

writing your  
**application**  
resume and  
application letter



**Flinders**  
UNIVERSITY

inspiring achievement

# graduate qualities at flinders

Flinders University's Bachelor degree programs  
aim to produce graduates who:

ARE  
KNOWLEDGEABLE

CAN  
APPLY THEIR  
KNOWLEDGE

COMMUNICATE  
EFFECTIVELY

VALUE  
ETHICAL  
BEHAVIOUR

ARE  
COLLABORATIVE

CAN WORK  
INDEPENDENTLY

CONNECT  
ACROSS  
BOUNDARIES



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[www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities](http://www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities)

CRICOS 00114A

# WRITING YOUR CV/RESUME AND COVER LETTER

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## 1. THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Your resume (or curriculum vitae (CV) - these terms are used interchangeably) is an essential marketing document that demonstrates your personal and professional skills. It is your advertisement to the employer, the goal of which is to obtain an interview.

We have other booklets available, covering all aspects of graduate job search. You may wish to obtain free copies of our booklets from the Careers and Employer Liaison centre, or download them from our website.

- Creative Job Search
- Addressing Selection Criteria
- Winning Graduate Applications – responding to application forms
- At the Interview
- Assessment Centres & Selection Tests
- The booklet, 'Networking - going proactive' is available to be downloaded from our website also.

*"Never assume your job application and resume will be read. Many recruiters and employers take less than 45 seconds to make a decision on a resume, so a skim read for relevant points is all you should expect."* Chris Tan, Recruitment Consultant, The Advertiser, Career One, Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, pg 23.

Do not use the examples in this booklet as they currently stand - they represent rough notes for CV preparation only, and are provided to give you some ideas about how to develop CV statements. Be aware that employers and recruiters get frustrated at reading the same things many times over! Be original – your best application will be created out of your own unique experiences!

## 2. FLINDERS UNIVERSITY GRADUATE QUALITIES

As a result of successfully pursuing your studies at Flinders University, you will have developed program-specific professional competencies as well as being able to demonstrate a range of qualities.

Flinders University's Bachelor degree programs aim to produce graduates who:

- are knowledgeable
- can apply their knowledge
- communicate effectively
- can work independently

- are collaborative
- value ethical behaviour
- connect across boundaries.

More information about the Graduate Qualities, including descriptions is available at: [www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/](http://www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/).

As you conduct your self-assessment and review your educational experiences, consider how you may both demonstrate and draw on these qualities as you embark on the next step in your career.

*We are proud that so many Flinders graduates identify with, and can be distinguished by, these distinctive academic, professional and cultural characteristics.”* (Flinders University Graduate Qualities statement [www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/graduate-qualities\\_home.cfm](http://www.flinders.edu.au/graduate-qualities/graduate-qualities_home.cfm))

### **3. SKILLS SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS**

Employers hire people, not degree parchments! Each employer has a shopping list of generic employability skills they wish to purchase. Their goal is to ensure organisational success by recruiting and retaining employees who have a variety of skills and personal attributes, as well as the important technical and professional job specific skills.

Employability skills are not only required to gain employment, but also for you to progress within an organisation so as to achieve your potential and contribute successfully to the organisation’s strategic directions.

These skills are developed throughout your life and in multiple settings, such as:

- education
- work experience (paid and unpaid)
- life experience
- extracurricular achievements
- community involvement
- sporting activities
- social activities and leisure.

Numerous surveys show that employers of graduates look for a number of general skills:

- literacy and numeracy
- time management and organisation
- oral and written communication
- team work
- creative problem-solving
- initiative and enterprise
- critical and analytical thinking
- ability to apply discipline knowledge and concepts
- information gathering, evaluation and synthesis
- emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- adaptability.

The information included in the resume must reflect these skills and be tailored to the employer's requirements.

#### **4. SIX STEPS TO PREPARING A TAILORED RESUME**

Step 1 – Define who you are through self-assessment

Step 2 – Research the employer and what they are looking for

Step 3 – Match yourself to the Employer's requirements

Step 4 – Plan the resume structure and what information to include

Step 5 – Present your resume professionally

Step 6 – Create the content of your resume

#### **STEP 1 – DEFINE WHO YOU ARE THROUGH SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Writing your resume starts with assessing who you are and what you have to offer. Your 'offer' to employers will be based on the experiences, values, interests, attributes, and skills that you have developed in multiple settings. Developing greater self and career awareness will help you to make well-informed decisions and communicate clearly with employers in your written applications. In other words, you can market yourself to the employer in a targeted way.

Check out the box on the next page for a self-assessment strategy.

1. Break your life into its various components: work, secondary school study, university study, and personal life (extra-curricular activities).
2. Look at each area and consider what it involves and what you gained from the experience. Some aspects to consider are: responsibility, time management, communication skills and teamwork.
3. Think about how these skills and experiences could be applied to the industry and positions you are interested in.
4. Write down your skills and experiences and next to each one write down how they can be applied in a workplace. Become familiar with this list so that you are well-versed in the applicability of your skills when applying for jobs and attending job interviews. [www.graduateopportunities.com/career\\_advice/self\\_assessment](http://www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/self_assessment)

## **STEP 2 – RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER AND WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR**

Once you have found an employment opportunity, you need to ensure that your resume targets the needs of that particular employer.

### **Who is this employer?**

Research the employer as part of your marketing strategy. Your aim is to begin to understand the culture, mission, and values that they uphold. Use avenues such as the following:

- attend Flinders University Careers Fairs (held on campus throughout the year) and Employer On-campus visits to meet with employers
- graduate recruitment literature
- employer profiles in publications (including online) from Graduate Opportunities, Unimail and Hobsons
- the organisation's website, annual reports, media releases, etc
- articles in newsletters/magazines and the financial and business sections of newspapers
- industry associations' sites.

