Hand-out Curriculum Vitae

The Curriculum Vitae (CV) is still the most important document in many job applications. Based on the first impression you make with your CV, within about one minute it is determined whether you end up on the 'yes' or 'no' pile. Subsequently, your CV will be scrutinised and used in preparation for the job interview. How can you make a positive impression with your CV? Make sure your CV is a personal, authentic document which makes recruiters curious about you. Critically review and customise your CV before each job interview.

Before you start

Before you start writing your CV it is important to thoroughly analyse the vacancy text and the organisation. Always check if the information you give is relevant to the reader. Search for words that are relevant to the vacancy and include these *keywords* in your CV. It is important that you adapt your CV to the position you are applying for, so delete, clarify or move relevant skills or experience. Make sure that the template of your CV is also in line with the organisation in question. It may help to make one CV that contains all your experience and then adapt it for each vacancy. Try to limit the size of your CV to a maximum of two A4. For scientific positions, this may be a bit longer, as it is customary to include your publications and presentations at conferences.

The basic elements of a CV

1. Headline

At the top of the first page you put 'Curriculum Vitae', just your name or a combination of both.

2. Photo

A photo is not mandatory in the Netherlands, but it does give the CV a lot more personality. If you are applying outside of the Netherlands, check what is customary there. If you decide to include a photo on your CV, make sure it is a professional one in which:
- ✓ You look friendly
- ✓ You are looking straight into the camera
- ✓ The photo is sharp
- ✓ The photo is taken at close range (head - shoulders)
- ✓ The photo has a neutral or calm background
- ✓ The photo is suitable to the position and to the way in which the organisation and its employees present themselves online
- ✕ Research has shown that bare arms or shoulders make an unprofessional impression

Do you not have a professional photo yet? Usually a photographer is present at the Radboud Career Day. Of course, you could also take a picture by using your mobile phone.

3. Personal details

Include the following items in your personal details:
- First and last name – unless they are in your heading
- Address

- Telephone – ensure neutral voicemail text
- Email – as professional as possible, not your student address
- *Optional*: Date of birth
- *Optional*: Nationality – only if relevant
- *Optional*: Driving licence – only if relevant
- *Optional*: personalised link to your LinkedIn profile.

4. Personal profile

This is an important part of your CV and probably the most difficult as well. It is a free text area that can help draw the reader's attention to important parts of your CV, your personality and your interests. Indicate clearly in about 5 sentences or bullet points what you have to offer an employer and what your added value for the company is. You can think of your ambitions, qualities, special skills, mentality, etc. It is not a compulsory part, so think carefully about a strong text. Is it too hard for you? You can leave it out.

5. Education

State the period of study, the name of your study program and the educational institution. Make sure the structure is unambiguous so that the reader can quickly 'scan' your CV. Put your study programmes in anti-chronological order, so the most recent one is at the top. If you t (optional) courses / minors / internships / thesis-projects that fit well with the vacancy, add them below the study program in bullets.

Example:
2017 - 2020   **Bachelor Communication Science**, Radboud University Nijmegen
- Bachelor thesis: '………………………………….'. Grade: 8.
- Relevant electives: X, Y and Z.

6. Work experience

Use the same layout as for education. Make sure that what you have done in terms of content always stands out the most. Describe in max. 3 sentences or bullets what work you have done or what results you have achieved. You could make a distinction between *relevant/study-related work experience* and *other work experience* (side jobs), so that the most relevant work for the vacancy is at the top of each heading. You can indicate that you can provide references on request by putting '(references on request)' in brackets after 'work experience'. Make sure that you can approach supervisors from your study/traineeship/work if requested.

Example:
2017 - present **Student assistant Career Service,** Radboud University Nijmegen
- Organisation of Online Career Day for 500 students
- Creating content for social media, newsletter and website

7. Extracurricular activities / internships / volunteer work

You can use one or more headings depending on your experience. If you have more than three experiences under one heading, see if splitting them up helps to highlight your relevant experience. In any case, each section must have the same layout as work experience and education. Depending on how well they fit within the vacancy, you can choose to place them higher (more relevant) or lower (less relevant) on your CV.

Present your committee work clearly. If you have done many committees, you could make one main heading with the name of the study or student association and add the various parts as bullets underneath it, or you could distinguish your board work form your committee work.

Example:
2020 - present **Chair**, Study association Nijmegen
- Working together in a team
- Managing five committees and training new board members
- Organising the Nijmegen Career Event (150 visitors)

8. Language skills

Determine the importance of the languages. Are they relevant for this job? Then choose for a long description (divided into: reading, listening, speaking, writing, CEFR level), a shorter description or no description at all (if irrelevant for the position).

Example short description:
Dutch (native), English (Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency), German and French (basic knowledge)

Example long description:

Level CEFR	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Dutch	C2	C2	C2	C2
English	C1	C1	B2	B2
German	B2	C1	B2	B1

8. Computer knowledge

Determine which skills are of added value for the position.

Example:
Python, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Office and SPSS.

9. Interests

Think carefully about what you are trying to get across by stating your interests. Which qualities do you want to emphasise? These are interesting to mention when they fit the vacancy and/or represent a passion. Think about sports, travelling and music. If you are applying for a managerial position, for example, you can show your leadership by pointing out you are the captain of your hockey team. By briefly explaining your interests, people get a better idea of who you are as a person and how you live your life.

Example:
Music (piano and violin), soccer (captain and referee) and travelling (backpacking through Australia)

10. Layout: first impressions of your CV

Before your CV is read, the recruiter sees the formatting of your CV. Research with eye tracking has shown that recruiters scan a CV quickly (anywhere from 10 seconds to 2 minutes). If the structure is chaotic, the recruiter spends a relatively large amount of time on irrelevant details and searching. By making your CV look neat, you give the recruiter a 'tour' of your CV

- **Is important information being overlooked in a list?** See if you can break down certain headings and add headings. As a (former) student, we recommend you to mention your education first in your CV and then your work experience later. As soon as your work experience starts to 'outweigh' your education you can consider turning this around.
- **Make sure that your CV is easy to scan**. Use the checklist to find all of our tips.
- **You can use a template for your CV**, or a handy tool such as [Canva](). On websites like Pinterest or via Google you can look for examples of CVs as well. You could also think of a video CV or an online CV (in the form of a website). Choose something that suits you! Original CVs are extra notable, but keep in mind that such a creative CV is not appreciated by everyone. This depends on the industry, the type of company, and the preferences of the recruiter. You can inquire about the preferences by calling the company and ask them what kind of CV they prefer (e.g. more traditional or more creative).

Don'ts

× Mention lies, they always come to light eventually.
× Errors in your contact details. This would make a company unable to reach you. For example, do not use your student address if you are about to graduate. Also check your voicemail text.
× "Funny" or unprofessional email address, such as xx_roosje@hotmail.com.
× Send your CV in an empty mail. Provide a salutation, mention that you have enclosed your CV and letter and close the email neatly.
× Irrelevant (private) information: social service number, bank account number, religious and political preferences, etc.
× Cram as much as possible on your CV. Make sure your CV is 1 up to 2 pages long. For academic jobs, it's normal that CV's are longer then 1-2 pages, because you're also adding some science-related information Do you only have 1 page? Do not force yourself to come up with multiple pages.

CV-Check

Do you have trouble with the preparation of your CV? Or do you already have a CV, and would you like somebody to give you feedback? Make an appointment with the Career Officer or hand in your CV in Brightspace.