what is most relevant and pulls the reader's eye directly to it, rather than making him/her search for it.

For example, the most common criterion used for the first cut is your pedigree - where you received your degree. If you are applying to an institution where English is the language of discourse, people read left to right and top to bottom. As you read the typical entry below, notice how

EDUCATION

2000-2008	**Doctor of Philosophy**, English, University of California Berkeley
2000	**Bachelor of Arts**, English, Occidental College

your eye naturally looks to the left and is drawn to the bolded category marker, your degree then the date, department, and, lastly, Berkeley. The format above also draws attention to the unusually long period necessary to complete the PhD. Compare the above to the following,

EDUCATION	
PhD	**University of California, Berkeley**, Anthropology, expected May 2008
BA	**Occidental College**, Anthropology, 2000

If you have had an unusual career path you shouldn't try to hide it, but neither do you want it to be the first thing a search committee member learns about you.

Clarity is achieved by the use of concise, unambiguous language and formatting options that help the reader easily assimilate the information you want to convey. Awkward phrasing, cryptic wording, etc. create speed bumps which distract the reader, and interfere with their ability to apprehend the critical information contained in your CV. For example, you and all your friends may know that your Chancellor's Fellowship is very prestigious and hard to get, but someone on the outside may easily assume that just about every student gets one because that was the case with a similarly titled award at their institution. Instead of just listing the award, clarify it with a line of text.

Chancellor's Fellowship for Dissertation Research, UC Berkeley	2006-2007
One of three awarded campus-wide from over two hundred submissions.	

In a similar fashion, if you have been invited to present a paper at a particularly prestigious conference or symposium, don't assume that people outside your sub-field will be able recognize its significance. Remember, the fact that they are searching for someone with your specialty generally means that it constitutes a gap in their department. If you have notable achievements, make sure they are easily found and understood by your audience, the search committee, and not just your friends and your advisor.

By the same token, you need to be selective. A CV which is overly dense with little white space between categories and text confronts the reader (It can make your brain hurt in anticipation.), rather than invites her /him. Too much information presented without an organized hierarchy makes it harder for your audience to discern essential from less important information.

Another tool at your disposal is the variety of formatting options (e.g., **bold**, *italics*, bullet points), types and fonts available with most word processing programs. Judicious use of these options can help set off major sections and sub-sections of your CV, making it easier to scan and read. However, it is easy to go overboard. Limit yourself to a couple of types and font sizes. Remember the goal is clarity and not artistic expression, and less is often more.

In addition, the more formatting attributes you choose, the more difficult it is to maintain ***consistency***. When the reader confronts different spacing, formatting, and fonts among similar items it's distracting, and provides an easy excuse to discard the offender.

The thought process behind figuring out how to best organize your CV is also a useful way of forcing you to think about your strongest credentials, and how you can best communicate these strengths when you get to an interview. Clarity, organization and consistency does not mean spending two days deciding if your vitae looks better in Verdana vs. Times New Roman (rather than working on your research), but it does mean spending some time to look at the visual presentation of your essential data.

You belong in the "deserves further consideration" pile. Don't make your reader work hard or look long to come to the same conclusion.

CV - Part 2 - The Elements and How To Put Them Together

Overview

Listed below are the dozen plus categories of information, that are most often included in a CV (It is also useful to think of them as modules that can be moved around to suit particular openings and circumstances). It would be rare for someone to use all of them in a single CV.

Aside from the first three (identification, education, and dissertation) which generally lead, the order that follows depends on your own particular strengths and/or the nature of the program you are applying for. If you have published an article or won a prestigious fellowship, you want that right up front. If the program is at a small college that emphasizes teaching, than your teaching experience (if any) and any other evidence of close interaction with students should follow the first two slots.

Think hard about what are the three facts, apart from your name, that you want the reader to know about you based on the first page of your CV. The first two are UC Santa Barbara and McNair Scholars Program. The third should be whatever piece of information will help you the most, and not what is the most common choice among the sample CVs you've seen.

