Planning for Graduate Studies

> Preparing Your Resumé, Curriculum Vitae (CV), or Portfolio

When applying for graduate school, a resumé, Curriculum Vitae (CV), or portfolio may need to be included with your application.

A resumé is typically one to two pages in length and usually contains the following information:
• Education
• Employment
• Skills
• A list of awards and/or scholarships (academic or financial)
• Volunteer experience and/or community involvement
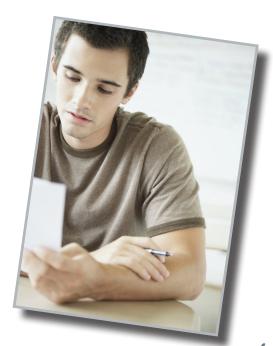
How to get started on your CV:
Writing a CV can be a lot of work and time consuming, however, it can be made easier by organizing your background into various headings or topics. Use the outline below to get you started.

• Personal / Contact Information
• Academic Background
• Research or scholarly activities
• Grants / Patents
• Public presentations
• Professional Licenses / Certificates
• On-campus involvement
• Academic / Research interests
• Leadership roles you have held (or hold) within organizations on or off-campus
• International experience
• Foreign Language Experience
• A list of your memberships in associations or clubs
• Samples from previous university course work
• Volunteer experience
• A list of references

Some departments or programs may require a portfolio. This is information that is compiled in a binder or other specified format. Department websites may list what should be included. Some examples are:

• Samples of creative work (may be written, on a CD or a DVD)
• Letters of commendation
• Descriptions of projects, or photos demonstrating past experience that relates to the program for which you are applying.

Develop your resumé, CV or portfolio to highlight information that the admissions committee is looking for.

Visual Presentation

A title page is a nice touch along with the document being placed in a business binder or folder. There are various types of display folders available from your local office/ stationary store. A letter head can be developed for yourself and used consistently throughout the document. This will give the document a professional appearance.

The layout of your resumé or CV is also very important and the presentation principles of a resumé should be followed, as stated below:

- 8 ½" x 11" paper
- black ink (colour in letterhead, do a fax/photocopy test run)
- white or conservative coloured, good quality paper
- balance type and white space
- 11-12 point font, larger for headings
- keep margins to approximately one inch
- get professional help with typing, formatting, printing if needed
- use common, easy to read font types
- CAPITALIZE, **bold**, underline, or use shadings to emphasize headings, create variety and help with organization

Before you send your resumé or CV, have you checked for the following?

◼ Overall Appearance
Does the appearance of your resumé or CV look professional?
Is the layout balanced and appealing?
Have you included clear, consistent headings?

◼ Length/Conciseness
How long is your resumé or CV?
Where can you decrease verbiage if necessary?

◼ Relevance
Have you highlighted your most relevant qualifications for your potential program of study?
Is the personal information you have included relevant to the potential program of study?

◼ Clarity
Does your resumé or CV give specific examples that demonstrate your qualifications?
Is the language appropriate for the program you are applying to?
Are all abbreviations spelled out?

◼ Completeness
Has all important information been included?
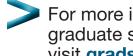Spelling, punctuation and grammar have been checked and reviewed by someone else?

◼ Accomplishments
Does your resumé or CV make you stand out as an exceptional candidate?
Have you included achievements, awards, recognitions and scope of responsibilities?
Does your resumé or CV emphasize how you would benefit your potential program of study?

> For more information about graduate studies in Alberta, visit **gradstudies.alberta.ca**