When you attend an interview, you can use this information to indicate your enthusiasm about working for that organisation.

### **What are they looking for?**

A useful approach is to highlight key words in the job advertisement (see the Optus example below where these words have been underlined). This will also be helpful for you in focusing both your resume and your cover letter.

### **Optus, Administration Support Officers**

Do you enjoy the environment of a back office function, like working in a large team but also have the ability to take ownership of your work and work autonomously??

We are looking for switched on individuals who have excellent attention to detail, time management skills and ability to prioritise their administration duties to support the Customer Service Sales team.

Other key skills you will need to display to be successful in winning one of these positions are: Ability to self-manage your work, take ownership of your daily, weekly and monthly commitments, intermediate data entry and computer literacy.

If you are applying for a Graduate Recruitment Program, the organisation's website will usually have a section titled 'Who are we looking for?' that clearly sets out the degree areas, skills, attributes, and qualities sought.

## **STEP 3 – MATCH YOURSELF TO THE EMPLOYER'S REQUIREMENTS**

Get into the 'mindset' of the employer who will be reading this document; and will be looking for evidence that you are their ideal candidate. They will be thinking "*What's in it for me?*" and "*Why should I meet with this applicant?*". How will you get their attention and maintain their interest throughout this document? You will answer this question through matching your skills with what they are looking for and providing evidence.

Examples of evidence of skills:

- technical/specialist skills developed through tertiary study (accountancy skills, understanding policy/legislation, groundwater analysis, counselling skills, statistical analysis skills, programming, event management, foreign language proficiency, and so on)
- public speaking and verbal communication abilities (oral presentations, casual work)
- team work skills (group projects, amateur theatre, music band or ensemble, sporting/community involvements)
- written communication skills (assignments, produce the newsletter for a community organisation, thesis, placements)
- customer service skills, dealing with the public (retail sales, hospitality or other work experience, call centre experience)
- liaison and negotiation skills (committee and student representative experience)
- ability to handle responsibility (supervision of staff, trainer of new staff, operate retail outlet in manager's absence).



## **STEP 4 – PLAN YOUR RESUME STRUCTURE AND WHAT INFORMATION TO INCLUDE**

Each time you apply for a position you will make decisions regarding the structure (the order in which you position each heading) and content of your resume (selection of the relevant information) in order to highlight the most relevant aspects of your experience. There is no 'right' way or 'one-size-fits-all' template for writing a resume. Many commentators recommend writing a separate resume for each job application, tailoring it specifically to the requirements of that position/organisation. Here are a few suggestions that will enable you to decide how to present your experience in the best light.

### **Headings**

Information in the resume is usually grouped under the following types of headings:

- Personal Details
- Career Objective
- Professional Memberships
- Education
- Industry/Clinical/Course Placements
- Employment History
- Skills Profile
- Achievements
- Community and Leisure Interests
- Referees

It is not necessary to use all these headings and you may wish to omit or add headings or change the order. You can also make your headings quite specific in order to best present your information. For example:

- Education can become: Professional Training, Nursing Qualifications
- Employment Experience can become: Legal Sector Experience, Community Sector Experience, Casual or Customer Service Employment
- Extracurricular Activities can become: Leadership in Student Activities, Community Participation.

## Sequence the Headings: Overall Structure

Choose your headings and decide the order in which you would like to sequence them. A good guideline is to prioritise the information you present in your resume in order of importance to an employer. This will ensure that the most relevant information appears early in the resume.

### *Example: positioning degree related experience*

It is important to emphasise any degree-related experience (this could include course placements, a WorkReady Internship Placement, Vacation Work, Volunteering, etc.) in your resume, as this is the experience that is most highly related to the positions that you will be applying for. Therefore, following your Education section you may have a section called, for example; 'Clinical Placements or Industry Experience'. You would then describe each placement using bullet points, as if it were a paid position, including dates. Another option would be to have this as the first sub-section in your Employment or Work Experience Section.

### *Example: positioning hobbies/interests*

Information on hobbies and leisure interests should not appear on the front page; locate it before your Referees Section. The information with higher priority is likely to concern your education and work experience.

## Sequence the Headings: Section Structure

Once you have decided on the order in which you will place your headings, you will need to decide how you structure the information *within* each section. Using reverse chronological order can emphasise your recent achievements. Having said that, the most significant information in the section should appear first, so it doesn't get lost in less relevant details, and end up being skipped over by the employer. If it isn't possible to do both, you may need to create sub headings.

### *Example: Structuring the Education Section*

In your Education Section, consider how the following structure of sub-headings potentially emphasises more recent Professional Development activities (e.g. attending a conference or seminar/workshop) over the older information on Secondary Education:

#### **EDUCATION**

Tertiary

Professional Development

Secondary Education

### *Example: Structuring the Employment Section*

In another example, if a law student was currently employed in a retail sales position, but had previously undertaken 2 law clerkships, rather than including all of this information under one heading "Work Experience", sub-headings in this section could be created for greater impact. For example, the first sub-heading could be "Legal

Sector Experience” followed by “Casual Work Experience”. This way, the most relevant information is given highest priority.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Legal Sector Experience

Use reverse chronological order to describe each placement/clerkship.

Casual Work Experience

## **STEP 5 – PRESENT YOUR RESUME PROFESSIONALLY**

### **Style**

Your resume should be written in simple language, avoiding embellishments. Pay close attention to the spelling and grammar; you are making a first impression. Minimise or avoid sentences, especially detailed and lengthy ones. Utilise bullet points as they allow the reader to quickly access your information. Your key selling points must be easy to access when an employer starts perusing your resume.

### **Presentation**

The following 10 guidelines should be observed when preparing a resume:

1. Use good quality plain A4 paper and printer.
2. Staple pages at the top left hand corner.
3. Do **not** use plastic folders or covers.
4. Ensure your name appears in the header/footer of each page after the first page.
5. Leave space between sections.
6. Use a layout that ensures information can be easily read.
7. Place dates in the left margin as a general rule.
8. Keep headings and sub-headings consistent in style and size.
9. Avoid small print, italics, script, underlined words, horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, and shading.
10. Number the pages.

Always observe any specific instructions from the employer regarding application format, including length, headings and content (some employers will have a ‘Guidelines for Applicants’ section on their vacancies page – make sure you check this).

### **Length**

This depends on the amount of information to be presented. Be concise, and aim for a length of no more than 2 - 4 pages. This can be challenging where you have an extensive employment history but structuring your information carefully can overcome this.

## **Fonts**

Use ONE font in your document that is easily read e.g. 12-point Arial or Helvetica. Multiple fonts can be really annoying. Use **BOLD CAPITALS** for section headings to clearly delineate them.

## **STEP 6 – CREATE THE CONTENT OF YOUR RESUME**

Give the document the heading, Curriculum Vitae or Resume.

### **Personal Details**

A cover sheet stating your personal details is not essential, as this information can be included at the top of the first page. As a minimum you should give your name, address, telephone number and email.

#### **Name**

Provide your full name and consider highlighting your surname in bold or capitals.

#### **Address**

Provide your current postal address and arrange for your mail to be forwarded to you when away from that address for any extended period of time.

#### **Telephone/email**

Provide contact details that allow a quick and effective method of contact. This includes home/mobile phone numbers and facsimile if applicable. Ensure that any voicemail or answer phone messages are businesslike and present a professional image. Email addresses also need to be appropriate; 'outrageouspartyanimal' does not present a great first impression to a prospective employer. Check these daily when job searching.

#### **Residential status**

If you are not a permanent resident, it is important to provide your visa status, with details on the duration of your stay, hours you are permitted to work, and any residency/citizenship applications pending.

#### **Date of birth/sex/marital status/nationality/religion**

Factors relating to age, gender, marital status, race or religion are not required to be listed under Equal Opportunity legislation in Australia.

#### **International applications**

Different countries will have varying requirements and legislation. Be prepared to adapt your documents to the culture of the country you are targeting, and the specific position/industry. You may find useful information by logging onto the Careers homepage of universities in the target country and websites such as:

- Prospects – UK’s Graduate Careers Website: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk> - link to ‘careers advice’ and select ‘country specific information’ to find out about working and studying in over 50 countries throughout the world, including information on applying for jobs.
- CareerMove International Career Opportunities: includes country specific information and examples/downloads, plus extensive international links for applications information: [www.careermove.info/country.html](http://www.careermove.info/country.html)
- Goinglobal.com - Global career information and resources: <http://www.goinglobal.com/topic/resumes.asp>

## Career Objective

This is a brief (1 - 4 lines in length), optional statement about your short to mid-term career aspirations. You can use an objective statement to draw links between your skills and a particular position, and to give the reader a focal point from which to review your document. It communicates to the reader how and where you would like to utilise your degree and your skills. This is useful if you are undergoing a career transition from one field into another, or if there are many potential career pathways for your degree.

Vague, clichéd, and self-centred statements will serve only to irritate the employer, for example: “a challenging position where I can utilise my education and skills in a supportive environment and achieve rapid promotion”. The statement must align with the job and organisation being applied for, and you **MUST** change it for each application.

The statement should include:

- What type of position/organisation you are interested in.
- What you can bring to the job.
- How the organisation will benefit (it is important to bring out what you can do for the employer, not just what they can do for you).

For example:

To obtain a \_\_\_\_ position in \_\_\_\_ organisation/industry/field/sector that will enable me to use my skills and experience in \_\_\_\_ and provide the opportunity to contribute/develop \_\_\_\_.

And

To provide a wide range of \_\_\_\_ services to \_\_\_\_, and to use my skills in \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_.

## Examples of career objectives

- To commence my career in an event management role, where I can combine my outstanding skills in public relations with creative flair to deliver successful arts events.
- To combine my dual qualifications in science and business in a marketing role in pharmaceutical sales, harnessing the interpersonal skills honed through 5 years retail sales experience.
- A position in data analysis where my skills in mathematics, computer programming and deductive reasoning will contribute to new systems development.
- To utilise my scientific expertise in the area of environmental education, allowing development of interactive and effective presentations to youth and community stakeholders.
- To be employed in a training role where my teaching qualifications and 3 years experience in staff development programs will result in enhanced communication and interpersonal skills within the organisation.

## Education

### Tertiary

Mth Yr - Mth Yr	Bachelor of ABC (Full Title of Qualification) Flinders University Majoring in ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grades; Grade Point Average (GPA) x out of 7.0 (this is optional but can demonstrate academic achievement and differentiate you from other applicants)</li><li>• Key subject areas (Tailor this (bullet) list (3 or 4 subjects) to the employer/role you are applying for.)</li><li>• Technical Skills (for example – scientific skills – equipment/instruments used, laboratory procedures, fieldwork skills etc)</li><li>• Major Projects (optional, but can market your degree)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conducted field survey of water/waste catchments in the Patawalunga region.</li><li>• Undertook research into juvenile offending behaviour and the impact on detention rates and custodial outcomes within rural and remote communities.</li><li>• Developed marketing plan for Coorong cultural tourism provider, including interpretive signage and interactive online presence.</li></ul></li><li>• Awards/Prizes/Achievements/Study Exchanges</li></ul>
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Academic Transcript available upon request (if not specifically requested in the application process).

If you have undertaken course placements, you may refer to them here, or in a separate section immediately following your Education section. Consider sub-headings for tertiary, other qualifications/professional development and secondary education. In each section, list qualifications in reverse chronological order. Indicate that copies of certificates/degrees etc are available on request and if you have overseas qualifications, provide an explanation as to their nature, content and equivalence in Australia.

## **Professional Development/Other Courses/Further Qualifications**

Include any relevant courses e.g. conferences, seminars, Graduate Skills Development Programs, TAFE courses, Child Safe Environments - Mandatory Reporting, Occupational Health & Safety Courses, First Aid, etc. Include dates and details of the training provider.

2009                      Flinders University  
Degree Plus  
Sessions Attended:

- Communication and Networking in the Workplace
- Working in Teams
- Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

(Certificates available on request)

## **Secondary**

Mature age applicants can probably leave out secondary education altogether.

Jan xx – Dec xx      Title of qualification – School  
Tertiary Entrance Ranking (optional)

- Achievements
- Any responsibilities held/major extracurricular activities – e.g. Prefect, Mentor, Student Representative Council, Team Captain etc (focus on the senior years of High School)

## **Professional Memberships**

This can demonstrate your career commitment and ongoing professional development.

2009 – Current              Australian Psychological Society  
Student Member

## **Employment History**

### **Sub-headings**

As discussed earlier, you may need sub-headings for areas such as: professional experience, casual work, voluntary work, practical placements, or vacation work. Strategically consider which parts of your work experience need to appear first; your bar work, or the career-related Vacation Work you undertook. Use reverse chronological order under each sub-heading.

## What to Include

Dates of employment, name of employer, position, duties performed and hours worked per week. Use bullet points followed by a verb phrase rather than sentences to describe your work. Avoid I did, I have, etc.

- Jan 09 – Current      Organisation  
                                 Job Title  
                                 Duties included:
- Start with the most important duties first
  - Between 3-7 points as a general guideline
  - Tailor to reflect duties/skills relative to the target role

Consider phrases such as:

- Recorded data using ...
- Conducted research into ...
- Provided customer service ...
- Answered up to 25 phone calls per day
- Created online newsletter ...

When describing Placements - be specific:

- Developed a marketing plan for ...
- Managed a caseload of X number
- Worked with clients ranging in age from X-Y, presenting with....
- Designed a brochure promoting tourism destinations in the ...

## Make the most of Casual Work

It is important not to underestimate the skills you have gained through part-time and casual employment.

When describing duties, look for tasks that involve transferable skills (e.g. the skills involved in serving customers in Hospitality may be a useful starting point for dealing corporate clients). Consider the order in which you describe your duties; what will make the most impact? For example, if you did bar work, don't state first up that you stocked the fridge; tell the reader about the transferable aspects, such as communicating with customers.

## Identify the transferable skills

The following positions may have provided more professional development opportunities than you would imagine. Consider skills such as: communication, time management, teamwork, etc. Think about how you may write these up as statements of achievement in the work history section of your CV.

**Process worker:** Did you complete tasks efficiently in a team context, with attention to quality standards, within the designated time frame and in adherence to Occupational Health & Safety requirements? Possibly you held some elected responsibilities in the work group?



**Cleaner:** Did your professional customer service, attention to detail and high standards secure repeat business? Safe usage of chemical cleaning products?

**Retail Sales:** Did you develop good customer relation skills? Anticipate customer needs? Influence their decisions? Up sell other products? Negotiate resolutions with difficult customers? Were there sales targets? Were you responsible for any cash handling, banking or balancing the till? Did you demonstrate creativity in merchandise displays? Manage the store independently during owner absences?

## Examples

Night Filler (current role, note present tense 'ing' ending)

- Responding to customer queries courteously and competently
- Stacking shelves quickly and with attention to detail
- Working in a team of 10 in a fast paced environment, assisting team members when needed
- Practising safe manual handling techniques and complying with Occupational Health and Safety procedures
- Neat personal presentation required at all times

Hospitality (previous role, note past tense 'ed' ending)

- Provided customer service for a 60-seat, silver service restaurant
- Served as host including working with customers on catered events, seating arrangements and special dietary requirements
- Assisted shift manager with large parties and beverage orders
- Worked quickly and efficiently during peak demand
- Compiled part-time worker schedules and ensured compliance with OH&S Standards.

## Adding Value

Did you have responsibility for any staff training and supervision (however informal)? Was there any training provided - on the job or more formally? Have you been promoted from the job you started in? What extra responsibilities have you been given at work? Did you receive any awards, for example: 'employee of the month'?

Customer Service Officer - Adelaide Gourmet Pizza

Commenced on the busy delivery hot line and was promoted to a supervisory role within 4 months.

Responsibilities:

- Coordinated allocation of up to 400 deliveries per shift
- Trained and supervised 10 employees in customer service
- Motivated team to exceed weekly sales targets
- Resolved customer complaints

Achievements:

- Won 'employee of the month' award for excellence in customer service in December 2009.

## Composing your Statements of Achievement

In formulating evidence of your capabilities by composing achievement statements, search your memory for:

- major projects in which you had responsibility or led the activity;
- procedures, policies, programs, changes that you introduced which were successful and solved problems;
- events or situations which those around you viewed positively in terms of your involvement in them; or
- examples of: increased sales, exceeded quotas, met targets, academic achievements.

Think also about how you can quantify your achievements. Quantifying money, time and amounts in your accomplishments enables you to maximise the impact of your successes and potential on the employer.