There is no standard format or recipe. The Career Center has a number of books that provide sample CVs, and they are all a little different. Remember, the key organizing principle behind your CV is what will make the most effective presentation of your ability to fulfill the requirements of the program at hand. Consequently, you should expect to have two to three versions of your CV by the end of the application process. In addition, some disciplines have idiosyncratic conventions about how certain types of information should be conveyed. Be sure to have your CV reviewed by a member of your department before sending it out into the great beyond.

Personal Information

The CV is always headed with your name and contact information including address, phone number and email. Your name should stand out in some fashion using a combination of ALL CAPS, **bold**, and/or larger font size. You should also put your name and the page number in a header or footer after the first page. At some point in the process, the sheets of your CV will have to be unstapled in order to make copies, and we don't want your first page attached to someone else's second.

The phone number listed should have an answering machine or voice mail that is under your control and has a professional sounding message that preferably includes your full name. You should not include information about your age, marital status, children, or place of birth.

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Education

For students with less than two or three years of experience, your educational background comes next both because it is the primary qualification you bring to the program and because your degree is from an institution that, in most disciplines, represents a powerful, positive imprimatur. As discussed above, there are a number of accepted formats for presenting this information, simply make sure that you select one that makes it easy for the reader to identify you with your undergraduate institution.

Your degrees should be listed in reverse chronological order. If you have not completed your degree, put "expected" before May 2008 or December 2008. If you graduated with Latin honors and/or Phi Beta Kappa from your undergraduate institution and don't plan on having a separate honors section, you can list them after the undergraduate degree.

You need not list every college and university you have attended. If you spent a year at another institution in the course of your studies without receiving a degree and think it helps you, list it under your undergraduate institution. If not, forget about it. If you went to two undergraduate institutions, you need list them.

EDUCATION

Ph.D	**University of California, Berkeley** Anthropology, May 2008
	Universität de Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, BRD Visiting Scholar, 2006-2007
MA	**University of California, Berkeley** Anthropology, May 2004
BA	**Occidental College** History, Phi Beta Kappa, 2002

What follows next depends on your strengths and the type of program the CV is being used for. The idea is to have a strategy for a given set of jobs and design the CV as part of the means of implementing that strategy. If you have two or more honors/fellowships (especially prestigious and competitive ones) create a separate section and put them front and center. If you have even one publication in a reputable journal (especially in a field where they are rare for someone at your stage) get it on the first page. If you have extensive teaching experience and/or awards and it is for schools that values teaching highly put it next. What do you want them to know about you?

Awards/Honors/Fellowships/Grants

List your awards in reverse chronological order. Don't overestimate the recognizability of your awards and honors beyond your immediate circle. Include enough information for the reader to understand the magnitude and importance of especially noteworthy ones.

Chancellor's Fellowship for Dissertation Research, UC Berkeley	2006-2007
One of three awarded campus-wide from over two hundred submissions.	

Again you are looking to distinguish yourself from all the other pretenders to your throne. This is not the time to be modest about your accomplishments.

Teaching Experience & Interests

For many schools this category is of paramount importance so take the time to clearly convey the depth and breadth of your experience. Graduate students at Berkeley teach in a range of capacities and with differing levels of responsibilities, but, almost inevitably, all of this experience is grouped under formal title of Graduate Student Instructor. At one end of the spectrum, teaching assistants are adjuncts who follow in the wake of the professor (though often times the person following the circus elephant with a shovel may seem a more apt analogy). At the other end, instructors are professors absent the PhD running their own courses with little or no supervision. To more accurately communicate the nature and extent of you experience you can use the following four categories:

- **Teaching Assistants**: Run sections/labs & Grade problem sets, papers and exams
- **Teaching Associates**: Give lectures to the whole class (15-49 percent of the total) Have some influence on the content of the syllabus Run sections/labs & Grade problem sets, papers and exams
- **Lecturers**: Give at least half the lectures Have some influence on the content of the syllabus Run sections/labs & Grade problem sets, papers and exams
- **Instructors**: Give most or all of the lectures Have substantial influence on the content of the syllabus Run sections/labs & Grade problem sets, papers and exams

If you have a lot of teaching experience, think about breaking it out by level of responsibility. In a similar manner, separate teaching experience at Berkeley from courses taught at other institutions, especially if they offered the opportunity to develop your own syllabi and lecturing ability.

