

Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics

**Sixteen Tips for Preparing an Effective CV**

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1. **Remember your CV represents you.** It will make a first impression on your behalf. If it has typographical errors, if it is disorganized, if there are grammar mistakes, those problems will be part of the readers' impression of you.
2. **Choose a layout that is clear and uncluttered and print your CV in 12-point font.** The people reading your CV are likely to be senior to you. They may have reached a stage in their reading lives where 10-point font is annoying and 9-point font is a downright insult.
3. **Remember that it would be a rare occasion for your CV to be read in isolation.** If you are submitting it for an advertised position, then it's likely the person(s) reading it will also be reading several others – possibly even hundreds of others. In order to be memorable, yours must be perfect in form and outstanding in content.
4. **Consider including a section entitled “Papers and Presentations”** where you list accomplishments such as your original test development project, your curriculum design, and your ALR project. Soon you can add your conference presentations and your publications to this section and then change its name accordingly.
5. **Use a system of parallel headings and subheadings** that make it readily apparent how your experiences relate to one another and to your objective. Make it easy for a potential employer to understand exactly what you did, when, for what organization, and for how long.
6. **Make sure the components of your CV are unified and clear.** Don't let information get separated from the headings it supports. It is better to use more pages than to split information across pages.
7. **Be sure to maintain syntactic parallelism in your paragraphs or bullets.** If you are using verb phrases in the past tense, for instance, don't switch to full sentences with subjects, and vice versa.
8. **Include a section about your skills,** including your language proficiencies, photographic experience, editing skills, special kinds of managerial expertise, etc. Don't exaggerate, but do inform potential employers about the things you can do that would set you apart from the 200 other applicants for the same job.
9. **Consider including a section for hobbies, interests and travel,** especially if you are applying for a job in another country. Any information that depicts you as a healthy, well-rounded individual who could adjust easily and independently to a new culture may reassure a potential employer. Also keep in mind that some jobs include extra- curricular activities and supervising student clubs, so your interest in drama or your prior experience as the editor of a student newspaper may be highly relevant.

10. **Include a separate section for honors and awards** (e.g., Dean's List, scholarships, special achievements, etc.), if you have received some. If you are a non-native teacher of your target language, provide ratings (e.g., ACTFL) or test results (e.g., TOEFL) that demonstrate your ability in the target language. You can also provide your own self-assessment of your proficiency.
11. **Consider including a separate section about your computer skills.** These days, it is very important to document your computer abilities. List all the computer programs you can use proficiently and the sorts of educational applications you can use and/or train others to use.
12. **Make sure it is easy for a potential employer to contact you.** If you have a permanent and a temporary address on your CV, indicate clearly when the temporary address will no longer be valid. Provide phone, fax and email information.
13. **If you don't have much teaching experience, it may be advantageous to list your relevant MIIS coursework.** The curriculum at MIIS is designed to bridge the typical gap between theory and practice. If you are not a very experienced teacher, consider listing your course titles, to make the breadth and depth of your training explicit and apparent. This might be particularly helpful if your potential employer does not request your transcripts.
14. **Include as the last part of your CV a list of three to five references** who know your work well. These people should be your professors and former employers or supervisors (not your minister, your neighbor, or your best friend). Be sure to include a referee who has actually seen you teach. For each person, give his/her name, title, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Many, many companies and schools check references by phone or e-mail these days, so don't omit this information. You must ask your referees for permission to list them. And by the way – if I'm a harried potential employer and your CV says, "References available upon request" it goes straight to the bottom of the pile. I won't have time to track down this information and I may not want to signal to you that you are potentially short-listed. So if you want to work for me, don't create extra work for me.
15. **Before you send your CV anywhere, get it proofread** by a dozen of your pickiest friends. Then show it to Therese Tishakov and at least one of your professors. Remember that these people have read thousands of MA holders' CVs and may be able to spot a problem or a discrepancy based on their experience over the years.
16. **Keep us informed.** When you do get a job or when you change jobs, please advise our career development person (Therese) and your former professors. Also please send us your new contact information, preferably with a few copies of your business card. We want to make sure your new business card is posted with the others on the Alumni Accomplishments Bulletin Board.