Avoid starting your achievement statements with 'I'.

Examples:

- Wrote 30 news releases in a four-week period under daily deadlines.
- Managed a student organisation budget of more than \$5,000.
- Developed a filing system that reduced administration time by 2 hours per week.
- Developed lesson plans for 2 classes of 25 students each.
- Trained 10 new employees in cafe procedures.
- Introduced 10 student service improvement proposals as committee member in the Hall of Residence.
- Fielded up to 30 customer service calls a day, identifying and providing solutions for customers, and ensuring repeat customers.
- Planned, organised and implemented creative activities for children aged 4-12.

*“Make sure that you sell yourself in your application. The aim of your application is to argue why the organisation should hire you and what the benefits will be for your organisation. Your application is not about what the organisation can offer you, but about what you can contribute to their mission and goals.”* Rebecca, International Studies (Honours), Policy Adviser at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## Action verbs

To help you write concise statements about your achievements, use the following to start your statements:

Adapted From K.I.S.S Guide to Managing Your Career by Ken Lawson 2001 Dorling Kindersley, pg. 109.

Achieved	Devised	Presented
Adapted	Directed	Produced
Administered	Edited	Promoted
Advised	Established	Provided
Advocated	Evaluated	Published
Analysed	Facilitated	Reconciled
Applied	Formulated	Recorded
Arranged	Generated	Reduced
Assessed	Identified	Reported
Audited	Implemented	Represented
Balanced	Increased	Researched
Budgeted	Innovated	Resolved
Chaired	Integrated	Reviewed
Coached	Interviewed	Scheduled
Communicated	Led	Streamlined
Completed	Liaised	Supervised
Conducted	Maintained	Synthesised
Consolidated	Managed	Trained
Consulted	Marketed	Updated
Coordinated	Modified	Upgraded
Counselled	Monitored	
Created	Negotiated	
Demonstrated	Organised	
Designed	Performed	
Determined	Planned	

## **Volunteer Work**

Describe your volunteer work just as you would paid work – with dates, name of the organisation, and bullet points about your responsibilities. Refer to our previous comments on structuring the resume to determine where to locate this in the resume.

Example: Learning Assistance Program Volunteer

- Working with students experiencing difficulties with learning on a one-to-one basis for 1 session a week
- Consultation with teacher and student to develop a plan of activities tailored to each student's particular needs
- Engaging with young people, to provide social and learning support
- Responding creatively to challenging behaviour
- Liaising with social workers, foster carers, school staff, and parents
- Encouraging student participation and building confidence and self-esteem
- Adhering to departmental policies on ...

## **Publications**

If you have written any articles or publications to do with your work or study, include them, and have a copy available if necessary at the interview.

## **Skills Profile**

Select no more than 5-7 skills that relate to the job or career area for which you are applying. Don't just list off a string of fantastic sounding adjectives - this won't convince anyone. State what the skills are and give examples of how and where you have demonstrated them. The skills should reflect studies, work experience and other experiences outlined in your resume. Keep the statements short.

- Highly developed skills in ... (developed through ...)
- Demonstrated commitment to ... (confirmed by ...)
- Excellent communication skills from experience in ...
- Ability to ... (as demonstrated by ...)
- Demonstrated ability to ... (as shown by ...)

Basic Skills profile examples

- High-level communication skills developed through 5 years experience in retail sales combined with leadership roles in student associations.
- Project-based teamwork skills demonstrated through participation in 6 group projects at university and a health promotion placement at Community Care Inc.
- Effective planning, organising and prioritising skills were demonstrated in my supervisory role in the hospitality field.
- Excellent skills in written communication demonstrated by achieving credits and distinctions in over 70% of my coursework.

- Computer skills: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Explorer & Access), SPSS, MYOB, etc.
- Language skills: Fluent in Spanish, understand Italian.
- Driver's licence and type (if relevant).

## **Achievements**

Another option is to have a special section on achievements (outstanding academic results, awards, sporting achievements) – this is optional.

## **Community and Leisure Interests/Recreational Interests**

Alternative headings could include: Extra Curricular Activities, Memberships Of Clubs And Societies, Interests, Overseas Travel, Community Involvement, Sporting Activities etc. – choose whatever is most appropriate to your activities and involvements.

### **What to include**

Detail community and sporting involvements - in these activities have you held any administrative or leadership positions (captain, president, secretary, treasurer)? What did you do and what was achieved? Have you held any coaching positions or do you have a coaching certificate? Have you assisted with event organisation? Try to make your description active. For example: Martial Arts (train 2 nights per week at X Karate Club), Football (play for X club, coach junior members).

You can also list hobbies, leisure interests, self-development activities, and travel. Focus on activities that show initiative, creativity, teamwork, communication, organisational, and other skills; especially if these are relevant to the job that you are applying for and you have space on the resume. Keep this information brief and interesting.

### **Why to include it**

Inclusion of recreational pursuits can give an employer more of an idea of you as a rounded person, your personality, an indication of how you may fit into their organisation and work group. If some of your skills have been developed through these pursuits, it is important to mention them. For example: involvement in team sports may indicate you could be a team player in the workplace. Overseas travel could demonstrate initiative and skills in cross cultural understanding and communication. This can also be used as an icebreaker at interviews; and in some areas, for example the Human Services sector, they can give an indication of your ability to balance work and life.

### **Consider the Impression you make**

Do the interests support your job objective? Will they enhance the employer's perception of you? For example, if you are applying for a customer service role, and list fairly solitary pursuits such as listening to music, reading, gardening - what image does this convey to the employer?

## Referees

Referees are people whose position gives them credibility. They can:

- give you a positive evaluation that is relevant to the job
- verify your suitability for the job in terms of your experience and personal qualities either verbally (telephone) or in writing (e.g. email).

