**FORMATION AND STRATEGY OF CV CONSTRUCTION**

Eric vanSonnenberg, MD

Department of Student Affairs

University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix

CV stands for *Curriculum Vitae*, which etymologically is from the Latin, meaning “course of life”. CVs are used predominantly in academia, medicine, and research. CVs are factual, detailed, and should focus on chronological achievements.

There is no absolutely “correct” format for construction of a CV. Academic and medical institutions vary in the categories and order in which they prefer CVs to be constructed. In this document, we will outline an academic and medical CV that will last your lifetime. You may need to modify it at times to comply with specific academic institutional requirements; however, this outline will highlight the essentials of an academic and medical CV, will strategically emphasize your achievements, and will satisfy the vast majority of CV requirements in academics and medicine.

An academic and medical CV is not a résumé. The latter is more appropriate for industry, is not as factual, and is intended to be convincing for a job application. A “Bio” is a very abbreviated form of a CV, typically prepared by medical and academic luminaries, and is used as an introduction before important lectures; a “Bio” is not relevant for our current CV discussion.

We will only concentrate on standard CV construction, as it is appropriate for academic and medical settings. This document is a step-by-step journey to guide you to constructing your CV, to addressing common questions about CVs, to avoiding extraneous verbiage, and will set you up for your lifelong CV.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

* Once you start your CV, keep adding to it periodically so you don’t forget important items.
* Remember that a CV includes factual items and is not a job resume.
* Use 12 font throughout.
* Use Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman font; stay away from fancy fonts and formats that have no place in a CV.
* Bold your name whenever it appears in the CV.
* It is important to prioritize and highlight your achievements in your CV; in that vein, it is equally important to omit extraneous verbiage, to avoid typical job resume explanations because they dilute and may obscure your truly valuable achievements, and also to avoid “fluff” (the fancy term is “remplissage”) to “pump up” the CV, as knowledgeable reviewers see right through it, and fluff detracts from your important accomplishments.
* At times there may seem to be overlap, in that an entry might fall into different categories; we will address those ambiguities later in this document.
* The ERAS guideline for CVs is somewhat different from the standard academic and medical format, so for that task you will need to comply with their specific outline.
* As far as chronology listings, for each category or section list most recent years, then less recent in descending order (so-called “reverse chronology”).
* Put all yearly dates in the column on the right side of the pages; usually months are not necessary; if the entry is ongoing, put a hyphen after the start date and either the word “present” or “current” after the hyphen.
* There is no limit on the size of your CV, and assuredly you want to include all your important accomplishments. Conversely, there is no place in a CV for detailed explanations, the words “I” or “me”, or opinions.
* Grades and scores do not need to be listed on your CV, as these are visible to reviewers on your transcripts.
* Do not use abbreviations that will be unfamiliar to most people who will read your CV. Realistically, outside of Arizona, not many folks know what UACOMP stands for, so write it out.

**CV CATEGORIES**

The following is a list of potential categories or sections in an academic and medical CV. Assuredly you will not have entries in all these categories currently; if you do not, leave that category or section out for the time being. You can always add categories and specific information later when new information occurs. More specifics in the individual categories will be described later in this document, but here are the basic potential categories or sections:

* Name, contact information, personal information
* Education
* Honors and Awards
* Publications
* Oral Abstract Presentations
* Posters
* Non-society Lectures
* Research Experience
* Work Experience
* Leadership
* Volunteering
* Committees
* Societies and Memberships
* Certifications
* Creative Interests
* Hobbies and Interests
* Other categories that may apply later in your career— Current and Previous Positions, Grants, Editorial Boards and Manuscript Reviewing, Teaching, Books & Chapters

**CATEGORY SPECIFICS**

**NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Your legal name, all pertinent and easily reachable contact information should be included; more personal information such as spouse and children can be included if you think it would be helpful.

**EDUCATION:** Lead with your anticipated MD degree and the year; then in reverse chronological order, include all your other formal education starting with college (include your major), and include any secondary degrees, such as Master’s and PhD. Note that MD, PhD, etc. do not require periods.

