



# How to write a curriculum vitae – advice for young researchers

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## PRACTICAL SCENARIO

A pulmonary fellow in Brazil is planning to apply for a position as a student in a prestigious doctoral program in another state. She consulted the program's website and learned that, in order to apply, in addition to other documentation, she needed a complete, updated version of her curriculum vitae (CV) at *Plataforma Lattes*. She realizes that her CV is one of the most important documents in the application process, since its content may be compared with that of other candidates to the doctoral position. Therefore, she seeks help to make sure that her CV at *Plataforma Lattes* is not only up to date, but that it helps her stand out as a good candidate for the graduate program as well.

## WHAT IS PLATAFORMA LATTES

*Plataforma Lattes* is a nationwide electronic platform for academic CV adopted by most funding agencies, academic institutions, and research institutes in Brazil. It was launched in 1999 by the Brazilian *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq, National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) and is integrated with databases from other institutions, such as SciELO, Scopus, and CrossRef, as well as university databases, giving the platform user the possibility of accessing information from the researcher's CV, including his/her connections with academic institutions and prior funding.<sup>(1)</sup>

Given that the *Plataforma Lattes* system is almost universally adopted by academic institutions in Brazil and provides standardization of the process to include

items in academic CV, anyone accessing the platform can consult a researcher's CV and use it to evaluate and compare researchers, students, and institutions.

## WHY IS THE CV SO IMPORTANT IN ACADEMIC MEDICINE?

A CV is a professional portfolio of a researcher's academic career. In many situations, it is the first impression that a future academic supervisor, employer, or funding agency will have of the researcher. It tells the researcher's professional story, and even at first glance, it should present information in a way that highlights strengths and expertise that show that the candidate is the perfect match for the role he/she is applying for.

One of the most important parts of a CV is the personal statement—described as the "Summary" in the platform—containing from one to three paragraphs, in which the researcher summarizes his/her academic history, current job position, accomplishments, and interests. In some instances, the personal statement is longer and used to apply to specific grants.<sup>(2)</sup> *Plataforma Lattes* shows the personal statement as the first and, therefore, most visible item in the CV. The platform generates a standardized text automatically, extracting information from other standardized items, such as education/training and current job positions. However, researchers can (and should) edit this section periodically, making sure that the text is well written and tells their professional story in a way that conveys what makes them fit for the position they are applying for.

**Table 1.** Elements to include in a curriculum vitae: the model at *Plataforma Lattes*.

Item	What to include
Brief personal details	Name, professional address
Personal statement <sup>a</sup>	One to three paragraphs summarizing career story, current job position, accomplishments and interests
Education (most recent first)	Undergraduate degree, specialization, residency, and fellowship for clinicians
Job positions (most recent first)	It may be a fellow position for young researchers
Research projects and funding	Current and completed projects, including funding details
Awards and prizes (most recent first)	It may include undergraduate prizes
Publications	Peer-reviewed manuscripts, book chapters, and conference abstracts
Teaching experience	It may include informal teaching such as teaching interns
Conference attendance	National and international conferences

<sup>a</sup>For some specific awards and grants, the personal statement may be longer and more focused on the position being sought.<sup>(2)</sup>

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## WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CV?

Even young researchers, with little or no prior research experience, can and should have an impressive CV that is compatible with the position they are applying for. An experienced researcher, applying for a large grant, will highlight publications, teaching appointments, and prior successes with academic funding. Young researchers such as the fellow in the practical scenario should highlight their education, including the institutions where they were trained; their motivation to learn, such as attendance to academic and medical conferences; community service, such as volunteering in academic projects; and technical skills, such as the ability to communicate in foreign languages. Table 1 shows the basic structure of an academic CV at *Plataforma Lattes*. There are other models, of course, but the general structure is more or less the same.

## TIPS TO WRITE A GREAT CV

1. Make sure that the most important information comes first (usually in the personal statement) and is well written, brief, and easy to read.
2. Make sure that you include all the important items in the order required by the institution.
3. If you are not using a standardized platform such as *Plataforma Lattes*, format your CV in a way that it is consistent in its use of fonts, line breaks, bullet points, and other details.
4. Proofread your CV to correct spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
5. Be honest and consistent. Lying on your CV gets you a bad reputation.

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## REFERENCES

1. Jericho BG, Ilgen JS, Gottlieb-Smith R, Simpson D, Sullivan GM. How to Write Your Curriculum Vitae. *J Grad Med Educ.* 2019;11(3):333-334. <https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-19-00221.1>
2. Tay A. Sell yourself and your science in a compelling personal statement. *Nature.* 2021;593(7857):153-155. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-021-01101-z>