

RESUME AND COVER LETTER Development Guide



EXPLORE | EXPERIENCE | ENGAGE

CAREER SERVICES

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When you submit your resume to an employer, also include a cover letter detailing your interest in the position. The cover letter allows you to expand on details from your resume, explaining

The Cover Letter

how your unique academic and professional history makes you the best candidate for the job.

Many job seekers do not take the time to craft a well-written cover letter. However, the letter can pique employers' curiosity and motivate them to focus more carefully on your resume. The cover letter is an excellent way to present a professional, polished impression to employers.

Creating Your Cover Letter

- Include a cover letter each time you send a resume, unless otherwise stated. The letter should always be the first page of your materials so that it introduces you to the employer
- · Tailor the cover letter to the position for which you are applying
- Use the same font, style and paper as the resume
- Use a standard business letter format
- Address the letter to a specific individual. Contact the company and ask to whom you should address the materials. If unable to determine how to address the letter, use 'Dear Hiring Manager' or 'Human Resources Manager'
- Keep your letter brief, three to four short paragraphs
- Review your letter carefully, checking for spelling, grammar or typographical errors

Cover Letter Content

First paragraph

Identify the position for which you are applying. State how you learned of the position and why you are interested.

Middle paragraph/s

Discuss how/why you are qualified for the position. Using the job description, explain how your skills and experiences make you the best candidate.

Highlight accomplishments, positive characteristics, or past experiences that illustrate how you can benefit the organization.

Closing paragraph

Reiterate your interest in the position, thank the employer and request an interview.

Include your phone number and offer to provide additional information. Indicate when you will follow up with the employer.

Use a professional closing, such as 'Sincerely'. Sign each letter in blue or black ink. Susan Brown 5487 Main Street North Montgomery, AL 01234 (251) 555-1212

Date

Jack Sawyer, Vice President Vitality Consulting P.O. Box 19857 Mobile, AL 12345

Dear Mr. Sawyer:

I am writing in response to your advertisement on LinkedIn for a Digital Design Specialist. In researching Vitality Consulting, I discovered that you recently received an award of excellence from the Mobile Business Association. I am excited about the opportunity to bring my skills and abilities to such a reputable company.

Through my education and work experience, I have acquired skills necessary for this position. My degree in Communication has given me a strong understanding of public relations. Additionally, my involvement in campus organizations, combined with my significant public speaking experience and four years of graphic design, has enabled me to develop leadership skills. This background makes me an excellent choice for Vitality Consulting.

I am excited about the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Digital Design Specialist position. I will call you on [DATE, one week after interview] to schedule an appointment if you would like to discuss my qualifications for the position. If you need additional information earlier, please feel free to contact me at (251) 555-1212.

Thank you,

SIGNATURE

Susan Brown

Resume Development

Resumes are often your first chance to make a positive impression on employers and must represent the absolute best you have to offer. These living documents reflect your professional growth. Continually develop and update your current skills and experiences. <u>Career Services recommends the following guidelines:</u>

- The overall tone of your resume should be clear, concise and easy to read. For example, separate each section of the resume by using a bold font on the heading titles
- Target the resume for each position. All entries should demonstrate that you have the education and experience to fulfill requirements
- Do not use templates. Your resume should be unique and original
- Resumes are typically one page in length. If you use a two-page format, be sure to have enough content to support the additional page. Resumes should never be more than two pages in length
- Use white or ivory resume paper. Be sure to use the same paper for all documents, such as cover letters. If a mailed copy of your resume is required, do not fold the document
- Use 10 to 12-point font size for the body of the resume. Your name should be in a slightly larger font
- Avoid underlining, italics or graphics
- Resumes typically have 1-inch margins. If you use smaller margins to fit information on one page, do not use less than ½-inch
- After personal contact information, the objective should be the first category on the resume. Other categories should be arranged in order of importance in relation to the job requirements
- Quantify job duties when possible. For example, 'Contacted more than 1000 customers each month, representing a 10% increase'
- Use proper names instead of abbreviations or acronyms. For example, 'First Generation College Students' instead of FGCS
- Include a cover letter with each resume you submit to potential employers; cover letters may be embedded in email or sent as an attachment
- Have someone else proofread your resume. USA Career Services, professionals in your field and professors can provide insight

