

What Makes the Résumé and Academic CV Different?

Key Differences

Whereas resumes are brief summaries of an applicant's experiences and highlight the most relevant positions and skills for a particular opportunity, the CV is a more comprehensive listing of a scholar's experiences and achievements. While CVs are used exclusively in academic and research environments, the resume is required in all other job sectors.

The CV

A CV, or *Curriculum Vitae*, is a document of your intellectual and academic accomplishments. It is an intellectual biography presented as a list without descriptions. Typically, CVs are used for university positions, graduate schools, and academic fields that require graduate degrees and are research-intensive.

Occasionally, the terms "CV" and "resume" are used interchangeably. Unless you are applying for an academic position, you should use the resume writing guidelines, as that is more common in the United States. However, if possible, find out exactly what an application expects from you.

The term CV is often used in other countries instead of "resume", but they mean the same thing. However, the formatting is quite different, and you should research the norms for the country in which you are applying to see what information is expected.

Whereas Resumes are limited to 1-2 pages, CVs have no length limit. An experienced university professor, for instance, might have a 20-page CV! Your CV will expand as you gain more academic experience, but be careful not to "pad" your CV with irrelevant or unimportant items.

The Resume

A strong resume should effectively demonstrate your skills and accomplishments from past experiences, paid and unpaid, as they are relevant to the reader. The general purpose of a resume is to get you to the next stage of the application process, the interview.

A graduate student's professional resume is very different from one crafted in high school or college. Your resume should represent a curated set of experiences described in a way that shows a recruiter how you have used relevant skills and what results you achieved. With this in mind, consider the quality of the experiences you choose to include based on their relevance to opportunities you are applying to. It is often more effective to describe a few relevant involvements in depth than it is to include a longer list of positions that may not be as relevant.

In general, graduate students are allowed two pages for a resume, but if you can convey everything you need to in one, then do so! Recruiters will typically take six seconds or less to skim your resume when first reviewing all applicants, so be sure to be as clear and organized—and brief—as possible.

Visit W&M's Office Career Development & Professional Engagement website for more detail:

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/career/students/advising-topics/resumes/>