

Getting Started with CVs and Cover Letters

The CVs and cover letters that you send to potential employers and professional contacts are nothing less than advertisements of your skills, interests, and experiences. Finding a position in academe, research, or industry can be an extremely competitive process, and it is important to give careful attention to all aspects of your application packets.

If you are applying to large research universities, it will often be understood that your interest in them lies in their prestige and opportunities to do high level research with top names in your field. However, if you are applying to smaller, more teaching-oriented institutions, such as liberal arts colleges or smaller, lesser-known universities, then it will become increasingly important for you to convince the employer that you have a genuine interest in becoming a member of their faculty. Either way, your CV and cover letters will be extremely important ways to attract attention and make your case.

Other Resources

This guide is designed to help GSAS students get started in putting together CVs and cover letters for careers in academe, research institutes, think tanks, industry, and other such fields that require and seek out PhD-level applicants in specific disciplines. To find out about related workshops or to have your application materials reviewed by OCS staff, contact the Office of Career Services at 617-495-2595, or check out our Web site at www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu.

Also see:

Heiberger, M.M. & Vick, J.M. (2001). *The Academic Job Search Handbook*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Newhouse, M. L. (1997). *Cracking the Academia Nut: A Guide to Preparing for Your Academic Career*. Cambridge, MA: Office of Career Services, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. (available at OCS)

Frequently Asked Questions about CVs

What is a CV, or curriculum vitae, and how does it differ from a traditional resume?

While a resume is generally a one to two page document, a CV is usually two to ten pages in length. A CV is a document which is used when pursuing a position within academe or other areas where your field specific knowledge and academic accomplishments are required. This marketing tool is used to introduce you, to communicate your qualifications, to establish your professional image and to pique the interest of the reader to encourage an invitation for an interview.

In addition to using a CV to pursue positions, an academic may also be asked to submit a CV for merit and tenure reviews, for support when submitting manuscript proposals for publication, for submission with grant proposals, for publicity or introductions for speaking engagements, when applying for membership in a professional society or organization, when offering services as a consultant, when being considered for leadership roles, awards or special recognitions, or when pursuing a sabbatical or fellowship opportunity.

It is important to choose a format for your CV which will highlight your strengths, achievements and experiences. Your CV should contain a record of your educational background, professional accomplishments (including teaching and research), publications, presentations, recognitions, collegial activities and professional affiliations. Some additional categories to consider include Teaching Interests, Research Interests, Administrative Experience, Leadership, Language Competencies, and Cross-cultural Experience. References may be included but are often listed on a separate reference page instead.

As with a resume, sentence fragments with action verbs are recommended rather than complete sentences. Pronouns are not used. It is important to arrange the CV with the most important pieces of information being listed first. All information should be in reverse chronological order within each category. Highlighting should be used but judiciously. The presentation must be professional, so be sure to proof it carefully and have it critiqued by advisors, colleagues, people in the field, and career counselors. Remember that the CV is a work in progress and should be revised regularly as you develop your professional career.

Should I have more than one version of my CV for different types of employers?

Yes. Think about who will be reading your resume. For academic jobs, you use a CV so that people in your field will appreciate the specifics of your research and your accomplishments within your field. If you are applying to a small, liberal arts college that puts a premium on teaching experience, you will want to highlight your experience as a teaching fellow, and any tutoring experience you have had. If you're applying for a nonacademic job—such as in a research institute, or a research position in industry—then your CV may downplay teaching and go into more detail on any nonacademic or applied experience you may have had.

Are there formatting guidelines I should keep in mind?

Stick to a common font like Times New Roman or Garamond, and avoid text boxes, underlining, or shading. Font size should be between 10 and 12 point, and kept consistent throughout the document. Margins should be equal all the way around the page, and should be at least three quarters of an inch in size.

Can someone at OCS review my CV?

Yes. Each semester the GSAS counselors hold weekly walk-in hours, as well as two days of special drop in sessions (typically in September and May) for GSAS students interested in having their CVs or resumes critiqued. In addition, during the academic year there are OCS counselors available on a walk-in basis daily from 1:30-3:30. Students and alumni/ae may also have their CVs reviewed as part of a counseling appointment with a GSAS staff member (to schedule, call 617-495-2595).

