

# A guide to CVs for Academic Researchers



# A guide to CVs for academic researchers

This guide is aimed at researchers applying for an academic position. See our standard guide to CVs and covering letters if you're applying for roles outside of academia. The principles of writing a CV for academia are the same as writing a CV for industry, but the content and length will differ.

Your CV should be targeted to the opportunity you're applying for and will typically be around three pages long. Write briefly and concisely using bullet points.

Employers will be looking for evidence of:

- **Academic achievement, experience and knowledge**  
E.g. relevant studies, technical and discipline-specific skills and/or relevant industry experience
- **Research skills and experience**  
E.g. techniques and methodology, research management
- **Contribution to learning**  
E.g. teaching experience, successful collaboration
- **Research output and success**  
E.g. publications and conferences, presentations and papers, patent applications, secured funding

## Marketing your skills and experience

As well as discipline-specific knowledge, as a researcher it is likely you have gained a very marketable range of experience and skills for your CV. Employers need to see evidence of the skills you have that relate to the role.

**Research-related skills** will vary depending on your discipline but might include:

academic writing	innovation	project management
critical analysis	Intellectual Property knowledge	report writing
data analysis	knowledge of lab procedures	scientific writing
developing/improving products	literature search	secondary research techniques
EndNote use	market analysis	specific software/equipment use
ethics knowledge	methodological skills	statistics proficiency
experience of peer review	primary research techniques	writing proposals
information consolidation	programming	

**Additional transferable skills** developed through your postgraduate experience might include:

a methodical approach	confidence	Health and Safety knowledge
ability to work under pressure	creativity	industry knowledge
adaptability	cultural awareness	multi-disciplinary working
business start-up skills	diversity understanding	networking
capacity to influence change	environmental awareness	problem solving
collaboration	financial knowledge	self-motivation
commitment	goal orientation	team working
communication		time management

For more detailed information about skills, see the **VITAE Researcher Development Framework**: [www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development)

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Include essential details  
(name and contact details).

## Your name

Full address

Phone number

Email address

LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

ResearchGate profile (optional)

Keep your email  
address professional  
and check that your  
voicemail is activated

## Research Interests (optional)

Outline your principal research interests. Summarise past research and mention what you're currently working on. Highlight your future plans and how they relate to the aims of the department, e.g. broadening research experience or enhanced specialist reputation.

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## Education

Put your most relevant qualification first (usually the most recent), then work backwards.

### 2018 - 2021 Full title of your PhD, university name and location

- Include name of supervisor(s) and sponsor/funding body.
- Describe aims, methodology and achievements of your project.
- Highlight any activities that are particularly relevant to the role.
- Include any technical skills developed.
- If your research is relevant to the role, you can include a research abstract here, or in a separate section as an appendix.

### 2014 - 2018 Full title of your Masters, university name and location, result obtained

- Provide details of relevant projects/activities, e.g. dissertation, literature review.
- Mention any significant achievements.
- If your subject of study is not relevant to the role, focus on relevant skills you've gained. Remember to provide examples as evidence.
- Include any technical skills developed.

### 2014 - 2018 Full title of your degree, university name and location, result obtained

- Highlight modules relevant to your application, and good academic grades.
- Include the title of your dissertation, and include your methodology, if relevant.
- Include any relevant technical skills you developed.

### 2007 - 2014 Name of school/college, location (optional)

**A-levels (or equivalent):** list subjects and grades across the page to save space.

**GCSEs (or equivalent):** state the number and grades obtained, e.g. GCSEs, grades A\* - C

If you have international qualifications, write them as they are, you don't need to convert them.

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## Academic awards and prizes

- If you've received any awards or bursaries, list them here. E.g. academic scholarships or prizes to attend conferences or to study overseas.
- If you have several awards and prizes you can include these as an appendix.

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## Publications

- If you have any publications, including those pending approval, list them here.
- Organise by: research area, date, level of contribution, or by status of the publication.
- Distinguish between work published, submitted/accepted or under review.
- Include details of work that is yet to be submitted.
- Reference fully and consistently

If you have a long list, you can include selected publications here with a note to see the full list as an appendix.

