

## Some Guidelines on Composing a CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) / RESUME

Along with your personal statement, all applications require a document commonly called a CV (for *curriculum vitae* = Latin: “the course of one’s life”).

The purpose of a CV is to give the reader a quick and favorable impression of your life. You need to detail your activities relevant to the application and to list those achievements that might distinguish you from other applicants. Imagine that a member of a scholarship committee or the personnel officer of a company may have to read hundreds of applications in a short time; it is paramount that your CV, as it appears on the page, has a clear and pleasing appearance – nobody wants to have to figure out a disorganized eyesore of a document.

For both your CV and your personal statement, choose a trusted font (like Times, Palatino, Bodoni) either 10 or 12 point, not bigger, not smaller. Make sparing use of underlines, **bold type** and *italics*, and ***never combine*** them. Try using just one of them for the purpose of highlighting headers. Avoid fancy bullets and other ornaments and keep left indents to a minimum. Try to fit everything on no more than two pages with the following margins: left, right and top: 1 inch; bottom: 1.5 inches.

The first items you enter are your contact addresses, i.e. both your university address (on the left) and your home address (on the right). A *curriculum vitae* is not a continuous narrative, but subdivides your life into various categories; these categories and the order in which you list them may change depending on whether you apply for an academic scholarship or a position as a high school baseball coach. Rank the categories so that the most pertinent aspects of your life come first. Categories for an application might look as follows (and in this order):

- Education (and Research, if applicable);
- Academic Activities;
- Professional Experience (e.g. significant employment, self-employment, internships);
- Scholarships and Awards (you may list honors here or under ‘Education’);
- Publications (if any);
- Volunteer Service; (for both of these note any leadership roles and/or
- Athletic Activities; special accomplishments)
- Extra-curricular Activities and Personal Interests (e.g. music, theater);
- Language Proficiency and/or unique Technical Abilities.

In a CV, you have to strike the proper balance between modesty and self-promotion. Don’t make the entries too long; don’t shorten them to the point of being cryptic or incomprehensible. They should reflect your accomplishments. Moreover, entries in a CV are very often starting-points for questions during an interview; so be prepared—think in advance about how you might respond eloquently when asked about this or that aspect of your life. The thing you may find least relevant—say, your love of snowboarding—might be the item that breaks the conversational ice.