

The CV:

Presenting yourself professionally on paper

What is a CV and is it any different than a resume?

You are probably familiar with a resume, but may or may not have heard the term “CV.” A CV, or *curriculum vitae*, is a written profile of your professional qualifications. It can vary in length from one to several pages, depending upon the variety and number of your experiences. (A resume, in contrast, is a 1-2 page overview of your job experiences.) A CV is appropriate for the health care professional because potential employers typically do not receive a large number of applications (i.e. < 20) for each position. In other fields, an employer may receive hundreds of applications for one position and so will desire brevity. Although they are actually different, the terms CV and resume are used interchangeably by many people.

How should you organize your CV?

The top of every CV should contain **contact information**. Your name is typically centered, and may be set in larger and/or boldface type to attract attention. Remember to:

- Place your complete name, address and telephone number at the top of the page. You may also want to include an e-mail address. Make sure that the telephone number is the number at which you would like to be contacted. If you don't want your current employer to know you're looking for another job, then do not put your current job phone number down as the contact number.
- Think carefully before including a second “permanent” address. This can be confusing to employers who will not know where to contact you.

After the **contact information**, you should strongly consider the following headings:

Education

- Start with your most recent educational experience first (this is called reverse chronological order).
- For each degree you have obtained, spell out the full name of the degree (i.e. “Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy” “Doctor of Pharmacy”) and the full name of the university. Then note the year of graduation. If you are currently working on a degree, put the word “candidate” after the name of the degree, spell out the full name of the university, and note the expected year of graduation.
- If you have no degree from your pre-pharmacy coursework, then it is acceptable to use the words “Pre-pharmacy studies.”
- Residency, fellowship, and certificate information should be included under the “education” heading.
- Do not include information from/about high school.

Specialized Training/Certification

- This includes CPR, ACLS, BCPS, immunizations, emergency contraception—any similar professional certification you have earned.
- Use the full certification name and note the year the certification was earned. You can include a short description of the certification if you feel it is not self-explanatory.
- Understand that certification is not the same as a certificate. If you are certified in some area, it means you have received specialized training in a particular skill and that you have shown you

can perform that skill at a pre-specified level. A certificate involves more coursework and qualifies you to work in a particular area – not to perform a specific skill.

Experience

- Use the heading “Professional Experience” if you have any pharmacy or other professional health care experience.
- Include related jobs, rotations, and volunteer experience.
- Start with your most recent experience first (reverse chronological order).
- Information to include:
 - ✓ Time interval employed (list start and stop month/year; use year only if you held the job for more than a year)
 - ✓ Position title
 - ✓ Name and location of employer
 - ✓ Name and contact number of a supervisor
- Non-pharmacy or non-professional experiences can go under the category of “Other Related Experience.” Be sure to describe only transferable skills (i.e. skills you gained at other non-pharmacy jobs that would enhance your value to a pharmacy employer. Any jobs involving teaching, triage, or interaction with members of the public may involve skills transferable to the pharmacy profession. It all depends upon how you present the skills on paper).
- A short description/list of projects you completed or notable activities performed while on the job is a nice touch; it is probably not necessary to list your standard job duties unless they are out-of-the-ordinary.
- Rotations are good to list when you don’t have much else to place on the CV. If you’re more than a couple of years out from school, drop the rotation information unless skills that you learned at a particular rotation may play a direct role in the job you are applying for. Include the same information as for a job; and avoid site-specific rotation descriptions (e.g., instead of “white medicine,” use the easy-to-understand “adult internal medicine”). Spell out names and do not use abbreviations (for example, heme/onc is wrong, Hematology/Oncology is correct—also be sure to spell out terms like Medicine Service, and University Hospital and Medical Center).
- If you have experience teaching courses that you want to highlight, you may include “Teaching Experience” as a third experience heading.

Presentations

- Include the presentation title, name of group presented to, and year. The location of the meeting (city and state) is optional.
- If you have several presentations, you can separate out poster presentations, invited oral presentations, inservices, class lectures—whatever works.
- Don’t list contact names for the presentation, but have a copy of all handouts from the presentations ready to present during an interview.

