

# PHD Career Strategy Essentials: Craft an Effective Resume

Hyun Ja Shin

Director, Graduate and Postdoctoral Career Services

June 9 ,2022

*Yale Office of Career Strategy*

# True or False?



The goal of the resume is to get a job.



I have a CV so I don't need a resume

# The Academic CV

## CV

Comprehensive academic work history

Used for faculty positions

No constraints on length

Full list of publications are included

Content is more important than style

Usually does not need significant modifications for different job postings

# The Academic CV vs Resume: What is the Difference?

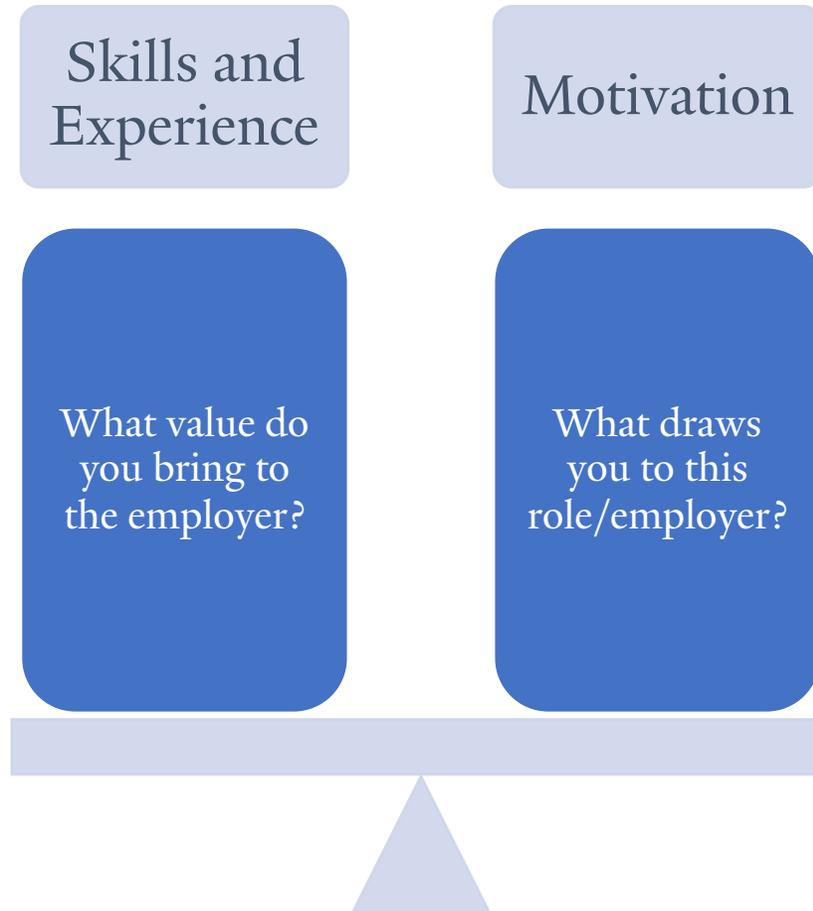
| CV   | RESUME  |
|--|---|
| Comprehensive academic work history  | Strategic, targeted, and concise; overview of the most <b>relevant</b> skills and experiences |
| Used for faculty positions   | Used for non-academic positions   |
| No constraints on length   | 1-3 pages maximum   |
| Full list of publications are included                                     | Publications are rarely included  |
| Content is more important than style                                       | Layout is very important  |
| Usually does not need significant modifications for different job postings | Should be customized for a specific job or function   |

# Resume Fun Facts

- 76% of HR recruiters spend less than 5 minutes deciding whether or not a candidate will proceed to the next step
- 87% of HR recruiters thought it was important or very important for a resume to be tailored to the position
- Considered to be mistakes by recruiters:
  - grammatical and spelling errors: 99%
  - Resume too long (e.g. more than 2 pages): 47%
  - Objective not listed at top of resume: 11%
- 89% of HR recruiters found resume mistakes “sometimes” or “always”

