



Resume and Cover Letter Guide

Career Resource Center
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Preparing for the trail ahead.



WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

<i>Skills & Abilities</i>	<i>Values & Interests</i>
What practical experience have you gained through your professional experience, volunteer experience or academic projects? Are you a problem-solver? What are your transferable skills? Are you willing to learn?	What is important to you? Do your personal interests tie into the mission of the company? What are your outside interests? Are you a good fit? Will you be an ethical employee? What motivates you?
<i>Academic Preparation</i>	<i>Professionalism</i>
Do you meet the minimum academic requirements? Do you have the necessary academic credentials? Do you have a basic or advanced theoretical understanding of the field? Do you have an intellectual curiosity? Do you have foundational academic background in your area along with a broader liberal arts background? Can you read, write and communicate effectively? Can you apply theoretical knowledge to the real world	Do you have a strong work ethic? Can you make sound ethical decisions? Will you arrive to work on time and demonstrate initiative? Will you work well with others, despite personality differences? Will you work to support the mission of the organization? How do you conduct yourself outside of work-time? Will you be a positive representative of the organization? Are you dedicated to growing personally and professionally? Are you affiliated with professional organizations and dedicated to keeping your knowledge of the field/industry current?

Your resume and cover letter are documents used to convey this information to potential employers. Resumes typically focus on your skills, abilities, education, and experience. Your cover letters typically address on your values, interests, and professionalism.

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is the most important document used in applying to professional positions, graduate school or for professional networking. A resume is a short synopsis of your credentials. Resumes are often the first contact you will make with potential employers and should be tailored specifically to each position.

Most employers spend less than 20 seconds reviewing your resume, for this reason it should be clear, concise and focused while providing enough relevant information to capture their attention.

WHAT TO INCLUDE?

1. Full contact information:
 - Name, complete address, email, phone number and LinkedIn profile link
2. Objective statement, professional mission statement or a summary of qualifications section:
 - This section should be tailored specifically to the position you are applying
 - Include keywords (see below) and language similar to the company's mission or values statement. Keep it authentic and original but complementary.
3. Education:
 - Name of college(s), city & state of college, degree, major, GPA if 3.5 or better, year of graduation if recent (may be omitted if more than 10 years)
 - May want to highlight scholarships, dean's list or other academic honors
 - Include study abroad or other accredited educational experiences in this section
 - High school may be included, but not necessary
4. Work and volunteer experience:

- Job title, company, city & state of company, dates of employment
 - Brief description of your duties or abilities focusing on transferable skills
5. Certifications, licenses, skills and training:
- Include only current certifications along with certifying agencies and dates of expiration
 - Include any relevant training or skill sets (ex. GIS, GPS, firearm safety, Leave No Trace Trainer, laboratory equipment knowledge, computer program experience)
6. Qualifications indicated on the job announcement:
- Ensure any required skills are explicitly indicated on your resume. Employers will not assume just because you are applying that you have the skills they need.
7. List of References:
- If space allows include a list of at least three references. Be sure to include at least one professional and academic reference. The third could be a second professional, academic or personal reference.
 - Included complete contact information including: Full name, title, company, address, phone, and email
 - Do not write references upon request. Make it easy for the employer.
 - If space does not allow references on your resume. Include them anyway on a separate paper with your same contact information header as your resume. (see personal branding section)

FORMATS & STYLES

Unless you are creating a resume for a federal government position, there is no universal resume format. There are only guidelines that you should follow. Content should be formatted and styled consistently throughout your resume. While there is some room for creativity, resumes should always be professional. Clip art and busy fonts should not be used on resumes; however a little color or clean lines may be used to focus attention or reflect a personal brand. Pictures should not be included unless it is required or relevant to your industry (i.e. modeling, acting, animal training presenter).

TYPES OF RESUMES

Chronological: Focuses on individual jobs and transferable skills of each position, all positions listed in reverse chronological order. This is the most common style for all job seekers and college students.

Functional: This style focuses on the writer's skills rather than past positions. Positions are listed but explained in great detail. This style is used when a person has the same primary position at several companies or if the writer is looking to change professional fields. Most employers typically do not favor this style, but for some it is an ideal way to organize information.

Chronological/Functional Hybrid: A combination of chronological and functional resumes is used when the writer has some relevant experience and some not. There is both a focus on skills and abilities as well as key relevant positions. Additional work history sections are used to list, but not emphasize irrelevant positions.

Curriculum Vitae or CV: Curriculum Vitae translated to "life work". Many people use CV interchangeably with resume. CV's are generally used in the fields of research and higher education. It is also a term used commonly in foreign countries in lieu of resume. The differentiating factor of a CV is the inclusion of publications and presentations. CV's are typically longer, sometimes much longer than a standard one or two page resume. Some academia CV's can be 30 + pages. CV's usually have "CV" or "Curriculum Vitae" written on the top of first page. It is usually placed directly above or below the contact information.

PERSONAL BRANDING

Personal Branding is very important for all application materials. A personal brand is what ties together all the materials you are submitting as part of your application. The brand is accomplished by being consistent with abstract information like your values and interests, as well as consistency with concrete information like your contact information header. Be sure to use the same style and size fonts in all documents. Developing your own unique and personalized header is a quick, easy and impressive way to develop your brand. It is used similar to stationary. A personal brand will send a collective and consistent message to the reader. The key to personal

branding is consistency and authenticity in representing your professional and personal values and physical look of all application materials.

KEYWORDS

Keywords are commonly used words specific to certain industries. While most Unity College student resumes will be read by an actual person, occasionally computers are used to screen qualified candidates. If this is the case a resume that does not contain enough “keywords” may not make it into consideration regardless of qualifications.

To identify what keywords to include in your resume first look at the job announcement. Highlight the words that seem to be the most significant and are listed as essential qualifications. Keywords can be skill specific such as certain computer programs or can be characteristics such as team player. Another keyword resource is Onet Online’s federal occupational database [Insert website link](#). Simply enter the job title and use the occupation description to identify industry keywords. Lastly don’t overlook company websites and publications. Focus on areas such as mission statements, vision statements, or values to help you identify industry keywords. The Career Resource Center also has an extensive list of keywords for each major.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Transferable skills are qualities and abilities that are useful regardless of the position held. They are not specific to one certain field. When describing a former position, it is best to focus on transferable skills rather than job specific skills, especially if you are looking to move in a new direction from former employment. For example if you worked at a fast food restaurant during high school, you would focus on skills such as: “ability to work in a fast-paced, team environment while providing quality customer service”, rather than, “flipped burgers and operated a cash register”.

RESUME WRITING GUIDELINES

1. Everything is listed in reverse chronological order
2. Highlight your strengths and accomplishments
3. Aim for two pages or less, unless creating a CV
4. No more than two font styles or two font sizes, always format consistently
5. No clip art, busy fonts or pictures
6. Tailor each resume to the specific position, weighing requirements accordingly
7. Always include keywords
8. Ensure requirements of the position are listed in your resume
9. Emphasize key strengths, never exaggerate or lie on your resume
10. Match resume materials to other application documents such as cover letter or reference list to maintain consistent personal brand
11. Don’t overlook class projects, service projects or volunteer experience
12. Focus on transferable skills, not job specific skills
13. Use action words
14. Make sure your verb tense is consistent. Present or past tense are acceptable.
15. Focus on abilities rather than duties
16. Always have at least two people look over your resume. Use the Career Resource Center professional staff they are specially trained in resume writing.

SUBMITTING YOUR RESUME

Hardcopies

Hardcopy application materials should be printed on special resume linen bond paper using a high quality printer. The Career Resource Center has a full supply of resume paper for student use. Unless otherwise specified, materials should be sent in a large letter size envelope. Address should be written neatly or printed on address labels (also available at the Career Resource Center). Be sure to sign your cover letter and submit complete application packages.

Electronic submission

Always follow the specific requests of employers. Some employers may request that all material be submitted in one document, separate documents, etc. If no specific guidelines are offered the default electronic submission format is as follows:

- All items submitted together in one document Cover letter first, Resume, List of References, Application, then other required supporting documents.
- Be sure to use identifying information on the file names; ex. Chad.Westerhoff.Application.Materials.pdf
- You may want to consider using an electronic signature on your cover letter. The Career Resource Center can help you create an electronic signature. (Please note there are some risks to sending your personal signature electronically.)

OTHER IMPORTANT APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Teaching portfolios

Transcripts (official and unofficial)

Copies of certifications, licenses or other official documents

E- Portfolio websites

Experience log

Letters of reference

List of references

CHERYL BLOOM

PO Box 6 | Chatham, MA 01545 | 508.287.0626 | CherylBloom@comcast.net | [Linked In Profile](#)

Curriculum Vitae

OBJECTIVE

Highly motivated environmental professional with over 9 years of experience, seeking a challenging position in project management with an environmentally sustainable organization or business

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Experience drafting and submitting multi-volume environmental reports to federal regulators
- Knowledge of Massachusetts wetlands regulations with experience filing Notices of Intent
- Wetland delineation field experience
- Environmental inspection experience
- Knowledge of erosion, sediment control, and stabilization techniques
- Ability to multitask, prioritize, work independently and support organizational goals
- Excellent management and organizational skills

EDUCATION

[Unity College](#) Unity, Maine

Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology (2000)

"...provides dedicated, engaged students with a liberal arts education that emphasizes the environment and natural resources."

- Cumulative Grade Point Average 3.56

[National Outdoor Leadership School](#) Tucson, Arizona

Graduate, Southwest Semester (1997)

"...to be the leading source and teacher of wilderness skills and leadership that serve people and the environment."

- Immersive wilderness based leadership training in backpacking, rock climbing, caving and canoe tripping

EXPERIENCE

[AECOM Environment](#) Sagamore Beach, MA

Project Specialist (2005 to 2011)

"To create, enhance and sustain the world's built, natural and social environments."

- Coordinate, draft, produce and file environmental clearance packages to obtain federal, state and local approvals for underground natural gas transmission construction projects in Pennsylvania, New York and New England states
- Conduct wetland delineations and vernal pool surveys
- Filed Notices of Intent under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act
- Conduct environmental inspections during construction of underground natural gas pipelines

[Maine Land Use Regulation Commission](#) Rangeley, Maine

Environmental Specialist II (2003 - 2005)

- Reviewed applications and issued permits for residential buildings, subdivisions and commercial developments

[National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association](#) Orono, Maine

Fisheries Biologist (2002 – 2003)

- Drafted Biological Opinion under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act permit for net-pen Atlantic salmon aquaculture in the Gulf of Maine

[Manomet Center for Conservation Science](#) Stratton, Maine

Stream Ecologist Field Assistant (2000)

- Conducted field work identifying streams that fit parameters to be included in a headwater stream study

[United States Fish and Wildlife Service](#) Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska

Volunteer Biological Technician (1999)

- Performed vegetation, migratory bird and fish surveys
- Remote travel included GPS operation, orientation skills and motorized watercraft operation

SKILLS, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- | | |
|--|------|
| ▪ Association of Massachusetts Wetlands Scientists, Member | 2011 |
| ▪ IWEER Basic Wetland Delineation | 2008 |
| ▪ IWEER Winter Woody Plant Identification | 2008 |
| ▪ ESRI Certification, ArcGIS I | 2006 |
| ▪ NEIWPCC Wetland Delineation at Disturbed and Problem Sites | 2005 |
| ▪ Maine DEP Erosion and Sediment Control | 2005 |
| ▪ Municipal Code Enforcement Officer Training, Rule 80K | 2005 |
| ▪ NEIWPCC Advanced Wetland Delineation | 2004 |
| ▪ National Conservation Training Center, ESA Sec. 7 Consultation | 2002 |

REFERENCES

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COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are one of the most simple but difficult letters to write. Many students find it difficult to write about themselves. Sometimes the task is easier when you start off writing as if you were talking to a friend rather than a potential employer. Once the content is down then you can work to make it more professional and tailored to a professional audience.

Cover letters are your opportunity to write something personal and meaningful, rather than simply documenting information like on a resume. It is an opportunity for you to express your values, interest, and level of professionalism as well as your knowledge of the company. You can use the cover letter to convey specific examples of your accomplishments and experience.

Remember the goal of a cover letter is to tell the employer what you have to offer them, rather than what you hope to gain from the experience.

What to include?

Occasionally employers request specific information to be included in your cover letters. Always comply to employer requests or you will not likely be selected for the position. They want to know you are capable of following directions before they will be willing to hire you. If no specific requests are asked then follow the standard cover letter guide. See example.

Guidelines:

1. Always address your cover letter to an actual person, rather than “to whom it may concern”. If you have put an honest effort in to seeking a contact name and are unable to find one then an acceptable compromise would be to address it to the head of the human resource department.
2. Always follow the standard format unless the employer requests specific information.
3. Most cover letters are written in block letter style. Single spaced with double space between paragraphs.
4. Standard letter format spacing is important. It shows the employer you know how to write a professional letter. Follow the sample provided.
5. Keep your cover letter to one page, unless the employer has requested additional information that would require additional pages.
6. Minimize I statements. (ex. I am very interested in this position because I would be a great fit). Students have come into the Career Resource Center with over 30 I statements on a one page cover letter.
7. Use a warm and energetic tone, but be confident. (rather than stating “I think I would be a good fit for this position because...”, state, “I would be great fit for this position because...”.)
8. Use positive words such as: excitement, enthusiasm, interest
9. Be authentic but be careful of cliché’s such as “Ever since I was a little girl, I’ve always loved animals”
10. Always focus on what you have to offer them, not what they have to offer you.
11. Use the same header, font size and font style as your resume. Print the same high grade paper as your resume.
12. Don’t forget to sign your letter.

Sample Cover Letter Format

Your street address
City, state, zip

Month, Day, Year

Mr./Ms./Dr. Name of contact person

Title of contact person

Name of organization

Street address

City, state, zip

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

(First paragraph) Explain why you are writing and indicate the position for which you are applying. Tell how you heard about the position and the organization. Introduce basic information about yourself that explains why you would be the best candidate for the position. The first paragraph should catch the attention of the reader and create initial interest in you. If you are not applying for a specific position, still emphasize why you are interested in the organization.

(Second paragraph) Emphasize your skills and qualifications, and demonstrate how your experience meets the requirements for the position. Do not merely repeat the information listed on your résumé; instead, highlight and expand on your qualifications and experiences that are most relevant to this particular employer. Outline the skills you will bring to the position and communicate how you will contribute to the organization.

(Third paragraph) Refer the reader to the documents you have enclosed, such as your résumé, application, transcripts, etc. Reiterate your strong interest in the position/company. Provide contact numbers and the best way to reach you. Specify how you plan to follow up. Thank the reader for taking the time to consider your résumé.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

Type your name here

Enclosure(s) (This indicates that there are accompanying documents, such as your résumé, a reference list, etc.)

10.