

The Narrative CV

What It Is and How to Craft It

- Canada-wide: Tri-agency CV (TCV)
- Québec: Fonds de recherche du Québec CV (CV-FRQ)

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A **Pathways to Impact** workshop presented by:

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Pathways to Impact

Concordia University

To support our community in maximizing their contributions to science and society, Concordia University is developing **Pathways to Impact**, an initiative that leverages both existing and enhanced resources, tools and expertise to provide researchers and research institutes/teams with an integrated support service, centered around established impact pathways.

Pathways to Impact helps researchers and research institutes/teams navigate through a fragmented landscape of resources and support by offering a seamless **integrated support system** through a carefully curated web-based platform, launching soon at:

<https://www.concordia.ca/research/for-researchers/pathways-to-impact.html>

This workshop on the new narrative Tri-agency CV (TCV) and Fonds de recherche du Québec CV (CV-FRQ) has been developed as part of the Pathways to Impact support system for researchers.

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Don't panic.

- The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

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Applications requiring narrative CVs

- Narrative CVs have been widely used for European and some American funding opportunities for several years.
- The new **Tri-agency CV (TCV) is a narrative CV** for SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR grant applications and was launched with the 2025 SSHRC Impact Awards competition in April 2025.
- The **Tri-agency** does not yet have a phase-in timeline for the **TCV** but is committed to requiring it for **all grant applications in the near future**.
- The new **Fonds de recherche du Québec CV (CV-FRQ) is a narrative CV** and will launch for postdoctoral fellowships and pilot grant programs in **July 2025**. It will be **required for all Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) grant applications by January 2026**.
- Therefore: **now is the time to prepare to write one.**

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Are the Tri-agency CV (TCV) and Fonds de recherche du Québec CV (CV-FRQ) identical?

- ***Almost!***
- **But**, for the “most significant contributions and experiences” section, the CV-FRQ adds, as a requirement, what you should do for the TCV anyway: “Specify the **date or period corresponding to each contribution**, as well as the **target audience** (A. academia, B. practice environment, C. general public).” (Translated from the French [CV-FRQ instructions](#).)
- **Citation requirements for publications, performances, etc., are not the same.**
- Some formatting and font requirements differ – check every time.
- Note that **certain grant programs may have additional requirements** for your narrative CV beyond the general instructions.
- **It is absolutely necessary to read all the instructions for the narrative CV and the particular grant you are applying for each time.**



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What are the TCV and the CV-FRQ?

- Like other narrative CVs, a format that provides a flexibly structured, written description of a researcher’s contributions and achievements
- Like other narrative CVs, have the potential to reflect a broad range of relevant skills, experiences, and qualitative impacts, more than can often be seen in a traditional academic CV
- 5 pages in English, 6 pages in French
- **Focused on a specific research project**
 - *Much more* so than any other narrative CV format



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TCV template: 3 sections

Must be self-contained

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

- **Personal statement**

Click or tap here to enter text.

- **Most significant contributions and experiences**

Click or tap here to enter text.

- **Supervisory and mentorship activities**

Click or tap here to enter text.

CV-FRQ: same except the first section is named “*Parcours et compétences de la personne candidate*” (“Applicant’s career path and expertise”), and you can add an optional title.

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Why are narrative CVs being used?

In line with the San Francisco **Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**, the narrative format:

- allows researchers to describe their varied contributions to research across **a diverse range of career paths and personal circumstances**.
- **encourages responsible, holistic use of article-based bibliometric measurements of scholarly publications and citations**, while discouraging the use of journal impact factors.
- **emphasizes qualitative descriptions** of the impact and significance of research and research-creation, and the role of the applicant in it.
- **fosters research excellence** by inclusively recognizing and rewarding many diverse and worthy aspects of research that might otherwise be overlooked.

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Why are the narrative TCV and CV-FRQ being used?

- Drawing all of the above together, the narrative TCV and CV-FRQ are being used to evaluate *project-specific* experience, capacity, and promise.