Source: [SHRM Survey Findings: Résumés, Cover Letters, Interviews, 2014](#)

# Your Professional Narrative



# Assessing Your Value to an Employer

**What are employers looking for?**

- Review job postings
- Attend employer information sessions
- Do informational interviews

**What do you offer?**

- Technical skills
- Transferable skills
- Experience
- Interest and "Fit"

# Skills Demanded by Employers

| Skill/Quality  | Weighted average rating* |
|--|--------------------------|
| Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization | 4.63                     |
| Ability to work in a team structure  | 4.62                     |
| Ability to make decisions and solve problems                                     | 4.49                     |
| Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work                                    | 4.41                     |
| Ability to obtain and process information  | 4.34                     |
| Ability to analyze quantitative data   | 4.21                     |
| Technical knowledge related to the job   | 3.99                     |
| Proficiency with computer software programs                                      | 3.86                     |
| Ability to create and/or edit written reports                                    | 3.60                     |
| Ability to sell or influence others  | 3.55                     |

Employers rate the importance of candidate skills/qualities

\*5-point scale, where 1=Not at all important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; and 5=Extremely important

# PhD Skills of Interest to Employers

- Team player
- Global mindset
- Mentoring
- Translating data in stories
- Mission-driven
- Project management
- Cultural awareness
- Attention to detail
- Policy writing
- Intellectual curiosity
- Leadership
- Teaching acumen
- Research experience
- Communication skills
- Willingness to learn
- Working with diverse stakeholders
- Analytical skills
- Entrepreneurial
- Statistics/data
- Resourcefulness
- Organization skills
- Problem solver
- Foreign language skills
- Design-thinking
- Agility/Adaptability
- Passion
- Programming/quant
- Courage
- Creativity

Source: Reported by employers meeting with PhD students at Undercover Bosses event, NYC Nov. 2019

# What Do PhDs Offer?

Technical knowledge

Transferable skills such as:

- **Critical thinking** (Apply reason and logic to problem solving, evaluate trends, make sound judgments)
- **Oral and written communication** (Write grants, give presentations, teach classes, participate in meetings or group discussions)
- **Teamwork and leadership** (Mentor undergraduates, oversee meetings, collaborate on projects with faculty and peers)
- **Project management** (Identify goals, develop timelines, coordinate resources, prioritize tasks)
- **Information management** (Collect, organize and analyze large amounts of data; conduct surveys)

# Inventory Your Experience and Skills

| List   | Write down  | Identify   | Describe   | Organize  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ALL potentially relevant experience (dissertation research, lab work, teaching, leadership activities, volunteer experience, internships.)</li></ul> <p><b>Unpaid experiences count!</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ALL tasks, responsibilities and any measurable results or accomplishments</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• experiences which best market 4-5 key skills demanded by a role/employer</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• each <b>RELEVANT</b> experience in a results-oriented way, emphasizing accomplishments and transferable skills</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• experiences under skills-focused headings</li></ul> |

# Re-Marketing Your Teaching Experience

## **BEFORE: CV entry on a teaching experience:**

Yale University, New Haven CT

Head Teaching Fellow, Bio 101a: Genes and Development

Teaching Fellow, Bio 102a: Principles of Cell Biology

Issues?

- Emphasizes topic, not skills
- Assumes that the reader knows what you know

# Teaching Experience – Skills and Tasks

## Tasks

- Prepared syllabus
- Ordered books
- Created and graded problem sets and exams
- Prepared and delivered lectures and discussions
- Developed multimedia resources
- Evaluated student progress and met with students one-on-one
- Supervised independent research projects
- Organized 2 field trips

## Transferable Skills

- Organization and planning
- Project management
- Communications
- Translating complex concepts to new learners in interesting ways
- Mentoring and leadership

# Your Teaching Experience – New Description

**AFTER: Emphasizes actions and accomplishments**

Teaching Fellow, Yale University, New Haven, CT

- **Collaborated** with faculty to design curriculum, created and graded course materials, led two weekly discussion groups for class of 25 students. and supervised independent research projects.
- **Translated** complex ideas using multiple multimedia sources, including course-specific website, videos, and audio samples
- **Received** excellent student evaluation scores that surpassed course benchmarks for quality.

