

Narrative CV

This resource covers

- **why** you would write a narrative CV and how it fits in the wider drive to change research culture
- **what** a narrative CV is
- **how** to write a narrative CV by describing the different sections and giving examples of skills and experiences for each section

Why?

- A drive to award a much wider range of contributions to be more inclusive has been seen in the UK, other European countries and the US. This has come from initiatives such as [DORA](#), of which the University of Cambridge is a signatory, as well as wider discussions about an improved research culture (see this report from [Wellcome](#))
- [UKRI](#) has introduced Narrative CVs into its applications for fellowships and other funding
- Other funders are also using this new application style, and more are likely to do so
- Whilst it is mostly used in funding applications, you may see it required in some job or promotion recruitment processes.

Now is a good time to start thinking about the narrative of your career in more detail!

What?

A narrative CV covers the past. Not just what you have done, but also how you have done it. It tells the story of how a wide range of contributions, skills and experiences have made you into the researcher you are today. It enables people who have followed non-traditional career paths to evidence the skills and experience they bring. It is about wider impact, not just through publications.

The unknowns

[Pilots](#) have received positive feedback; however,

- Studies comparing results of applications using narrative and traditional CV are underway, to determine whether this new application document will result in higher levels of success from a more diverse range of applicants, but are yet to report definitively
- Whilst there's a growing list of resources to support applicants writing a narrative CV (see below) funders are keen that there should not be examples available so as to not inhibit researchers' ideas on what to include. You could take a look at this [platform](#) if you are interested in peer-sharing of narrative CVs.
- Lack of detailed guidance for assessors to ensure fair assessment of narrative CVs remains a problem.
- Questions remain about the level of English writing skill required, and whether or not there are [cultural or other barriers](#) to writing about oneself in this format (Loppolo et al 2024)

How?

Overview

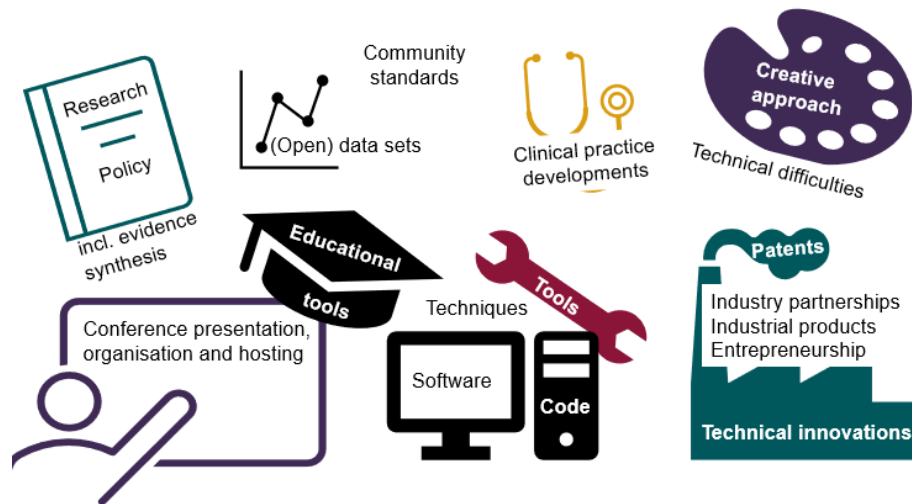
The format of each funder's narrative CV continues to evolve and can be different for each type of grant, so please check the guidelines carefully! In general, you should avoid lists where possible, and make sure that each piece of evidence you choose is as relevant as possible to the funding opportunity you are seeking.

- Instead of a list of publications and journal impact factor, provide context; explain the content and how it has made a contribution to the research field and beyond
- Tell a story
- How? Rather than what? Choose examples!
- Show passion and ambition
- Avoid buzz words and boasting language
- Be more reflective
- Think about the broader impact of your work

Sections or Modules may be similar to the UKRI narrative CV, as below. Use the diagrams to prompt ideas for completing a Narrative CV:

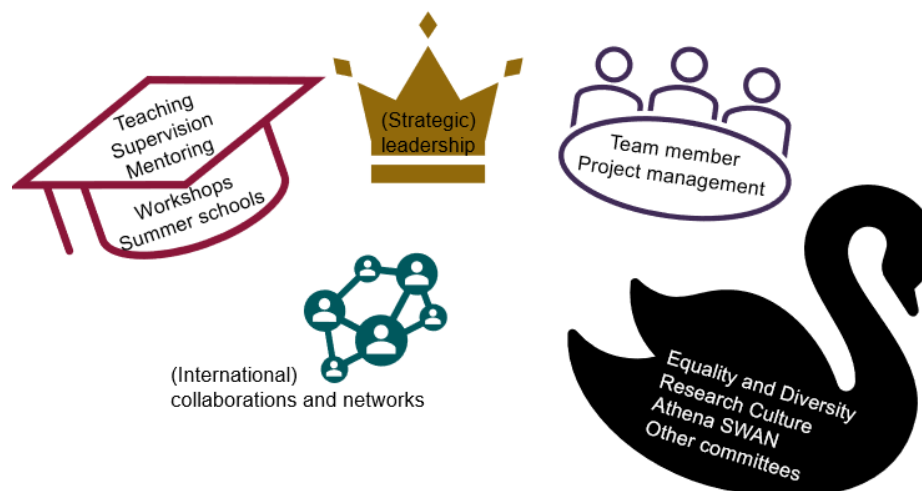
Contributions to the generation and flow of new ideas, hypotheses, tools or knowledge