Consider describing your experiences with these “action verbs”:

Achievement

accelerated
accomplished
achieved
activated
attained
competed
earned
effected
elicited
executed
exercised
expanded
expedited
generated
improved
increased
insured
marketed
mastered
obtained
produced
reduced
reorganized
reproduced
restructured
simplified
sold
solicited
streamlined
succeeded
upgraded

Help/Teach

advised
clarified
coached
collaborated
consulted
counseled
educated
explained
facilitated
guided
helped
instructed
modeled
participated
taught
trained
tutored

Administrative

arranged
channeled
charted
collated
collected
coordinated
dispensed
distributed
established
executed
implemented
installed
maintained
offered
ordered
outlined
performed
prepared
processed
provided
purchased
recorded
rendered
served
serviced
sourced
supported

Lead/Manage

acquired
administered
approved
assigned
chaired
contracted
controlled
decided
delegated
directed
enlisted
governed
handled
initiated
instilled
instituted
managed
motivated
presided
recruited
retained
reviewed
selected
shaped
supervised
united

Communication

addressed
arbitrated
articulated
briefed
communicated
conducted
contacted
conveyed
corresponded
delivered
demonstrated
edited
entertained
interviewed
informed
lectured
mediated
negotiated
persuaded
presented
promoted
proposed
publicized
reported
represented
responded
suggested
translated
wrote

Plan/Organize

allocated
anticipated
arranged
catalogued
categorized
classified
collected
consolidated
convened
edited
eliminated
employed
gathered
grouped
monitored
organized
planned
regulated
scheduled
structured
summarized
targeted

Creative

authored
changed
conceived
constructed
created
developed
devised
drafted
established
formulated
founded
illustrated
influenced
introduced
invented
launched
originated
revamped
revised
staged
updated
visualized

Research/Analytical

assessed
compared
critiqued
defined
derived
detected
determined
discovered
evaluated
examined
explored
found
inspected
interpreted
investigated
located
measured
observed
predicted
rated
recommended
researched
reviewed
searched
studied
surveyed
verified

Financial

allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
compiled
computed
controlled
disbursed
estimated
figured
financed
forecasted
projected
reconciled
tabulated

Technical

adapted
adjusted
applied
built
computed
constructed
designed
diagnosed
engineered
experimented
maintained
modified
operated
prescribed
programmed
proved
reinforced
repaired
resolved
restored
solved
specified
systematized
tested

CV Sample for Academe 1

CATHERINE RYAN

History and East Asian Languages
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

000 K Street, #40
Boston, MA 02000
(617) 001-1234
ryan999@fas.harvard.edu

EDUCATION

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

PhD, expected November 2005. History and East Asian Languages (late Qing/Republican China)
General Examination Fields: Pre-modern China, Modern China, Social Anthropology

AB, *magna cum laude*, 1993. Concentration: East Asian Languages and Civilizations (China)
Semester Abroad at Peking University (CIEE Chinese Language Program)

University of Paris III (Oriental Languages and Civilizations), France

Diplôme Supérieur, 1994. Field: Contemporary Chinese Studies. Emphasis on PRC international and regional relations

DISSERTATION

“The Power of Mercy: The Early History of the Chinese Red Cross Society, 1900-1937”

Advisor: Professor Philip Kuhn

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Albert Gallatin Fellowship in International Affairs	2004
Harvard University Graduate Society Dissertation Fellowship Alternate	2004
Harvard University Center for International Affairs Summer Research Grant	2004
Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant for dissertation research	2003
Committee on Scholarly Communication with China (CSCC) Research Grant Extension	2003
CSCC Research Grant for twelve months of dissertation research in Nanjing, PRC	2002
Harvard University Sheldon Travel Grant for dissertation research	2002
Academic-year FLAS for preliminary dissertation research	2001
NCR Foundation Research Grant for research in Taipei, ROC	2001
Harvard Club of the Republic of China Research Grant for research in Taipei, ROC	2001
Summer FLAS for third-year intensive Japanese, Harvard University	2000
Tower Fellowship for study in France	1993

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

“Social Action and Elite Identity: The Chinese Red Cross Society in Late Qing and Republican China,” in *Papers on Chinese History* (2005), forthcoming.

