

PRBB Intervals Course Proposal

Course Title: Building your story: how to write a narrative scientific CV

Proposed date(s): June 2, 2026

Course Language: English

Course Leader(s) and very brief summary of relevant qualifications and experience (no more than 2 lines for each trainer):

David del Álamo: PhD in Biology, 12 years of research experience, experience as a scientific editor, head of the EMBO Fellowship programme, MBA.

Thiago Carvalho: PhD in Biology, 12 years of research experience, experience as scientific editor and scientific writer, head of graduate programmes at Gulbenkian Institute and Champalimaud Foundation.

Rationale for course (why is this course of interest for the PRBB staff?)

The traditional CV favours evaluation shortcuts such as research metrics and penalizes applicants with non-traditional career paths. Major research funding agencies and recruiters are adopting new formats that incorporate narrative elements, either supplementing or substituting the standard CV, trying to obtain a more comprehensive portrait of the career and professional skills of the applicants.

Course aim – general

The course is designed for the students to learn the basic components of a narrative CV and transform their traditional CVs into narrative ones through interactive exercises.

Specific learning outcomes (what new skills, knowledge &/or attitudes will participants take away from the course?)

Students will learn the strengths and weaknesses of a traditional CV and the rationale behind a narrative CV. They will learn about the different formats of a narrative CV and common feedback from the community and reviewers. They will learn to identify and categorize education, professional experience and skills in their CVs to transfer them to the different sections of a narrative CV. They will write themselves some of the sections of the CV.

Course contents (outline of topics to be covered)

The workshop is divided into four sections:

Introduction to the narrative CV: DORA, CoARA, and the problem of research assessment; the rationale behind the adoption of narrative CVs; standard narrative CV formats.

CV and cover letter workshop: in groups, participants identify the narrative elements in their CVs and cover letters; peer to peer storytelling exercises.

Narrative CV formats: introduction to standard narrative CV templates, with a focus on the widely used UKRI template; narrative CV categories and their application to cover letters, interviews, and resumés. Workshop on writing a section of the narrative CV.

Narrative CV reception: strengths and weaknesses of narrative CVs; funding agency trends;

reviewer comments on narrative CV scoring; candidate comments from previous calls.

Training methods

The course is imparted as a mixture of lectures and practical exercises. Participants will prepare a cover letter and a traditional CV in advance which will be the basis of all exercises throughout the course. They will write in class parts of their own narrative CV and will have the opportunity to work on the full version after the course to receive personalized feedback from the trainers.

Target group in PRBB (Senior scientists, postdocs, predocs, management/admin staff, all residents)

Researchers and research support staff

Number of participants (maximum)

Due to its practical and interactive nature, the course can accommodate up to 15 students.

Total course hours (Please specify direct training with instructor present and required self-study)

Note: only the direct training hours will be included in the post-course certificate.

Number of hours of class time: 8

Number of hours of self-study: 8

Total number of course hours: 16

Distribution of course (hours/days)

The course is imparted in one day and consists of two sessions of 4 hours each.

Pre-course preparation and and self-study expected between sessions (what preparation should participants do before the course and/or in between sessions – reading, online study, prepare ideas etc?)

Before the workshop begins, students provide their standard CV and a cover letter.

Material participants need to bring (laptops, etc...)

Participants need internet access and need to bring a laptop for the writing exercises (a tablet may also work if they are used to write on it).

Relevant background reading/ audiovisual/websites or other materials

A document including resources and further tips will be provided at the end of the course. Participants do not need to consult anything in advance.