Explain HOW you have contributed and which key skills you have acquired and used



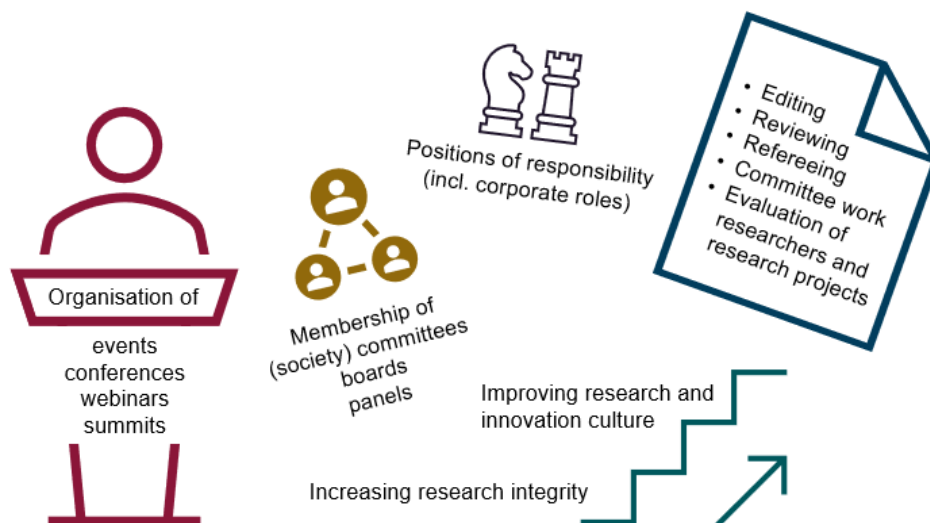
Contributions to the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

Give **examples** of HOW your expertise had a positive impact on individuals, teams, organisation or strategy in and outside of your institute



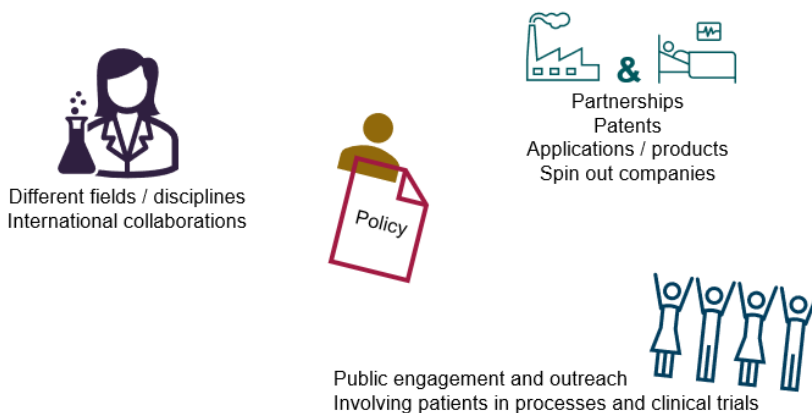
Contributions to the wider research and innovation community

Give **examples** of activities you have engaged in to progress the research community in your discipline but possibly outside your immediate department or institute.



Contributions to the broader research and/or innovation-users and audiences, and towards wider societal benefit

Depending on your career stage, this one may be harder to find evidence for. Think about the public engagement, knowledge exchange or community work you have done. It may be that you have done work outside of your research that could useful be brought in here.



Additional information

There is sometimes an optional 'Relevant additional information' section, where you can add information relating to your proposal, for example,

- career breaks
- secondments
- volunteering
- part-time work
- other relevant experience (including time spent in different sectors)

*Would you like some tailored feedback on your narrative CV? Book an [appointment](#) with one of **our Careers Consultants!***

Additional resources

- Guidance for [Writing a Narrative CV](#), ARRC University of Cambridge
- University of Cambridge Careers Service's [video](#) on Narrative CVs
- [Narrative CV: resources to help you write one - Overview | Rise 360 \(articulate.com\)](#), Lab for Academic Culture at the University of Glasgow
- Information from the [University of Oxford](#), including information on writing a team narrative CV
- [Time to rethink the scientific CV \(nature.com\)](#)
- [SciCV, the Swiss National Science Foundation's new CV format | bioRxiv](#)