

The Difference Between a Resume and an Academic CV

There is often confusion among postdocs regarding the distinction between a resume and a curriculum vitae (CV). This is understandable because there are no universally accepted definitions or standards, plus the terms are used differently by different individuals and organizations, and in different countries.

More often than not, the term CV is used in Europe and Australasia – but the content is very similar to what we call a resume in the U.S.

The Resume

A resume is generally required for “industry” (i.e., non-university) positions. It is a 1-2 page document that highlights your Education, Work/Research Experience, and Relevant Skills. Additional components may include community service and leadership activities. Brevity is preferred (or required) simply due to the sheer number of applications reviewed by recruiters/hiring managers. Publications, presentations, professional development, grant writing, and teaching experience can be made available upon request - often on such online sites as LinkedIn, Research Gate, PubMed, Google Scholars, or your own professional website.

The CV

In the United States, CVs (or what we prefer to call **Academic CVs**, to avoid confusion) tend to be required for positions in academia (colleges and universities), as well as research and scientific facilities. This may include CVs submitted for application to graduate and some professional programs. The CV contains a summary of your educational and academic experience as well as some or all of the following: teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, professional development, professional credentials, grants, patents, awards, honors, and professional affiliations.

It is typical for an experienced university professor, administrator, or researcher to have a 5, 10, or even 20 page CV since those positions typically require research, publications, presentations, participation in professional organizations, grant writing, etc.

Whether you create and submit a Resume or an Academic CV will be a function of the following:

- (1) What you’ve done and know that merits inclusion
- (2) The position to which you’re applying
- (3) Any instructions provided by the committee or hiring manager regarding the resume/CV

As with all documents submitted in a job application, neatness, organization, and clarity of expression are essential. Documents should be tailored to each position, and focus on those skills and experiences most relevant to the position to which you are applying.

Individual career coaching, job search and interviewing assistance is available to all UNC postdocs through the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs