

## Getting your CV into shape

## The Golden Rule

You have only a few minutes to impress,  
so ...

Make sure your major selling points are  
VERY clearly visible.

## The basics

- Different kinds of academic job:
  - Temporary teaching fellowships
  - Temporary/permanent lectureships (teaching and research)
  - Temporary research fellowships
- Tailor your CV (a bit) to the particular job.

## What is the selection panel looking for in a CV?

Formally:

- Pay close attention to the formal job description or further particulars.
  - Does it require research and teaching, or just one?
  - Does it require administration?
  - Does it require teaching in specific areas or in specific modules, and/or research in a specific area/on a specific project?

Informally:

- Whatever the job, most employers will want someone who:
  - looks like they are or have the potential to be high-flyers;
  - will be a congenial and co-operative colleague.

## General dos and don'ts

- You have a VERY limited amount of time to make an impression! So:
  - Have clear headings
  - Don't include irrelevant information
  - Keep it brief
  - Avoid lengthy narratives; use headed sections and bullet points where possible.

## What info is 'irrelevant'?

- GCSE and A level results
- Hobbies and other personal information
- What you look like (no pictures!)
- Detailed information about your UG career
- Non-academic employment (unless to explain holes in academic career, or especially relevant, e.g. school teaching)

## The CV

- Four basic headings:
  - Education/employment, teaching, research, administration
  - Tailor to the particular job, but still cover all the areas.
- Two issues:
  - **1. Experience:** What experience should I aim to acquire while doing my PhD?
  - **2. Presentation:** How should I present that experience on my CV?

## Education/employment

### EDUCATION

- Start at UG level, not earlier
- Don't list UG modules, but listing Masters modules is fine.
- Give your PhD title and name of supervisor; also names of examiners if already done.
- Be VERY clear about the status of your PhD. If not finished, give realistic completion date. If examined and referred, say when and how long for.

## Teaching: experience

- GET SOME!
- Breadth: Try not to teach the same modules/topics all the time.
- Kinds of experience:
  - Seminar/tutorial teaching
  - Different years of study
  - Lecturing
  - Assessment
  - Module organisation/curriculum design
  - Innovation/ideas: try out different things (e.g. different ways of running seminars)
  - Get feedback (student evaluations, peer observation)

## Teaching: The CV

- Be specific:
  - Areas and topics you've taught
  - Areas/modules you *can* teach
  - Types of teaching and assessment done
  - Any module organisation, curriculum design, etc.
  - Very brief summary of teaching evaluations?

## Research: experience

- Publications
- Presentations
- Conference or workshop organisation
- Other activity (e.g. refereeing)

### Remember:

- You will probably be expected to show research potential even for teaching-only positions
- The panel will probably shortlist just on the basis of your CV: they will probably NOT read any of your work at this stage, nor (probably) see references.

## Research: The CV

- Publications
    - Include book reviews, writing for non-specialist magazines, etc.
    - Papers that have been submitted but not definitely accepted should be listed as 'submitted', NOT 'forthcoming'!
  - Presentations
  - Make sure anything really good (e.g. good journal paper) comes FIRST and is VERY visible! Don't bury it amongst presentations etc.
  - Conference organisation and other activities
  - Brief summary of PhD
  - Brief summary of research plans/papers in preparation.
- Keep these summaries short – say ½ page for PhD and the same for plans. (Maybe more for research fellowships.) Keep fairly accessible.

## Administration: experience

- Try and get some!
  - Organise a conference and apply for funding for it
  - Teaching-related admin counts, e.g. quality assurance (writing reports on module evaluations, etc.)
  - Volunteer for something like the BPPA committee
  - Volunteer to help out in your Department! E.g. offer to help organise someone's conference, or talk to prospective students on open days, or ...

## Administration: The CV

- Put down anything relevant.
- Employers aren't expecting a lot of admin experience for a beginning-of-career position.

But they want evidence that you understand that this is a part of the job (if it is) and that you are a willing colleague who will not resent being asked to do admin and/or do it badly.

## Referees

- Normally two (or three) asked for.
- A referee without an obvious vested interest in your success counts more!
- Tailor choice of referees to the job.
- Research referees:
  - Try to get someone who isn't your supervisor interested in your research. (External examiner?)
- Teaching referee:
  - Try to get one! E.g. ask your HoD or Director of UG Studies to peer-observe you; make sure they know about good student evaluations; etc.

## The covering letter

- Have one, but make it SHORT! Never run onto a second page.
- Use it SOLELY for the purpose of saying why you would be great for THIS PARTICULAR job.
- Only repeat parts of your CV that are especially relevant (they will read your CV anyway).
- DO NOT say anything important that isn't already in your CV.
- Pay close attention to the job description – particularly for teaching jobs. E.g. if they want someone to teach philosophy of mind, and you have no teaching experience in this area, say that you are willing and able to teach it and say something about WHY you are able to.
- If there are periods of time you are DEFINITELY unavailable for interview, make this very clear.

## Should I include anything else?

- Only with very good reason! Perhaps:
  - Short (no more than a page) summary of one or two sets of student evaluations (or a report on the evaluations if that's what your dept. requires you to do).
  - Examiners' report on your PhD thesis, if it's good!
- Don't include references (this is pretty standard in the US but not in the UK).
- Don't include a writing sample unless asked to do so.