



Postdoc CVs

What PIs and line managers need to know

Curriculum vitae (CVs) lie at the heart of almost every job application and there are easy things that PIs and line managers can do to help their postdocs produce an impressive CV for any application.

Traditional Academic CVs

- An exhaustive inventory of your achievements and outputs that can be as long as needed (although some suggest a 6-page limit).
- Detailed sections covering education, research employment, publications, funding, awards and prizes, technical skills, etc.
- Problems: don't showcase many of the skills and experiences researchers have, promotes an unhealthy and competitive research culture (e.g. focus on quantity of publications), hard to compare across disciplines.

Narrative Academic CVs (e.g. Royal Society's [Resume for Researchers](#))

- Narrative CVs allow researchers to evidence a wider range of activities and impacts, including knowledge generation, development of individuals, contribution to society, and give context to their careers (e.g. career breaks).
- Many research funders, including UKRI, are trialling narrative CVs. The Joint Funders Group has guides and resources here: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-and-innovation-culture/joint-funders-group/>
- Funders working to reduce unintentional biases (e.g. towards researchers for whom English is their first language).

CVs Beyond Academia

- Maximum 2 pages and selective with information: a marketing/branding tool to highlight relevant experience and achievements.
- Content **and** style are important – use of relevant sections, headings, a headline and summary guide the reader to the most pertinent information.
- Online CV templates can be downloaded or used as inspiration.
- Key tips:
 - Ensure relevant skills are prominently displayed.
 - Translate academic outputs (e.g. show the skills behind a publication list).
 - STAR (situation, task, action, result) and PAR (problem, action result) techniques can effectively convey skills, goals and values in summaries, bullet points or short paragraphs.
 - Assume the employer is pushed for time – what 4-5 things should they know from a 10 second scan?





What PIs and line managers can do

We've broken this into three tiers, increasing in the level of engagement and input you'd give.

(1) Basic

- Show your postdoc your CV – are they aware of (i) what a traditional academic CV should look like, (ii) what a narrative academic CV looks like, and (iii) what CVs beyond academia look like?
- As their contract draws to an end take an interest in their next steps – be open to discussing other jobs with them, within or beyond academia. If they show you a job that they're interested in, suggest particular skills or experiences you know that they have that they should highlight on their CV.
- Signpost postdocs to beyond academia CV information sources:
 - Prosper: <https://prosper.liverpool.ac.uk/postdoc-resources/act/different-types-of-cvs/>
 - Institutional careers services, web searching (e.g. [Indeed](#))
 - Someone in own network could offer advice is in relevant industry or sector.

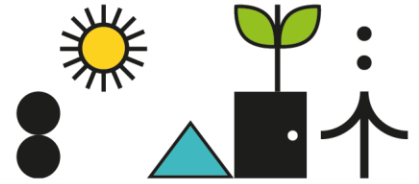
(2) Intermediate

- Offer to read and comment on their academic CV – what stands out, what's missing, what needs strengthening? Are there things your postdoc could do in their current role to fill the gaps?
- Offer to read a CV in relation to a specific job – are they targeting the job advert? What 4-5 qualities stand out and do they align with the job?

(3) Advanced

- Help them translate their academic outputs for a non-academic audience.
 - Help them identify relevant achievements.
 - Show that it's ok to remove publications from their CV if publications aren't relevant to the job they're applying for. Understand that this may make them feel uncomfortable and help them see the skills that underlie those outputs.
- Get your postdoc practicing PAR/STAR techniques about their job or skills.
 - Ask them to write a CV headline and summary.
 - Ask them to demonstrate how they've used a skill(s).
 - Provide feedback and suggestions for how they could improve.
- Ask your postdoc to write a 2-page CV for beyond academia and provide feedback (this is good practice at highlighting experience and skills, regardless of career direction).





- Ask your postdoc to write a narrative CV using the Resume for Researchers template and provide feedback (<https://royalsociety.org/-/media/policy/projects/research-culture-images/2019-10-research-culture-resume-for-researchers-template.pdf>).