We're flying the plane while it's being built

- **There are no reviewer guidelines currently available.**

Luxembourg National Research Fund [survey](#):

- "Many reviewers...mentioned the utilization of ORCID or other online sources of quantitative data to complement their evaluation.
 - **Therefore:** *activate Google Scholar and ORCID account; ensure LinkedIn profile and ORCID up to date.*
- Many reviewers also express that it is more difficult to evaluate and compare narrative CVs.
 - **Therefore:** *your narrative CV must be persuasive and create a connection with reviewers. Storytelling elements are helpful: setting, characters, problems, resolutions...*

Techniques for writing a compelling narrative CV

- **Adapt materials already prepared:** e.g. 5 Most Significant Contributions (Tri-agency); CIHR Summaries of Progress; NSERC Form 100; nominations for recognition; ECRs: job talks, cover letters.
- **Workshopping** narrative CVs with colleagues is a good strategy.
- Research **teams should review each others' narrative CVs.**
- Explain your contributions to a colleague **orally**, then write *that* down.
- Be sure at least one or two people review your narrative CV whose dominant language is the language in which you are writing it.
- Encourage HQP to take professional development workshops.
- ChatGPT – be very judicious with this tool (and **report** when used).
 - More on this one soon...



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Transition period to narrative CV

- *Read instructions for any application very carefully **each time** – requirements are likely going to change year-to-year for some time.*
- Basic elements will stay more or less the same:
 - Personal statement / Career path and expertise
 - Most significant contributions
 - Supervision/mentorship
- Be sure you use the right “template” for each agency: **SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR all have slightly different formatting requirements** (e.g. font-type) for the TCV; the **CV-FRQ formatting is slightly different from the TCV.**
- There is **no** requirement that contributions, training, etc. must have occurred over the last six years.
- Keep your “traditional” CV, updated.



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The narrative TCV and CV-FRQ are just **written job interviews**

- The reviewers already have core components of your “traditional” CV if they want it – ORCID, Google Scholar, LinkedIn, etc.
- Personal information = “Tell us a bit about yourself.”
- Significant pertinent contributions = “What experiences to do you have that make you right for *this* task?”
- Supervision/mentorship = “What are the core pillars of your approach to graduate supervision?”



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How the TCV and CV-FRQ are *not* like job interviews (Phew!)

- The TCV and CV-FRQ are written – you are **not required to answer questions on the spot**. You have time to reflect on and amend your responses.



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Getting started

- **Allow time:** it can take a day or more to get a first draft ready.
- **Know your audience.** Is it a multidisciplinary committee in addition to peer reviewers?
- **Once they are released, read the evaluation guidelines that reviewers will read** to know their criteria. Don't *only* read the instructions for applicants (though do read those too!).
- Think carefully: which of the research activities you have undertaken are **most pertinent to the present grant opportunity**?
 - *A very strong contribution may not be relevant for the application.*
- Collect evidence of impacts of these activities: every statement you will make in your narrative CV about the impacts and significance of your contributions should be **backed up by evidence**.



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Instruction from FRQ pertinent to all narrative CVs

“The information provided in the narrative CV must be aligned with the program’s objectives and evaluation criteria. **Therefore, it is essential to be familiar with the objectives and evaluation criteria of the program for which you are applying in order to determine the content relevant to include in your narrative CV.**”

(Translated from the [CV-FRQ instructions](#))



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A little modesty goes a long way

- Narrative CVs are written in the **first person**.
- You want a balance between emphasizing your accomplishments and competence, on one hand, and not appearing *too* immodest, on the other.
- Definitely **err on the side of emphasizing your accomplishments and competence**.
- How to be modest while not underselling yourself: mention contributions of collaborators and your team, especially your HQP; put emphasis on those who benefited from your research; highlight intellectual growth you experienced during the process.



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Basics:

- **Be selective.** Rather than long lists of publications, narrative CVs are geared towards qualitative descriptions of expertise acquired, and the impact and significance of contributions.
- Think in terms of DORA's two dimensions to illustrate the impact of a contribution: **scale of influence** and **new audiences**.
- **Use evidence.** You're telling a story – *your* story – but it's a non-fiction story that needs to be substantiated every step of the way.
- Address **academic and non-academic** outreach and impact.
- Describe **your career path** and its context – whether “traditional” or “non-traditional.”



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Personal statement / career path and expertise extract, example

"I am an associate professor of anthropology at the University of [_____]. My project will provide granular ethnographic narrative data that public and private health insurance decision-makers can use to assess the impact of [_____] on remote communities in [_____]. In my work as an ethnographer, I am interested in, and have researched, the far-sighted design of future artefacts, tools or infrastructures. I work in a cross-disciplinary and imaginative way to synthesize new perspectives and consequently produce novel research. For example..."

- Adapted from University of Glasgow's "Narrative CVs for funding and job applications"
https://rise.articulate.com/share/NyPk_PNIENdfRS5R5catqqiJzs3woS3Y#/lessons/a0G1S8sChDTr93JCgMIM5HguP42vRwqC



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Most significant contributions and experiences:

TCV must be self-contained; no evaluation guidelines available yet

- Set your own goal posts: **show reviewers how to evaluate** your TCV
 - At the beginning of your "contributions" section, **itemize the expertise needed for your proposed project** (number each item).
 - Then, for each contribution you discuss, refer **explicitly** to the areas of expertise needed for your project (e.g. "Contribution 1, _____ (areas of expertise 2, 3 and 5)").
 - Ensure that you are demonstrating **all** of the areas of expertise you have itemized.



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Most significant contributions and experiences

- Discuss **up to 10** contributions **pertinent to your proposal**.
 - It is **not** necessary to include 10 – that's a maximum.
- **Be very clear about WHY a contribution is pertinent** to the proposed research project: what skills did you develop, what experience did you gain, what networks did you establish, etc. that are *directly relevant* to the new project?
- Specify **your role and contribution** to team collaborations.
- Clearly illustrate **outcomes, impacts, significance, usefulness**, etc. of the contribution. *Who benefitted and how?*
- Provide **EVIDENCE**.
- **Researcher Impact Framework** (Giovanna Lima & Sarah Bowman 2022) is a great tool for this.



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Researcher Impact Framework: *Generation of knowledge*

To demonstrate: your expertise in the field, creativity and analytical capacity, how you have advanced theoretical knowledge and practical applications *within your discipline and beyond*.

| SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY | EVIDENCE: REACH, USE, RELEVANCE DATA | SOURCES |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Presenting a paper or poster at a conference → Editing a collection of essays → Writing book reviews → Serving as a peer-reviewer → Building/creating a digital scholarly project/web-based scholarship → Managing a lab or research team → Conducting clinical work → Applying for/securing grant funding → Sharing research data → Completing an invention disclosure → Publishing an article or book → Additional Open Science contributions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Number of downloads, access → Field-weight citation impact / ratio → Number / quality of scholarly / policy citations → Wikipedia citations → Quotes from reviewers → Reference in news / blog articles → Number of libraries that hold the publication → Use in syllabus in other Universities → Number and diversity of speakers and attendees at events → Disciplines present → Number of submitted grants → Amount of funding received → Indications of data reuse → Patents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Publisher's websites → PlumX Dimensions → Google Scholar → Overton → Altmetric → Publons → Subject and/or institutional repositories → Own data → Press releases → Web search → WorldCat → Open Syllabus → Conference organisers → Website traffic data → Funder website → Patents office → Dimensions |

Lima, G. and Bowman, S. (2022). *Researcher Impact Framework: Building Audience-Focused Evidence-Based Impact Narratives*. Trinity College Dublin. [pdf] Dublin. <https://doi.org/10.25546/98474>; p. 10 (slightly adapted)



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Researcher Impact Framework: *Supporting broader society*

To demonstrate: your knowledge, skills, and commitment to realising the impact of your research with and for beneficiaries beyond academic settings.

| SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY | EVIDENCE: REACH, USE, RELEVANCE DATA | SOURCES |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Writing an article for a news media outlet → Blogging or podcasting → Discussing research on social media → Being quoted or interviewed on radio, TV, or in print journalism → Community service or community engagement projects → Representing/advocating on behalf of a research area → Serving on the board of a non-profit → Engaged research projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Shares on media → Number of citations → Number of downloads, access → Readers' feedback → Number and quality of engagement (followers, comments) → Testimonials from engaged publics → Changes in practice and policy → Reductions in costs or increased savings and efficiencies → Achievements delivered by the Board → Amount secured for societal partners → Diversity of partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Own data → Institutional webpage → Press releases → Altmeter → PlumX → Publisher's website → Web search → Google Scholar → Website traffic data (e.g. Google Analytics) → Social media analytics → Official documents on governmental websites → Overton → Funder's webpage → Awards |

Lima, G. and Bowman, S. (2022). *Researcher Impact Framework: Building Audience-Focused Evidence-Based Impact Narratives*. Trinity College Dublin. [pdf] Dublin. <https://doi.org/10.25546/98474>; p. 13

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Researcher Impact Framework: *Supporting the research community*

To demonstrate: your influence on the research agenda and strategic directions of your discipline, and significance of your contributions to your research community.

| SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY | EVIDENCE: REACH, USE, RELEVANCE DATA | SOURCES |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Serving on a conference or symposium committee → Serving in an elected position within an association or scholarly society → Serving as a department / faculty Chair, Dean or other leadership role → Chairing or serving on a search / selection committee → Serving as a journal editor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Number and diversity of speakers and attendees at events → Different disciplines present → Networks created or enhanced → Number / quality of access to training and supports facilitated → Number / quality of internationalisation connections facilitated → Changes in open access data, instruments, and outputs → Changes in equality, diversity, and inclusion data → Diversity of participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Own data → Terms of reference for the position → Annual progress reporting → Testimonials by colleagues, peers, or beneficiaries → Awards → Agreements → OpenDOAR → News articles → Organisation data |

Lima, G. and Bowman, S. (2022). *Researcher Impact Framework: Building Audience-Focused Evidence-Based Impact Narratives*. Trinity College Dublin. [pdf] Dublin. <https://doi.org/10.25546/98474>; p. 12

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ECR “pertinent and significant contribution” extract, example

“In 2022 I presented a poster and a talk to a group of international colleagues at the Symposium on Precision Measurement Physics in China. I have expertise in both theoretical and experimental physics, which is rare, so I was able to explore the thermodynamic interactions in a more comprehensive manner. My poster and talk attracted the attention of physicists in France and Ireland, resulting in a keen exchange of knowledge and an invitation to sit on an international working group on thermodynamic measurements. This network will be a critical asset for my proposed research project.”

- adapted from Narrative CV Example ECR:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/25177-narrative-cv-example-early-career-researcher>



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Supervision/mentorship


- **How** your supervision and mentorship of students and other HQP contributed to their development. What exactly did your supervision/mentoring role entail?
- Tell **success stories** of those you have supervised or mentored – awards, academic or industry positions, etc. That’s **EVIDENCE!**
- How your **EDI strategies and involvement in research culture** have created an inclusive environment for your students and mentees.
- **Outreach** activities also go in this section.



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Researcher Impact Framework: *Supervision and mentorship*

To demonstrate: your engagement in supportive practices and relationships with students, trainees, HQP, ECRs and others; how you nurture talent and help develop skilled researchers

| SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY | EVIDENCE: REACH, USE, RELEVANCE DATA | SOURCES |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teaching a course → Developing a syllabus → Developing an open access course → Advising / Supervising students → Hiring, training, or supervising student interns or research assistants → Writing letters of recommendation → Leading or advising a student group → Co-authoring research with non-academic partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Number of modules and students taught → Number hired / trained / supervised → Diversity of roles created → Student / beneficiary feedback → Number Connections supported → Career / scholarly progression → Number or percentage of publications that are co-authored → Co-authorship network → Number of spin-out research projects and/or outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Own data → ORCID → LinkedIn → Course provider data → Institutional websites → Testimonials from beneficiaries → Acknowledgment in publications → Awards → Scopus → Dimensions  |