Usually three are required, and they may be composed of an academic referee, work referees (manager or supervisor from your casual, placement, or voluntary work), or perhaps someone who has seen you in positions of responsibility in sporting, student clubs and other community activities. Be selective about who you choose - consider who can give the best overview of your skills as they will relate to the workplace? Where possible, use referees who can speak about your skills/attributes that relate to the position. Appropriate referees enhance your chances for employment, and confirm what you've said about yourself during job interviews. Sometimes the employer may specify what type of referees they want ("Referees: do not include relatives or more than one academic referee").

Only use a Personal/Character referee if absolutely necessary and there is no alternative. Personal referees can only comment on general topics and it is extremely unlikely that they would be familiar with the sorts of things most employers conducting a referee check want to know.

Provide the following information, which includes their workplace contact details.

Title (Ms/Miss/Mrs/Mr/Professor/Doctor etc) Name (e.g. Dr Alex Supervisor, Ms Jane Director, Mrs Sophie Employer)

Position Title

Organisation Name

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

Fax: .....

Email: .....

Relationship:.....

If you are making speculative applications, you can state, "Referees available on request".

Avoid last minute rushes and organise your referees before you start job searching. Make sure you get their permission first and provide them with a copy of your application. It also helps to keep them informed about what positions you are applying for, so that they are prepared for whoever may be contacting them for information about yourself (especially if you are at the stage of being invited to an interview).

Finally, as a courtesy, let the referee know the outcome of the application process - a Thank You letter is also a good idea.

NOTE: The difference between references and referees. A reference is a written statement and is NOT a substitute for a referee. Most employers/recruiters will not use written references (after all, who would include a negative written reference with their application?) as they will be contacting your referees to obtain much more specific information. Written references are better placed in your portfolio and will add to the 'tools' that you can draw upon in your application process.

## **5. TROUBLESHOOTING**

### **Shall I include a photo of myself?**

In Australia a photo is not usually necessary; the way you look doesn't reflect your ability to do the job. An exception to this could be an actor's resume.

### **Does each section of the CV need to fit on one page?**

No; if you need to go onto the next page you can do so - just put for example, "Work Experience Continued" at the top of the next page, so it is clear to the reader what section they are in.

### **Is it OK to use coloured paper?**

The appropriateness of colour will really depend on the industry you are targeting - for example; fields such as Advertising and Design may call for a more visually creative approach. For most sectors, use white or off-white paper. Some organisations consider the use of coloured paper as a sign of immaturity or commercial naiveté. Also coloured paper won't fax, photocopy or scan easily.

### **What about gaps and changes?**

Take care to explain any major gaps or anomalies that you think the employer may query. If you took a year off, to travel the world, then say so. If you started in one course and changed to another the following year, you may want to explain why (for example, you reviewed your career goals, or built up high enough grades to change to the course of your choice). Don't leave the employer guessing. Avoid portraying gaps of months in your work history by using the years you were employed such as 2006-2008, rather than mentioning actual dates or calendar months.

### **What can I do about not-so-good grades?**

You can downplay information on grades by advising that your Academic transcript is available on request. In statements about your course you could say, "Successfully passed or completed". You could choose to explain what happened, indicating that your

GPA is not a true reflection of your potential, what you did about it and what you learned as a result.

For example, perhaps there was a bad patch early on, but grades improved over the course of the degree due to (describe the factors ... such as improved time management, motivation, determination, goal setting or a change of career focus). Or indicate if you were supporting yourself through university - i.e. working 25 hours per week on nightshift, and this impacted on grades.

Sometimes there may have been a medical or family reason, in which case you can obtain a supporting letter from your doctor or treatment provider. Reflect carefully on what information you disclose, and how and when you do this.

### **Presenting a longer work history**

If you are a mature age student who has held a range of work roles prior to coming to university, it can be hard to fit this into the CV. Employers are most interested in what you have done recently, so have less information on jobs held early on in your career (*unless they are highly relevant to the job for which you are now applying*). For these early jobs you might just mention dates, company and job title. You don't need to list all the jobs you have ever held in your life-this can overwhelm the reader with information.

You can state:

“Employment details prior to 2003 available on request.”

Or

“Prior to 2003, I was employed in a range of roles, including customer service officer, administrative service officer and travel agent (Details available on request).

Organisations included....

Main areas of responsibility were:

- Bullet points

### **I am using my degree to change careers, what do I say about this?**

It can be helpful to provide some explanation of a change in career path so it makes sense to an employer when perusing your CV. Your Career Objective may reflect this, for example, “To effect a career transition to the X area, where I can draw on the knowledge and skills gained through...etc....”

The way you describe your previous career roles/duties may change considerably for graduate applications.



Focus on transferable skills when detailing your employment history. For example: if you are moving from a secretarial career to a career in law, do not include long list of duties relating to technical secretarial skills, such as shorthand, using fax machines, filing etc. This isn't the type of work you are applying for now and your CV must reflect this. Focus on customer service/client liaison skills, knowledge of commercial environments/administrative systems, computing skills and the aspects of your previous experience that you can apply in your graduate role.

### **Presenting a complex work history**

Some students hold numerous part-time and casual jobs to support themselves through university, and this can be difficult to describe succinctly on the CV. You might want to group your work history into categories to make for easier reading; for example: Hospitality Experience, Retail Sales Roles, Administrative Experience, etc. Under each category heading, describe your jobs in reverse chronological order. While this breaks up the overall chronological flow of this section, an employer can very quickly gain an impression of your experience.