Resume Categories

When developing a resume, the following categories should always be included:

- Header
- Education
- Experience

To highlight your unique skills and qualifications, the resume can also include the following categories:

- Objective
- Summary of Qualifications
- Relevant Coursework
- Military Experience
- Clinical Experience
- Cooperative Education/ Internships
- Campus and Community
 Involvement
- Collegiate Athletics
- Skills and Abilities
- Computer Skills
- Honors and Awards
- Language Skills
- Leadership
- Volunteer Work
- Projects
- Presentations/ Publications
- Certifications

Online and Electronic Applications

Most companies follow strict guidelines when accepting new applicants and will require you to complete an online application. When creating online applications:

- Accurately complete each field
- When entering proper names,
- use appropriate capitalizationFollow all directions closely
- Save or print your information
- Save of print your information so that you can review prior to an interview

Applications generally require extensive information about your work history, including dates of employment, salary history and names and contact information of previous supervisors.

You will also usually be asked for detailed information about your academic history, such as names of institutions, dates of attendance and degrees pursued or earned. Do not omit any information occurring within the specified timeline. You will be asked if the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of your knowledge. Failure to disclose all required information could result in termination.

We recommend that you create a folder for application material so that it is readily available when applying for new positions.

Resume Development

Header

Include name, mailing address, phone number and email. Use professional email addresses that include only your name or initials.

Objective/Summary

Objective statements should clearly identify your purpose and be tailored to each position. Summary sections can also be used in place of an Objective section; use bullet points to highlight unique skills and experiences that market what you have to offer an employer.

Education

List academic degrees you are pursuing or have completed in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Do not list high school information. Use bold font on the degree title or name of institution, whichever you choose to highlight. Include date of graduation, name of school, city, and state.

Listing grade point average on the resume is optional. Typically, include if it is 3.0 or higher. List as follows: GPA 3.8/4.0.

Relevant Coursework

This section lists advanced courses in your major or any coursework unique to your field. List only the courses that will give you a competitive edge.

Experience

List previous work experiences. Include full- or part-time jobs, Coop/Internships, and volunteer or leadership opportunities.

Do not list every job you have ever held; focus on those most relevant to your objective.

Include your title, organization name, location and the dates of employment. In a bulleted list, use action verbs to describe job duties, skills, responsibilities and accomplishments.

To highlight specific areas of experience, use multiple categories,

such as 'Professional Experience' and 'Work Experience.'

Honors and Activities

Employers seek candidates with a broad range of abilities. Provide information that makes you memorable. List awards, honors, volunteer work, campus/community involvement, and leadership experiences in reverse chronological order.

Computer Skills

Include software/computer proficiencies and languages. Also list specialized skills, such as Adobe Creative Suite.

For additional resume examples, visit www.southalabama.edu/careerservices

Lily Munster 1313 Mockingbird Lane Mobile, Alabama 35547 251-555-5555 / Lily.Munster@gmail.com									
Objective	A position as Proposal Coordinator with Strategic Resources, Inc.								
Education	Bachelor of Arts, Communication— Strategic Communication, May 2016 University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama Major GPA: 3.65/4.0								
Relevant Coursework	Relational Communicatio Public Relations Crisis M Public Relations Commu	anagement	Advertising Media Planning Strategic Publication Design Branding & Visual Messages						
Professional Experience	 Intern, May - August 2016 Hummingbird Ideas, Mobile, Alabama Wrote press releases or other media communications to promote clients Studied the objectives, promotional policies, or needs of organizations to develop public relations strategies that influenced public opinion or promoted ideas, products, or services Prepared or deliver speeches to further public relations objectives Consulted with advertising agencies or staff to arrange promotional campaigns in all types of media for products, organizations, or individuals Updated and maintained content posted on the company's website 								
Employment Experience	 Student Assistant, August 2015 – Present Office of International Student Services and Admissions University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama Assist in processing International student applications for admissions Provide customer service and resolve customer requests Student Assistant, March 2014 – May 2015 Patient Business Services University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama Scanned and processed insurance claim forms 								
Honors and Activities	Due South, 2015 – Present Southbound Orientation Leader, 2015 – Present Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), 2014 – Present Students for Equality, Treasure, 2014 – 2015 Dean's List, Fall 2014								
Computer Skills	Microsoft Word Google+	Microsoft Excel	Apple Final Cut Express						

