

## Academic applications

Academic applications typically consist of an application form or CV and covering letter. Sometimes you may be permitted to send your CV along with the application form.

### The academic CV

An academic CV can be 4-5 pages long and will focus heavily on research outputs. It may even include an appendix outlining future research plans. Typically a CV for a postdoctoral post will be shorter than a CV for a permanent lecturer vacancy. When putting together your CV you need to think carefully about what information to include as well as how to prioritise it and lay it out so that it catches the reader's attention. You need to strike the balance between being concise, but also including all the information required.

An academic CV should include:

- A **synopsis of your PhD** at the beginning or as an appendix plus other education, including previous degrees
- A section on **conferences** attended and papers given at conferences
- **Publications** produced, normally in chronological order. Use subheadings such as 'Relevant publications', 'Peer reviewed', 'In progress' and 'Conference proceedings'. If you have a long list of publications, include these as an appendix
- **Evidence of teaching/presenting skills**, such as running seminars or practicals
- **Administration experience**, e.g. involvement with committees or working groups
- **Successful bids for funding or awards**
- Involvement in **outreach or public engagement** work
- List of **scientific techniques used**, e.g. NMR, HPLC
- For FOH/SSF/HUM researchers, a list of **research methods used and software packages used** for analysis e.g. Atlas TI, SPSS
- Give **evidence of your skills** such as **IT, time management, project management and report writing**
- Give up to **three references**. One should be your supervisor. Good academic references are vital

Before you write your CV, take the time to see examples of other academic CVs. It is worth looking at a range of them, even if not in your subject area, to compare different CV layouts and section headings before deciding what will suit you best. Ask around in your department to see colleagues' examples, and look on the web, as many researchers post their CVs online.

## Application forms

Application forms tend to contain the same type of information as a CV but require you to present it in the way the recruiter wishes to see the information. These are often now online forms. They can be more limiting as you do not have the free reign to present yourself and allocate space to the information in the way that you can with a CV. The advice for writing CVs above and elsewhere within the Careers & Employability site is just as relevant for application forms, as with these you still need to choose your words and examples carefully to project the desired impression and capture the readers' attention.

For academic jobs applications forms will generally allocate space for the applicant to list their research publications.

Within application forms generally there is often a section called 'Additional information' or 'Personal/Supporting statement'. This section is your chance to elaborate and show the recruiter why you are the best candidate for the job. It allows you to expand on aspects that maybe you can't within the CV or application form due to space constraints. It should be very tailored to the role and your response should demonstrate that you understand fully what the role involves and how you can deliver these aspects.

Top tips:

- Complete the application form fully.
- Personal Statement – this is the most difficult part of the form requiring careful planning and structuring. Thoroughly research the position, department and institution to which you are applying.
- Provide evidence that you meet the selection criteria and qualify for the appointment. Evidence of suitability, highly relevant training and experience – provide good recent examples to support what you say.
- List or highlight any achievements that make you stand out from the crowd, eg. Prize for project work.

## Covering letters

It is important to have a good covering letter as it is often the first part of the application the selector sees. The cover letter is the place for you to display your motivation and enthusiasm for that particular role which does not come across in the CV. It gives you a chance to say things you can't fit into the application form and elaborate on your experience or skills that you want to draw attention to.

If you are sending the application as an email then send the covering letter as an attachment.

Academic covering letters should include:

- Address to named individual
- Start with why you are applying and state position and ref number
- What interests you about the research role / group / institution?
- Why you are a suitable candidate?
- What opportunities does this post offer you?
- Suggest possibilities for future research funding / collaboration
- For teaching positions, refer to evidence in CV of flexibility and breadth of experience

Top tips:

- Use good English and a positive tone
- Length will depend on how much of the relevant information is asked for within the other parts of the application. Up to 2 pages for a lectureship position
- Make it clear when you expect to finish your PhD if not yet complete
- Show there is a good match between you and the job description – draw out relevant examples but do not repeat your CV exactly
- Show you have researched the employer
- Use specifics and give examples rather than making statements which are not backed up by any evidence

## Supporting research statement

Some applications will require a research statement. This should include:

- **Current relevance** - how is your current/previous knowledge and research experience relevant to the post?
- **Justify your topic** – how does it relate to the current state of knowledge, does it fill a gap which is important, who will it benefit, does it cross disciplines?
- **Outline your approach** – what research methods and resources will you use (identify potential funders / collaborators), what questions are you seeking to answer, what problems will you explore, what results will you hope to achieve?
- **Progress to date** – where are you in your planned programme of work, what is your timetable, has your work been published?