

guide for writing your cv



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ABOUT PROJECT EDUACCESS

Access to higher education is a privilege most people from marginalised communities are systematically denied through cost, information, and dispositional barriers.

Launched in 2021, Project EduAccess is a modest attempt to improve inclusivity in higher education institutions and work towards removing these barriers for students from marginalized communities in South Asia.

We hope to achieve this by providing expert mentorship, support, and guidance to learners in South Asia.

In addition to running a mentorship programme and organising workshops, Project EduAccess also regularly develops content such as guides and documents that aid potential applicants in their university and scholarship application processes. This guide for writing your CV is a part of our series *Guides on Application Documents*.

DISCLAIMER

This guide, prepared for the benefit of prospective applicants, is a compilation of advice available on the websites of several universities and scholarship bodies. The information provided is for general informational and educational purposes only. All information is provided in good faith.

WRITING YOUR CV

Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a document that contains the grades, achievements, and experience of a candidate. Across applications, there will be many different requirements for a CV, depending on the university, the course and the scholarship in question.

An easy step is to make a Master CV document in which you should specify all the experience, activities, and grades secured [the guidance on specific heads to cover is below]. This document can be a relative longer document which covers all experiences. At the time of application, you can pick up relevant information from the Master CV and tailor your CV for the specific application. This is an essential exercise in the applications process, seeing as most universities expect you to submit CVs that do not exceed 2 pages.

COMMON HEADS TO COVER IN A CV

Following are some things to include in an academic CV. You can pick and choose depending on your field and your work experience:

1. Name and Personal Details
2. Personal Profile (optional)
3. Education
4. Work and Research Experience
5. Relevant research/ technical/ laboratory skills

6. Publications
7. Conference presentations
8. Projects
9. Awards and Funding
10. Research Interests
11. Extracurricular activities

- **Name and personal details:** Write the name in big and bold font as the CV heading. Under that, include contact details like an email address you regularly use, a phone number you can be reached on, and any relevant website/ portfolio link. For example:

SHAHRUKH KHAN
shahrukhkhan@khan.com | +919999888777 | LinkedIn

- **Education:** The name and personal details should be followed by educational qualifications in a reverse chronological order (most recent to earlier ones). Include educational qualifications with a short description of the course and study outcomes and the final grade (percentage/GPA depending on application requirement). Include the years through which you did the course. Highlight course aspects and dissertations that are relevant to your current application. You can include your class rank or percentile, if you think it will reflect favourably on your application. For example:

MSc in Finance and Economics, College Name, Location (2017–2019)

CGPA: 7 (Top 5 rank)

Studied modules on International Finance, Derivatives and Financial Risk Analysis, Portfolio Management, Corporate Financial Reporting. The course gave exposure to econometric methodologies and its usage in financial risk analysis that I shall be using to develop my future research.

Dissertation: 'Title'

My research is concerned with...(a one/two-line description of the dissertation)

OR

- LL.B – Year II | Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi | Aggregate of 3 semesters - 63.3% (I Div.) 2018-21
 - B.A. (H) Economic | XXX, University of Delhi | CGPA 7.4/10 (I Div.) 2015-18
 - Higher Senior Secondary (CBSE) | XX School, Delhi | Best four subjects aggregate 96.75% 2009-15
- **Work Experience:** This includes professional work and any positions of responsibility you have held including volunteer positions and internships. Mention your position, organisation name, time spent at the organisation, location and describe your responsibilities. You can include your responsibilities either in bullet points or in a paragraph, depending on the length of the content. For example:

Project Associate at Z Foundation (2 February 2020 to 2 February 2022)

Led a team of five to conduct research and data analysis on healthcare accessibility of domestic workers under the welfare schemes of the Government of West Bengal. Responsibilities included guiding and

training the team members, supervising all aspects of research and developing the final publication.

OR

INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Events Officer

Delhi, India

January 2020 – Present

- Provide support for organizing conferences and seminars/ webinars on topical issues in human rights, liaising with speakers and participants, creating content for social media, and recording events for podcasts.
- Also responsible for recording and disseminating event outputs, including writing up, editing and proofreading academic reports.

Check the Annexure for a list of action verbs you can consider using to describe your experiences in your CV.

- **Publications and Presentations:** Include relevant published works like articles, papers, blogs, journals and books. If there are group projects, mention other authors and highlight your name and contribution. Include online links to your publications wherever possible. For example:

'Impact of COVID-19 vaccines on diabetes patients', The Lancet: The paper investigates the impact of the COVID-19 vaccines on people with type 2 diabetes.

