Curriculum Vitae Workshop
November 22th, 2011
16-18:00, Seminar room, RS6

Conveners: Ralph Buchenhorst and James Thompson
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Within academia the Curriculum Vitae is increasingly viewed as one of, if not, the most important document or factor when considering a candidate for professorships, teaching or research positions, research grants, scholarships, etc. Since the CV is much more than a mere factual listing of one's academic achievements, the importance of having a CV that is clear and concise should not be underestimated. The CV should demonstrate to potential reviewers of your application that you clearly fit the job description, are qualified for the job (or show great potential), and thus represent an excellent candidate for the position. Whether applying primarily for research or teaching positions, the organization and structure of your CV plays a crucial role in determining whether your application will be given further consideration or not.

 For those individuals planning to apply and work in two or more academic contexts, such as members of this graduate school, the challenge is even greater, because of differing expectations and norms for structuring CVs. Such things as 'proper' chronology, personal details, terminology, and category placement can vary to a great degree between contexts.

The purpose of this workshop is fourfold: (1) to provide the PhDs with the essential features of academic CVs; (2) to explain important differences between English language CVs in the American, British, and selected European contexts; (3) to discuss various strategies for tailoring your CV to the respective context and position; (4) to introduce the most common CV formats.

We began the workshop by discussing the essential features of an academic CV as well as provide various examples of what might be included among these categories. In no specific order of importance:

> University Education (Studies and Degree/Title Attained)
> Main Research Areas and Projects (Present and Past)
> Visiting Research Fellowships, Field Research
> Awards/Distinctions
> Organization of Conferences, Workshops, Symposia
> Publications: Monographs, Edited Volumes/Issues, Peer-Review-
> Articles, Other Contributions, Book Reviews, Published Translations
> List of Courses Taught
> Lectures, Papers *
> Personal Information
> Participation in Outside Funded Projects
> Professional Services
> References *

In the second part of the workshop, we explored some of the fundamental differences potential applicants should be aware of when applying for positions and grants. Here, as mentioned above, the emphasis was on using the 'appropriate' chronology, what personal information should and (perhaps more importantly) should not be included, e.g. due to various anti-discrimination laws in the United States one typically does not include age, gender, marital status, whether one has children (and if so how many).

The third part of the workshop examined the CVs of scholars associated with the graduate school at various points along the academic path (as well as in different disciplines). Here, the emphasis was on showing how specific strategies have been employed and why. These included, but were not limited to, how organization changes as one gains more experience, which formats are appropriate for which contexts, e.g. a more teaching or research oriented CV, assessing terminology and structures, especially when translating a position from one context into another (e.g. Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter vs. Assistant Professor vs. Lecturer A or B). We also critiqued the effectiveness of the respective strategy employed in each of the sample CVs.

 In the final part of the workshop, the group turned to assess several CVs from the participating PhDs in order to assess the respective strengths and weakness thereof. Here, not only did the graduate students receive direct feedback on their CVs from the Postdocs as well as have a chance explain why they made certain choices, but the other participating PhDs also had the opportunity to implement what they had just been exposed to by making a further critique, which was usually based on their own CVs.

After the conclusion of the formal presentation, the graduate students had the opportunity to address any issues or ask questions about points they still had. Before concluding the workshop, and in relation to a question from the PhDs, the Postdocs briefly discussed the importance of the individual components of an application. From there, the discussion moved to the topic of different writing styles when writing a dissertation in English (especially focusing on the question of whether it is appropriate to use "I" and "we"). After this short departure from the workshop topic, plans for future workshops related to the application (e.g. cover letter, teaching statement, etc.) and interviewing process were announced.