Do I Need a Resume or Curriculum Vita?

Author : Karen Watson

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Understanding the different between a resume and a CV can be a little confusing. Resumes and Curriculum Vitae are completely different documents, should be approached differently in writing and each are geared to certain industries and job types.

If you're confused about the difference between a resume and a curriculum vita (CV), you're not alone! Both are job-seeking documents used to help you obtain a job interview with a prospective employer. Both a resume and CV list relevant information about your background and your qualifications. To add to the confusion about these job-seeking tools, many people use these terms interchangeably. What are the differences?

The Resume

A resume is an overview of your relevant work experience, skills, education, and any other information related to the targeted job, such as volunteer work or professional memberships. There are three primary types of resumes: functional, chronological, and combination. A functional resume highlights skills, abilities, and education rather than work history. A true functional-style resume does not list employment dates. A chronological resume highlights employment (or volunteer work) shown in reverse-chronological format; that is, the most recent employment is listed first. A combination-style resume combines elements of the functional and chronological styles. Most resumes are one or two pages long.

For most job applications, a combination style resume is the best choice many applicants, including college students and new graduates. Even though work history on a graduate resume may not be as extensive as for that of a seasoned employee, a chronological work history can demonstrate transferable skills and dependability. A purely functional style resume would not provide this advantage, and yet a purely chronological style would not allow for additional information highlighting relevant skills or other information.

The Curriculum Vita

A CV is a more detailed listing of information used by applicants in select fields, such as the medical and education industries. The format of a CV is sometimes similar to that of a resume, but it is typically a straightforward listing of information. A CV includes information such as employment, education, and publications in a reverse-chronological order. It is often used by those seeking advanced positions in the medical and teaching professions. For example, someone applying for a university teaching position would list his or her education, classes taught, and any relevant publications. CVs can be much longer than a traditional resume.

A CV may also be required for those applying to graduate school, although again, a CV is

typically used for specific fields, such as research or teaching. However, if you are applying for a position in a foreign country, you may need a CV. A professional resume writer can help you determine whether you should use a resume or a CV for these types of positions.

Which Do I Need?

For most new graduates and college students, a resume is the best option to use for job application purposes. There is a bit more room for creativity (in styling, not false information!) with a resume. Additionally, resumes are traditionally what hiring managers expect to see unless specifically noted otherwise.