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## Conferences

If you have been involved in any conferences, clarify your level of participation:

- Did you help to organise it? If so, how?
- Did you present anything? If so, was it a poster, paper, or in another format?
- Did you receive any funding for your attendance?

If you have a long list, you can include selected conferences here with a note to see the full list as an appendix.

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## Employment or Work/Industry experience (paid and voluntary)

Use the job advert/description (if available) to identify what the employer is looking for and give specific examples to demonstrate your relevant skills and experience.

How you market your work experience can really help you to stand out. You could organise your work history under different headings. This allows you to put the most relevant information first, for example:

Research experience

Teaching and administration experience

Additional experience

In your 'additional experience' section you can highlight skills gained from any other paid or voluntary work.

You can use the following as a guide to presenting this information.

## Dates worked, job title, organisation, location (no need for full address)

Write briefly about your responsibilities to set the context, giving specific examples. Focus on **how** you carried out those duties, i.e. the skills you used.

- Give priority to research, teaching and administrative experience.
- Include relevant industry collaboration
- Recruiters also value experience which shows you have added value to your department, such as assisting at school events, or involvement in student admission and recruitment activities
- Casual employment is usually brief and listed separately, later in your CV

If you have teaching experience:

- Include details of courses taught, developed and assessed; size and educational stage of the groups; seminars; tutorials; and lectures.
- Include experience of tutoring, mentoring, supervision and demonstrating.
- Mention any teaching qualifications.

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## Additional skills and training

Give details of other relevant skills/training you might have, such as:

- Research-related training
- IT skills – list the software packages, programming languages or operating systems you can use and any qualifications you've gained
- Language skills – list the different languages you can speak and your level of fluency
- Driving licence

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## Professional memberships

List relevant professional body membership with dates. Include any significant contribution and experience gained.

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## Interests (optional)

Mention any interests you have that are related to the position you're applying for or which allow you to demonstrate useful skills. Don't just list the activities, give more detail.

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## Referees

Usually required to provide three, including a supervisor, a further academic (preferably in an area related to research) and one other.

Name	Name	Name
Job title/relationship to you	Job title/relationship to you	Job title/relationship to you
University and department	University and department	Organisation name
Full address, including postcode Telephone number	Full address, including postcode Telephone number	Full address, including postcode Telephone number
Email address	Email address	Email address

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## Action words

'Action words' help you to create a strong impression of achievement, ability and activity and demonstrate that you have the skills and qualities an employer is seeking. Avoid passive terms such as 'I had to...', 'I was required to...', 'I was involved in...'. Use active, positive verbs instead to describe your role and the impact you made, such as:

achieved	coordinated	developed	initiated	organised	produced
analysed	created	edited	led	planned	researched
budgeted	delivered	evaluated	liaised	prepared	solved
completed	demonstrated	improved	managed	presented	supervised
conducted	designed	increased	negotiated	prioritised	trained

## ✓ Checklist

### Key things to consider:

- Is your CV tailored to meet the employer's criteria?
- Is the most relevant information first?
- Has every piece of information earned its place?
- Have you explained your contribution to activities and included evidence of your skills?
- Is it clear and easy to read?
- Have you used subheadings, bullet points and white space?
- Have you avoided long paragraphs?
- Have you checked spelling, punctuation and grammar?
- Is the font and format consistent and professional?
- Have you used a professional email address?
- Would your CV benefit from an appendix?

### Need more help?

- Attend Careers Service workshops on writing CVs and covering letters:  
[www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/events/workshops](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/events/workshops)
- Find further support and workshops through your Faculty Researcher Development programme:  
[www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/about/offer/#postgraduatestudentsandresearchers](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/about/offer/#postgraduatestudentsandresearchers)
- Get feedback on your CV or covering letter – support is available Monday to Friday, no appointment needed: [www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/about/visit](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/about/visit)
- If you have a disability and would like advice on sharing information: [www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/jobs/diversity](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/jobs/diversity) or come in and speak to us.
- You can find more advice about developing your career in or outside academia at:  
[www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers)