GRADUATE STUDENT WRITING WORKSHOP
Cover Letters, Vitae and Resumes

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Prepared by Jean E. Wallace
Adapted from The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In 602/702, we looked at how to prepare CVs and resumes in the abstract. We'll review some of this, as well as discuss the purpose of these documents. You are invited to bring in a draft of your cover letter, vitae or resume for peer review and feedback.

APPLICATION LETTERS AND COVER LETTERS

Many people believe that application letters and cover letters are essentially the same but these kinds of letters are different. The letter of application is a sales letter in which you market your skills, abilities, and knowledge. A cover letter, on the other hand, is primarily a document of transmittal.It identifies an item being sent, the person to whom it is being sent, and the reason for its being sent, and provides a permanent record of the transmittal for both the writer and the reader.

APPLICATION LETTERS

When writing an application letter, remember that you probably have competition. Your audience is a professional who screens and hires job applicants—someone who may look through dozens or even hundreds of other applications on the day they receive yours. The immediate objective of your application letter and accompanying resume is to attract this person's attention. Your ultimate goal is to obtain an interview.

As you write your application letter, be sure you complete three tasks: catch the reader's attention favorably, convince the reader that you are a qualified candidate for the job, and request an interview. In writing your application letter, you should include the following:

- ✓ Identify the job by title and let the recipient know how you heard about it.
- ✓ Summarize your qualifications for the job, specifically your work experience, activities that show your relevant skills (e.g., teaching, research), and your educational background.
- ✓ Refer the reader to your enclosed resume or cv.
- ✓ If you are applying for a specific job, include any information pertinent to the position that is not included in your resume.
- ✓ Indicate your availability for an interview, stating where you can be reached and when you will be available. If your prospective employer is located in another city and you plan to visit the area, mention the dates for your trip.

To save your reader time and to call attention to your strengths as a candidate, state your objective directly at the beginning of the letter.
Example: *I am seeking a position as a manager in your Data Center. In such a management position, I can use my master's degree in information systems and my experience as a programmer/analyst to address business challenges in data processing.*

If you have been referred to a company by one of its employees, a career counselor, a professor, or someone else, mention that before stating your job objective.

Example: *During the recent ARRGH convention in Washington, D.C., one of your sales representatives, Dusty Brown, informed me of a possible opening for a manager in your Data Center. My extensive background in programming and my master's degree in information systems make me highly qualified for the position.*

In subsequent paragraphs, expand on the qualifications you mentioned in your opening. Add any appropriate details, highlighting experience listed on your resume that is especially pertinent to the job you are seeking. Close with a request for an interview. Proofread your letter carefully. Two sample letters of application are presented below. The first letter (Sample #1) is by a recent college graduate responding to a local newspaper article about the company's plan to build a new computer center. The writer is not applying for a specific job opening but describes the position he seeks. The second letter (Sample #2) is from a college senior who does not specify where she learned of the opening because she is uncertain whether a position is available.

Sample #1

<div align="right">

6123 Farrington Road
Apt. B11
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
January 11, 2005

</div>

Taylor, Inc.
694 Rockstar Lane
Durham, NC 27708
Dear Human Resources Director:

I just read an article in the *News and Observer* about Taylor's new computer center just north of Durham. I would like to apply for a position as an entry-level programmer at the center.

I understand that Taylor produces both in-house and customer documentation. My technical writing skills, as described in the enclosed resume, are well suited to your company. I am a recent graduate of DeVry Institute of Technology in Atlanta with an Associate's Degree in Computer Science. In addition to having taken a broad range of courses, I served as a computer consultant at the college's computer center where I helped train users to work with new systems.

I will be happy to meet with you at your convenience and discuss how my education and experience match your needs. You can reach me at my home address, at (919) 233-1552, or at krock@devry.alumni.edu.

<div align="right">

Sincerely,
Raymond Krock

</div>

Sample #2

<div align="right">

6123 Farrington Road
Apt. G11
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
January 11, 2005

</div>

Taylor, Inc.
694 Rockstar Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am seeking a position in your engineering department where I may use my training in computer sciences to solve Taylor's engineering problems. I would like to be a part of the department that developed the Internet Selection System but am unsure whether you have a current opening.