Cooperative Education and Internship Resumes

Students applying for Co-op and Internship assignments need high-quality resumes.

Header

Include name and contact information. Use a professional voicemail message and email.

Objective/Summary

Objective statements should clearly identify your purpose and

be tailored to each position. Summary sections can also be used in place of an Objective section; use bullet points to highlight unique skills and experiences that market what you have to offer an employer.

Education

Include your full degree title, expected graduation date, major and name of institution.

Marcus Reynolds

492 Cedar Lane • Mobile, Alabama 36627 • 251-555-5555 • mreynolds@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

A Co-op position in the field of Civil Engineering

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, May 2018 University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama GPA: 3.68/4.0

Surveying

Calculus I&II

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Dynamics Statics Civil Engineering Materials Mechanics of Materials

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Resident Advisor, August 2015 - Present University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama

- Manage residence hall area consisting of 100 undergraduate students
- · Plan and implement activities and educational programs
- Train incoming Resident Advisors
- · Supervise facilities and rotate emergency on-call duty

Tutor, Math Department, 2014 - 2015

University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama

• Tutored freshman math students in Algebra and Pre-Calculus

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

American Society of Civil Engineers, Member, 2014 - Present

- Served as Secretary, 2014 Present
- Presented at regional conference
- Assisted with coordinating E-week activities Student Government Association, 2014 – Present Southbound Orientation Leader, 2014 – Present

HONORS

USA Honor's Program, 2014 – Present USA Presidential Scholarship Recipient, 2014 – Present Dean's List: Fall 2014, 2015 and Spring 2016

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Habitat for Humanity, Volunteer, 2013 - Present

COMPUTER SKILLS							
C# Programming	AutoCAD	Microsoft Office					

Include your grade point average if above 3.0.

Relevant Coursework

Coursework completed in your field demonstrates your specific knowledge and skills obtained in the classroom.

Employment Experience

List work history in reverse chronological order.

Students applying for Co-op or Internship positions may not have relevant major-related work experience. However, other types of work experience can demonstrate your skills.

Include recent work history, focusing on transferrable skills, such as leadership, customer service and organization.

Use action verbs from the Skills Cluster page.

Additional Resume Categories

Include resume categories that focus on accomplishments, skills, and experiences employers in your field would value.

Sample categories include:

- Computer Skills
- Honors
- Campus Involvement
- Community Involvement

These resume categories can showcase unique qualifications for a position. For Co-op and Internships, as well as full-time degreed positions, employers seek well-rounded candidates and rank communication skills as their highest priority.

Employers want candidates with initiative, teamwork and interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities and leadership. Campus/ community activities, awards and honors demonstrate that you have these skills.

Job Search Tools and Strategies

Employers seek candidates who can demonstrate certain proficiencies. Use the following SKILLS CLUSTERS as a guideline in communicating your abilities on your resume and professional documents.

