

Resume and Cover Letter Writing

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Career Center for Science & Engineering
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Outline

1. Resumes

- Content & Format
- Private Industry vs. Federal Resumes
- Examples

2. Cover Letters

- Content & Format
- Examples

3. References

- Content & Format
- Examples



Resume Overview

Effective Resumes

- Strategically market your skills, experience and accomplishments to individual employers
- Get you the interview!



Contact Information

- Includes name, address, phone, e-mail
- Should stand out from the rest of your resume
- Separate this information from rest of your resume with a space or graphic (line)



Objective

Objective

- A statement which identifies the position for which you are applying
- An Objective allows individuals involved in the hiring process to route your resume accordingly
- If position title is unknown list other information to communicate your goal with that employer. For example, career field, organization type, skills utilized, or technologies, services, industries of interest.
- Be clear and concise
- Tailor Objective to individual positions to demonstrate understanding and interest.

Examples

- Seeking an internship in the field of electrical engineering for the summer of 2006.
- Seeking employment as a Biomedical Engineer in a medical device company where I can use my knowledge of biology and engineering, as well as my research experience to develop and improve cardiac devices.



Education

Include

- Institution Name (College and University)
- Institution Location (City and State)
- Degree- write it out!
- Major, minor, concentration
- Expected date of graduation

Optional

- GPA
- Honors or awards
- Thesis title
- *Relevant* Coursework
- Study Abroad

Points of Interest

- reverse chronological order
- high school information comes off once you become a Junior

Example

Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, Expected May 2006
Institute of Technology, University of Twin Cities- Twin Cities
Minneapolis, MN
GPA: 3.54/4.00



Skills

- The Skill section is a snapshot of your skills and *abilities* and should be targeted for individual positions
- Employers look for evidence of where and how and how applicants developed skills in other parts of their resume
- Skill sections are an effective strategy for screening databases
- Employers want people who possess the *technical* (major-related) and *non-technical* (interpersonal) skills listed in a position description
- Valuable non-technical skills:
 - Oral & written skills
 - Teamwork/Interpersonal skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Flexibility/Adaptability
 - Leadership
- Good idea to include Computer Skills



Examples

Lab Skills

Gel pouring, PCR, DNA fingerprinting, using restriction enzymes, titrations, solution preparation, flow rate testing, biocompatibility testing

Computer Skills

- Languages: Assembly, BASIC, C, C++, FORTRAN, Java and Scheme
- Operating Systems: UNIX, Windows 98 and XP
- Software: CAD, Dreamweaver, MATLAB.
- Interpersonal: Experience working effectively as part of a team, enjoy collaborating with others



Experience

- May include employment (FT, PT, seasonal), internships, co-ops, research, volunteering, classroom projects, student groups
- Equally important to highlight technical *and* non-technical skills
- Use creative headings within Experience to organize information and market your abilities

Ex: Career Related Experience; Engineering Experience; Lab Experience; Research Experience; Leadership Experience; Other Experience

- Within each heading arrange information in reverse chronological order
- Include:
 - Job title
 - Name of organization
 - City & state (no zip codes)
 - Dates employed (month and year)
 - 4 – 5 descriptive sentences explaining responsibilities, duties and skills
 - Accomplishments



Example

Career Related Experience

Data Mining Support Intern

September 2004 – present

Silicon Graphics, Mountain View, CA

- Developed an easy to use interface and data visualizer for a data mining engine. The visualizer presented data in both tabular and graphic formats, and allowed for various functions.
- Worked as part of a team to co-design an extension of the Internet's Domain Naming System (DNS) to allow efficient handling of mailing lists.
- Developed Perl scripts to run a WWW-based database allowing arbitrary searches and automated additions to database.

Recruiting Director

September 2003 – present

Society of Women Engineers

- Planned and facilitated activities to promote and increase membership.
- Increased membership by 40% through event coordination and advertising.
- Introduced a successful high school outreach program to high school students.



Example

Administrative Office Assistant

May 2001 – August 2003

Company, City, State

- Managed membership accounts and organized member information.
- Assisted members by taking calls, answering questions, following up on inquiries in a timely manner, and transferring callers to appropriate departments as needed.
- Carried out administrative tasks necessary for daily operation of office including scheduling meetings, coordinating travel arrangements, filing and coordinating office supply orders.
- Attended monthly staff meetings, and prepared spreadsheets and graphs for senior staff meetings.

Hints

- Start sentences with verbs, and try to use a variety of verbs to keep descriptions interesting
- No personal pronouns (I, my, we)
- Use minimal articles (a, the, are)



Other Sections

- Honors & Scholarships
- Languages
- Certifications
- *Projects!*
- Activities: clubs, organizations, athletics, intramurals
- Professional memberships and affiliations
- No personal hobbies or interests!



Format

- Length: generally limited to 1 page for undergraduates
- Margins (0.5" – 1.0")
- Font Size (10 – 12pt.)
- No Templates!
- Use bolding and underlining to call attention to important information
- Be conservative and professional with graphics



Common Resume Blunders

Do NOT:

- Title your resume, "Resume"
- Overuse abbreviations
- Include personal information (religion, gender, marriage status, citizenship, etc.)
- Use the passive voice (have, has)
- Mention salary
- Staple or fold resume
- Include references on resume
- Misrepresent yourself



Federal Resumes

- It is important that you realize you cannot use your private industry resume for a federal application. A private industry resume would not include the following mandatory details of a federal resume:



Checklist for a Federal Resume

- ✓ Announcement Number, title and grade of job applying for
- ✓ Social Security Number
- ✓ Country of Citizenship
- ✓ Veteran's Preference
- ✓ Federal Civilian Preference
- ✓ High School (even with higher degrees) and zip code
- ✓ Zip codes for educational institutions and employers (for verifying purposes)
- ✓ Supervisor's name and telephone
- ✓ Yes or No- contact can (or cannot) be made with current employer
- ✓ Address, phones, and supervisors' names for other employers
- ✓ Salary and number of hours worked per week for all positions
- ✓ Employment history and all of the other information that is important for the last 10 years and longer, if relevant.
- ✓ Can be 2-6 pages long

Adapted from *The Federal Resume Guidebook* by Kathryn K. Troutman. ISBN: 1-56370-313-0



Resume Summary

Effective Resumes

- Are reviewed by several people
- Have no spelling or grammatical errors
- Are limited to 1 page for undergraduate students
- Market skills and experience to an employer according to *their* needs
- Are easy to read, focused, professional
- Written in the ACTIVE VOICE (strong, results-oriented verbs)
- Printed on high quality resume paper



Cover Letter Overview

- Use a cover letter to: (1) demonstrate knowledge of the position and organization and, (2) highlight related skills and abilities.
- Focus on the needs of the *employer*
- Create a customized cover letter for every position
- Send a cover letter whenever you submit a resume to an employer (exceptions: eRecruiting and job fairs)



Content

First Paragraph

- Indicate why you are writing
- Indicate how you learned about the position.
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Describe why you are interested in the position *and* the organization



Content

Second Paragraph

- Most important paragraph
- Mention 3-4 skills that are related to the position of interest
- DON'T just list skills (employers will be skeptical), briefly describe where and when you developed them
- Okay to use examples from your resume

Third Paragraph

- Thank employer for their consideration
- Refer to enclosed resume
- Indicate future plans and your interest in possible interview
- Provide contact information



Format

- Use a business letter format
- Keep it brief (1 page max)
- Proofread (this is an indication of your written skills)
- Cover letter and resume should match in terms of paper and font



References Overview

- Select 3-4 people and *ask them in advance* to serve as references (provide them with a copy of your resume)
- Use professional, not personal, references
- Create a balance: gender, work and school
- Keep references informed about your progress

Format

- References go on a separate sheet of paper
- They are NOT submitted with your resume unless requested by employer
- Bring your references with you to an interview
- Arrange alphabetically by last name, and include your contact information at top

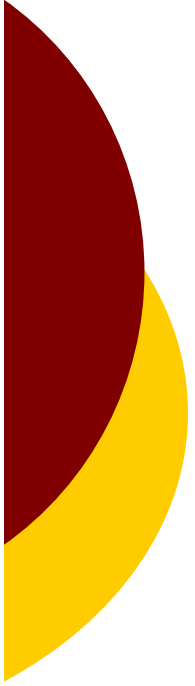


Example

Richard Anderson
1234 House St.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-999-9999
randerson@umn.edu

Tom Jones
District Manager (Supervisor)
ABC Company
123 Lake Shore Drive
St. Paul, MN 55143
123-456-7890
tjones65@ABC.com

Lisa Smith
Professor
Department of Biology
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123-456-7890
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Thank you!

Any Questions?