Publications

- Don’t include site-specific newsletter publications—these should be listed with job or rotation as projects.
- If you have more than four, divide them into peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed.

- Cite the published material using the official citation method noted in the “Uniform Requirements for References in Manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journals,” *except* list all authors (not just the first three).

Related Awards and Activities

- For awards, list title and year granted. You may describe the award briefly if you think it will not be self-explanatory.
- For Dean’s List, cite the quarter(s) and year(s).
- For committee memberships (general and ad hoc), list committee name and time spent in committee.
- List any association offices held.

Professional Affiliations

- List all professional associations of which you are currently a member. Spell out the full name of the associations—do not use abbreviations.

Licensure

- List name of state and type of license only.

What things should you avoid putting on your CV?

Omit items that have nothing to do with your profession. Besides the fact that the information is irrelevant, there are two other important considerations. First, listing certain kinds of personal information can enable unscrupulous people to gain enough information about you to commit fraud in your name. Second, potential employers typically don’t WANT to know anything that could put them at risk of a discrimination suit later on. Equal opportunity employment clauses state that some of the items listed below could provide a basis for discrimination, so employers would not want to see this type of information. Include only information that is pertinent to the professional nature of the position for which you are applying.

Leave all these things off your CV:

- ✓ Social security number
- ✓ Marital status
- ✓ Description of health
- ✓ Citizenship
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Pharmacist or intern license number
- ✓ Irrelevant awards, publications, scholarships, associations, and memberships
- ✓ Recreational activities or hobbies
- ✓ Personal references
- ✓ Travel history
- ✓ Previous pay rates
- ✓ Reasons for leaving previous jobs
- ✓ Components of your name which you really never use (i.e. middle names)
- ✓ The words “References available upon request.”

What do employers look for on CVs?

While each employer will have an ideal candidate in mind, the following are traits that most employers will look for and/or be cautious of when reviewing a CV:

Things employers look for:

- ✓ Signs of achievements
- ✓ Patterns of stability and career direction
- ✓ Specifics in job descriptions
- ✓ Willingness to work hard
- ✓ Completeness of resume
- ✓ Neatness/Professional presentation (including grammar and spelling)

Things that can worry employers:

- ✓ Pattern of job hopping
- ✓ Lengthy descriptions of education
- ✓ Obvious gaps in background
- ✓ Irrelevant personal information
- ✓ Overabundance of qualifiers, or statements about achievements that are inconsistent with the job description.
- ✓ Typos and grammatical errors

What is considered standard for formatting and layout?

CVs and resumes can be presented in a variety of ways. This is an opportunity for you to be creative. However, the following standards should be followed:

Ensure that your CV is neat and visually appealing:

- ✓ Choose high quality paper in white or off-white
- ✓ Have the final version professionally reproduced in a single-sided format
- ✓ Use a laser printer—handwriting, typing and dot matrix printing look unprofessional

Font case and size:

- ✓ Times New Roman is recommended
- ✓ 12 point font size will be the easiest to read; do not use smaller than 10 point font
- ✓ Do not use more than two fonts on your resume
- ✓ Use bullets to aid organization, but be careful not to overuse them. Too many bullets lead to a cluttered appearance

Be consistent. Choose a pattern of spacing, an order of information presentation or a format of highlighting that is standard throughout the document. This will avoid a “patched” appearance.

What about grammar?

The standard grammar for a CV differs somewhat from everyday professional writing. Some general points of difference are listed below:

- ✓ Use past tense, even for descriptions of currently held positions, to promote consistency.
- ✓ Do not use personal pronouns
- ✓ For the most part, use short, simple phrases that begin with action verbs.

