

# Preparing an Effective CV for an Academic Position

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# Keep the Position Description in Mind

- What is the job?
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Extension
- What is the disciplinary focus?
- What are the expectations for success?



# Keep the Position Description in Mind

- The successful candidate will be expected to
  - develop a competitive research program
  - teach undergraduate and graduate courses, mentor, recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students, and participate in outreach activities
  - establish a vigorous, extramurally-funded extension program
  - publish in refereed journals, secure extramural funding, meet demands of teaching and advising, and provide appropriate outreach, departmental and university service
- Required qualifications
  - an earned Ph.D. degree in Animal Science or related discipline;
  - disciplinary knowledge
  - demonstrated accomplishments in research and evidence of teaching and/or extension experience.



# Research the Department

- Program strengths and potential needs
- Student and faculty numbers
- Commodity focus
- Facilities
- History of the position (newly created/high turnover?)
- Mission and Values Statement
- Deficiencies your experience addresses
- Fresh perspectives you can bring to the position



# Thoughtful Preparation of a Cover Letter

1. Why am I writing?
2. What do I have to offer the position?
3. What are my significant achievements?

A good cover letter summarizes the CV while highlighting your unique qualifications for the position you are applying to.



# What is a cover letter?

## Your formal introduction

- The first document read
  - it can make or break your application

## A letter of Application

- Targeted for a specific position description
- Outline skills to meet department's needs
- Helpful to use position description's terms



# Generate interest

- The goal is to get an interview!
- Should be brief and interesting
- Should not be a carbon copy of your CV
- Should highlight what you'll bring to the job
- Should never be sent in 'form letter' style



# Create the right impression: 10 Tips

- 1) Letter geared for specific job opening
  - Adapt letter to needs of the job you want
  - Refer to that job in opening sentences
- 2) Describe your related skills
  - Tie your experience to your skills
  - Show how they directly relate to the job description





# Create the right impression: 10 Tips

## 3) Make it personal

- Research the department
- Address letter to a specific person

## 4) Create a catchy opener

- Readers scan for content
- Open with attention-grabbing sentences
- Describe why you're the best for the job



# Create the right impression: 10 Tips

## 5) Include vital information

- Name, address, phone with area code
- Should be clearly visible
- First thing reader will need to contact you

## 6) Type and proofread

- It's your first impression...make it good
- Be sure it's neat and professional
- Errors will reflect badly on you



# Create the right impression: 10 Tips

## 7) Keep it brief

- Use action words, active sentences
- Give enough information to interest the reader don't overwhelm
- Limit letter to one, no more than two pages

## 8) Be confident, creative, enthusiastic

- It's a tool to sell your best asset...you!
- Let your personality shine in your letter



# Create the right impression: 10 Tips

## 9) Keep copies

- Keep a copy of every letter you send
- Past letters make job search easier
- Copies make follow up easier

## 10) Request a response

- Your letter is written to get an interview
- Ask for one!



# Writing A Cover Letter

## Contents

- Section 1:
  - State the position.
  - How you learned about the position/organization.
  - State referrals or other connections
  - Mention enclosure of your resume.
  - Professional goals



# Writing A Cover Letter

## Contents

- Section 2:
  - Concise overview of education, work history and skills that will help you perform the job.
  - Make the match
    - Candidate skills = Employer needs
  - Highlight specific qualities
  - Summarize and market experience
  - Picture yourself there



# Writing A Cover Letter

## Contents

- Section 3:
  - State confidence in your ability, why you are right for the position AND for the organization.
  - State the plan of action. What's next?
  - Give information on how you can be contacted
- Section 4:
  - Express appreciation
- Closing, signature, and typed name



# Effective CVs

1. Well organized.
2. Packed with information that support your academic objective.
3. Comprehensive record.
4. Organize for relevance for the position.
5. Have someone proof read.





# What Information Should be in a CV?

- There is no set format
- Prepare your CV specifically for job to which you are applying
- Information that is most relevant to the position you are applying should be first



# What Information Should Be In CV?

- Identify Yourself
- Education
- Work Experience
- Professional Associations
- Honors and awards
- Research Publications
- Grants
- Presentations
- Teaching/Extension Experience
- References
  - Show breadth
  - Stay in academia

## Optional Sections

- Interest Statements
- Goals for
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Extension
- Special Skills and Abilities



# Characteristics Of A Successful CV

- Focuses on skills. Uses action words to define the responsibilities of your job-related experience.
- Easy to read and understand.
- Visually powerful and free of gimmicks.
- Length – an academic CV cannot be too long.



# Characteristics Of A Successful CV

- Must always be 100% truthful.
- Language is grammatically correct.
- Spelling has been checked.
- Formal Style



# Basic Checklist

- No spelling or grammar errors.
- Neat, clean, and professional looking.
- Margins at sides and bottom.
- Layout makes reading easy. Use of white space is effective.
- Important titles should be emphasized.

Experiment with fonts & styles; **bold**, *italic*, and underlines. No more than 2 or 3 different sizes.



# Basic Checklist

- Information is logically recorded.
- Use Action Verbs for accomplishments & results.
- Bullet points and Numbering.
- Quantify your results whenever you can.
- Format – chronological or reverse chronological



# Successful Interviewing Skills

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# First Impressions Count ...

- **Make The Best Impression You Can**
  - On-Time
  - Dress
  - Physical Contact
  - Eye Contact
  - Smile
  - Fidgeting





# Characteristics of a Successful Interview

- Preparation
- Presentation
- Content



# Interview Preparation

- Research the Job and company
- Review the Job Requirements
- Know your CV
- Know Where You Are Going
- Be Prepared to Give Behavioral Based Examples
- Anticipate Questions
- Be Prepared to Sell Yourself!
- Bring a list of potential questions
- Be well rested



# Interview Presentation

- Be Prepared and Responsive For Questions
- Take Time to Organize Your Thoughts
- Make Effective Eye Contact and Smile
- Express Confidence in Your Abilities
- Be Attentive to Body Language
- Prepare a Seminar that that relates your qualifications to the position
  - Are there special requirements?



# Interview Content

- Listen Carefully to Questions
- Understand Behavioral Based Interviewing
- Rehearse Your Answers
- Sell Yourself!
- Silence is Golden, Know When to Stop Answering
- Tie Your Background to the Position
- Focus on Your Accomplishments
- Turn Weaknesses Into Strengths



# Behavioral Based Interviewing

- Prepare your **STAR'S**
- Situation or Task
- Action Taken
- Result of Your Action



# Behavioral Based Questions

- Can You Tell Me About A Time...
- Think Specific
- Don't Say "Usually, Always, Or Never"
- Say "I"
- Be Prepared to Answer the Negative Question
- Was The Result Positive? Measurable?
- Don't Forget To Smile
- Be Concise



# Technical Skills Are Important but Soft Skills are also Important

- Adaptability
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Innovation
- Integrity



# Summary

- Keep the Position Description in Mind
  - When preparing
    - Cover letter
    - CV
    - Seminar
    - Interview
- Proof Read!
- Research the Department





# Questions

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