

# RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

When applying for jobs outside of academia, you will typically need to submit a resume instead of a CV. A resume is not just a CV minus the publications. The language and value system of academia often no longer apply. The process of converting your CV into a resume requires you to see and present yourself in a new way and can be both exciting as well as a little painful. It can be difficult to edit hard-earned academic credentials, publications, and experiences from your CV. Although it will be tempting to leave as much as

possible and let the employers figure out what might be useful, keep in mind that your readers will not have the time or motivation to do so.

Employers often say they initially spend less than 30 seconds reviewing a resume. Unless you quickly and clearly demonstrate how your graduate training and other experiences allow you to bring value to their line of work, they would rather move on to the next resume. You will need to translate your skills from academic jargon into the

language of the field for which you are applying.

The resume is a marketing tool and in order for you to write an effective one, you need to 1) know what you have to offer (skills, knowledge, experience, achievements), 2) know the market or employer's needs and 3) demonstrate fit in an attractive and clear format. It needs to be written to let the reader know why you can do a particular job well.

## Resume Sections

### Name and Contact Information

- Your Name
- Address (personal mailing address, not your institutional office address; can leave it out for privacy and security reasons if circulating the document widely).
- Phone Number (list the number that you'll answer; make sure your voicemail greeting is appropriate)
- Email Address (avoid using your "fun" address name, list your simple, professional one)
- Website or LinkedIn address (if pertinent)

### Objective

- Optional; needs to be clear, concise and meaningful.

- Can include the specific position you are seeking, skills you wish to use on the job, field or organization type in which you are interested, or a combination of all of the above (e.g. Seeking a position in museum administration requiring strong research and writing skills and a background in art history).

### Education

- Listed in reverse chronological order, with the expected or most recent degree first.
- Include institution, location (especially if overseas), degree, field of study, graduation date or expected date of completion.

### What is the difference between a CV and a resume?

The curriculum vitae (also referred to as CV or vita) is a comprehensive record of your scholarly credentials, research and teaching experiences, and has no limitations in length. It is used in academic or research settings to apply for jobs, tenure, grants or fellowships.

A resume, on the other hand, is a concise (1-2 pages) and selected summary of your most relevant skills and experiences as they relate to a particular employer's needs. The language, value system, and format of a resume differ from an academic CV and align more closely with the position and company to which you are applying.

- Can also include research focus (keep the description broad unless the employer would be interested in your exact area of specialization), relevant courses, study abroad experience, selected honors.

## Experience

- Listed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experience first.
- Include name of organization, location (optional; be consistent in usage with other sections), position title, dates (include month if appropriate).
- Describe your accomplishments, starting with action verbs rather than using passive language such as “duties included” or “responsible for” (see sample action verbs on the pages that

follow or Google “resume verbs” for additional suggestions).

- Use either past or present tense as applicable and keep your format consistent.
- Leave out personal pronouns such as “I,” “me,” “my.”
- Quantify and highlight results and accomplishments whenever possible (e.g., Received fellowship awarded to 5% of applicants, Increased efficiency by 40%).
- Include paid jobs and any non-paid experience (internships, volunteer community service, relevant academic/extracurricular projects, and professional/student activities) that relates to the job you are pursuing.

- Divide experience into two or more sections, when relevant. Possible section headers include Relevant Experience, Additional Experience, Research & Project Management Experience, or Leadership & Communication Experience.

## Other Sections

- You can choose to include other optional sections if they are relevant and can provide helpful information to prospective employers. Sample headings may include: Summary of Skills, Computer/Technical Skills, Languages, Activities, Honors/Awards, Professional Affiliations, Professional Development, Interests, and Additional Information.

## Resume Format

There is no single way to format your resume. Choose a resume format that will best present your strengths.

### Chronological Format

- An arrangement of your qualifications in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent.
- Most familiar to employers and often preferred.
- Best for someone with a clear history of directly relevant experience.

### Combination Format

- Highlights specific skills and experiences, which are listed in reverse chronological order and categorized under relevant skill or experience headings (e.g., Research and Writing, Public Service, Leadership); offers flexibility and strength of both the functional and chronological formats.
- Familiar to employers and easy to follow.
- Helpful for candidates who lack a linear history of related work experience but

have experience that can be grouped under relevant headings.

### Functional/Skills Format

- Highlights your skills by function rather than work experience and conveys skills and abilities possessed even if they were not used in related work settings.
- Not as familiar to employers and less frequently preferred.
- Useful for career changers, candidates with very limited or no experience.

## Resume Tips

- Make sure the way you prioritize information reflects the priorities of the organization to which you are applying; consider placement on page, order of bullet points, and number of lines.
- Use limited amounts of **bold**, *italics*, CAPITALS, and underlining strategically to bring attention to the most relevant information.
- Balanced use of blank spaces and margins is important. Don't make your margins and font size too small. Keep margins to around .7 to 1 inch and font size to 10

or 11 point (adjust as needed for various font styles).

- Don't include personal information such as marital status, photo, or physical characteristics unless you are applying to jobs outside of US and Canada and this is the norm for that country.
- When sending emails electronically, attach as a PDF file to preserve formatting and name your file clearly to allow employers to easily identify your resume (e.g., Your name\_Resume).

- References do not need to be listed unless they have been requested. Instead of using space to include the line: “References available upon request,” have a separate list ready for submission, typically during the final stages of your interviews (see Sample Reference List later in this *Guide*).
- Have your resume critiqued by several people for content and grammar. Bring your resume to the CDC to have it reviewed by a career counselor.

## Sample Action Verbs Listed By Functional Skill Area

### Communication

Aided  
Advised  
Arbitrated  
Clarified  
Co-authored  
Collaborated  
Consulted  
Coordinated  
Counseled  
Defined  
Enlisted  
Formulated  
Influenced  
Informed  
Inspired  
Interpreted  
Interviewed  
Mediated  
Merged  
Negotiated  
Promoted  
Publicized  
Recommended  
Represented  
Resolved  
Suggested

### Creative

Acted  
Adapted  
Composed  
Conceptualized  
Created  
Designed  
Developed  
Directed  
Drew  
Fashioned  
Generated  
Illustrated  
Imagined  
Improvised  
Integrated  
Innovated  
Painted  
Performed

Planned  
Problem-solved  
Shaped  
Synthesized  
Visualized  
Wrote

### Detail-Oriented

Analyzed  
Approved  
Arranged  
Classified  
Collated  
Compared  
Compiled  
Documented  
Enforced  
Followed through  
Met deadlines  
Prepared  
Processed  
Recorded  
Retrieved  
Set priorities  
Systemized  
Tabulated

### Financial

Administered  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Appraised  
Audited  
Budgeted  
Calculated  
Computed  
Developed  
Evaluated  
Figured  
Maintained  
Managed  
Performed  
Planned  
Projected

### Manual Skills

Arranged  
Assembled  
Bound  
Built  
Checked  
Classified  
Constructed  
Controlled  
Cut  
Designed  
Drove  
Handled  
Installed  
Invented  
Maintained  
Monitored  
Prepared  
Operated  
Repaired

### Providing Service

Advised  
Attended  
Cared  
Coached  
Coordinated  
Counseled  
Delivered  
Demonstrated  
Explained  
Furnished  
Generated  
Inspected  
Issued  
Mentored  
Provided  
Purchased  
Referred  
Submitted

### Organizing

Achieved  
Assigned  
Consulted  
Contracted  
Controlled

Coordinated  
Decided  
Delegated  
Developed  
Established  
Evaluated  
Negotiated  
Organized  
Planned  
Prepared  
Prioritized  
Produced  
Recommended  
Reported

### Leadership

Administered  
Chaired  
Convinced  
Directed  
Examined  
Executed  
Expanded  
Facilitated  
Improved  
Initiated  
Managed  
Oversaw  
Produced  
Recommended  
Reviewed  
Supervised