“Co-opting the State: Philanthropy and Local Government in Republican China.” Delivered at Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Washington, DC, April 7, 2004.

“The Introduction of International Humanitarian Norms into China: The Case of the Chinese Red Cross Society.” Delivered at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, March 22, 2004, and the Fourth Annual Graduate Student Conference on Asia, Columbia University, February 12, 2004.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Harvard University, Core Program & Anthropology Department, Cambridge, MA

Teaching Fellow, Anthropology of China (Professor James Watson), Spring 2002

Taught two sections of introductory anthropology of China.

Harvard University, East Asian Studies Department, Cambridge, MA

Tutor, Junior Tutorial, China, Fall 1999; Fall, Spring 2000-2001

Developed syllabus and taught seminar on late imperial through contemporary China to third-year EAS honors concentrators.

Clark University, Worcester, MA

Instructor, Nathan Mayhew Seminars (Summer School), Summer 1999

Designed and taught course for summer students on the Tiananmen Square incident in historical perspective.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Harvard University, East Asian Studies Department, Cambridge, MA

Assistant Head Tutor, Fall, Spring 2003-2005

Administrative director and academic advisor for undergraduate East Asian Studies program. Oversaw seven teaching fellows and 50 third-year students. Organized publication of *East Asian Studies Newsletter*.

Harvard University, Winthrop House, Cambridge, MA

Non-Resident Tutor, Fall 1999-present

Provided academic and non-academic advising; organized and ran weekly Chinese language table; served on House grant selection committee (Rockefeller and Truman grants).

Papers on Chinese History, Cambridge, MA

Editor, Graduate Student Journal, 2001, 2002, 2004 editions

Worked with four-member student board to edit and prepare publication of student papers on issues of Song, Ming, Qing and Republican history.

Harvard University, Graduate Student Council, Cambridge, MA

History and East Asian Languages Representative, Fall 1999-2001

Represented department at monthly meetings; served on Spring 2001 GSC travel grant selection committee. International Student Host, 1999-2001.

Committee on Scholarly Communication with China, Beijing, PRC

Program Assistant, National Program for Advanced Study and Research in China, 1996-1997

Administered grants for study in China to American students and scholars.

RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

Graduate Student Associate, **Harvard Center for International Affairs**, 2003-2004

Visiting Scholar, **Nanjing University**, Nanjing, PRC, 2002-2003

Research conducted at Number Two Historical Archives, Nanjing; Municipal Archives, Shanghai; Number One

Historical Archives, Beijing; Municipal Archives, Beijing; Archival Section of the Chinese Red Cross Society, Beijing

Visiting Scholar, **Archives of the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**, Geneva, Switzerland, 2002

Visiting Scholar, **Academia Sinica**, Taipei, ROC, 2001

LANGUAGES

Mandarin Chinese: excellent. Classical Chinese: reading knowledge. French: excellent. Japanese: reading knowledge.

A version of this CV originally appeared in Newhouse, M. L. (1997). *Cracking the Academia Nut: A Guide to Preparing for Your Academic Career*. Cambridge, MA: Office of Career Services, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.

CV Sample for Academe 2

ELLEN R. JOSEPH
josepher@neuron.ucla.edu

3400 West Chester Blvd.
Apartment 109
Los Angeles, CA 90669
(813) 566-4321

Department of Neuroscience
Science Center, Room 5480
18000 San Bernardino Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90620
(813) 321-1234

EDUCATION

Columbia University New York, NY
PhD, Neuroscience 2000
Dissertation: Development of synaptic plasticity in *Aplysia californica*

Dartmouth College Hanover, NH
BS, *magna cum laude*, Biology. Phi Beta Kappa 1992

GRANT AND AWARDS

Post-Doctoral National Research Service Award 2001-2004
National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

Pre-Doctoral National Research Service Award 1996-1998
National Institute of Mental Health

Department of Neuroscience, Faculty Award 2000
Columbia University

Graduate Fellowship 1992-1996
Columbia University

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, CA
Postdoctoral Fellow with Dr. Young X. Shen 2000 – Present

Project: Developmental regulation of NMDA receptor-mediated synaptic transmission in zebra finch brain

- Developed single cell PCR method to study developmental changes in NMDA receptors, correlated with developmental stages of song learning.
- Analyzed developmental changes in juvenile song.
- Altered development of song with behavioral and circadian manipulations.