Fundraising research analyze strategize program develop contact inquire inform motivate direct persuade monitor coordinate	Public Relations assess prepare coordinate present negotiate publicize strengthen promote handle participate facilitate troubleshoot	Accounting record assess audit prepare maintain forecast calculate estimate figure appraise examine measure verify	Leadership create lead encourage manage organize compare inspire represent govern direct advise	Writing conceive construct craft integrate interpret capture abstract express inform summarize conclude	Craft/ Artisan design create build entertain perform draw render illustrate compose construct conceive choreograph	Innovating create modify change upgrade improve design activate restructure establish stimulate implement transform	Language translate interpret lecture converse negotiate compare understand comprehend proficiency fluency teach tutor
Research & Development identify evaluate review assess compare analyze critique explain prepare recommend conclude determine	Human Resources assess analyze recruit survey screen interview select train mediate appraise coordinate align	Finance analyze invest budget inventory evaluate appraise construct develop acquire deploy manage project	Analysis assess observe review dissect interpret discern conceptualize discover infer illuminate clarify quantify qualify conclude	Editing review analyze check compare comment correct rewrite revise rework amend improve initiate investigate advise read	Consulting troubleshoot problem solve assess assist arrange guide counsel survey serve contribute motivate train	e utuor stimulate inform instruct facilitate awaken explore advise counsel entertain	Performing create present play interpret act sing dance perform model read inspire
Program Development analyze design construct develop prepare strategize coordinate formulate recommend persuade implement monitor	Information appraise analyze inventory structure design categorize document process manage program link coordinate organize	Management Supervision coordinate facilitate plan schedule delegate mediate evaluate strategize develop listen consult monitor	t/ Desig organi explor formul sketch draw draft layout create plan style pattern build displa	ize conce re desig late troubl n inspe locate edit analy e imple const modif n opera	eptualize n eshoot ct ze ment ruct y	Selling inform educate persuade provide assist serve trade vend handle present sell convince	Organizing/ Logistics classify organize assist maintain liaison support arrange systemize schedule coordinate streamline simplify
review mo assess tra survey ass analyze co quantify org identify red announce ac promote red advertise pro advance set	Iministration onitor ck sess ordinate ganize quisition cess ceive ocess ceive ocess rve nish	Service/ Hospitality serve assist troubleshoot present maintain help coordinate prepare welcome enhance anticipate	Persuading present articulate clarify challenge negotiate inquire reason influence convince arbitrate mediate reconcile	analy: desig const craft	n ruct eshoot eer oulate inate	Investigating pursue interrogate question analyze intuit seek search probe examine explore	Counseling/ Healing listen sense/intuit help assess analyze assist align coordinate understand inform facilitate

References

Employers typically request professional references as part of the interview process. These references offer information about your skills, experiences and qualifications related to the job search. Prepare three to five references. When providing your references to employers:

- Do not list references on the resume. Include them on a separate page, using the same format and header as the resume
- For each reference, list name, job title, employer, mailing address, phone number and email
- List people with whom you have worked in an academic or professional capacity. Consider current or former employers, faculty members/ advisors, coworkers and organization advisors
- Ask permission from your reference choices prior to beginning the job search
- Keep references updated on your job search and inform them each time you submit their information
- Provide them with a current copy of your resume and an overview of the job for which you are applying

The career portfolio should showcase your skills and talents. It is a compilation of professional documents, examples of work, education, accomplishments, awards and certifications.

Students in various fields, such as graphic design, visual arts, communications and journalism, will utilize portfolios.

Reference Example

Lily Munster

1313 Mockingbird Lane Mobile, Alabama 35547 251-555-5555 Lily.Munster@gmail.com

REFERENCES

Mark Gibson, Manager USA Athletic Emporium 1234 Richards Avenue Mobile, Alabama 36609 Work: (251) 555-4697 mgibson@athemp.com

Sharon Jackson, Manager

Sales Department Artemis Plastics, Inc. 678 Main Street Mobile, Alabama 36655 Work: (251) 555-9243 sjackson@artemisinc.com

Dr. Frank Wilson, Professor

Department of Economics University of South Alabama 123 MCOB Mobile, Alabama 36688 Work: (251) 555-0583 frankwilson@southalabama.edu

Portfolios

Career portfolios are purposeful and professional. Consider your specific career goals and the needs of potential employers as you develop the portfolio.

Determine if your portfolio represents your professional best. Discuss your materials with Career Services, professors and professionals in the field. Professional, targeted career portfolios can include the following:

- Short/long term career goals
- Education and/or certification in your field
- Resume and references
- Samples of work related to your field (can include work, school and volunteer experiences)
- Letters of recommendation