### Research/ Investigation

Calculated  
Cataloged  
Collected  
Computed  
Conducted  
Correlated  
Critiqued  
Diagnosed  
Discovered  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Experimented

Extrapolated  
Gathered  
Identified  
Inspected  
Investigated  
Monitored  
Proved  
Reviewed  
Surveyed  
Tested

### Technical

Assembled  
Built  
Calculated  
Computed  
Designed  
Engineered  
Fabricated  
Maintained  
Operated  
Programmed  
Remodeled  
Repaired  
Solved  
Tested

### Teaching Skills

Adapted  
Advised  
Clarified  
Coached  
Developed  
Encouraged  
Evaluated  
Informed  
Inspired  
Motivated  
Participated  
Provided  
Represented  
Supported  
Taught  
Trained  
Verified

## Sample Resume

### Giancarlo (John) Marconi

563 Salvatierra Walk • Stanford, CA 94305 • Cell: (650) 123-4567 • name@stanford.edu

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Five years experience modeling, designing, testing and optimizing wireless networks
- Proven ability to work on teams, communicate effectively and manage projects

#### EDUCATION

**PhD** in Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA expected 6/20xx

**MS** in Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA GPA 4.0/4.0 20xx

**BS** in Electrical Engineering, Politecnico di Milano, Milano, Italy GPA 98/100 20xx

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**Research Assistant**, Ginzton Lab, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 20xx—present

- Developed energy-efficient routing protocols, data collection algorithms and collision-free scheduling for multi-cluster wireless sensor networks for use in smart environments
- Envisioned new vision-based applications for camera networks. Initiated collaboration with 2 professors and 3 students to demonstrate proof-of-principle
- Modeled convex and combinatorial optimization problems in wireless sensor networks
- Proposed practical, near-optimal data collection and scheduling algorithms

**Wireless Network Intern**, ABC Technology Center, Palo Alto, CA Summer 20xx

- Evaluated heuristic algorithms under different network assumptions. Improved the network delay and lifetime tradeoff up to 50 percent for wake-up scheduling
- Worked with 2 team members to develop and evaluate efficient node supervision and scheduling algorithms for wireless security/fire alarm systems
- Presented findings and recommendations to Chief Technology Officer

**Research Assistant**, Politecnico di Milano, Italy 20xx—20xx

- Evaluated and improved multi-rate multi-user OFDM-CDMA systems, including multi-modulation, multi-code, variable-spreading-length, and bi-orthogonal schemes

#### Technical Communication

- Published 7 technical journal articles and presented 2 conference papers; 2 patents pending
- Assisted in writing and editing 2 research proposals, resulting in a 2-year \$500,000 grant
- Teaching Assistant for 3-quarter graduate-level networking course series

#### ACTIVITIES

**Treasurer**, Graduate Student Council—coordinated 5-person team that raised \$6,000 20xx

#### SKILLS

Programming: Matlab, C/C++

Technical: OFDM-CDMA systems; familiar with IEEE 802.11g/n standards

Languages: Italian (native), English (fluent), Japanese (conversational)

#### HONORS

Nokia Wireless Design Competition—2nd Place 20xx

Presidential Fellowship 20xx—20xx

#### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

IEEE, Stanford IEEE Student Chapter

## Sample Resume

### ELEANOR J. BANKS

PO Box 94305  
Stanford, CA 94309  
(650) 123-4567  
name@stanford.edu

#### OBJECTIVE:

To apply my demonstrated research, writing, and editing skills to a research analyst position