I expect to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from North Carolina State University in June and by that time will have completed the Computer Systems Engineering Program. Since September 2000, I have been participating, through the University, in the Professional Training Program at Computer Systems International in Raleigh. In the program I was assigned to several staff sections as an apprentice. Most recently, I have been a programmer trainee in the Engineering Department and have gained a great deal of experience in computer applications. Details of the academic courses I have taken are included in the enclosed resume.

If there is a position open at Taylor Inc., please let me know whom I should contact for further information. I look forward to hearing from you soon. I may be reached at my office (919-866-4000 ext. 232) or via email (Brock@aol.com).

Sincerely,
Rebecca Brock

COVER LETTERS

As mentioned previously, application letters and cover letters are not the same. A cover letter identifies an item being sent, the person to whom it is being sent, and the reason for its being sent. A cover letter provides a permanent record of the transmittal for both the writer and the reader.

In a cover letter, keep your remarks brief. Your opening should explain what you are sending and why. In an optional second paragraph, you might include a summary of the information you are sending. A letter accompanying a proposal, for example, might point out sections in the proposal that might be of particular interest to the reader. The letter could then go on to present a key point or two explaining why the writer's firm is the best one for the job. The closing paragraph should contain acknowledgements, offer additional assistance, or express the hope that the material will fulfill its purpose.

The following are examples of cover letters. The first letter (Sample #1) is brief and to the point. The second letter (Sample #2) is slightly more detailed because it touches on the manner in which the information was gathered.

Sample #1

Your Company Logo and Contact Information

January 11, 2005
Brian Eno, Chief Engineer
Carolina Chemical Products
3434 Pond View Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Mr. Eno:

Enclosed is the final report on our installment of pollution control equipment at Eastern Chemical Company, which we send with Eastern's Permission. Please call me collect (ext. 1206) or email me at the address below if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Nora Cassidy
Technical Services Manager
ncassidy@company.com

Enclosure: Report

Sample #2

Your Company Logo and Contact Information

January 11, 2005

Brian Eno, Chief Engineer
Ecology Systems, Inc.
8458 Obstructed View Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Mr. Eno:

Enclosed is the report estimating our power consumption for the year as requested by John Brenan, Vice President, on September 4.

The report is the result of several meetings with Jamie Anson, Manager of Plant Operations, and her staff and an extensive survey of all our employees. The survey was delayed by the transfer of key staff in Building A. We believe, however, that the report will provide the information you need to furnish us with a cost estimate for the installation of your Mark II Energy Saving System.

We would like to thank Billy Budd of ESI for his assistance in preparing the survey. If you need more information, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Nora Cassidy
New Projects Office
ncassidy@company.com

Enclosure: Report

CURRICULA VITAE (CV) VERSUS RESUMES

Before you start
To decide whether to submit a CV or a resume, you will need to determine which of them most appropriately fits the criteria provided by the employer, grant agency, or scholarship or internship committee who will be reading your application. Often, the application instructions for a particular position will state whether a CV or resume is requested. If you are unsure, it is worth your time to contact the agency and ask which would be most appropriate for the position.

What is the difference between a resume and a CV? What do they typically include?
A typical resume is a general and concise introduction of your experiences and skills as they relate to a particular career or position that you are aiming to acquire. As such, a resume may have to be altered for each position that you are applying for so as to emphasize those skills and experiences most relevant to the work. Resumes are usually no more than one page in length. They are often accompanied by cover letters, which provide a permanent written record of the transmittal of the resume (what is being sent, to whom it is being sent, and who sent it).

A typical resume will include the following information:
- *Name and Contact Information:* your home address might be most appropriate, especially if you do not want your current employer to know that you are looking for another job!
- *Education:* a listing of your degrees or certifications and educational institutions or programs.
- *Work Experience:* names of the companies or organizations that you have worked for, the location of each company, the dates worked, your job title, and duties performed.

In contrast, a CV is a fairly detailed overview of your life's accomplishments, especially those most relevant to the realm of academia. As such, these documents have their greatest utility in the pursuit of a job in academia or research. Because academic researchers are often working on and completing many projects and teaching responsibilities simultaneously, it is wise to think of a CV as a living document that will need to be updated frequently. A typical CV for someone in the beginning stages of his or her graduate school career might only be two or three pages in length, while the number of pages of a more seasoned researcher's CV may run into the double digits. In both CVs and resumes, information within sections is usually organized chronologically (and I suggest most recent first).

A typical CV will include the following information:
- *Name and Contact Information:* contact information for your current institution or place of employment may work best, unless you do not want your colleagues to know that you are job-hunting.
- *Areas of Interest:* a listing of your varied academic interests.
- *Education:* a list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation. You may also include the titles of your dissertation or thesis here.
- *Grants, Honors and Awards:* a list of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service.
- *Publications and Presentations:* a list of your published articles and books, as well presentations given at conferences. If there are many of both, you might consider having one section for publications and another for presentations.

- *Employment and Experience:* this section may include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences.
- *Scholarly or Professional Memberships:* a listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member. If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section.
- *References:* a list of persons who write letters of recommendations for you, which includes their contact information.

Additional Considerations

Use common sense when formatting: There are no universal guidelines for how to format or organize a resume or CV. However, some commonsense guidelines may apply. If you are concerned that your resume or CV might appear too busy or misaligned be sure to evaluate the consistency of your use of space in the document.

Fonts and font sizes: go with the flow: It is a good idea to stick to commonly used fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial when creating a resume or CV. Fonts such as Bauhaus or Old English Text might have their place in other writing projects, but these might distract the reader and pull their attention away from the content you want them to read. Perhaps with the exception of your name, the use of a uniform font size throughout the document will also keep the reader focused on your accomplishments.

Seek and evaluate examples: Many professors and professionals have posted their CVs and resumes to online faculty web pages, bulletin boards, and employee profile pages on corporate websites. These documents, often posted as Adobe PDF files, are useful templates for designing your own CV or resume. It is best to search for a CV or resume of an individual who shares your field, discipline, or interests, as it will provide you with a model that most closely approximates what your final document might look like.

THE CURRICULUM VITAE

Sociology 602/702
Jean E. Wallace

A Curriculum Vitae, or CV, is a cumulative record of professional achievements, academic preparation, and qualifications in your discipline. It includes primarily research and teaching, as well as papers, presentations, awards, and professional and administrative contributions. Your CV is one of the most important parts of an application for academic jobs. However, your CV isn't the only part of your application: its main purpose is to secure an interview. A CV is organized to reflect an understanding of the needs of a particular institution or organization.

IT SHOULD BE PRESENTED IS SUCH A WAY… that anyone who looks at it can read it quickly and easily and be able to find the info they want – it's very different from your cover letter that will be in more detail and provide highlights. Think of it as an advertisement selling a product and that product is you.   Often times, your cv is the one chance you have to convince someone that you're the right person for the job, grant or program.

Developing a CV
- **A CV is a multi-purpose, perpetually unfinished document.**   Since a CV is a cumulative record of your academic accomplishments and it's used for a variety of purposes, it's always evolving-- you'll create new categories and add recent accomplishments; there is never a final version.
- **How is it different than a resume?** A resume is used for non-academic positions. It is carefully tailored to the employer you are addressing: outside of academia. A resume is usually shorter, and includes skills, outcomes and accomplishments related to a specific job.

  - **Uses for a CV:** A CV is the most important academic job search tool. However, it has multiple uses beyond the faculty job search. A CV may also be used for: o Grant or fellowship applications
    - Summer positions
    - Academic jobs
    - Research positions in industry
    - Merit or tenure review
    - Publications
    - Speaking engagements
    - Consulting
    - Awards
    - Leadership positions
    - Sabbatical opportunities

Getting started: The first thing to know about CV development is that while there is no standard format, there are different conventions for every discipline. It is important to consult with faculty, students, and other colleagues to understand what is expected in your field. Don't get committed to one version or format!
- You may wish to focus your CV for a specific job or grant for which you are applying. As a result, you may find that you develop several versions of your CV. When drafting a CV, keep the following questions in mind:
  - A CV is a targeted document: why are you using the CV?   o Type of institution matters: is it all about research, or do they care mostly about your teaching?
    - Who is the reader? What do you know about the needs/interests of the employer?
    - Length will vary with accomplishments and purpose of CV use and level of detail will vary as

your career progresses. Create new versions, with new categories and less detail, as your career progresses.