- **Conferences, Trainings, Courses, Certifications:** Mention conferences you have attended and presented at. If you have just attended a conference, only include

it if you think the theme of the topic is very relevant to your application. Otherwise, only include conferences that you have either organised or where you have participated as a presenter.

Similarly, include trainings/ courses you have undertaken like IT skills, teaching skills, technical skills, digital training, online courses, etc. It is equally important to include any relevant professional certifications here (provide the title of the certification, the name of the certifying organisation and the date on which you earned the certification).

Please be careful about how many you include in the CV you submit for your application – list only those that are relevant for that particular application.

- **Awards and Funding:** This includes academic awards, ranks, achievements, grants/ scholarships/ fellowships you received for studies or research work.

OPTIONAL HEADINGS

- **Qualifications:** These may include other qualifications like English language test scores (IELTS/ TOEFL).
- **Research Interests/ Areas of Academic Interest:** You can choose to include a list of your specific areas of research/ academic interest – it may also be useful to divide the list into current and future interests. However, this is an optional section that can also be merged into the personal profile section.

- **Skills:** This may include IT, language and technical skills as well as relevant transferable skills (creativity, leadership, team management), which may not be wholly relevant to the application you are making.
- **Languages:** If you are multilingual, write about the languages you know and indicate how well you know them using "native/ advanced/ intermediate/ beginner levels of written/spoken fluency" as appropriate.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** This may include extracurricular interests, activities and achievements. This is an optional section depending on its relevance to the application.

NOTE: In a CV you submit for graduate applications and graduate scholarships, you do not need to include a "References" head, simply because you will be expected to input the details of your referees separately in the application form and they will also be asked to submit reference letters in support of your application.

LANGUAGE TO BE USED/ NOT TO USE

- The language of a CV should be straightforward and clear. Refrain from using long paragraphs, passive voice and short forms.
- Use technical terminology, wherever applicable.
- The CV is an archive of all your achievements, skills, and interests and therefore, it should read confidently so that it can convey how you are the suitable candidate.

- Use bullet points with action words (see *Annexure* for a list of action words) to describe work/ academic experiences in short sentences.

FORMATTING A CV

- The CV design should be readable, clear and consistent.
- The main things to remember when formatting a CV are who it is being sent to and for what purpose, depending on which the information should be organised and highlighted.
- After preparing your CV, get it printed to check if it looks neat and readable in case you have to submit the hard copy at any point.
- *Font and Highlighting*: Choose a readable, attractive font and it is best advised to not use more than two fonts in one CV. The font size should be a minimum of 11 pt. Do not overuse bold, italics and highlighting because it is distracting for the reader. To highlight headers and sections of the CV, use bold since too much italics and underlining can make it look clumsy.
- *Headings*: Maintain a consistent style (font style, size, colour, capitalisation) for similar headings and sub-headings. Do not put full stops after headings/ sub-headings. Create headings that are of relevance to your application. Avoid using 'Other' as a section since it suggests that the reader could possibly skip it.

SAMPLE CVs

A few sample CV formats are available [here](#).

SCHOLARSHIP ADVICE

Scholarship applications usually provide guidance on how to tailor a CV. Even otherwise, depending on the aims, intentions and scope of the scholarship, the CV can be tailored. For example, it may be important to show teamwork, initiative, and leadership for some scholarships. In this case, the CV should include 'Positions of Responsibility' with a brief description and outcomes, if any. A few examples of scholarships with their diverse CV requirements are given below:

- Several courses under Erasmus Mundus require applicants to follow the Europass CV format; it is [available here](#).
- For the Rhodes Scholarship, applicants are advised that the CV should contain a list of principal activities. Separately, the scholarship also looks to identify leadership potential in applicants – so, it is wise to highlight such qualities in your CV.

RESEARCH DEGREE ADVICE

It is especially important to highlight your involvement in academia and research projects, if you are looking to apply for research degrees like PhDs/ DPhils. Highlighting any previous research experience (in the form of writing dissertations in your undergraduate/ postgraduate degrees, or in the form of publications, or in the form of research internships) is necessary to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills to pursue a research degree.

