

AWP Job List

Number 2

September 1999

What Makes an Effective Curriculum Vita

If you are planning to apply for an academic job, you will need to prepare a curriculum vita (CV), which is a listing of your education, publications, grants, awards, teaching experience, and more—in essence, an academic resumé. These suggestions, culled from AWP's "Guidelines for AWP Members Using the Career Placement Service," will provide you with an explanation of the headings and information that comprise the academic CV. The AWP Board of Directors and staff consulted with program directors, department chairs, and others who served on hiring committees. The AWP Board and staff shaped these Guidelines to help you meet the demands of your prospective employers. For more information on AWP's Career Placement Service, feel free to contact Placement at <awp-place@gmu.edu>, via phone at (703) 993-4304, or check on the Web at <awpwriter.org>.

If you plan to apply for a range of jobs, in composition, in creative writing, and in teaching English as a second language, for example, you may wish to prepare slightly different CVs for each general type of position. Although you must always be accurate and truthful with the information you present in a CV, it may be appropriate to omit certain qualifications while you emphasize others,

depending upon the position. As with your letters of application, the CV should address the job description and the specific qualifications described in the advertisement for that position.

Generally:

- Present a vita that is easy to read. Pick a clear, simple typeface; use bold fonts, and vary type size and styles to make headings stand out from the text, but use restraint. Don't let your vita become too dense. Be sure there is enough white space. It should invite the eye. Don't use colored paper, scented paper, colored inks or fancy, artsy fonts.
- For an academic vita, avoid descriptive paragraphs of the sort common on nonacademic resumés ("...in this job, I was in charge of the hiring, promotion..." etc.).
- Be clear, objective, and honest about what you list. Your vita should not be a work of fiction—or even creative nonfiction.
- List your most recent accomplishments in any category first.
- The categories after "Education" ("Academic Positions," "Awards" etc.) can be presented in a different order with the headings changed slightly to fit your background and to highlight your achievements. The point is to fit the general form while making yourself look as good as possible for a particular position. If you don't have anything to list in a certain category (no awards, for example), omit the category entirely.
- Be sure to date your CV. You will be revising it often. Dating your CV will help avoid confusion as to which version is the most recent and the best to send out.
- Make sure your CV, like your letter of application, is free of errors.
- Include a header so that your name and a page number will appear on each of the pages following the first page.

Your vita should include the following headings and information:

Education:

- Indicate what genre your thesis is (poetry, nonfiction, fiction).
- If it helps qualify you for the job, you should list places you studied without receiving a certificate or

(continued on page 10)

Curriculum Vita

from page 1

degree, but beware of making your academic career look checkered or ill-conceived.

Academic Positions:

- You can call this “Teaching Experience,” if you prefer, to broaden the category to include short term teaching such as writing conferences, but it might be better to list these under a separate category for “Other Teaching Experience.” Universities and colleges are generally not interested in teaching done at the K-12 level or at summer camps and the like.
- Don’t turn one semester teaching a single section of composition into a visiting writer or assistant professor position. Honesty is best, and honesty will help you remain confident when your application wins you an interview. Make it clear where you taught and for how long. Make sure it is equally clear what your current position is, if you hold one.

Awards, Grants, & Honors:

- Try not to list too many “finalist” or “honorable mentions” in this category. One or two show promise. A long list can make you look like a perpetual also-ran.
- Don’t go too far into the past. It’s not a good idea to list undergraduate awards unless they mean something outside the granting institution.
- Don’t list awards that aren’t for writing, teaching, or some connected field.
- Don’t cite inclusion in books like *Who’s Who*.
- If you don’t have any awards, you can omit this category from your vita. If you have awards, but some other aspect of your vita is stronger (say, publications), you can move that one up. Always emphasize your strengths.

Publications:

- Note clearly when and where the work was published and indicate, by subheadings, the length of each publication, whether it was a book or an article.
- If you publish in more than one genre, you can also have separate subheadings for poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, plays, etc.
- You can list reviews you’ve written on other people’s work (under a separate subheading), but make sure the places in which they appeared would impress a serious writer or scholar, or at least a serious reader, as important venues for a review. This probably rules out campus newspapers or local news weeklies, for example.
- The best choice for formatting citations is the MLA style, but whatever style you use, be consistent.
- If you have a substantial number of publications, you may want to list only books and a brief list of representative magazines on the vita itself and then attach a separate bibliography or publications list.
- Don’t use this section to list reviews of your work by others or interviews you’ve given.

Work in Progress:

- This isn’t a category you must have, but it can make a nice opening question for an interviewer.
- It’s best to list only one project here. Don’t list more than two projects, or you risk seeming scattered and unlikely to complete any one book.