*Be specific*

*Don't assume what the reader knows*

*Focus on relevant skills*

*Use **STRONG ACTION VERBS***

# Re-Marketing your Research Experience

- **Consider your audience**
  - Are technical skills called out in the job description?
  - Why would a layperson be interested?
  - What relevant skills, techniques, and methods can you emphasize?
  - What are your innovations and accomplishments?
- **Don't forget:**
  - Relevant collaborators, especially for pre-published work
  - Other responsibilities, e.g. managing equipment or lab, supervising other researchers, coordinating interdisciplinary communications, mentoring students
  - Appropriate balance between how you executed work, topic, and accomplishments

# Research Experience – Description for Non-Research Position

PhD Researcher, Yale University , New Haven, CT

- **Designed** multi-year research agenda, developed novel theoretical model, built and executed surveys in 3 languages, conducted 50+ interviews, and performed qualitative analysis.
- **Mentored** two undergraduate researchers
- **Published** research articles as first author in two peer-reviewed journals, and presented research at national conference with over 300 attendees

# Re-Marketing your Extracurricular Experience

## **BEFORE:**

McDougal Fellow, Yale University, New Haven, CT

- Ran graduate student events related to arts and culture.

# Extracurricular Experience – New Description

## AFTER:

McDougal Fellow, Yale University, New Haven, CT

- **Designed** new monthly arts workshop series attended by 50-150 students
- **Established** collaborations with multiple Yale organizations and **performed** outreach to local artists
- **Procured** facilities and supplies, **oversaw** team of 5 student workers, **developed** and **executed** marketing plan, and **managed** budget of \$10,000

# Headings – Make Them Do Work For You!

**Use specific headings to create a highly structured, organized resume.**

Instead of “Work Experience” or “Relevant Experience,” try:

- Research Experience
- Policy and Advocacy Experience
- Leadership and Project Management
- Communications and Writing Experience
- Research Experience in Genomics and Data Analysis
- Software Development Experience

**List in order of importance!**

# Resume Sections: Education

Yale University, New Haven, CT  
PhD, History

May, 2018

- Prize Teaching Fellowship (awarded to 10 graduate students annually)
  - Selected coursework (Yale School of Management): Introduction to Accounting, Financial Modeling
- 
- **List degrees in reverse chronological order**
  - **Dissertation title (maybe - only if relevant)**
  - **Relevant coursework outside of discipline**
  - **Honors and awards – placed under the appropriate degree**

# Resume Sections: Summary

**Must be brief, specific, tailored to the job description. Assertions should be backed up by evidence in the resume.**

- *“Multilingual biochemist with proven leadership in initiating and executing functional protein expression laboratory research. Strong track record of getting projects completed on time, on budget, and meeting deliverables and milestones. Effectively help fellow scientists put their ideas and findings into persuasive and engaging presentations for conferences and industry presentations.”*
- *“Expert education consultant with 10+ years of research and practice-based experience in community development and university administration. Strong public speaking, teaching, and facilitating skills for diverse student, professional, and general audiences.”*
- **Occupies key real estate so use judiciously**
- **Capture key words for applicant tracking systems**
- **Be specific and include quantification where appropriate**
- **Make connections between disparate experiences**
- **End with strong statement of fit, result or accomplishments**

# Resume Sections: Skills

- **Areas of Expertise**

- Early Care and Education ; Survey, Observational, Interview, and Direct Assessment Research Methods; Program Evaluation; Database Management and Statistical Analysis; Developmental Psychology