DISCIPLINE-BASED ADVICE

For a **social science** application, one can follow the same sequence of heads specified above. However, do bear in mind that most social sciences applications require you to highlight work and research experience. Therefore, do draft the sections that demonstrate work and research skills (including publications, work with relevant organisations, etc.) carefully. Also highlight workshops and trainings that enhance your skills as a social sciences student.

For **LLM/ law** applications in particular, some universities tend to focus more on research or theoretical subjects – here, highlighting research experience and publications should be prioritised. However, if it is an application for a taught LLM with more practice-oriented subjects, work experience should be mentioned first and highlighted clearly. If there is space, then undergraduate dissertation topics (if undertaken) can also be specified.

For a **humanities** application, a CV can follow the same sequence recommended above. Dissertations, research interests, and publications should be highlighted. Including relevant websites that include academic writings and creative projects is very helpful. Do highlight workshops and trainings that enhance your skills as a humanities student. For example, a student of literature should highlight workshops on creative writing, translation, language courses and so on. Since some humanities degrees are interdisciplinary in nature, highlighting relevant interests, training and achievements beyond the specific subject is also a good way to demonstrate the expanse of your experience and skills.

For a **STEM** application, it is important to highlight the specific educational qualifications your degree of choice demands. It is equally important to clearly

highlight the technical skills and certifications relevant to your degree of choice. Differentiation between different kinds of skills is not necessary for CVs with a smaller number of skills. However, it might be useful to distinguish between different range of skills otherwise (for example, Web Development Languages vs Programming Languages vs Database Languages, etc.). Conveying comfort/ capability levels with your skills is also very important. You can say "Proficient In/ Adept In" to convey a high level of skill competency such that you are able to use and apply the skill for real-world applications, and "Experience with/ Exposure To" to convey a beginner-comfort level. Sometimes the best way to present your skills, or perhaps your only exposure to an experience, has been because of a project (either academic or personal) or hackathon or clinical/ shadowing experience. These kinds of experiences can have their own section.

ANNEXURE: ACTION VERBS

Achievement	Administrative	Communication	Creative	Financial
accelerated	arranged	addressed	authored	allocated
accomplished	channelled	arbitrated	changed	analysed
achieved	charted	articulated	conceived	appraised
activated	collated	briefed	constructed	audited
attained	collected	communicated	created	balanced
competed	coordinated	conducted	developed	budgeted
earned	dispensed	contacted	devised	calculated
effected	distributed	conveyed	drafted	compiled
elicited	established	corresponded	established	computed
executed	executed	delivered	formulated	controlled
exercised	implemented	demonstrated	founded	disbursed
expanded	installed	edited	illustrated	estimated
expedited	maintained	entertained	influenced	figured
generated	offered	interviewed	introduced	financed
improved	ordered	informed	invented	forecasted
increased	outlined	lectured	launched	projected
insured	performed	mediated	originated	reconciled
marketed	prepared	negotiated	revamped	tabulated
mastered	processed	persuaded	revised	
obtained	provided	presented	staged	Lead/Manage
produced	purchased	promoted	updated	acquired
reduced	recorded	proposed	visualized	administered
reorganized	rendered	publicized		approved
reproduced	served	reported	Research/Analytical	assigned
restructured	serviced	represented	assessed	chaired
simplified	sourced	responded	compared	contracted
sold	supported	suggested	critiqued	controlled
solicited		translated	defined	decided
streamlined	Technical	wrote	derived	delegated
succeeded	adapted		detected	directed
upgraded	adjusted	Plan/Organize	determined	enlisted

	applied	allocated	discovered	governed
Help/Teach	built	anticipated	evaluated	handled
advised	computed	arranged	examined	initiated
clarified	constructed	catalogued	explored	instilled
coached	designed	categorized	found	instituted
collaborated	diagnosed	classified	inspected	managed
consulted	engineered	collected	interpreted	motivated
counselled	experimented	consolidated	investigated	presided
educated	maintained	convened	located	recruited
explained	modified	edited	measured	retained
facilitated	operated	eliminated	observed	reviewed
guided	prescribed	employed	predicted	selected
helped	programmed	gathered	rated	shaped
instructed	proved	grouped	recommended	supervised
modelled	reinforced	monitored	researched	
participated	repaired	organized	reviewed	
taught	resolved	planned	searched	
trained	restored	regulated	studied	
tutored	solved	scheduled	surveyed	
	specified	structured	verified	
	systematized	summarized		
	tested	targeted		

scan to stay connected



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