#### EDUCATION:

**Stanford University**, Stanford, CA  
PhD in English, expected 6/20XX

**Brandeis University**, Waltham, MA  
B.A. in English (6/20XX)

#### RESEARCH/WRITING/EDITING EXPERIENCE:

- |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11/20XX-present | <b>Studies Enterprise Research</b> , Palo Alto, CA<br><i>Consultant:</i> Researched and wrote reports on small business education needs. Developed curriculum and audiovisual materials in business education. Conducted 5 workshops for 100+ teachers and the California Education Agency |
| 6/20XX-8/20XX   | <b>Texas Commission on Economy and Efficiency</b> , Austin, TX<br><i>Writer/Editor:</i> Analyzed data, wrote, and edited commission reports on the state personnel system and computer services                                                                                            |
| 7/20XX-8/20XX   | <b>South Educational Development Laboratory</b> , Austin, TX<br><i>Technical Writer:</i> Researched and wrote monthly publication on educational technology issues. Developed curriculum materials used by Texas Education Agency                                                          |
| 6/20XX-8/20XX   | <b>Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts</b> , Austin, TX<br><i>Research Analyst:</i> Researched and wrote quarterly reports on Texas business trends. Monitored legislative meetings relevant to economic issues. Conducted research on cost-cutting measures                              |

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

**Computer:** Publisher, PowerPoint, Word, Dreamweaver, Drupal, Photoshop, Mac/PC environments

**Languages:** Fluent in Spanish, conversational skills in French

**Interests:** Education, biking, hiking, reading, travel, and social networking

## Sample Reference Page

### REFERENCES FOR JORDAN HOSAY-BATES:

**Prof. Richard Choksi** (Dissertation Advisor)  
Department of Chemistry  
Stanford University  
Stanford, CA 94305  
(650) 123-4567  
name@stanford.edu

**Jennifer Chen** (Internship Supervisor)  
Business Analytics Manager, Google  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043  
(650) 123-4567  
name@google.com

**Michael River** (Internship Supervisor)  
Director, New Ventures  
400 Main Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94315  
(650) 123-4567  
name@newventures.com

## Cover Letters

Cover letters provide you with the opportunity to:

- initiate contact and introduce yourself
- respond to job postings or inquire about openings
- personalize your resume and show enthusiasm and interest in the job
- highlight information that addresses the needs and interests of the employer

Bear in mind that the letters you write not only convey your interest and qualifications, but also give the employer an opportunity to observe how you communicate and present yourself. What you choose to include in the letter and how you choose to say it reveal much about you, from your attentiveness to detail (including spelling and grammar) and professionalism to the overall quality of your writing skills.

The following tips and guidelines are provided to help you craft an effective cover letter. Please remember that sample cover letters should not be used as scripts to copy but as examples to help you compose your own letter.

### Cover Letter Tips

1. Focus on the employer's needs rather than your own. Ask yourself: "What are they asking for, why do I want this position, and in what ways do I meet their qualifications and needs?" "What value can I add to this company?" Address these questions in your letter.
2. Tailor your letter for each employer. Generic letters do not make good impressions and are usually ignored. For practical purposes and limitations in time, plan to at least prepare a tailored letter for each different type of job (e.g. one for consulting, one for industry research) and customize 1-2 sentences for each employer.
3. Keep it concise, typically only one page, and in business letter format.
4. Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization. What attracts you to this company?
5. Highlight your skills and abilities and go beyond or expand on your resume content. Be clear about your objective and communicate your top 2-3 skills or experiences as they relate to the position.
6. Ideally, address the letter to the hiring manager, including a specific individual's name, title, and organization (all correctly spelled). Use "Dear Hiring Manager" as an alternative or when preferred by the employer.
7. Address specific skills and interests without copying them verbatim from the job announcement.
8. Have several people proofread your letters to avoid errors. An effective cover letter requires careful research, strategic thinking, and multiple revisions. Bring your draft letter to the CDC to have it reviewed by a Career Counselor and to discuss your specific situation and appropriate strategies.

## Cover Letter Format

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip

Date

Employer's Name  
Title  
Company/Organization/Institution Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip

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

**Who are you and what do you want?** Your opening paragraph should briefly introduce you and your interest in the organization or position. If you are aware of a specific position or opening, refer to it now and how you learned about it. This paragraph could also mention the name of an individual who recommended that you contact the employer, or cite other research that prompted you to write. It is important to indicate why you are interested in their organization.

