

FORMAL LETTER WRITING – CURRICULUM VITAE AND COVER LETTER

Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum vitae provides key information about a person's life, skills, experience, education and qualifications. The term *curriculum vitae*, abbreviated to CV, is of Latin origin and can be loosely translated as "a course of life". Thus, shortened form *vita* is sometimes used.

The main purpose of a CV is to provide future employer with data about us necessary for gaining some position. *Curriculum vitae* is commonly used in Europe, the Middle East, Africa or Asia when seeking a job, whereas in the United States and Canada CV is primarily used when applying for academic, education, scientific or research positions. CV in the "European" sense is in these countries called **résumé**. Generally, a CV tends to be longer and more detailed mainly on education, usually including an extensive list of professional history, previous employment, work experience, publications, etc. Sometimes, the information included in a CV or résumé has to be adapted to different types of positions. Similarly as a résumé, *curriculum vitae* should include personal information as the full name, contact address, phone number, email address or fax of the applicant. Certain attempts to create a model of a standardized CV were made in the European Union. This universal CV was included among other documents - Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Certificate supplement and Diploma supplement - **uniformly called Europass**, which should help clearly understand person's skills and qualifications throughout Europe.

How to write a good CV

Structure your CV in a logic and well-arranged way. At the top you should type in bold your **personal and contact information** (name, address, phone number or possibly e-mail). Further **academic background information** on postgraduate, graduate or undergraduate work, degrees or honours follow. Other information could deal with work or other related experience, **professional development** (conferences or workshops attended), **research activities** (journal articles, authorship, conference proceedings, etc.). If it is connected to the position you apply for, you can also mention **affiliations or memberships** in concrete societies, volunteer work or consulting. Usually some **foreign language abilities** or skills are necessary to mention. If possible it is useful to give **information on references**. Ideally give the details of two referees: one academic and one employer. Imply their names, position, address, phone numbers and email addresses. They should be always asked for their permission and possibly informed of your career aspirations and achievements to date. Information such as your date of birth, age, gender, religion or marital status, whether you have a driving license or your photograph are in accordance with anti-discrimination laws in most cases considered optional data.

What to avoid

When writing the CV, you should avoid certain issues which would negatively influence your chances of getting the job. Do not use any subjective (mainly pejorative) evaluation of your previous colleagues, bosses or teachers. **Never lie**: implying skills or knowledge you do not possess will be revealed if not during the interview then definitely after you have been recruited. Be careful about possible grammatical mistakes in your CV - it would throw bad light upon you. Also being too wordy in order to impress the potential employer will discourage them from even reading it. The CV should be **written concisely** and to the point as the others will not spend a long time extracting and seeking for the relevant information.

The language of a CV

The language of a CV and in fact of all similar documents has its own specifications which combine **characteristics of formal and written language**. One of the main rules is to **avoid abbreviations and contracted forms of words**. Mixing of tenses is also one of the common mistakes people make as they describe previous and current work experience. It does not matter if you use the past or the

present tense but choose one and stick to it! You should **avoid writing in the first person** as much as you can – using action verbs to start with sentences is a good way to overcome this. It immediately emphasizes the skill used and focuses the reader's attention. If you combine this style with using **bullet points**, it will make your CV scannable so that the main information can be identified quickly.

CV layout

The visual aspect of your CV plays an important role, too. Use only good quality, white A4 paper with black print, remember to use spacing, highlight different sections as it helps better orientation, and consider the font use. Arial, Times New Roman or Calibri seem to be much more acceptable than e.g. Courier or Comic Sans. **The style and format of your CV should remain uniform throughout.**

Cover letter

Another document very often attached to *curriculum vitae* is the cover letter. Cover letter, or covering letter, also referred to as motivational letter or letter of motivation, is a letter sent to a future employer when applying for a job. It is a way of **introduction of the applicant** and **explaining suitability for the desired post**. Basically, cover letters are one page at most in length, divided into a header, introduction, body, and closing. The employer's address is listed below your contact information.

Header

Header embodies the **sender's contact information** (name, address, phone number, cell phone number, email address) and the **recipient's contact information**. Do not forget the date sent after either the sender's or the recipient's address. The final part of the header is a **salutation** followed by a comma, a space, and then follows the first paragraph of the letter (introduction). If you address the concrete person, you use salutation as e.g. *Dear Mr. Smith* or *Dear Dr. White*. In case you do not know the name of the contact person, you should use general salutations as *Dear Hiring Manager*, *Dear Sir or Madam* or *To whom it may concern*.

