

The following is a compilation of information from websites, books my college's career guidance counselor, and the input of many faculty from the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at CSU when emailed and asked to say what is in a good and bad CV and cover letter.

In your CV: Do

- Make the formatting visually appealing and consistent (including list of papers use same format!)
- Put information in a consistent chronological order that is easy for reader to follow
- Make the font big enough so that older faculty can read.
- Use formatting such as bullets, italics, or bold font only sparingly and use paper that is white, beige or a neutral color
- Check for misspellings and other errors

In your CV: Do

- Include information about your research and teaching experience
- Include publications, abstracts and professional presentations
- Include Professional Activities
 - (committee memberships, intern experiences, relevant volunteer work)
- Have a skills section including second language and/or computer proficiencies

When you need to start applying for jobs is NOT the time to start thinking about what your CV is going to look like!!!

- Think you want to go into teaching but have little experience?
 - Volunteer to be on your university's education committees
 - Volunteer to help TA classes
 - Volunteer to help with K-12 mentoring (science fairs, ASM etc)
- Want to apply for jobs in research?
 - Make sure you write that paper and get it submitted before you start working on your CV
- Want to go into industry?
 - Make sure you are familiarizing yourself with and obtaining the skill's that industry will need

Advise on how to get teaching experience

- Volunteer to do more than required
- Find a teaching mentor at your university
- Many liberal arts colleges hire 1 year instructors to fill sabbaticals (look in places like chronicle of higher ed)
- Try to get part time work at Jr Colleges (big city's often very hard)
- NIH website giving advise about post docs getting experience

<http://www.the-aps.org/careers/careers1/mentor/postdocteach.htm>

In your CV: Don't

- Worry too much about length—there are no rules on length.
- The CV should be professional and should include your important data.
 - (although lots of faculty in my dept said not longer than 3 pages)
- Include the following information.
 - Age;
 - Ethnic identity;
 - Political affiliation;
 - Religious preference;
 - Hobbies;
 - Marital status;
 - Sexual orientation;
 - Place of birth;
 - Photographs;
 - Height;
 - Weight;
 - Health.

In your CV: Don't

- Have poor grammar, incorrect spelling –
 - Easily overcome by having someone else proof read.
 - If you're not a native English speaker this is imperative.
- Use personal pro-nouns such as I, me or my

In your CV: Don't

- List excessively detailed information about research or teaching.
 - Instead, provide the titles of research projects and course names along with brief summaries of your work.
- Listing every technique you've ever used;
 - a brief description of your research project(s) usually gives a good idea of what technical expertise you have.

In your CV Don't

- Fluff your CV up with things like listing high school, college accomplishments or listings in who's who's etc.
- List large numbers of manuscripts "in preparation" - if it's not been submitted, then don't bother putting it on.*** (this is debatable!!)
- Don't mix abstracts with peer-reviewed publications to 'pad out' your publication list.
 - Annoying to an over-worked reviewer as he/she tries to sort through it to glean the relevant information.
 - This can highlight the fact that you are somewhat embarrassed by its scant nature.
- ❖ Instead make 2 separate lists: 1 of publications and 1 of abstracts.

In your CV: Don't

- Neglect to name your research supervisor, it sends up red flags that there were conflicts.
- Not listing your current advisor as a reference - if you don't/can't then some explanation is warranted (in cover letter)
- It prevents potential employers from evaluating your professional references (i.e. post-docs in same or different labs, collaborators, major advisors, committee members, etc.).
- Much as we may not like it, pedigree is an important part of your portfolio.

What to do if there were conflicts with a supervisor.

- Having problems with your major professor is not always the kiss of death to your career.
- Getting a good committee is critical.
- Establishing relationships with your committee members, especially a collaboration (no matter how small) can give you a broad group of professionals familiar with your work and with your abilities.
- You can also establish these relationships with other collaborators not on your committee.
- Make sure to list people who are familiar with your conflicts as references for a counter opinion, ask them to address the conflict if they are comfortable with this.
- Again, we can't stress this enough, it all comes back to networking!

2009 what if your advisor harassed you, can you leave them off your CV?

The debate.

- A participant told me she had to leave her first post doc as her advisor was harassing her, and she did not want him on her CV (although he was a co author on publications)
- I asked the faculty of CVMBs their opinion 25 responded
- 7 must list advisor (2 said say he can not be used as a reference)
 - 16 said list post doc and leave off advisors name (5 said list another supervisor from this position)
 - 2 said they never put names of anyone who advised them they assume that is evident from list of publication
 - Obviously there is no rule, but you want to avoid being cut from pile due to what people might infer from your CV,
 - best bet be as honest as possible

Paragraph of your research interests

- Many faculty complained that many applicants only send a list of techniques used which give them little feel for what an applicants scientific interests are.
- Some suggested that you also write and include a brief paragraph describing your research interests, which cleverly weaves in your technical know how.
- If you are a post doc and applying for faculty positions this will be a required part of your application.

What is a cover letter?

