Academic CV

The purpose of this document is not to tell you how to write an academic CV, as there are loads of resources out there to help you with that. For example, the University of Toronto has produced a [comprehensive guide](#) to creating a student CV.

Instead, the point of this document is to help you sort out some of the nuances of interdisciplinary CVs in health research, understand expectations for an early career CV, and point you to some of the McMaster specific CV resources.

First, here are a few of my favourite CV tip resources:

- The Professor Is In – [Dr. Karen's rules of the academic CV](#) (There's some good stuff in the comments, too)
- The Guardian – [Academic CV: 10 Mistakes](#)
- Nature Blogs – [38 Tips on writing an academic CV](#)

Within these documents you have likely noticed significant variation in advice about formatting, emphasis, order etc. That's part of the complexity of the academic CV. There is no one right way to do it! Sometimes the variation is disciplinary. Sometimes it's about career-stage. Sometimes it's about the purpose that you are using your CV for. I think despite the variation there are a few consistent messages:

- Keep the formatting consistent, clear, and pretty plain. This goes for reference formatting, alignment, font, capitalization etc.

- Your CV should be a comprehensive, but completely honest, account of your accomplishments. Sometimes you may need to produce a shorter, more focused CV, but it's good to keep track of *everything*.

- There are important genre rules about what goes in what category, and what categories should be included on your CV. McMaster has codified these rules for faculty and produced a [very long guidance document](#) about the McMaster CV. I highly recommend that you follow these guidelines. You may not have something to list under every category, but this gives a good sense of what to list and what not to list.

Here are some common mistakes that I see in student CVs:

- Reference formatting is not consistent. Pick one style (e.g. APA, MLA, Vancouver) and list all your publications, presentations, grants etc. as though you were referencing them in a paper. No more vague and inconsistent references like this, please!

  2017   "When do fish sleep". Smith, A., Bridget Jones, Calliope Brown. FHS Research Day. 02/03/2017. McMaster University. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

- Using the same document for CV and Resume. A resume is to help you get a job. It details your work experience and accomplishments and is tailored to the position you are applying to. A CV might help you get an academic job, but it's purpose is to offer a comprehensive overview of all your academic accomplishments. Early in your career you might list research assistant work, teaching assistant work, but please don't list other non-academic jobs. You may have won many awards in high school, but these should probably fall off your CV after your undergraduate degree.

- Exaggeration or inconsistencies which favour the student. Consider your CV a legal document. Don't exaggerate research positions (e.g. Research Assistant and Research Associate are very different jobs). If a paper was rejected, remove it from your CV. If your conference presentation was a poster, indicate that. Your guest lecture in someone's class is not an invited talk, it's a teaching contribution. Reviewers (whether they are grant reviewers, potential supervisors, potential employers) see a lot of CVs and are pretty good at sniffing out things that seem fishy. If they find something that seems wrong, they might view the rest of your application with suspicion.

- Leaving out relevant academic contributions. On the opposite side of CV inflation, some students don't know just what they can list. Some common things that get left off:
    - Teaching contributions to someone else's course (e.g. a guest lecture)
    - Presentations at local conferences or small local meetings
    - Knowledge Translation efforts, like blog posts or pod casts about your research.