Introduction

The next part of the letter is introduction in which the candidate briefly states the specific position desired. Although this section should be very short (approx. 1-2 sentences), it is very essential as it **should catch the employer's immediate interest**.

Body

The body emphasizes the material in the CV and explains **why the job seeker is interested in the job** and would be of value to the potential employer. Typical matters considered typically include the applicant's skills, qualifications, and past experience. Other special things to note such as availability date can be included as well.

Closing

The closing **summarizes the letter**, and implies how the applicant will follow up. It may indicate that the applicant intends to contact the employer; however, many prefer the more indirect approach of simply saying that the applicant will **look forward to hearing from or speaking with the employer**. After the closing there comes a **valediction**, and then a **signature line**. Examples of some suitable valedictions are following: *Sincerely*, *Sincerely Yours*, *Regards*, *Best Regards*, *Kind regards*, *Yours Truly*, *Respectfully* or *Thank you for your consideration*. These phrases are, similarly as the salutation, followed by a comma and space. After it comes a signature. Optionally, the abbreviation ENCL may be used to indicate that there are enclosures as a CV or copies of other official documents.

ACTIVITIES

1. Questioning an applicant

Write questions you would ask an applicant to find out the following information

first name	_____	_____
surname	_____	_____
date of birth	_____	_____
place of birth	_____	_____
country of origin	_____	_____
present address	_____	_____
permanent address	_____	_____
marital status	_____	_____
skills	_____	_____
driving license	_____	_____
interests	_____	_____
health status	_____	_____
accreditation	_____	_____
education	_____	_____
work experience	_____	_____

2. Reading comprehension

Scan through the texts again. Answer these questions.

What is the difference between a CV and a résumé?

Why do you usually need a CV?

What are any common mistakes made in writing a CV?

What is the language of official documents in general?

What does the term Europass stand for?

What is the main function of a cover letter?

What are the main parts of a cover letter?

4. Lexis

Match the particular expressions to the parts of CV in the table below (sometimes there may be more possibilities)

Address, Administrator of the course, Artistic pursuits, Boss's Name, Details of final project, Driving Licence, Email, Employer's name, Grants, Hobbies, IT Skills, Job title, Language knowledge, Applicant's Name, Title of doctoral thesis, Candidate's Phone number, Postgraduate work, Professional exam (grade), Referee's Name, Work Responsibilities, Skills gained at work, Sports, Supervisor's name, Training course, Tutor's name, University name, Work address

Personal information	Education & Qualifications	Work experience	Skills	Professional Training	Interests & Activities	References

5. Gap fill

Read the cover letter (enclosed to an internship application) and fill in the gaps with appropriate expressions or phrases

Application Form, a definite asset, a great deal of, a match for, conducted a study, consideration, contact, Dear, experience with, applying for, In addition, look forward to, performed experiments, provide me with, reliable, to schedule an interview, willing to

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 639 00 Brno
 Czech Republic
 uhliř@email.cz

Dr. John Sheep
 The College of Veterinary Medicine
 Royal College Avenue
 AL9 47T London
 United Kingdom

February 13, 2010

_____ Dr. Sheep,

I am _____ the scientific research 1-term internship that was listed through The University of Veterinary Studies Career Services Office.

I have had _____ laboratory experience in biochemistry, and microbiology, both indoors and in the field. I have _____ testing new drugs for cattle. In field studies, I have _____ on quality of milk from cows using these drugs.

_____ to my lab work, I have _____ recording, calculating, analyzing data, as well as preparing reports. I have no problems to work as a team member, I am very _____ and organized, and _____ learn.

I hope I would be _____ your team. This internship would _____ the ideal opportunity to further expand my skills and knowledge in the research.

I will _____ you the next week to see if you consider my qualifications _____
for the position. If so, I hope _____ at a mutually convenient time. I _____
meeting you.