**HONORS & AWARDS:** This is an important category, hence its early position in your CV. Here you present your outstanding accomplishments such as scholarship awards, Dean’s list, and special notoriety. Examples:

4 Year Goldwater Scholarship Achievement Award, University of Arizona 2020-2024

Dean’s List, Arizona State University, Honors College 2021, 2022

**PUBLICATIONS:** Of all research activities, this is the most valuable and important. Here are examples of how to annotate your publications:

Kaib S, Shah-Patel L, Guttman D, et. al. Organizing and advising in a Student Affairs Department —what a joy! *Journal of Irreproducible Results.* 2020. 12:36-39.

(Note that the format is authors, article title with only proper names being capitalized, italicized journal name, year, volume, inclusive page numbers) (The notation “et. al.” is used when there are six or more authors; it is utilized after the third author’s name replacing all other subsequent authors.)

Smith S, Wynn S, Coudret D. Learning Specialist input; the key to a successful medical school experience. *Journal of Exotic Ideas*. 2021. (Accepted, In Press)

(Note that once an article, abstract, poster, or book chapter has been formally accepted, it is then placed in the respective correct category with the notation of “Accepted”. If an article has been submitted, but there has been no response yet, or the research is still in progress, both remain in the Research Experience section.)

**ORAL ABSTRACT PRESENTATIONS:** In this section, all words in the title are capitalized except articles and prepositions. Example:

Michaud M, Coudret D, Wynn S, Smith S. “Tutoring at the University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix Sets the Bar for Excellence”. 1st Annual Meeting of the Society of Incredible Education. Bucharest, Romania. September, 2022.

**POSTERS:** Use the same format as with the Oral Abstract Presentations.

**NON-SOCIETY LECTURES:** These generally will be local, solicited lectures that are typically informal, and do not go through a rigorous society review. Example:

Fisher L**.** “How to Eat Well in Your High School Years”. Phoenix Central High School. June, 2023.

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**: This refers to research work that you are involved with, or have participated in previously, and that has not yet been accepted in any of the above categories. For example, your Scholarly Project work, until a formal national presentation or publication, should remain in this category. State your role, the name of the research project, the years, and your mentor with his or her title. Example:

Research Assistant. Functional MRI of the Corpus Callosum in the Drosophila. 2026-7

Zac Baker, MS, Mentor (use MD, PhD, EdD, MS; not Dr., to be specific about the mentor’s title, and not both Dr. and PhD or MD)

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** This section refers to work for which you have been paid. Entries here further emphasize that you are a hard worker, even when you have been pursuing your studies; speaks well for you. Example:

Teaching Assistant, Stanford University, Biochemistry 206 2020

 (remember, dates are listed in the right column)

**LEADERSHIP:** Examples:

Interest Group Leader, Surgery. University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix 2021

Co-Leader, Summer Scrubs, University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix 2025

**VOLUNTEERING:**

Wesley Clinic, Phoenix, Arizona. Wellness physical exams. (Be brief) 2019

**COMMITTEES:**

Student Representative, 1st Year Curriculum Review Committee, University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix 2020

**SOCIETIES & MEMBERSHIPS**:

American Medical Association, Student Level 2021-current

American Association of Family Medicine, Student Level 2022-current

**CERTIFICATIONS:**

ACLS-BLS 2019-current

**CREATIVE INTERESTS:** Here you have the opportunity to note briefly something very special that you have accomplished. Examples:

2nd Violinist, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra 2020-current

All PAC 12 Football Quarterback, University of Arizona 2021

**HOBBIES & INTERESTS:** List a few of your hobbies that give the reviewer an insight into who you are, and what you might be asked about. Examples:

Haiku poetry writer, tennis player, numismatist, church choir singer

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

So the CV will be an accurate, factual, and detailed chronicle of your academic, medical, and work life that enables the reader to learn about you and your accomplishments. As we noted, the CV is always dynamic and in progress. It occasionally will require modifications to comply with different institutions’ guidelines. In constructing your CV, there occasionally will be “gray areas”; by all means, the Dean, your advisors, learning specialists, and I personally will be happy to help you sort out any ambiguities. Best of luck!