On the same page: Writing killer resumes & more Questions & Answers

1) **If applications say "resume or CV" how should we decide which to submit?**

   It really depends on how much content you have. If you have minimal content, go for the resume....but if you have a long career to cover, take advantage of the space that the CV has to offer

2) **Which type of document is more likely to be asked to students, for instance when we are applying to a program or a graduate school?**

   More often than not, resume or the option of "resume or CV". It is understood that, unless you are a returning student, you have a smaller portfolio than someone who has been in the field for 20 years

3) **Would making a CV be helpful in customizing and tailoring your resume to different positions?**

   Absolutely! If you can organize your experiences well, it will help you think about everything you've done and what you want to include in your resume

4) **Should we address experiences or opportunities that were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how?**

   You can certainly list anything competitive that you were awarded (spot in an REU, etc.) and mentioning that it was cancelled. If you can get how selective the experience was, having that data would be useful to provide. It at least shows that (a) you were competitive and (b) you were self-motivated that you wanted the opportunity

5) **How should you describe research experience on a resume? How much depth is necessary? For graduate school, should research experience be its own category?**

   If you have enough for research experience, yes! Otherwise just related experience would be good.

6) **I've seen CVs with research descriptions (almost more like a resume) under the professional experiences section for undergrad + graduate RA positions. Is this normal/a good idea?**

   CV's are a lot more flexible, so there is a lot of wiggle room about how to present things. I'm not sure it is normal, but it certainly is one easy way to show the scope of a position. I wouldn't do it in the resume since space is so limited and you want it to be all about you.

7) **What about if we belong to research groups during our undergraduate studies? Should we include this in the work experience section?**

   If it matches the work experience for what you are applying, that would work, although it might be worthwhile thinking about "research experience" as its own heading would be kind of neat

8) **If you worked on 2 different projects in the same research group but they were very different and used different skills (e.g. experimental vs computational) should they be listed separately or together?**

   It might be nice to have 2 subheadings for your different projects

9) **If I'm an undergrad research assistant, and I'm also a math tutor, a resident assistant, and a multicultural center student worker, should I show all of them on resume? It should be pretty long so should I just have description for research assistant but just list other positions on the resume?**
   I think you have your answer - listing what isn't directly applied to what you are trying to get entry to - highlighting the skills that make the most sense for where you are applying.

10) **My lab mates have presented our groups research at conferences that I did not attend, do I list those presentations and posters that my name is on in the CV since they show projects that I've worked on?**
    The presentation is part of your list of presentations/publications since you are a co-author. Just make it clear you were not presenting author.

11) **Would presentations include only formal ones? Or can group meeting presentation be included?**
    Those "internal presentations" are perhaps appropriate for a CV you don't want to bog down a resume with a number of internal presentations (if you presented internally once a month for instance). Make it easy to see what you did and the skills you learned while doing it!

12) **If you have a lot of publications and professional oral presentations, but there's no way to fit all that on a 1 page resume, what would be the best way to include them?**
    If you have enough to really fill up 2 pages, I might do a "selected publications" on page one and the full list on page 2. Otherwise, I'd do "selected publications" and keep to 1 page

13) **If I transferred schools, do I mention my first school on a grad school resume or CV?**
    You need to show all your higher-education experience if you had a significant amount of education at a school. If you had any sort of a degree (like an associates) you would want to highlight it. If you only did one semester at a different school, you might just let your transcript speak for itself (for grad school)

14) **I am pivoting from a career in the military to applying to grad school. I've received awards, decorations and certifications in the military. Should I be including these in my CV even though they may not be related?**
    Your CV is allowed to include everything, so yes, these should be included. Even in the resume you'd want to highlight those transferable skills (like leadership).

15) **Should high school accomplishments be included on a resume/CV for grad school?**
    Generally, not so much, unless there is something crazy accomplished (like being an Olympian). It really should be just about undergraduate accomplishments.

16) **Can we omit languages/awards if there is an experience that may bring more value or if the awards a bit old but still valid?**
    You can and should include what makes the strongest case.

17) **Should one include volunteer positions that are more routine?**
    There is always a way to highlight some skill (trustworthy, team player)...and the fact that you actually cared enough to volunteer. Check out this article for other ideas:
    https://inchemistry.acs.org/content/inchemistry/en/careers/volunteering-on-resumes.html

18) **Why do most jobs ask for required skills and years of experience if technical skills is least priority?**

Jobs ask for these skills *AND* from among the people who apply, they want these soft skills. And for some of these positions, they need the teamwork as much or more than the technical skills. If you have basic chemical skills and some instrumentation experience, specific instruments can be taught. If you cannot work in a group setting...that is more difficult to teach.

19) **How can we best incorporate skills without making it look like a list on a resume?**

Use that word choice carefully

20) **How much do certification courses like Coursera or webinar certificates help while applying to grad schools?**

Anything that shows how you are able to pick up new skills is worthwhile...it is part of your application package. It shouldn't be the only thing in your package (you have coursework, and letters of recommendation, and the reasons you want to go to grad school) but it shows that you go above and beyond.

21) **Which software should we try to use ideally to design our resume?**

I have used Canva or Microsoft Word. They have really good templates!

22) **Does margin width matter when it comes to a resume and CV?**

It is about what looks good on first quick glance. Don't go crazy with 0.25 inch margins :) but beyond that, see what looks good quickly on first glance