Check for grammar. Misspellings, poorly constructed sentences, and inappropriate use of punctuation communicate negative impressions about a candidate. **Do not rely on the computer grammar check or spell check.**

Review for content, clarity and mechanics. You should have at least two people review your CV—one for content, and one for writing mechanics and layout. You should make sure that the person reviewing each area has the appropriate skills to make an accurate determination of any problems, and is honest enough to alert you to them. For example, it would be best to have a colleague, supervisor, or other pharmacist review for content, and someone you know as a strong writer to review for mechanics. Seriously consider the advice given by your reviewers. Often, another person can catch problems you wouldn't see because of lack of experience at writing CVs.

Proofread, proofread, proofread. Be sure to catch all spelling errors, grammatical weaknesses, unusual punctuation, and inconsistent capitalization. Proofread it numerous times, put it down for a week, then proofread it again to catch any hidden mistakes.

What if your CV will be scanned?

Many large companies are now scanning CVs. If you think your CV may be scanned, it would be in your interest to develop a “scan friendly” CV. Computers scan CVs using optical character recognition (OCR) software. The CVs are then stored in applicant tracking system databases. When a job vacancy occurs, the employer can do a database search for qualified candidates.

There are some things to keep in mind when developing a scannable CV. Database searches of scannable CVs often search for industry-jargon keywords outlining specific skills. Job descriptions from pharmacy job ads are a good source of key words and skills. Remember that your skills are *things*, so use nouns to describe them. Formatting and layout should be simple and non-decorative, and layout should be linear.

- ✓ Simple, sans-serif typefaces should be used. Courier and Helvetica are most easily scanned by computers.
- ✓ Use 10 to 14 point font size
- ✓ Use bold only if letters do not touch
- ✓ Use traditional resume formats such as those outlined above
- ✓ Use white space to separate sections (i.e. double space)
- ✓ Avoid graphics, parentheses, brackets, shading, and underlining

Closing thoughts:

Sell yourself. Create a good first impression by highlighting skills and abilities appropriate to the position. List your qualifications in order of relevance, from most to least.

Don't sell yourself short. This is by far the biggest mistake of all CVs. Your experiences are worthy for review by hiring managers. Treat your resume as an advertisement for you. Be sure to thoroughly "sell" yourself by highlighting all of your strengths. If you've got a valuable asset that doesn't seem to fit into any existing components of your CV, list it as its own segment or highlight it in the cover letter.

JOHN P. STUDENT

1000 NE 9th St., Seattle, WA 98105 ♦ (206) 123-4567 ♦ johnstud@u.washington.edu

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy (candidate), University of Washington, 1997.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pharmacy Intern (September 1994-present) Danish Hospital, Seattle, WA.

Preceptor: Dave Public, 206-327-9999

♦ Aseptically prepared sterile intravenous products. Distributed medicines in both centralized and decentralized settings. Prepared and delivered two inservices to pharmacy staff and one inservice to nursing staff.

Pharmacy Extern (August 1996-October 1996) Drugs R Us, Seattle, WA. Preceptor: John Q. Public, 206-789-7777

♦ Filled prescriptions and third-party insurance forms. Performed extensive OTC counseling. Prepared and delivered talk to pharmacy staff.

Pharmacy Extern, Adult General Medicine rotation (July 1996-August 1996) University Hospital and Medical Center, Seattle, WA. Preceptor: Andrew Q. Public, 206-548-9999

♦ Monitored drug therapy of 8-10 patients per week; conducted initial patient interviews, analyzed drug therapy while patient was on service, counseled patients about medications when discharged.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Pharmacy Assistant, Level B (September 1992-June 1994) Joe's Pharmacy, Bellingham, WA.

♦ Ordered and checked in stock. Operated cash register.

Volunteer (June 1991-August 1992) General Hospital, Bellingham, WA.

♦ Delivered medications to floor. Transported patients.

Waiter (June 1990-August 1992) Ralph's Restaurant, Bellingham, WA.

♦ Developed ability to multitask and troubleshoot difficult situations.

PRESENTATIONS

“Should asthmatics be hootin’ for zileuton? The place in therapy of the new leukotriene inhibitors.”