Columbia University New York, NY
Graduate Student with Dr. Thomas J. Schmidt 1993 – 1999

Thesis Research: Serotonergic modulation of synaptic transmission in developing and adult *Aplysia*

- Used *in vitro* single cell neurophysiological recording and stimulation to study developmental emergence of two serotonin-mediated forms of synaptic plasticity.

Marine Biological Laboratory Woods Hole, MA
Participant, Neural Systems and Behavior course Summer 1994

Columbia University

Graduate Student with Dr. Emily Chester

New York, NY

1992 –1993

Laboratory Rotation Project: Expression of Lupus antigens in fetal rat brain

- Characterized developmental changes in expression of numerous lupus antigens using immunocytochemistry and fluorescence microscopy.

Biosure Corporation

Assistant Scientist

San Diego, CA

Summers 1990, 1991

Project: Optimization of production of bacterial and yeast enzymes necessary for antibiotic synthesis

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of California, Los Angeles

Guest Lecturer and Consultant, Seminar in Animal Communication

Los Angeles, CA

Spring 2002

Written and Oral Communication Advisor

Spring 2001, Spring 2002

Columbia University

Guest Lecturer, Introductory Psychology

New York, NY

Summer 1997, 1998

Head Teaching Assistant, Cellular Basis of Behavior

Spring 1997

Teaching Assistant, Cellular Basis of Behavior

Spring 1994

Teaching Assistant, Neurobiology

Fall 1995

Dartmouth College

Teaching Assistant, Special Topics in Psychology

Hanover, NH

Spring 1992

Teaching Assistant, Introductory Biology

Fall 1991, Fall 1992

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2002). Two-stage, input-specific synaptic maturation in a nucleus essential for vocal production in the zebra finch. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 22:9107-9116.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (2002). Developmental dissociation of serotonin-induced spike broadening and synaptic facilitation in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 22:334-346.

Joseph, E.R., Chang, A.R., Kline, N.J., and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Pharmacological and kinetic characterization of two functional classes of serotonergic modulation in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Journal of Neurophysiology*. 78:855-866.

Smythe, M.I., Vaida, A.F., Joseph, E.R., Belema, J.F., and Denny, K.M. (1993). Fetal expression of renin, angiotensinogen, and atriopeptin genes in chick heart. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypertension*. A15: 617-629.

REVIEW ARTICLES

Joseph, E.R., LeBlanc, R., Kline, N.J., Bliss, E.A., and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Central actions of serotonin across the life span of *Aplysia*: implications for development and learning. In H. Koike, Y. Kidokoro, K. Takahashi, and T. Kanaseki (Eds.), *Basic Neuroscience in Invertebrates* (pp. 249-265). Tokyo: Japan Scientific Societies Press.

Kline, N.J., Bliss, E.A., Joseph, E.R., and Schmidt, T.J. (1997). Differential modulatory actions of serotonin in *Aplysia* sensory neurons: implications for development and learning. *Seminars in Neuroscience*. 9:21-33.

ABSTRACTS

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2002). Synaptic maturation is input-specific and occurs in two phases in nucleus RA of the zebra finch. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 28:1369.

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2001). Developmental regulation of NMDA receptor-mediated synaptic currents in nucleus RA of the zebra finch. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 25:191.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Synaptic facilitation is independent of spike duration in sensory neurons of juvenile *Aplysia*. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 25:695.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1997). Serotonergic facilitation of synaptic transmission in juvenile *Aplysia*. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 23:814.

Joseph, E.R., Kline, N.J., and Schmidt, T.J. (1995). Temporal dissociation of 5HT-induced spike broadening and excitability in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 21:941.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1994). Teaching neuroscience through a laboratory experience: you can't start too young. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 20:518.

