

Retrospective Narrative CVs

Important! These narrative CVs are examples and were not written for the research master Genomics in Society. The CVs were written by Sam Riedijk for the master's program in Clinical and Health Psychology, by Atze for the master Cell/Cellular and Molecular Biology and by Diewertje for the research master's program Genes in Behavior and Health.

Example of narrative CV Sam Riedijk (retrospective at age 21)

Educational experience

Until now I have studied at three different high schools, and I have studied business administration for two weeks and politicology for two days. My junior years in high school were overshadowed with growing up and learning to learn. In my third year I enrolled in an optional course in Psychology. I absolutely loved it and I was good at it. Strangely, it made me decide never to study Psychology, as I believed I was expected to study something difficult and serious.

As soon as I started to know who I was and what I wanted, I started lobbying with my parents to allow me to spend a year in France and go to high school there. Luckily, they agreed and I left to France to live with my aunt and go to a French Lycee. This experience was transformative, as it allowed me to reinvent myself. Nobody knew me from before and being Dutch had a magic appeal to French people that I very much enjoyed. I soon became fluent in French and I discovered that all the things I thought to be true and certain were quite different in France. The French had other truths and certainties ingrained in their culture. It made me realize that where we grow up determines how we perceive reality. I also experienced that in French I could express many different things than in Dutch. My mind was opened this year and coming back to the Netherlands I discovered that learning new things in school became much easier than before.

Work experience

While in high school, I started working all kinds of small jobs. I have delivered the morning newspaper for a year (getting up 6 days a week at 4:45!), worked in a retail shop, ice-cream saloons, campsites, picked tomatoes, did administrative tasks at the tax authorities, sold postcards from door-to-door, cleaned offices, sat behind several assembly lines in the flower industry, and worked in bars, restaurants and hotels. My most serious job was as a full-time sales employee in an arts wholesale company serving the French speaking clients. Through these jobs I acquired social skills, as all these domains knew different norms, values, and work ethics. I was seen in each job through different eyes, sometimes as highly educated elite girl, sometimes as a poor student, in other instances as lust object and in others as cheap and insignificant, easily replaceable work force. It taught me how your life is a matter of context and how important it is to discover the context in which you as a person can thrive. It made me decide that I would definitely go to university, only I did not yet know what topic I wanted to study.

Life experience

The year that has put in me on my path was the second year after high school. When I graduated from high school I felt lost. My entire social structure dissolved, everyone seemed to have a purpose but me. I enrolled in Business Administration for two weeks and with horror I discovered the misfit between me and this curriculum. I started working, fell in love with a man who was not studying and we decided to save money and then go for a working holiday experience to Australia. While my year in France was amazing, my year in Australia was quite opposite. I was soul searching, contemplating on my life and chewing on my mistakes. While most backpackers were busy planning for their next party and drinking beer, I was working with Australians, mostly quite damaged young people. I developed new skills in leadership and in surviving and I managed to return to the Netherlands with money in my bank account and a solid realization: I was a psychologist and I needed to enroll in university.

Path

Now that I know what my path is, I am highly motivated to dedicate myself to acquiring all the knowledge, insights and skills to become a full-fledged psychologist. I feel old compared to other first year students, and I feel a big responsibility to myself to make sure that I deserve my place on this path. My purpose is not per se to help people, but to acknowledge who I am, and how I add value to this world.

I hope my narrative CV provides you with the evidence and insight that enrolling in Psychology is the only way forward for me on my path, and that you are as committed as me to equip me with what I need to become a Psychologist .

Example narrative CV Atze Bergsma (retrospective at age 26, before start of my Master's):

Education:

I studied within the Dutch educational system on various levels and in various fields. After graduating from lower general secondary education (MAVO in Dutch), I really had no idea what I wanted to do next. Luckily, we had an educational market where we could go to see what type of study fitted us. I went and I spent hours walking around, finding nothing. But at the last moment, I saw a booklet that promoted laboratory techniques as a study. This interested me greatly and so I started my study in Chemistry on the post-secondary vocational education (MBO in Dutch). Up until this day, this has been the most challenging study for me. But I enjoyed learning there since the topic suited me well. This is also the reason why I wanted to continue studying Chemistry at a higher level after my graduation. I enrolled in the Bachelor's Chemistry and started with full enthusiasm. However, the education became much more technical and I started to lose interest in learning this particular field. Meanwhile, the same school also ran a Bachelor's in Molecular Biology. Several of my colleague students (e.g. friends) at that school were enrolled in that Bachelor, and after 1,5 years of Chemistry I decided to switch studies. It was the best move I have made in my educational path. I absolutely enjoyed learning about Molecular Biology, and it came really naturally to me.

Internships:

For both the MBO and Bachelor studies I have performed internships. The first internship was at the MBO. The internship was for a full year and I performed it at KIWA, a company that analyses the quality of materials that are meant for managing water, such as faucets and pipes. The work was really focussed and repetitive. I realized that this was not the work that I wanted to do for the rest of my life, and this made the choice to continue studying quite easy.