**Why are you a good candidate?** The middle paragraph(s) should consist of a selection of highlights from your background that would be of greatest interest to the organization and consequently create the notion of "fit." Focus on your top 2-3 skills and experience and include supporting evidence for any claim of skills or accomplishments. Again, try to display knowledge of the field and organization. Use action verbs to describe relevant skills and expertise and mention specific knowledge you may have (i.e., lab techniques, computer applications, etc.) that would be needed in the work. You can also touch on a particular topic that seems important in the job description that the employer developed. Whet the employer's appetite and entice them to read your resume in detail and schedule an interview.

**What will you do next?** Your closing paragraph should outline next steps. Express your willingness to provide additional information and desire to further discuss the position in an interview. Include your phone number and email address. If you will be in the area, let them know. Thank the reader(s) for their time and interest.

Sincerely,

*(Your signature; may omit extra spaces if sent electronically)*

Your Typed Name

## Sample Cover Letter #1

P.O. Box 12436  
Stanford, CA 94108

March 10, 20XX

Dr. Yolanda Lee  
Director, Admissions Office  
University of California, Berkeley  
University Hall - Room 21  
Berkeley, CA 94022

Dear Dr. Lee:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for the position of Student Affairs Specialist with the Admissions Office of the University of California at Berkeley, which I saw listed in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Currently I am completing a PhD in Communication at Stanford University. I would like to continue to work in a university environment, especially within the University of California system, and believe that my past experiences as an employee and a student of the University of California will enable me to succeed in this position.

As a Graduate Intern with the Dean of Students Office at Stanford during this past year, I assisted the Dean of Students on a number of research projects. I also served as a Graduate Program Coordinator with Residential Education at Stanford, where I was able to develop a "Speakers on Campus" program and supervise student assistants. This program brought alumni/ae speakers to the residences to conduct presentations regarding their experiences in arts, law, medicine, and business. As a Resident Assistant during my undergraduate years at the University of California at Los Angeles, I enjoyed the freedom to plan a variety of stimulating programs to best suit the needs of other students. I was able to successfully juggle the details of complex schedules while attending to the personal attention the students and staff needed to provide a well-organized program. I am confident that these skills transfer to the fast-paced environment of an admissions office.

I work effectively with diverse groups of people. While serving as Conference Host with the Hayward State Summer Housing Program, I interacted closely with international students and enjoyed both introducing them to the university environment and referring them to resources. I also collaborated with a staff of 22 hosts, where we supported and encouraged one another. With the College Readiness Program at Hayward State, I had the opportunity to encourage students of color to pursue educational opportunities and establish learning goals.

I look forward to further discussing my qualifications and enthusiasm for this position with you and members of the search committee. I can be reached by phone at (650) 123-4567 or by email at name@stanford.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Estelle Perez



## Sample Cover Letter #2

1483 California Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94302

December 14, 20XX

Ms. Patricia Morisette  
Manager, Corporate Administration  
Corvie Systems  
2604 Calderon Ave.  
Mountain View, CA 94040

Dear Ms. Morisette:

In response to your advertisement on Stanford's Cardinal Careers for a Systems Analyst, I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

As a Physics graduate student at Stanford University, I have developed extensive programming experience through assignments using C++, JAVA, and other programming languages in both Mac and PC environments. Through these projects, I honed my programming skills and learned a great deal from my peers in a project team setting. The collaborative potential of the Systems Analyst position, combined with Corvie Systems' significant advances within the tech industry, is what most attracts me to this position.

Through my internships at both Klavin, Inc. and Interbold, I acquired the necessary capabilities to successfully handle the responsibilities of a Systems Analyst. Through these opportunities, I have gained considerable experience with telecommunications applications, database management, spreadsheets, and graphics software.

I have a high degree of initiative and am able to learn new concepts quickly, which proved invaluable to the fast-paced environments in which my internships and education were completed. Further, I believe that my analytical skills and enthusiasm for the work that I do would positively contribute to the systems strategy department of Corvie Systems.

Please find attached my resume for your review. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications in person and to learn more about the opportunities at Corvie Systems. I can be reached at (650) 123-4567 or name@stanford.edu. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mazalia Kuanni