REFERENCES

Young X. Shen, Ph.D.
Horton W. Smith Professor of Neuroethology
Department of Neuroscience
University of California, Los Angeles
Science Center, Room 5485
18000 San Bernardino Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90260
(813) 321-1233
shenyx@neuron.ucla.edu

Dr. Akaysha M. Lin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of California, Los Angeles
William James Laboratories, Room B18
Los Angeles, CA 90243
(813) 321-9999
linam@psych.ucla.edu

Thomas J. Schmidt, Ph.D.
Elias T. Young Professor of Psychology
Department of Neuroscience
Columbia University
2649 Washington Blvd.
New York, NY 12345
(212) 999-5678
tjschmidt@fas.columbia.edu

Emily A. Chester, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Neuroscience
Columbia University
2649 Washington Blvd.
New York, NY 12345
(212) 999-3456
eachester@fas.columbia.edu

This CV is appropriate for applying for tenure track faculty positions at research universities. If Ellen were applying for a faculty job at a liberal arts college, teaching would be on the first page, and would include descriptions of her teaching experience.

CV Sample for Industry

ELLEN R. JOSEPH
josepher@neuron.ucla.edu

3400 West Chester Blvd.
Apartment 109
Los Angeles, CA 90669
(813) 566-4321

Department of Neuroscience
Science Center, Room 5480
18000 San Bernardino Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90620
(813) 321-1234

EDUCATION

Columbia University
PhD, Neuroscience

New York, NY
2000

Dartmouth College
BS, *magna cum laude*, Biology. Phi Beta Kappa

Hanover, NH
1992

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of California, Los Angeles

Los Angeles, CA
2000 – Present

Postdoctoral Fellow with Dr. Young X. Shen

Project: Developmental regulation of NMDA receptor-mediated synaptic transmission in zebra finch brain

- Developed single cell PCR method to study developmental changes in NMDA receptors, correlated with developmental stages of song learning.
- Analyzed developmental changes in juvenile song.
- Altered development of song with behavioral and circadian manipulations.

Columbia University

New York, NY
1993 – 1999

Graduate Student with Dr. Thomas J. Schmidt

Thesis Research: Serotonergic modulation of synaptic transmission in developing and adult *Aplysia*

- Used *in vitro* single cell neurophysiological recording and stimulation to study developmental emergence of two serotonin-mediated forms of synaptic plasticity.

Marine Biological Laboratory

Woods Hole, MA
Summer 1994

Participant, Neural Systems and Behavior course

Biosure Corporation

San Diego, CA
Summers 1990, 1991

Assistant Scientist

Project: Optimization of enzyme production necessary for synthesis of a B-Lactam antibiotic

- Through selective mutagenesis of yeast, increased yield of target enzyme 25%
- Through manipulation of components of bacterial media, increased target enzyme yield 15%
- Improved efficiency of yeast enzymatic assay by 20% and developed method for mass production and harvest.

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Single cell PCR

In vivo and *in vitro* patch clamping

Intracellular and extracellular neurostimulation

Immunocytochemistry

Statistical Analysis

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of California, Los Angeles

Guest Lecturer and Consultant, Seminar in Animal Communication
Written and Oral Communication Advisor

Los Angeles, CA
Spring 2002
Spring 2001, Spring 2002

Columbia University

Guest Lecturer, Introductory Psychology
Head Teaching Assistant, Cellular Basis of Behavior
Teaching Assistant, Cellular Basis of Behavior
Teaching Assistant, Neurobiology

New York, NY
Summer 1997, 1998
Spring 1997
Spring 1994
Fall 1995

Dartmouth College

Teaching Assistant, Special Topics in Psychology
Teaching Assistant, Introductory Biology

Hanover, NH
Spring 1992
Fall 1991, Fall 1992

GRANT AND AWARDS

Post-Doctoral National Research Service Award

National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

2001-2004

Pre-Doctoral National Research Service Award

National Institute of Mental Health

1996-1998

Department of Neuroscience, Faculty Award

Columbia University

2000

Graduate Fellowship

Columbia University

1992-1996

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2002). Two-stage, input-specific synaptic maturation in a nucleus essential for vocal production in the zebra finch. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 22:9107-9116.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (2002). Developmental dissociation of serotonin-induced spike broadening and synaptic facilitation in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 22:334-346.

Joseph, E.R., Chang, A.R., Kline, N.J., and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Pharmacological and kinetic characterization of two functional classes of serotonergic modulation in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Journal of Neurophysiology*. 78:855-866.