For the Bachelor degree I performed two internships, each lasting 7 months. In order to get some more life experience, I did these internships abroad. The first internship I did in India at Hindustan Unilever Research Center. This was an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life. Since our cultures are so vastly different, it made me look at other cultures in a completely different perspective, and made me more open to them. The second internship I did in Australia, at the Griffith University Institute for Glycomics. Although this was a much more western society, also here I noticed a lot of difference between how we live in the Netherlands. Mainly, I learned to not worry about everything so much, and be more relaxed in general.

Side jobs:

Besides studying, I also performed many jobs in order to pay for school and for leisure. I used to work as a paper boy (6 days a week, from 5.30 in the morning), a municipal worker, in a cheese factory, and many other small jobs. But the job that helped me develop more of my social skills was as a bartender. Although the main job description of this job seems to be to provide customers with a drink and a snack, I was also very much a social worker, listening and talking to costumers that needed someone that could listen to them. I very much enjoyed this job.

Why I want to enrol in this master program:

I want to enrol in this master because I have the feeling that there is still so much more to learn. During my bachelor I noticed that I really liked all the concepts I learned, but there were

still so many questions for me that needed answering. I realized that the only way I could get these questions answered were A: to study more at a higher level (e.g. Master degree), and B: If the questions are not answered during the master, how I can do research to answer these myself. I am really looking forward to broaden my “Molecular biology” horizon and to become knowledgeable about how to solve questions that remain in this particular field of interest.

Example of narrative CV Diewertje Houtman (retrospective at age 23)

From high school to Bachelor:

At high school I was especially good at beta courses and also choose this as a direction from the third year onwards. I followed courses in physics, biology, chemistry and mathematics. When I was choosing a Bachelor, it felt natural to continue on the beta side. As I was always drawn to learning about things that were very new and innovative, I decided to enroll in the new Bachelor on Nanobiology that started for the first time that year. That summer, when I was on a holiday with my parents and brother, my boyfriend broke up with me. When I came back in the Netherlands, immediately the day after we landed the introduction week started, and so I had to meet my new fellow students with a jetlag and a broken heart. Of course this didn't work. I didn't feel I could connect to my peers and my motivation to start learning new things was nowhere to be found. While I was trying to land with my feet on the ground, I was following lectures in that first week of the bachelor that were already so abstract I didn't know what we were talking about anymore. So I quit after 4 days. The year that followed was one of the best of my life. I started working to save money so I could travel, I made new friends working at my various jobs (as a cashier, sales person, a waitress in a hotel/bowling center/beach bar, and a warehouse worker), I met my current boyfriend, then I travelled to Nepal for 3 months by myself. This was a life-changing experience. I learned how to take care of myself and adjust to this new culture that was in many regards the opposite of Dutch culture. I learned how to accept things that were out of my control (the bus may arrive in 3 minutes or 3 hours), and to stand my ground with all kind of people who wanted something from me (mostly money). I stayed with a host family where I was warmly welcomed and experienced their relatively simple lifestyle focused on self-maintenance, which to this day allows me to put my worries and stress into perspective. When I came back, I allowed myself to choose a more "easy" study, away from the beta side I had always perceived as a higher achievement, and enrolled in the Bachelor Psychology. At this point I was interested in understanding myself better, and also to better explain the large differences between people I had met over the past year. Psychology was a good fit. I enjoyed the topics as well as the teaching method of problem-based learning. However, I missed a personal approach (student groups and tutors would change every 5 weeks, making it difficult to really connect), and although I was following the honors program of the social faculty, I also missed a challenge every now and then and a more technical/biological approach. I found both of these in the minor Genetics in Society. I learned that genetics is related to so many disciplines, and I found both personal and societal relevance in this field. In the paper writing track I started doing research with a PhD student, which I really enjoyed.

From Bachelor to Bachelor:

I strongly felt that I wanted to continue doing research in the field of genetics and the impact of genetics on people's lives, but with my Bachelor in Psychology, it was hard to find a Master program in the field of genetics where I could be admitted. However, I really wanted this, so I started to think the way forward was studying Medicine, since this would allow me to either become a clinical geneticist or to enroll in a research master related to genetics that I would then be admitted to. At the same time, I continued to work in the research team I had gotten

to know during the minor, and performed research looking into healthcare needs of people with a genetic condition. After a few months into medicine, I started to realize that I was already doing what I really wanted to do in the research project I did in parallel to my study, and that continuing in Medicine would also require me to learn a lot of things I would not necessarily be very interested in. I decided to continue doing what I liked at that moment, instead of pushing through this study that would get me somewhere I think I could like in over 6 years. So I quit Medicine, and applied to a research assistant job at the department of Psychiatry of the Erasmus MC, which I got. My interest and joy in doing research kept growing, and so I continued to look for a research master in the direction of genetics.

From Bachelor to Master:

With the timing of the start of this Master, I feel like it was meant to be. I am very excited that the study I was looking for last year, but that didn't exist yet, is now starting! I am looking forward to be in the interdisciplinary environment of this Master and to be able to contribute to research in the field of genetics from my background in Psychology, something I didn't think would be possible before.