C.V. Do's and Don'ts

An academic C.V. is one of the cornerstone documents of an academic job market application dossier. When done well, it can present a concise and yet thorough picture of an applicant. When presented effectively, a C.V. can help land a candidate on the shortlist for a first-round interview.

Without a doubt, it takes some patience and additional thought to distinguish one's C.V. from those of other applicants. But that patience can produce a document that fits better in the context of one's overall materials.

UChicagoGRAD reminds graduate students and postdocs at UChicago that 60-minute one-on-one advising appointments are available for C.V.'s at grad.uchicago.edu.

DON'T:

1. **Expect** everyone to read the whole thing
2. **Assume** a publication list replaces the need to include details about your research
3. **Include** a half-page summary of your dissertation/research
4. **Write "Curriculum Vitae"** at the top
5. **List** course numbers without description
6. **Tack on** employment that is not related to research or academia
7. **Use** subjective claims or adjectives: "exceptional," "ground-breaking," etc.
8. **Include** photos, birthdate or any other personal biographical information
9. **Make it longer** than your advisor's C.V.
10. **Under-sell** yourself!

DO:

1. **Read** other C.V.'s and follow standard formats for your discipline
2. **Tailor** to institutions
3. **Make PAGE ONE** compelling enough for reader to continue
4. **Explain** the significance of your work
5. **Vary** section styles to suit the content and move reader along
6. **Focus** on innovation and impact in each bullet
7. **Be specific** regarding methodologies employed
8. **Quantify** wherever possible
9. **Think a bit more** about font and layout
10. **Proofread** (and invite others to proofread) for consistency and grammar
11. **BONUS**: Keep your C.V. updated on your personal website

EXAMPLE C.V. SECTIONS

Education, Research, Research Interests, Teaching, Pedagogy Training, Publications, Conference & Workshop Presentations, Languages, Technical Skills, Department Service, Service to the Profession, References

*Remember that section titles and designations can be customized. If it makes sense to combine sections, do it! Your primary objective should be to make **as accessible as possible** the information that matters to the reader.*

REMINDERS:

- **Fonts matter.** Try to avoid default fonts like Times and Cambria. Use Garamond, Century Gothic, Palatino Linotype, or other easily readable and fonts.

- **Vary the section formats.** Your C.V.'s sections should be consistent but not uniform. Again, the format should make the content as easily legible as possible

- **Tailoring matters.** How you describe teaching, research, awards, etc. says a lot about your self-presentation—and about your understanding of the job/institution.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | GRAD

grad.uchicago.edu