Lima, G. and Bowman, S. (2022). *Researcher Impact Framework: Building Audience-Focused Evidence-Based Impact Narratives*. Trinity College Dublin. [pdf] Dublin. <https://doi.org/10.25546/98474>; p. 11

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Supervision/mentorship extract, example

“Multi-layered mentorship starts on day one in my lab. I mentor and co-publish with each of the HQP I supervise, grounded in initial one-on-one discussions about their career aspirations, work-life balance needs, and progress benchmarking. I ensure equitable and inclusive networking, conference, and internship opportunities, including guaranteed organization of local internships for students with parental or community responsibilities. I have supervised 1 Banting post-doc, and 5 PhD and 12 Master’s students to completion. Two of these HQP won best conference paper awards (____ conference, 202_; ____ conference, 201_), and among my former PhD students three are now professors at Canadian and international universities, and two were recruited as researchers for major pharmaceutical companies in the US and Germany.”

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Additional resources

- **Tri-agency CV instructions (SSHRC):** https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/tri-agency_cv-cv_des_trois_organismes-eng.aspx
- **CV-FRQ instructions** (in French): https://frq.gouv.qc.ca/app/uploads/2025/04/instructions_cv-frq_2025-1.pdf
- Oxford webinar – “**How to write a narrative CV for funding applications**”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKk8oKM_kec
- University of Glasgow resource – “**Narrative CVs for funding and job applications**”: https://rise.articulate.com/share/NyPk_PN_IENdfRS5R5catqgiJzs3woS3Y#/lessons/a0G1S8sChDTr93JCgMIM5HguP42vRwqC
- Giovanna Lima & Sarah Bowman, **Researcher Impact Framework (RIF)**: <https://researchimpact.ca/resources/researcher-impact-framework/>
- **NSERC Guidelines on the assessment of contributions to research, training and mentoring**: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/assessment_of_contributions-evaluation_des_contributions_eng.asp



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Additional resources

- **DORA Building Blocks for Impact**: <https://sfdora.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Building-Blocks-for-Impact—vF2022.pdf>
- University of Alberta, “**Baseline Competencies for Writing a Compelling Narrative CV**”: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/medicine/media-library/research/research-resources/practical-tips-for-narrative-cv.feb-2025.pdf>
- Simon Fraser University Library, “**Narrative CVs: prioritizing impact and influence**”: <https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/publish/scholarly-publishing/radical-access/narrative-cvs>
- University of Winnipeg, “**Guidance for Narrative CVs for Canada Research Chair Applications**”: <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/docs/guidance-for-narrative-cvs-for-uwinnipeg-crc-applications.pdf>
- Letitia Henville, “**How to write a narrative CV**”: <https://universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/how-to-write-a-narrative-cv/>



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Q&A



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Appendix A: Pertinent contributions and experiences, examples

- Refereed publications (or clusters of publications)
- Non-refereed contributions, such as book reviews, published reviews of the applicant/co-applicant's work, community reports, research reports, policy papers, public lectures, etc.
- Forthcoming contributions (submitted, revised and submitted, accepted, or in-press) – if permitted by program requirements
- Creative outputs such as exhibitions, performances, publications, presentations, and film, video and audio recordings
- Contributions to research and advancing knowledge to non-academic audiences (e.g., general public, policy-makers, private sector, not-for-profit organizations, etc.)



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Appendix A: Pertinent contributions and experiences, examples, continued

- Advances to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the research ecosystem
- Co-creation or transfer of products, technology, processes, services or advice useful to specific organizations (in the private, public or non-profit sectors), communities or society
- Creation, curation, sharing or reuse of datasets
- Partnerships or collaborations in the research community, or with other communities, including through research networks, large collaborative projects or community-engaged research



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Appendix A: Pertinent contributions and experiences, examples, continued

- Support for traditional knowledge or Indigenous ways of knowing, including cultural practices
- Contributions to open science
- Intellectual property: including patents, copyrights, trademarks or trade secrets
- Creation of companies or organizations that promote research or the use of research results
- Development of tools, including software, for use by researchers or by others in the public or private domain



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