Courses Taught:

- Use actual course titles if possible, but if the actual course title is unhelpful (English 208), you can list classes you have taught generically (Undergraduate Fiction Workshop). Make clear which are graduate and which are undergraduate courses. Generally, you do not list

information about how you taught the course here or your teaching philosophy.

Additional Professional Experience:

- Limit yourself to experiences that might be of use or interest to an academic department or a writing program. These might include time spent as an editor, journalist, literary festival coordinator, etc. You might also list under this category having served as a judge or screener for a literary contest, as an outside reader or editorial board member for presses, magazines, etc. If you have a fair amount of this kind of experience, you could use a separate subheading such as “Academic Service” or “Professional Service.”

Professional Memberships:

This category is optional.

References:

- List the three to five writers, teachers, or other professionals you have asked to write you letters of recommendation, their titles if applicable (Director of Creative Writing, XYZ Professor, etc.), professional addresses, and phone numbers.
- Be sure your choice of recommenders shows all your strengths. You may want to pick one person specifically because she can comment favorably on your teaching, another because he knows your writing well, still another because she has known you the longest or is a respected writer or teacher herself. If you have moved beyond your days as a student, try not to rely solely on people who were your teachers. Ideally, your letters should reflect your growth as a writer, teacher, and member of the larger writing community.

The template that begins on page 11 illustrates the use of these headings and proper formatting. If you are adept at page design, you might also want to try an alternative format for a CV, in which the headings appear as rubrics in a column beside the appropriate information (see page 13). Whatever format you choose—the important design elements are clarity and simplicity. AWP

Date your CV here

Your Name Here in Bold

address
phone #
e-mail address

EDUCATION:

MFA Creative Writing, 19—
name of school, city and state
title of thesis, genre

BA in what, 19—
name of school, city and state

ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Z, City, State, 1997 to present.

Visiting Writer, Department of Language and Literature, AAA College, City, State, 1996–97.

Adjunct Instructor, English Department, University of W, City, State, 1995–96.

Teaching Assistant, English Department, University of W [omit city and state if you list a school more than once], 1990–93.

AWARDS, GRANTS, & HONORS:

Poetry Fellow, Institute for Creative Writing, English Department, University of Y, City, State, 1997–98.

Creative Writing Fellowship, State Arts Board, 1996.

Smith-Jones Prize in Poetry, College of Y, City, State, 1995.

PUBLICATIONS:

Books:

A Really Great Novel, New York: Big Publishing House, 1998.
Poems for the Ages, City, State: University of W Press, 1997.

Stories in Magazines:

“Ham” and “Bacon.” *V Quarterly* (forthcoming, summer 2000).
“Maple Syrup.” *Y College Review* 52:2 (1998) 318-330.
“Flapjacks.” *Men’s Magazine* September (1997) 30-32.

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Header Here with Your Name & Page # — 2

WORK IN PROGRESS:

The Big Book of Life: a memoir about growing up in the Amazon as an anthropologist's only child.
First draft of three hundred pages completed.

COURSES TAUGHT:

University of Z

Graduate Seminar in Novel Writing, Fall 1998
Advanced Fiction Workshop, Spring 1998
Beginning Poetry Workshop, Fall 1997

AAA College

Introduction to Creative Writing, Fall 1996
Advanced Poetry Workshop, Spring 1997

University of W

Composition, 1990–93, 1995–96
World Survey of Literature, Spring 1996

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Fiction Editor, *Why Me Review*, University of Z, 1997-98.

Preliminary Judge, Jones Poetry Book Prize, University of X Press, 1997.

Organizer, AAA College Reading Series, 1996.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Modern Language Association
Associated Writing Programs

REFERENCES:

Name	Name
Title	Title
Address	Address
Phone number	Phone number
Name	
Title	
Address	
Phone number	

August 20, 1999

Luna Hartman

HOME ADDRESS

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(420) 382-1942 • lhartman@erols.com

EDUCATION

MFA Creative Writing, 1995
Lumiere University, Colorado Springs, CO
Slamdance on Tierre del Fuego, short stories

BA in English Literature, 1991
Sonoma College, Sonoma, CA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Z
City, State (1997 to present).

Visiting Writer, Department of Language and Literature,
AAA College, City, State (1996-97).

Adjunct Instructor, English Department,
University of W, City, State (1995-96).

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GRANTS,
& HONORS**

Poetry Fellow, Institute for Creative Writing
English Dept, University of Y, City, State, 1997-98

Creative Writing Fellowship, State Arts Board, 1996

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“Flapjacks.” *Men’s Magazine* September (1997) 30-32.

And so on—through the rest of the standard headings for a CV.