Smythe, M.I., Vaida, A.F., Joseph, E.R., Belema, J.F., and Denny, K.M. (1993). Fetal expression of renin, angiotensinogen, and atriopeptin genes in chick heart. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypertension*. A15: 617-629.

REVIEW ARTICLES

Joseph, E.R., LeBlanc, R., Kline, N.J., Bliss, E.A., and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Central actions of serotonin across the life span of *Aplysia*: implications for development and learning. In H. Koike, Y. Kidokoro, K. Takahashi, and T. Kanaseki (Eds.), *Basic Neuroscience in Invertebrates* (pp. 249-265). Tokyo: Japan Scientific Societies Press.

Kline, N.J., Bliss, E.A., Joseph, E.R., and Schmidt, T.J. (1997). Differential modulatory actions of serotonin in *Aplysia* sensory neurons: implications for development and learning. *Seminars in Neuroscience*. 9:21-33.

ABSTRACTS

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2002). Synaptic maturation is input-specific and occurs in two phases in nucleus RA of the zebra finch. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 28:1369.

Joseph, E.R. and Shen, Y.X. (2001). Developmental regulation of NMDA receptor-mediated synaptic currents in nucleus RA of the zebra finch. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 25:191.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1999). Synaptic facilitation is independent of spike duration in sensory neurons of juvenile *Aplysia*. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 25:695.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1997). Serotonergic facilitation of synaptic transmission in juvenile *Aplysia*. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 23:814.

Joseph, E.R., Kline, N.J., and Schmidt, T.J. (1995). Temporal dissociation of 5HT-induced spike broadening and excitability in *Aplysia* sensory neurons. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 21:941.

Joseph, E.R. and Schmidt, T.J. (1994). Teaching neuroscience through a laboratory experience: you can't start too young. *Society for Neuroscience Abstracts*. 20:518.

This version of Ellen's CV is virtually identical to the one for academic positions, except she has emphasized her research experience by moving Grants and Awards to page 2. She has also added a list of Skills and Techniques, and has omitted her reference list.

Cover Letter Template

Your Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Month Day, Year

Contact Name
Title (if known)
Organization Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Note that in an e-mail message, you would omit both your and the addressee's contact information, as well as the date. Simply start with the salutation.

Dear Professor/Dr. Last Name:

Opening paragraph: Clearly state why you are writing. If applying for a specific job, indicate the position title and where you saw it advertised. If you were referred to the position from someone within the institution, or by someone the addressee knows, mention that as well.

Middle paragraph(s): You should have several paragraphs that elaborate on how your research and other experiences in graduate school have prepared you for the job as it is described. Disciplines differ on the length and level of detail required for cover letters, so be sure to get feedback from people in your department. Junior faculty members who have recently been on the market themselves are often the best people to ask.

Think about how your interest in both the *job* and the *organization* developed—in order to stand out from the potentially long list of applicants, you will need to make a coherent argument for why it was a logical decision on your part to apply for the position, and why it would be a logical decision on their part to hire you. What kind of contribution will you make to their existing department? How will you fit in? Make sure you are writing for your target audience. For instance, for a liberal arts college you may use more space addressing your teaching experience than you would for a large research university. For a school outside a major metropolitan area, you may also want to indicate why you are interested in living in that part of the country.

Closing paragraph: Indicate that your CV and other supporting documentation is enclosed. Express interest in speaking with the addressee further in a personal interview, and indicate that you will follow up within an appropriate time frame. Thank them for their time and consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

(signature)

Name (typed)

Sample Cover Letter

000 K Street, #40
Boston, MA 02000

November 15, 2005

Professor Jason Winter
Chair
Department of History
Williams College
Williamstown, MA 02167

Dear Dr. Winter:

I am writing to apply for the position in Chinese History advertised in the Association of Asian Studies Newsletter. I am currently writing a dissertation at Harvard University under the direction of Professor Philip Kuhn, entitled "The Power of Mercy: The Early History of the Chinese Red Cross Society, 1900-1937." I will complete my dissertation in August 2005. An abbreviated version of my first chapter will be published this spring in *Papers on Chinese History* (Harvard University).