What Goes in a CV? A word about honesty…
It goes without saying that everything on your CV should be completely true and accurate. Even the slightest discrepancy can be damaging. Do not state that something has happened if it has not happened yet.
OMITTING THINGS OVER TIME

A Note on Style & Appearance: If your CV is dense and poorly formatted, and you make it difficult to read, you have not communicated what you want me to know. Unfortunately, busy people are looking for reasons to exclude applicants. Don't ignore presentation and style!
- Be consistent with grammar and formatting (bolding, font, etc.).
- Don't use abbreviations or course numbers that are specific only to your institution!
- Proofread, proofread, proofread! Spell-checking is good, but proofreading is better.
- In the business world, short resumes are preferred. There is no set length for CVs. It should be as long as necessary to reflect your achievements to date.
- Use white space, bolding, and indenting to make the CV easy to read.
- Put your name and page number at the top of page 2 or beyond.
- Use 10 point font, nothing smaller. Select one font and stick with it.

Content: Start with contact information, including name, address, phone number, and email address. A few things to consider:
- Pick one telephone number where you want phone calls. Be sure to have a message that you would want employers to hear. If you prefer that fellow students or others not know about your calls, do not include a lab or office phone number.
- Generally, you should not include personal information such as social insurance number, marital status, date of birth, height/weight, gender, or dependents. Do not include a picture. Some employers (i.e., government organizations) might ask for inclusion of personal information.

Sections/Categories: The categories you include will depend on how far along you are or how much experience you have. The education section should come first. Include your degrees (most recent first), school name and location, dates, and any academic awards received at graduation.

THREE BASIC CATEGORIES: RESEARCH TEACHING AND ADMIN – partly depends on what you're applying for what you'll emphasize and how much detail (e.g., research position or grant vs. teaching position).

RESEARCH OUTPUT: publications, conference presentations, posters
RESEARCH FUNDING: any awards for travel, conferences, grants, etc.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE: courses you've TA-ed, guest speaker, taught, training
ACADEMIC ACHEIVEMENTS: prizes, scholarships, awards,

ADMIN: committee work, position on committee

Categories that cover your research and teaching experience should come first, depending on the employer and what they are looking for. Separate academic teaching, research, or other experience from other related contributions, such as high school or community teaching.
Possible categories to use in your CV:

- Research: Dissertation summary, Master's thesis, advisor, title
- Research interests: future plans
- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Teaching interests
- Papers/Publications
- **Presentations/Posters**   THAT YOU HAVE PRESENTED OR CO-PRESENTED
- **Conferences**   THAT YOU HAVE PRESENTED OR CO-PRESENTED
- Related teaching
- Related experience
- Related research
- Other professional training
- Professional activities: Sheridan Center, Grad rep GSC
- University committees
- Undergraduate activity
- Professional affiliations
- Honors/Awards
- Fellowships/Scholarships
- Skills

In Summary:
- Make it readable
- Remember who will be reading it
- **Ask others to read it before you send it out**
- Proofread, Proofread, Proofread
- Honesty, Honesty, Honesty

Helpful Links:

U of C link to career services:
http://www.ucalgary.ca/careers/

U of C resources on resumes, cover letters and cvs:
http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/career-services/my-job-search/resumes

<div align="center">**CV Template : <u>Academic Careers</u>**</div>

Although the form and fashion of business CV's will vary considerably depending on time and place, academic CV's have remained remarkably consistent in their organization and orientation. While the sequence and length might also change according to the type and level of academic position you are applying to, this example contains most of the primary points of emphasis. As always, have your supervisor or another mentor from your field review this and other academic application materials prior to first submission.

<div align="right">
Address Street
Address City, Province
Phone/FaxNumbers
</div>

Your name (bold, large, 14-18pt) **Email@email.com**

Education
Doctor of Philosophy, Discipline, University, City, Province 2003-2006 (awaiting defense)
 • Thesis title, supervisor and committee
 • Comprehensive/prelim exam fields

Master of (Science, Arts), Discipline, University, City, Province 2001-2002
 • Thesis title and supervisor
 • Academic honours or distinctions

Bachelor of (Science, Arts), Discipline, University, City, Province 1999-2001
 • Academic honours or distinctions, GPA

Awards, Distinctions and Fellowships
List awards and fellowships in this section, ordered by most recent and with annualized award amounts listed in brackets. Some candidates will also choose to list major fellowships that they were offered but have noted as declined. If you have a fairly short fellowship profile, for instance, one per degree, then it would also be possible to capture these as bulleted points under the relevant degree in the education section.