Thank you for your _____,

Sincerely Yours,
Martin Uhlíř

Enclosure:
Curriculum Vitae

Letters of Reference

VOCABULARY LIST

affiliation (n)	/əˈfɪli'eɪʃ(ə)n/	členství
achievement (n)	/ə'tʃi:vmənt/	úspěch, výkon
apply for (v)	/ə'plai fə/	žádat o, ucházet se o
artistic pursuit	/ɑ:'tɪstɪk pə'sju:t/	umělecká práce, činnost
aspiration (n)	/,æspɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/	cíl, snaha, úsilí
attend (v)	/ə'tend/	navštěvovat, účastnit se
authorship (n)	/'ɔ:θə(r)ʃɪp/	autorství
briefly (adv)	/'bri:flɪ/	krátce, stručně
bullet point (n)	/'bʊlɪt pɔɪnt/	odrážka
cell phone (n)	/sel fəʊn/	mobilní telefon
complimentary close (n)	/,kɒmplɪ'ment(ə)rɪ 'kləʊz/	zdvořilostní zakončení dopisu
concisely (adv)	/kən'saɪsli/	výstižně, stručně
consulting (n)	/kən'sʌltɪŋ/	poradenství
contracted form	/kən'træktɪd fɔ:m/	stažený tvar
convenient time	/kən'vi:nɪənt taɪm/	vhodný, příhodný čas
country of origin	/'kʌntri əv 'brɪdʒɪn/	země původu
course (n)	/kɔ:s/	průběh, chod
cover letter (n)	/'kʌvə 'letə/	krycí dopis
conduct a study	/kən'dʌkt ə 'stʌdi/	provádět studii
deal of	/di:l əv/	část
definite asset	/'def(ə)nət 'æset/	určitá, jistá výhoda
degree (n)	/di'grɪ:/	akademický titul
driving licence (n)	/'draɪvɪŋ 'laɪs(ə)ns/	řidičský průkaz
embody (v)	/ɪm'bɒdi/	zahrnovat, obsahovat
enclosure (n)	/ɪn'kləʊʒə/	příloha dopisu
experience (n)	/ɪk'spɪəriəns/	zkušenost
extensive list	/ɪk'stensɪv lɪst/	rozsáhlý seznam
follow up (v)	/'fɒləʊ ʌp/	pokračovat
header (n)	/'hedə/	záhlaví
headline (n)	/'hed,laɪn/	nadpis, titulek
honour (n)	/'ɒnə/	hodnota, vyznamenání
in accordance with (phr)	/ɪn ə'kɔ:zɪ(r)d(ə)ns wɪð/	v souladu s, ve shodě s
in bold (phr)	/ɪn bəʊld/	tučným písmem
intend (v)	/ɪn'tend/	zamýšlet, mínit
key information	/'ki: ,ɪnfə'meɪʃ(ə)n/	klíčové informace
loosely (adv)	/'lu:slɪ/	volně
mutually (adv)	/'mju:tʃuəli/	vzájemně, navzájem
obtain (v)	/əb'teɪn/	získat, dostat; dosáhnout něčeho
organized (adj)	/'ɔ:gənaɪzɪd/	pečlivý, důkladný, svědomitý
overcome (v)	/,əʊvə'kʌm/	překonat, přemoci

pejorative (adj)	/pɪ'dʒɔrətɪv/	hanlivý
position (n)	/pə'zɪʃ(ə)n/	místo (zaměstnání)
professional assets	/prə'feɪʃ(ə)nəl 'æsets/	profesionální aktivity
professional training	/prə'feɪʃ(ə)nəl 'treɪnɪŋ/	profesionální školení, kurz
provide with (v)	/prə'vaɪd wɪð/	opatřit (čím)
recruit (v)	/rɪ'kru:t/	hledat nové zaměstnance
reliable (adj)	/rɪ'laɪəb(ə)l/	spolehlivý, bezpečný
résumé (n)	/'rezju:meɪ/	životopis; shrnutí
salutation (n)	/,sælju'teɪʃ(ə)n/	oslovení; pozdrav
seek (v)	/si:k/	hledat
schedule an interview	/'ʃedju:l ən 'ɪntə,vju:z/	naplánovat pohovor
skill (n)	/skɪl/	dovednost
stick to st. (v)	/stɪk tə/	držet se něčeho
suitability (v)	/,su:tə'bɪləti/	přiměřenost, vhodnost
supervision (n)	/,su:pə(r)'vɪz(ə)n/	dozor, dohled; řízení; inspekce
supplement (n)	/'sʌplɪmənt/	příloha
term of employment	/tɜ:m əv ɪm'plɔɪmənt/	doba zaměstnání, délka zaměstnání
throughout Europe	/θru:'aʊt 'juərəp/	v celé Evropě
to the point	/tə ðə 'pɔɪnt/	k věci, věcně
touch-typing	/tʌtʃ 'taɪpɪŋ/	psaní na stroji
valediction (n)	/,væli'dɪkʃ(ə)n/	slovo na rozloučenou
volunteer work	/,vɒlən'tɪə wɜ:k/	práce dobrovolníka
well-arrange (v)	/wel ə'reɪndʒ/	přehledně uspořádat
willing to (adj)	/'wɪlɪŋ tə/	ochotný
wordy (adj)	/'wɜ:di/	rozvláčný, mnohomluvný

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