Presented to pharmacy staff, Danish Medical Center, Seattle, Washington; January 1997.

“Dopamine and Dobutamine: Similarities, Differences, and Appropriate Therapeutic Use.”

Presented to ICU nursing staff, Danish Medical Center, Seattle, Washington; November, 1996.

“New products for *Helicobacter pylori*.”

Presented to pharmacy staff, Danish Medical Center, Seattle, Washington; March, 1996.

“What’s new in antibiotics for 1996.”

Presented to staff pharmacists, Drugs R Us, Seattle, Washington; September, 1996.

AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

1994-1996 Dean's List, School of Pharmacy, University of Washington

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American College of Clinical Pharmacy

American Society of Hospital Pharmacy

Washington State Society of Health System Pharmacists

LICENSURE

Washington State Pharmacy Intern

Josephine P. Student

422 NE 70th St.
Seattle, Washington 98000
(206) 444-4444

Education

Doctor of Pharmacy (candidate), University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, June 1997.

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. Completed pre-pharmacy requirements 1992-1994.

Associate of Arts and Sciences, Northwest Community College, Seattle, Washington, June, 1992.

Professional Experience

Finnish Medical Center *Pharmacy Intern* (October 1994-present) Seattle, Washington.
Supervisor: Joe Supervisor (206) 555-5555

- Prepared IVs and TPNs
- Filled carts for floors
- Restocked code box
- Transcribed phone orders for medications
- Filled prescriptions for emergency room patients
- Inventoried narcotics regularly

Opticare Home Health Care Company *Pharmacy Extern* (April 1997) Seattle, Washington.
Preceptor: Amelia Preceptor (206) 321-9876

- Read articles and presented them to preceptor
- Researched preceptor questions
- Performed drug regimen reviews, therapeutic drug monitoring, and drug interaction work-ups
- Assisted preceptor in reviewing and evaluating three home medical supply companies to establish the most cost-effective contract
- Participated in daily rounds with pharmacists

Mountainview Medical Center *Pharmacy practicum student, general medicine service*
(January - March 1996) Seattle, Washington. Preceptors: Louise Preceptor, Joe Preceptor
(206) 666-6666

- Attended medical working rounds on a daily basis
- Responsible for the pharmaceutical care of no less than five patients at any time
- Performed pharmacist admission interviews and discharge counseling. Presented a seminar entitled "Choice of pain medications in patients with acute pancreatitis" to pharmacy staff
- Answered questions about general and patient-specific drug therapy
- Wrote formal written answer to the drug information question "What is the efficacy of ACE inhibitors in nephrotic syndrome?"

John's Community Pharmacy *Pharmacy practicum student, community pharmacy*
(September - December 1996) Seattle, Washington. Preceptor: John Preceptor (206) 333-3333

- Filled prescriptions
- Transcribed phone orders from physicians
- Ordered stock
- Compounded unusual drug therapy items
- Interviewed patients about medication use
- Counseled patients with new prescriptions
- Assisted preceptor set up area in the store devoted to diabetes care, researched items to be stocked, wrote information sheets about oral hypoglycemics
- Presented information on diabetes care service to three physicians in an adjoining clinic
- Assisted preceptor in setting up a monitoring service agreement between diabetic patients and their physicians.

Other Relevant Experience

Asthma Camp, Volunteer (June 1996) Port Somewhere Camp, Olympic Peninsula, Washington. Contact: Julia V Coordinator, (360) 222-2222

- Assisted in medication administration to children ages five through twelve, whose asthmatic disease prevents them from attending other summer camps
- Remained overnight in cabins with children to assist with emergencies
- Participated in inhaler and spacer use technique education programs during the week-long camp

Awards/Activities

Burroughs-Wellcome Scholarship, 1995
Member, Lambda Kappa Sigma, 1994-present
Dean's List, 1995

Professional Affiliations

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
American Students of Pharmacy/American Pharmaceutical Association
Washington State Pharmaceutical Association