

How to Write a Suitable CV for Universities Step by Step

1. Understand the Purpose of a University CV

A curriculum vitae (CV) for university applications differs from a job résumé.

- It should **demonstrate your academic achievements, research interests, technical competencies, and motivation for higher studies.**
- It is not only a list of experiences but also a **narrative of your academic journey** that aligns with the program you are applying for.

2. Determine the Appropriate Length and Structure

- **Undergraduate or Taught Master's programs** → 1 page (maximum 2).
- **Research Master's, PhD, or Scholarships** → 2–4 pages.
- Use a clear font (Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, 10–12pt).
- Maintain consistent margins and spacing.
- Avoid unnecessary graphics or colors (universities value clarity over design).

3. Essential Sections of a University CV

The following sections should generally be included:

a) Header / Personal Information

- Full name (bold, slightly larger font).
- Address (city and country are sufficient).
- Email (professional, not casual).
- Phone number.
- Academic profile links (LinkedIn, ORCID, GitHub, Google Scholar, personal website).

b) Academic Profile / Research Interests (2–4 sentences)

- A concise statement outlining your **field of interest, goals, and strengths.**
- Example (Master's applicant):
"Prospective MSc student in Data Science with a strong background in applied statistics and machine learning. Particularly interested in natural language processing and ethical AI applications. Seeking to contribute research that bridges computational methods with social impact."

c) Education

- List in reverse chronological order.
- Include:
 - Degree title (e.g., *Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering*).
 - Institution and location.
 - Dates attended.
 - GPA, class rank, or honors (if strong).
 - Thesis/dissertation title with supervisor's name (if applicable).
 - Selected coursework (3–6 modules relevant to your application).

d) Research and Project Experience

- Highlight research, capstone projects, labs, or independent studies.
- Use **formal bullet points**: each should begin with an action verb and end with an academic or measurable outcome.
- Example:
 - “Conducted a final-year project on renewable energy storage; designed a lithium-ion battery optimization model under the supervision of Dr. X, achieving a 12% efficiency improvement.”

e) Work or Internship Experience (if relevant)

- Only include roles that demonstrate skills applicable to your studies.
- Stress technical responsibilities, problem-solving, teamwork, or leadership.

f) Publications, Presentations, and Posters (if any)

- Follow a consistent citation style (APA, MLA, IEEE).
- Example:
 - Doe, J. (2024). *Neural Networks for Image Recognition*. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)*.

g) Awards and Scholarships

- Academic awards, scholarships, competition prizes.
- State awarding body, year, and short context.

h) Skills

- Divide into categories:
 - *Programming/Software Tools* (e.g., Python, MATLAB, AutoCAD).
 - *Research Methods* (e.g., statistical analysis, survey design).
 - *Laboratory Techniques* (e.g., chromatography, microscopy).
 - *Languages* (state proficiency: native, fluent, intermediate).

i) Extracurricular Activities & Volunteering

- Only include activities demonstrating leadership, teamwork, or community engagement.

j) References

- Provide 2–3 referees (academic supervisors, professors).
 - Example format:
 - *Dr. Jane Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science, XYZ University, Email: jane.smith@xyz.edu*
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4. Writing Style and Formality

- Use **third person without personal pronouns** (“Conducted research on...” not “I conducted research...”).
 - Use **academic verbs**: *conducted, developed, analyzed, investigated, presented, published, supervised*.
 - Maintain a professional and respectful tone throughout.
 - Be factual; avoid exaggeration or subjective claims.
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5. Tailoring the CV

- Align your CV with the **program requirements** stated on the university’s website.
 - For research programs, emphasize **research experience and methods**.
 - For professional/applied programs, emphasize **practical projects, internships, and technical skills**.
 - Mirror the terminology used in the program description (e.g., if they mention “*sustainable engineering*”, highlight related coursework or projects).
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6. Final Presentation

- Save the file as **PDF**.
- Naming convention: *Firstname_Lastname_CV_University_Application.pdf*.
- Proofread carefully for grammar and formatting consistency.