Research Interests / Research Profile
Provide an 'abstract', no more than a paragraph, that outlines your current and prospective lines of research. This section is meant to quickly convey to search committee readers that your area of research 1.) fits the position at hand, 2.) is significant to the discipline, and 3.) that you have plans in place for continued research contributions that either extend from or move beyond your dissertation topic. Researchers in more technically oriented fields might also specify the primary techniques, approaches, languages or instrumentation they use in the conduct of their research.

Publications, Presentations and Abstracts

Shorter lists of publications and presentations can be listed here as a simple bulleted list. More extensive and varied publication histories should be organized by appropriate subsections ('Peer reviewed publications', 'Book reviews', 'Conference presentations and posters', etc.).

For peer-reviewed publications, your sequence of presentation might depend on what you have available. You could begin with single or lead authored first, or order from most-to-least recent. Typically this list is limited to those things accepted for publication.

If you list is particularly weak, or if the nature of your project was that it has produced a crush of submissions toward the end of you program, go ahead to list items for which there is a 'revise and re-submit' or which are 'under review'. Manuscripts in progress should generally not be listed here, but can and should be mentioned in cover letters, research statements, and at interview.

If your list is quite extensive, consider offering it near the end of your CV, just prior to references.

Research Experience
Here, list all research 'positions' you have held, including doctoral thesis/postodoctoral research, and any industrial or other experience that held a relevant research component. For example:

Postdoctoral Fellow, Department/Lab, University/company, City, Province 2006-Present
- *Use short, bulleted lists to outline your research subject and process for the position*
- *Try to focus on discrete outcomes (publications, results, etc.) or skills gained (techniques, instruments)*
- *Try to make your descriptions of the experience bounded, linear and concrete*

Research Assistant, Department, University, City, Province 2004-2006
- *Use short, bulleted lists to outline your research subject and process for the position*
- *Try to focus on discrete outcomes (publications, results, etc.) or skills gained (techniques, instruments)*
- *Try to make your descriptions of the experience bounded, linear and concrete*

Teaching Experience
This list should include all 'Courses Taught' and/or 'Teaching Assistantships', and for some types of institutions might best precede 'research experience' For academic positions, list the course name, when and where it was taught, a course number, and preferably some quick content information about the course. The emphasis on this list should be as consistent with the job announcement as possible. Amplify teaching experiences that speak to their needs, highlight general teaching aptitudes by noting awards or evaluations that help to establish your pedagogical skills. Whether requested or not, the addition of a teaching statement/portfolio alongside your CV is a recommended feature of any position where teaching will be expected:

Lecturer: Course Name and Number, Department, University, City, Province Winter 2004

Very brief description, 1-2 phrases, that outlines the content of the course, special modules, etc.

Teaching Assistant: Course Name and Number, Department, University, City, Province
Fall 2003
Very brief description, 1-2 phrases, that outlines the content of the course, special modules, etc.

Teaching Expertise
Here, consider a bulleted listing of the course subjects and areas that you feel confident and qualified to teach. This could be on basis not only of your actual teaching activity, but also advanced coursework you have completed in these subjects. Take a good look at the teaching catalogue of the target department or institution before writing this up. Emphasizing or ordering according to their needs is possible.

Professional and/or Community Involvement/Administrative Activity
Here, using a bulleted list, try to represent how you have been active in the administrative life of your community, university, and department. The bulge of retirements and new hiring means that, as a junior faculty member, you will probably be asked to take on some kind of committee or administrative role than in previous years. Adding administrative potential on top of high-calibre research and teaching might be just the thing that puts you back on top of the CV pile. Try to get beyond mere 'membership' to highlight initiatives you have taken or administrative achievements, however modest, you can claim.

References
Typically, at least three references are expected, including their titles, affiliations, and contact information. Give each person you list a 'heads-up' that they have been listed, and some indication as to the range of institutions you are applying to (incidentally, a great time to get their advice on the process). Your supervisor is almost always the first of these references; omitting a supervisor will immediately raise red flags on your file. Committee members, faculty mentors and established scholars with whom you have worked or collaborated are also acceptable. In some cases, Master's degree referees can also be used.