Some students may have performed numerous short-term or 'one-off' jobs or have done temping work through Agencies. This could be summarised briefly as follows (you could possibly add some bullet points on skills developed):

Jan 08 – Current      Various casual positions in hospitality and crowd control at sporting events and stocktaking for major retailers (Details available on request).

Make sure that you maintain a complete list of jobs, dates and employers for your records.

## **6. ELECTRONIC CVs**

### **Online Graduate Applications**

For many graduate application processes, you will actually enter CV information directly into the online form, under sections such as Applicant Details, Education, Employment History, Referees, and so on. You may cut and paste this information to the application form from a spelling and grammar-checked version of your CV.

Sometimes you will be asked to upload your resume in an electronic format and the Recruiter will usually indicate the format for the attachments and any file size limits. For example:

- 'Format for attachments: Microsoft Word or PDF; file size limit 500KB'
- 'Documents must be uploaded in the following formats: .DOC, .PDF, .TXT, .RTF'

To ensure an easy to read electronic resume:

- Use plain text, bold headings and use bullet points rather than long paragraphs.
- When saving, use only standard characters for the file name and keep the file size to a minimum.
- Left justified is the preferred format for viewing a resume online.

## **Emailing your application**

In some job advertisements, the employer may state that the application can be submitted by email. Your resume should be sent as an attachment to the email, in the requested format. If you are unable to find out what format to send your resume in, use rich-text-file format (.rft).

The cover letter can be included in the body of the email. Make sure that this email includes your contact details. As you would with any cover letter, state clearly the title of the position that you are applying for, and refer to the vacancy/reference number (if there is one). Include this information in the 'Subject' line of your message. You can include a confidentiality clause at the end of your email stating that the information contained in this email is confidential and intended only for the addressee. As a 'test' you can always email your CV to a friend to see how it looks on another computer.

## **Keywords and the electronic/scanned CV.**

Many medium to large sized organisations enter CVs into a database for searching. The only way to be found in an applicant search is to use the keywords or buzzwords (marketing, biologist) related to the industry. To find out about the keywords, read the job advertisement to see which skills and qualifications are required. Also look at advertisements for that sector for frequently used terms, the Internet, website/literature of the company. The more keywords you use, the better your chances are that a recruiter will see it.

To get additional information go to: [www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student](http://www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student) – link under > Job Seeking Resources >Applying online.

## **7. APPLICATION LETTERS**

*“Do not assume the cover letter will be read. Most employers skim the CV and then read the cover letter if they are interested, therefore, do not put vital information in the cover letter unless it is also in the CV.”* Chris Tan, Recruitment Consultant, The Advertiser, Career One Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, pg 23.

## **What is a letter of application?**

A letter of application, commonly called a “cover letter”, should accompany each resume you send to an employer. This letter serves as an introduction - to stimulate the reader to review your resume. In some cases the employer decides which resume to read on the basis of the letter.

To begin with, you should scrutinise the job advertisement closely and underline the key words that indicate the skills and qualities sought – see page 6 for an example. Ensure that you address these skills in your cover letter.

### **Points to remember**

- Use a correct letter style.
- Personalise each letter by sending it to a specific individual (note that this may not be possible if you are applying for a large scale, Australia-wide Graduate Recruitment Program).
- Be sure to spell his/her name correctly and use the proper title (Miss, Ms, Mrs., Dr etc)
- Word your letter carefully. Keep it short and to the point.
- Research the position and/or organisation and indicate this knowledge in your letter.
- Address the employer’s selection criteria (if appropriate).
- Realise the reader will view the letter as an example of your written communication skills.
- Be honest and sincere. Give an impression of modest confidence.
- As with your resume, use good quality paper. Observe margins and spacing.
- Proof read for spelling, grammar, punctuation and form.
- Remember to sign your letter.
- Cover letters should not be more than one page.

### **Some DONT’S to remember as you write your application**

- Don’t use a template letter or send an identical letter to hundreds of employers.
- Don’t overuse the personal pronoun “I” when starting sentences.
- Don’t cover all the same material that is included in your resume, but do refer to your resume.

Create a letter you feel comfortable with and which expresses your individuality. Remember that the purpose of the letter is to get the employer's attention. Write for the ear, not the eye - write as you would speak. Read your writing aloud, and if it sounds awkward/unnatural, begin again.

The following is only a suggested format for the body of the letter. Use your own creativity to write the letter that best communicates your style.

NOTE: If you start your letter with Dear Sir/Madam (but remember, where possible, do try to find out the name of the person to whom it should be addressed), sign the letter Your faithfully. If you start with Dear "name" (avoid using the person's first name in a formal letter), sign the letter Yours sincerely.

## **A sample letter of application format**

Your Street Address  
Your City State Postcode

Date

Name (e.g. Ms A. Recruiter)  
Position  
Organisation  
Street Address  
City State Postcode

Dear Title Surname (e.g. Ms Recruiter)

*Opening paragraph:* Attract attention. State why you are writing and name the position or type of work for which you are applying. Where applicable, indicate how you heard of the opening and mention the mutual acquaintance or referring party by name, or the specific reference from a newspaper advertisement.

Example: Advertised Position

- I am writing to apply for the position of... advertised in... on... (name of source and date).
- I have recently completed a Bachelor of... majoring in... and would welcome the opportunity to be part of your Graduate Program.

Example: Speculative Application

- I am writing to explore employment opportunities with your organisation as a ...
- I am in the final year of a Degree in... and I am keen to pursue a career as...

*Middle paragraphs:* State your reasons for applying to this particular organisation. Summarise what you have to offer by stating the qualifications your research indicates

would interest them and briefly point out particular achievements and skills that qualify you for this type of work. Sell yourself.