- The purpose of a cover letter is to tell a prospective employer what you can do and why you feel you are qualified.
- It is an opportunity to demonstrate your writing skills and it opens a window to your personality.
- A good-well planned cover letter is just as important as an impressive CV, and together they form an important resource in your job campaign.
- Address your letters to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address.
- Obtain information about the employer and tailor your letters for each position or employer. Generic, mass-produced letters are unprofessional.

What is a cover letter?

- Grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph.
- Construct your letters to be employer/work-centered rather than self-centered. It uses the first person ("I") sparingly.
- Eliminate extraneous words and avoid rehashing material from your resume.
- Keep your letter to one page.
- It sounds confident without being arrogant.
- It answers the question: "Why should we hire you?"
- It's action oriented.

An example that walks you through paragraph by paragraph

- Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
- Date
- Name of Person
- Job Title
- Company/Organization
- Street Address
- City, State, Zip Code
- Dear Mr./Dr./Ms../Mrs. XXXXXXXXX:
- Note I don't go over this just so it is in their notes
- FIRST PARAGRAPH: The beginning of your letter should catch the reader's attention, but avoid catchy phrases and gimmicks.
- Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying
- And mention the resource used in finding out about the opening or company/organization.
- You can also tell them why you are interested in that particular organization in this paragraph

SECOND and THIRD PARAGRAPH:

- Explain why you are interested in working for that employer or in that field of work, or this specific position and most importantly, what your qualifications are
 - e.g., academic background/training,
 - work experience,
 - personal skills
 - Point out achievements that relate to the field in which you are applying, without duplicating exactly what is included in your resume. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or other application instrument.
 - Indicate that your resume summarizes your qualifications and background.
 - You can also include personal attributes (personality) or "soft skills" here such as enthusiasm, dedication to the field, independence, self motivation etc...
- CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Restate your interest in the position, tell them that you are interested and available to interviews and provide follow up information. Remember to thank them for their time!

- Sincerely ,
- Note I don't go over this just so it is in their notes
- Your Name

MOST IMPORTANT POINT

- Your cover letter must be specific for a job application or a position you would like,
- vague "blanket cover letters" most often get ignored by busy faculty.
- This was the most often sited complaint from faculty in my college

Other Documents you might be thinking about preparing

- Depending on the jobs you will be applying for you might also be preparing to write a description of your research interests and your teaching philosophy.
- Faculty positions
 - Will need description of research interests and your teaching philosophy
- Biotech jobs or industry
 - Description of research interests

Acknowledgments

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- Kelly Reese the career guidance counselor for CVMBS from whom most of this material was "stolen" with generous permission.

REFS

- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/cvAdvice/a/cvAdvice.htm>
- Here's How: Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae, Acy Jackson
- The academic Job Search Handbook, Julia Miller
- The Curriculum Vitae Handbook, Rebecca Anthony

Notes from looking through your CVs

- 1 use your space wisely, don't automatically stick to the 1.25 x 1 x 1 x 1.25 margins!
- Give them as much contact info as possible
- From Ronica:
 - some of your documents did not print well,
 - she fixed them for you
 - an employer will not be so kind
 - If you are using odd programs think about if they are going to print well when received (major problem with Macs)
 - Always send Pdfs, safest bet, sure to print as planned (Dr Latimer, PI Lawyer says he only opens Pdfs as other documents are often scrambled)

Notes from looking through your CVs

- Hard to get a feel for what your work really is from most of your CVs
 - Give a BRIEF summary under your title or description that summarizes major techniques you use
- Same for teaching, indicate how many semesters and sections you taught
- Give a list of 3 references at the end
- 1 should be your PI if possible

Notes from Jill Livengood 2009

- government position CVs will be very different than an academic/industry position.
- The government requires extra information like salary, mentor phone numbers, high school education...
- So make sure you check to see if a position requires extra information on the CV!

Career Development: Interviewing Skills

Kindly provided by Kenneth Noll
University of Connecticut



References

Chronicle of Higher
Education

<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com>

Science

**Congratulations,
you landed a job
interview**

Now what?!

Types of interviews

Postdoc positions

Academic positions

Large and small
institutions

Non-academic positions

What are the purposes of the interview?

You are a top candidate

Employer is looking for reasons
to hire you

You are interviewing the employer

Your opportunity to “flesh out”
your CV and recommendation
letters

K. Delgizzo and L. Malisheski. Chronicle of Higher Education, Jan. 17, 2003

**Get rid of that
teacher-mentor
attitude**

Phone interviews for postdoc positions

- Ask potential employer to call you at a specific time so you have time to prepare yourself.
- Ask for a description of the project you will be expected to do.
- Do your homework on the project.
- Project interest/enthusiasm
- Know your own work and its importance (have your “elevator talk” prepared)

Typical academic interview components

- One-on-one chats with the faculty
- Meeting with graduate students
- Seminar to faculty and students
- Chalk talk with committee members
- Possibly a sample teaching lecture
- Meeting with Dept. Head and/or Dean
- Meet with those you ask to see
- Meals

Things to ask before your visit 1 Interview schedule

With whom will you be meeting?
What will you be expected to present?
Who will be in your audience?
What social events or meals will you be attending?