When you describe courses, don't bother to list Berkeley course numbers, and if the formal title doesn't convey all of the relevant information, add a descriptive line.

Scholarly Development: Publications, Work Submitted, Work in Progress and Research Interests

These elements of your CV collectively testify to your development as a scholar and a nascent member of a scholarly community. If you have not completed your degree you should not be overly distracted by the compulsion to have something in one or more of these categories. The most important academic credential you will bring to the graduate program is a compelling, completed research experience that produces strong letters of recommendation and generates interest and respect among others working in your field.

Publications, Creative Work

If you have publications (especially in a refereed journal) even if they are only book reviews, they nonetheless demonstrate engagement in the profession. Publications should be listed in reverse chronological order with a full citation. If you have a refereed article or a chapter in an edited volume, you may want to break it out from other, less rarefied publications.

For books and journal articles, use the bibliographic conventions of your field. Examples of other common, graduate student publications are listed below. For rarer, more exotic forms, check chapter six of the Chicago Manual of Style.

Book Review

Review of *Asia's Next Giant*, by Alice Amsden, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, XXI (Winter 2006): 237-239.

Co-Authored Article

Andrew E. Green and William Rose, "The Professor's Dream: Getting Students to Talk and Read Intelligently," *Political Science*, 97 (December 2006): 1287-89.

Chapter in an Edited Book

"Thursday Nights at the Providence Bridge Club." In *Post-War Rhode Island Cultural History*, edited by G. Sheldon Lowell, Providence: The Friar Press, 2006.

Monograph Published as a Part of a Series

Identity Against Ideology: Multiculturalism in the Post-Modern Age, Townsend Center for the Humanities Occasional Papers, no. 13, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

If you work in a field where publications are not the primary means of scholarly or creative expression, or if much of your work appears in a new or unusual form (e.g., software or published on the internet); make sure to take a couple of lines to explain its significance.

If you have had an article or chapter that has been accepted for publication, but it has not yet appeared, you may list it under publications with "forthcoming" replacing the publication date. You should only do this if your work has in fact been accepted, and not if it has only been submitted or is under review.

Most undergraduates don't have publications, and there are other ways of demonstrating scholarly engagement.

Scholarly Development: Presentations

Another marker of professional development is giving presentations at conferences, colloquia, and meetings. Whether at the national, regional or local level, meetings and conferences offer the opportunity to present and get feedback on your work, meet others involved in similar research, and practice your presentation skills. They also serve as evidence of your ability and desire to enter into the scholarly fray.

List all the papers and presentations you have delivered or will deliver, along with the names, dates, and locations of the conferences or meetings where you presented the work. If you have given a number of presentations at regional and national meetings, you may want to pull out the presentations at national meetings or other venues where there is a screening process and some degree of competition. Formal presentations at a workshop or colloquium at UCSB count as well; go ahead and list them.

Professional Affiliations

List memberships in all major professional associations. If you have been active in one or more, you may want to describe the nature of your involvement.

Professional Training

List any special training you have received through your department, the university or some other professional organization.

Languages

In many fields, languages are a marker of the scholarly caste, even if you do not use them in your research. In recent years, some schools have received foundation funding for courses (or more often, parts of courses) taught in a foreign language (e.g., Latin American Social Movements with a weekly meeting conducted in Spanish), and are on the lookout for with the ability to participate in such programs. Provide some indication of your level of expertise.

Other Professional Experience

If you have experience (either paid or volunteer) that is relevant to your work as an academic, list it here. For example, if your field is education and you served on the board of a charter school, or if you are in Asian Studies and worked as an associate director of the Japan Society of Southern California. If the connection between your professional experience and your current field is readily apparent, briefly explain it. If you can't, it probably doesn't belong here.

University/Department/Professional Service

If you have served on any committees, or in any appointed or elected positions, go ahead and list them. If you have helped found or expand a study group, committee, or other organization and your work there demonstrates your initiative and ability to make things happen, convey that vitality in your description.