Example;

- Through over 4 years experience in retail sales I have developed skills in...
- Relevant topics taken included...
- Within my course I had the opportunity to undertake a wide variety of project work, ranging from...
- This position particularly interests me because it would enable me to make full use of my... skills, as well as my current knowledge of...
- My workplace skills and experience have been enhanced by vacation work with... as a... This involved...
- Whilst completing my degree in... I undertook voluntary work experience at... where I gained valuable experience in...
- Through my combination of degree studies and work experience... I am able to...
- My placement involved the completion of a project on.... This role enabled me to ...
- I also have excellent skills in... developed through... and ...

Supporting your interest in the organisation:

- Having met with representatives of your organisation at the Flinders University Law Careers Fair I...
- In your campus presentation at Flinders University, I was impressed by your ...
- The recent article in... highlighted your....
- I would be particularly interested in obtaining a position with...
- I strongly believe in the importance of your approach to...
- My awareness of... your role in... was developed through ...
- I would welcome the opportunity to gain experience/develop my career with an organisation that is... In addition the opportunities for.... are highly appealing to me.

*Final paragraph:* Refer the reader to your enclosed resume, responses to selection criteria (if applicable) and academic transcript. Close by informing the reader of your next action (usually indicating your availability for an interview appointment and your contact phone number).

Example:

- Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to discussing my application with you in person.
- I look forward to discussing my skills and experience in more detail with you at interview.
- Please find attached a copy of...
- For speculative applications, mention that you will contact them by a certain date to follow up your application.

Yours sincerely

Your name

(Be sure to sign your name as well as type it!)

## 8. OTHER INFORMATION

More information on resumes, including samples is available at the following:

- Seek Career Resources: [www.seek.com.au/career-resources/](http://www.seek.com.au/career-resources/)
- Career One: [www.careerone.com.au/news-advice/resumes](http://www.careerone.com.au/news-advice/resumes)
- Monster: <http://career-advice.monster.com/>

There are many applications that will involve more than writing a resume and a cover letter. For public sector positions an additional document addressing Selection Criteria is usual. For most Graduate Recruitment Programs, there will be an online application form. See our booklets *Addressing Selection Criteria* and *Winning Graduate Applications* for further information.

### **Attend a Drop-In at the Careers & Employer Liaison Centre**

You can attend Drop-In sessions at the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre (Top Floor, Student Centre) where a Career Development Consultant is available on a first come first served basis to discuss your career queries. Drop-In times change each week - to find out about Drop-In times for each week, please check the 'What's On/current events' section of the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre web site:

[www.flinders.edu.au/careers/sub/whatson.php](http://www.flinders.edu.au/careers/sub/whatson.php)

This is usually updated on Friday afternoons for the following week.

- Please ensure you bring along paper copies of your resume/application/letter.
- Before attending a drop in session for feedback, please read this Booklet first, and apply the strategies we have outlined.
- It is also better to obtain constructive feedback early in the application process, to ensure that you are on track! When providing feedback, we comment from a careers perspective and do not provide a proof reading or editing service.
- Also bring a copy of the job advertisement or application package that you are responding to, as these are helpful when the Career Development Consultants review your draft.
- This service is available for up to one year after you complete your study at Flinders University and are in the job search mode.

You can also listen to a session that we have recorded on CV's at:

[www.flinders.edu.au/careers/Local/student/connect/index.html](http://www.flinders.edu.au/careers/Local/student/connect/index.html)

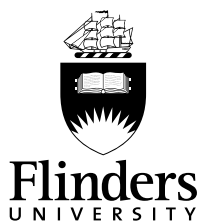
*“Your resume is the key to getting an interview so spend weeks on it and have others look over it and before sending it anywhere get the Careers Centre advice on it.”* Mark, Bachelor of Commerce, Graduate Accountant, Defence Material Organisation.

## 9. WHAT NOW?

Don't throw away your CV the moment you land your first graduate job – this document is 'work in progress' - like you! *Always have an effective, up to date resume available for use.* Use it to record your career progression, further training and achievements that you will accumulate as your career unfolds. One, or two years down the track; it may be hard to recall specifics about some of the roles you have held. So review your CV at least yearly, preferably half yearly (daylight saving is a good reminder). You never know when you will need it. Ask yourself: "How have I made myself more employable?"

### Sources

Graduate Opportunities 09, Graduate Careers Australia, 2009; Unigrad graduate jobs guide 2009, Unimail, 2009; K.I.S.S Guide to Managing Your Career by Ken Lawson 2001 Dorling Kindersley; [http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/about/publications/afip/section\\_3/resume](http://www.osds.uwa.edu.au/about/publications/afip/section_3/resume); [http://www.kellyservices.com.au/web/au/services/en/pages/careers\\_electronic\\_resume\\_tips](http://www.kellyservices.com.au/web/au/services/en/pages/careers_electronic_resume_tips); The Advertiser, Career One Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, pg 23; Employability Skills for the Future. Australian Government Dept Education, Science & Training, and Australian National Training Authority, March 2002; Employability Skills - from framework to practice: an introductory guide for trainers and assessors. Australian Government Dept Education, Science & Training, 2006; Defining Generic Skills: at a glance. Australian National Training Authority, 2003); <http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/1516>; <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search-essentials/Whats-Wrong-with-Personal-Reference/home.aspx> (What's Wrong with Personal References? by Paul W. Barada.



## CAREERS AND EMPLOYER LIAISON CENTRE

Visit us at the Student Centre, Level 3  
Tel: 8201 2832  
Email: [careers@flinders.edu.au](mailto:careers@flinders.edu.au)  
[www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student](http://www.flinders.edu.au/careers/student)

CRICOS Registered Provider Flinders University  
CRICOS Provider Number: 00114A