- **Laboratory Skills**

- Isolation of RNA and analysis by transcriptional profiling and Northern blot; Chromatin immunoprecipitation and analysis on microarrays and by quantitative PCR; Fluorescence microscopy; Statistical analysis of microarray data; Mammalian cell culture

- **Languages**

- French and Spanish (Professional Proficiency), Russian (Intermediate), Serbian (Basic)

- **Computer Skills**

- Stata, R, CPro, ArcGIS, Scientific Workplace, LaTeX, Advanced Excel, Adobe Creative Suite

# Resume Section: Publications and Presentations

Instead of listing all publications and presentations, consider the following if relevant:

- *“Published four articles on human rights in peer-reviewed journals; presented research to international experts at six conferences”*
- *“Contributed to research on new approaches for treating neurological diseases; published results in three peer-reviewed journals (The Lancet, NEJM, and AJM)”*
- Add “Selected Publications” section (max 3 publications)

# Resume Format

- Organize within descriptive categories which you can customize
- Put most important categories first
- Don't get too creative! Remember the applicant tracking systems
- Simple format, standard font (no “fun” fonts)
- Clear, easy to read
- Lots of white space - avoid large blocks of text
- 1-3 pages MAX (1-2 is best)

**Your most relevant qualities should stand out - 30 second test!**

# Resume Mistakes

- Adding all your experience (not just relevant experience)
- Forgetting to include keywords from job description- Consider the applicant tracking software!
- Using pronouns, jargon, acronyms
- Use bland or passive verbs( “responsible for”, “assisted”) rather than strong action verbs
- Including personal information - picture, birthdate, citizenship, gender
- Using a non-professional email address (splashypants@gmail.com)
- Following a rigid template instead of customizing to highlight your strengths
- Submitting your resume as a Word file – **ALWAYS USE PDF**
- Using the wrong tenses
- Forgetting to **proofread, proofread, proofread – not just spell-check!**

# Resume Examples

[OCS tips: Professional Resumes for PhDs](#)

[Imagine PhD – Job Family Resources](#)

[Versatile PhD](#)

## APPLY Organizational Management

You have narrowed your career options and it's time to start applying. Use this section to find job search engines, job postings, key search terms and tips and strategies for preparing your application documents.

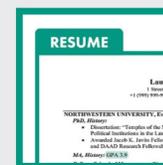
[Back to All Organizational Management Job Family Resources](#)



### Analyzed Job Description

Sample Job: Assistant / Associate Director, Brookings Institution

[Download PDF](#)



### Tailored Resume

Sample resume with highlighted sections tailored to the Job Description

[Download PDF](#)



### Tailored Cover Letter

Sample cover letter with highlighted skills and outcomes tailored to the Job Description

[Download PDF](#)

[Download all content packages items in a single PDF](#)

# The Bottom Line

---

Resumes are a different genre, with a different purpose and style than CVs

---

Curate your skills/experience to match employer's needs

---

Sell both technical and transferable skills

---

Follow guidelines for action verbs, headings, and concision to make your skills easily legible to busy readers

---

# BUILD Professional Skills and Experience

- [Professional development resources at Yale](#)
- [3-Minute Thesis Competition](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning \(free with NetID\)](#)
- [Internships and part-time positions](#)
- [McDougal Career Fellows](#)
- [GPE Fellowships](#)
- [Yale Graduate Impact Fellowship for the Humanities](#)

# More Resume Help

One-on-one advising appointments ([Yale Career Link](#))

Resume/cover letter feedback via **Email** within 5 business days

# Upcoming Workshops: Career Strategy Essentials

- **Career Strategy Essentials: Crafting Your Professional Narrative (GSAS & Postdocs)**  
June 14, 2022 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
*(Office of Career Strategy, 55 Whitney Ave, 3rd floor)*
- **Career Strategy Essentials: Crafting Your Professional Narrative (GSAS & Postdocs)**  
June 16, 2022 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
*(McDougal Graduate Student Center - 135 Prospect St., Upper Level)*