Things to ask before your visit 2 Travel arrangements

- Who will make arrangements for your travel and accommodations?
- Will the employer cover your expenses?
- Who should be contacted in case of an emergency?

Prepare thoughtfully

Acquaint yourself with the institution and its members
Think about what you can contribute to the dept./company
Practice your presentation before a critical audience
If you must present a lesson, adjust it to the audience

Practice presenting yourself

List the critical points you want to present about yourself
Prepare 1-, 3- and 10-minute versions of your research interests
Be prepared to ask questions; prepare a list of them

Seminar and chalk talk

Practice before a critical audience
Your chalk talk will be like standing before a grant review or thesis committee
Use first person, not the royal "we"
Know your very first projects, second projects, etc.
Know which programs at which agencies you will submit grants to
Know your stuff!
Relate your stuff to your hosts' stuff.

One-on-one meetings: Show the kind of colleague you will be

Forge a real connection with your interviewers
Ask questions about your interviewer and his/her work
Show enthusiasm and interest in his/her responses

Questions during the interview

Listen carefully to questions you are asked
Don't be afraid to ask someone to repeat a question or clarify something you don't understand.

D. M. Zimbleman. Chronicle of Higher Education, July 16, 2002

Questions you should NOT be asked...

What does your husband or wife do?
Do you plan to have children?
Are you pregnant?

...and if you ARE asked?

Elicit an employer's concerns, address those rather than the literal question
Respond in a way that conveys empathy with the interviewer's concern
Reframe the question or minimize a negative comment or situation
Stonewall cheerfully when asked for negative information

M. Heiberger and J. M. Vick. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 22, 1999.

Interview the interviewers: academic interviews

Does the faculty seem able to work together?
Is the job description clear, or are there different readings from different committee members?
Did you feel demeaned by committee comments or interview arrangements?

To ask or not to ask, that is the question (part 1)

At a fully teaching institution, don't ask about time off for research.
Ask carefully about the workload.
Do not ask specific questions about salary and benefits at the first interview (academic).
Ask about about research and teaching facilities available on campus.

R. Jenkins. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 15, 2004.

To ask or not to ask, that is the question (part deux)

Ask about staff support for grant writing, financial management, procuring supplies, repairing equipment, and specialized facilities.
Ask which types of courses you would be expected to teach and how those courses are assigned.
Ask questions that highlight your knowledge of the institution.

R. Jenkins. Chronicle of Higher Education. Jan. 15, 2004.

The interview meal

Use good table manners
Don't order the most expensive item on the menu/bottles of wine
Ask your hosts questions so you can eat your food
Go light on the alcohol (loose lips sink ships)
Thank your hosts for the meal

Questions for nonacademic positions

Tell me about your recent work experience(s).
Why are there gaps in your employment history?
What strengths and weaknesses would you bring to this position?
What types of job responsibilities do you find most rewarding/frustrating? Why?
Describe a situation when you had to take directions from several people at the same time.
Describe a time when you had to sacrifice quality for a deadline, or visa versa. How did you react to this?
Describe a tough problem that you have dealt with, tell how you approached it and the outcome.
When you delegate assignments to others, how do you keep track of their progress?

http://www.workforcecentralflorida.com/employers/interviewing_questions.asp

Interview the interviewers nonacademic interviews

How do you measure success on the job?
Can you tell me about the people I'll be working with?
What is your approach to solving problems?

More tips on company interviews

Read industry trade magazines, visit the company web site, and do a company search on the internet.
Demonstrate what you know about the company and the industry.
Present yourself as an active problem solver.
Tell how your experiences will help you meet your prospective role.

S. Bosker <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/interview/>

Even more tips on company interviews

The interview should feel like a conversation, not an interrogation. The interviewer should like you more at the end than at the beginning. The interviewer has a stake in seeing the candidate succeed.

The interviewer's attitude going into an interview is one of "hopeful skepticism." The sooner they hire you, the sooner the search can end.

"Anyone too busy to say 'thank you' will get fewer and fewer chances to say it."

Harvey Mackay, Founder and chairman of the Mackay Envelope Corporation

Don'ts

Undersell yourself
Present yourself unfavorably
Drink too much alcohol
Dress nonprofessionally
Discuss departmental politics, your perceived inadequacies, gossip about colleagues, etc.
Spend their interview money on extras

A little paranoia can be a good thing

Your interview starts in the parking lot, any onlooker could be one of your interviewers, so act accordingly
Be courteous and professional to everyone you meet (including staff)
Be positive and pleasant in small talk with strangers
TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE!

E. Hovanec. <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com/interview/>. 2002.

Interview stoppers

Not knowing your goals
Being too needy
Poor nonverbal communication
Falling into the answers-only rut
Rambling
Being overly familiar
Not asking specific questions

Take home messages

Relax
The interview is a two-way street
Your hosts want you to succeed
Prepare, prepare and then prepare again
Do your homework
Be polite to everyone
Did I mention preparing?
SMILE!