

# TIPS FOR IMPRESSIVE CVs

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This is the time of year when students are preparing for the job market or completing internship interviews. In either case, the bottom line to landing the job or internship you want is effectively marketing yourself. Besides a strong cover letter that outlines your interest in the position and specific qualifications, your curriculum vitae (CV) is perhaps the most critical document in your marketing materials. A CV represents the range and depth of your experience and professional activities.

Most internship sites and academic departments expect you to submit a CV with your application, and not a résumé. CVs are more comprehensive and can be thought of as an evolving document. As you acquire more experiences, you chronicle them on your CV. What follows are tips to help you make the best impression possible on paper, as well as areas that should be avoided, are unnecessary or might raise eyebrows.

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## IMPRESSIVE CVs

Keep in mind that your CV is a tool to inform and persuade, and it's also a reflection of who you are, so you want to be sure that it is error-free and easy to read and understand. Because evaluation committees have many applications to read through, you can help them and make a good impression if you are concise, consistent with your style, grammar and tense, use an active voice, and use psychological jargon appropriately.

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## WHAT'S UNNECESSARY?

Some people include a lot of personal information on their CVs, as well as photographs. Certainly, this is a stylistic decision, but it's generally recommended that you not include a picture, your date of birth, number of children, your height and weight, hobbies, or your astrological sign (yes, I have seen this on CVs!). These notations may be interpreted as offering too much information or that you're "padding" your CV.

Some other unnecessary items that are occasionally included on CVs are lists of courses you've taken, class presentations and names of conferences and workshops you've attended. Your course listing will be included on your transcripts, and most people will ask you for this information if they need it. Most expect that graduate students will have prepared a number of class presentations and attended conferences and workshops for professional development. However, simply listing conferences does not provide much useful information and may be seen as a CV-padding tactic.

Instead, talk in your cover letter or interview about the ways in which you have shown that you are committed to the profession. Unless you have a specific purpose for including class presentations or naming the conferences and workshops you've gone to, it may be best to leave these off. However, if you attended a special seminar to become certified in an area that is relevant to your career goals, your interests, or the internship or job site, it would be perfectly appropriate to include that.

Manuscripts under review, accepted or published in peer-reviewed journals should be given prominence on your CV and not mixed in with everything else you've written. Your record of peer-reviewed publications and order of authorship as a student will be more or less important depending on the site or job. If you've written for your department or state psychological association newsletter, for example, considering listing those pieces under a "Newsletter" or "Professional Development Articles" section of your CV.

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## **WHAT'S NECESSARY?**

You should include the following data on your CV in an easy to identify format: names of programs, academic achievements, employment, volunteer work, practica, supervision, research, teaching, professional involvement (membership and leadership positions), substantive presentations and publications. Only include references if you have permission from the individuals, you list and their current contact information. Be sure you use standard font styles and sizes. Print your CV on good quality paper. Remember that you are applying for a professional position, so you want your CV to reflect the same and impress.

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