My research focuses on state-society relations in China in the early twentieth century. My dissertation, "The Power of Mercy," reveals changing patterns of elite participation in public affairs in the late Qing and Republican China by examining the transformation of Chinese philanthropy from a sporadic local initiative, led by elites, to a sustained national effort, engaging a steadily growing segment of the Chinese polity. I use the archives of the Chinese Red Cross Society, as well as other published and unpublished materials gathered in China, Taiwan, Switzerland, and the U.S., to chart this shift in elite activity from the local to the national arena and to map out a parallel transition in elite self-definition. China's merchant and educated elite, caught in the flux of a crumbling dynastic system and an onslaught of foreign influences, used philanthropy, particularly the medical philanthropy espoused by the Chinese Red Cross, to create a social niche for themselves that was at once traditionally sanctioned and, at the same time, appealingly "modern." My study links these trends to China's growing nationalism and emerging interest in becoming a member of the international community. This investigation into the politics of humanitarianism places China's present-day engagement in the global arena in historical perspective and uncovers some of the earliest bases for the dissonance between China's international behavior and Western expectations for that behavior.

My work on the Chinese Red Cross Society also contributes to current scholarship on the rise of "civil society" in developing nations, an issue of central importance in today's era of emerging democracies. My research reveals the growth of alternative loci of power in the realm of social welfare action in China, power sources developed in a notably *non-confrontational*, mutually beneficial relationship with the state. These findings challenge much recent work on "civil society" which claims that the public sphere must operate in opposition to the state; they underscore the need to re-examine how social actors and governments work together. This in-depth study of philanthropic development in China also fills a gap in scholarship on non-Judeo-Christian philanthropic traditions and makes important strides toward an understanding of the historic relationship between the government and the voluntary sector prefacing the growth of the welfare state.

As a graduate student, I have combined research and teaching. At Harvard, I have designed and led a year-long tutorial (seminar) on modern Chinese history for honors-track undergraduates and taught two sections of an introductory course on the social anthropology of China. In these courses, organized as discussion seminars, I stress a range of skills: writing, critical reading, and persuasive oral presentation; I also challenge students to consider changing gender roles in Chinese society. Students have been generous in expressing their appreciation of my enthusiasm for the material and my dedication to improving their writing and analytical abilities; I would be glad to send their letters and course evaluations to you at your convenience.

My interdepartmental teaching experience and my training in pre-modern Chinese history, modern Chinese history, and social anthropology have made me a devout believer in interdisciplinary study. I am excited to see Williams's extensive course offerings in anthropology, political science, and Asian American history, all fruitful areas for cross-disciplinary cooperation, complementing and adding complexity to the teaching of history. I am particularly interested in working with Williams's Asian Studies and Women's Studies programs to build on these interdisciplinary opportunities.

At Harvard, I have taken an active role in fostering academic community. Skills I developed while working in academic administration in Washington have enabled me to build bridges within and between disciplines through activities such as organizing an interdisciplinary lunch series at Harvard's Center for International Affairs (long a bastion of Political Science); founding and editing a graduate student journal; assisting in ongoing joint curriculum development of the East Asian Studies program; and serving as a non-academic advisor to Harvard undergraduates. My experience teaching and advising students, my administrative abilities, my familiarity with living and studying abroad and with the process of placing students in overseas programs, as well as my commitment to the larger ideals of a liberal arts education all combine to make me and Williams an ideal match.

I am enclosing my curriculum vitae and course descriptions; my dossier (including letters from Professors Philip Kuhn, William Kirby, James Watson, and Ezra Vogel) will be forwarded to you separately. Please let me know if I can provide additional information or writing samples to aid you in the evaluation of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Catherine Ryan

Catherine Ryan's letter demonstrates tailoring to the teaching and community service needs of a small liberal arts college, particularly to the teaching needs of Williams, which she has researched. Her dissertation discussion is longer than usual, probably because she has not appended a summary. It effectively brings out the significance of her thesis, although she neglects to mention her future research. The CV places her impressive "Fellowships and Awards" at the beginning and her "Conference and Publications" ahead of "Teaching Experience" (it could go either way for a teaching college). She got the Williams job.