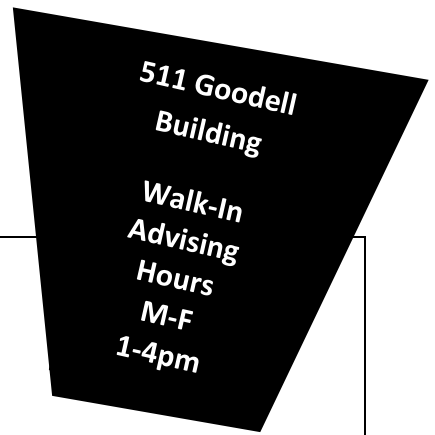# Resume and Cover Letter Tips

Resume Advice

Name and Education
- Your name is clearly visible and probably two points bigger than the rest of the text.
- Use only one address; two may be confusing to the employer.
- E-mail is not hyperlinked if hardcopy; e-mail address should be grandma-approved.
- Consider adding a relevant web address or link to your LinkedIn profile.
- UMass is a nickname; write out "University of Massachusetts Amherst" every time (no "*at*," "-," or "," in the name.)
- Include GPA if 3.0 or higher; if it is not there, employers will think it is below a 3.0.

Formatting Basics
- Resumes must be clean, concise and consistent with no typos or errors of any kind.
- One page in length (unless you have enough relevant experience to go to the bottom of a second page).
- Use a single, commonly-used font such as Calibri, Tahoma, Arial; size should range between 10 and 14.
- Dates are in reverse chronological order and numerical (08/13-5/14).
- Margins should not be less than ½ inch.
- Italics, columns, parentheses and underlines can be problematic for scanners; bold and all-caps read fine.
- When emailing, attach as a PDF that is titled with your name.
- Allow for white space. Too much black type on a page looks busy; not enough looks unqualified. Make sure there is a good balance.

Content Basics
- Every entry in the "Experience" sections needs a title, company, location and dates. The order is a strategic decision that then must be consistent under each heading.
- Use descriptive titles (i.e. Intern = Software Design Intern). Major titles are capitalized (e.g., lifeguard = Lifeguard).
- Start descriptions with active verbs, preferably the verbs from the job description. Describe your accomplishments and skills as they relate to the desired position; don't just list "job duties".
- No articles, pronouns or helping verbs (a, an, I, them, their, etc.).
- Use as many numbers as possible (Supervised group of 13 children, Managed budget of $15,000).
- Verb tenses: if currently holding a position, use present tense (i.e. "collaborate," not "collaborating." Otherwise use past tense.
- Well known abbreviations only (e.g., "CPR," not "ASB").

Possible Experience Section Headings   (Strategic choice based on resume audience.)
- Relevant Experience
- Additional Background
- Languages
- Community Service
- Honors and Awards
- Teaching Experience
- Relevant Projects
- Laboratory Skills
- International Experience
- Certifications
- Relevant Courses
- Computer Skills
- Leadership
- Research
- Technical Skills

Other Important Resume Concerns

An Objective… is not mandatory. It is the shorthand version of a cover letter, so if you are using a cover letter, the objective is redundant and takes up space. No-cover-letter situations such as career fairs, networking, conferences or posting your resume online are GOOD times to use it as it can briefly highlight the kind of position you are looking for.

Profiles and Summaries of Qualifications… are not mandatory and can be helpful or problematic.
Consider that many employers do not read these and just skip down to the first experience section. Depending on your relevant knowledge and the audience, it may be better to leave out the summary and spend time and space detailing how you can solve their problems in your experience sections.

Degree or University Name First?
There is no correct answer. Ask yourself which one has better market value for you. What would be more eye-catching?

Relevant Skills
Think of including coursework, lab techniques, class projects and large research papers as ways to demonstrate your relevant skills. Focus on courses relevant to employer (do not use basic courses or course numbers).

Awards and Honors…may not mean what you hope they will to an employer. For example, "Awarded the Mary Jane Scholarship freshman year 2012." Why did you receive this award? What is your message to the employer by having this on your resume? How are you demonstrating value, skills or abilities by including this?

Dates…belong toward the right-hand side of the page because the left-hand side is where people scan first and dates are never more important than your experiences.

Proper Names in Resumes
Leave names of supervisors out of the body of a resume, unless the employer knows the person. Names generally go on a separate references page. If you are putting research experience on your resume, include your Principal Investigator's name and a brief description (or bulleted list) that explains **your** accomplishments during each internship/lab/project. Make sure it is about you and not your PI, the team, or anyone else. Focus on achievements, not duties, and always show results, including measures of success whenever possible.

CV vs. Resume
A Curriculum Vitae is used in academia, and in theory would include all jobs you have ever had. A resume represents only experiences that are relevant to the position for which you are applying. Science CVs should also only include relevant experiences on them.

Hobbies/Activities
Is there a connection between you mentioning skiing and membership on the Quidditch team to the skills and accomplishments you say you have acquired on your resume? If so, what is it? You have to tell the reader why the activity or hobby is on the resume. If it is not connected, why have it on there?

References Available Upon Request
Use this only if you have nothing else more important to say, and you want to finish your formatting or you have extra space.

Alternatives to the Paper Resume
http://www.onlineidcalculator.com/result.php Google yourself using "Your Name" surrounded by quotation marks. This online calculator will determine what your online identity is and how to change it if it is not what you want it to be.
www.wordpress.org is free web software you can use to create a website or blog.
www.blogger.com A blog space can be used for personal and public viewing to enhance your "G cred" (Google credit) and promote accomplishments.
http://re.vu/ "Don't send a resume. Share your story." This helps you create an online version of your resume for free.
https://about.me/ Lets you quickly build simple and visually elegant splash pages that point visitors to your content from around the web.

Privacy Tips for Online Applications
For comprehensive advice turn to Privacy Rights Clearinghouse at http://www.privacyrights.org/ to learn about what information to/not post online, consumer protection, identity theft, and safeguarding your financial data.

Successful Cover Letters

The purpose of your cover letter is to:
- ✓ Show how your skills/experiences **MATCH** the job description.

- ✓ Clearly route your resume to the right contact person for the job opening.

- ✓ Show you can communicate professionally in writing.

- ✓ Reflect your positive attitude, personality, motivation and enthusiasm.

Whenever you send a resume or application to a potential employer, you must include a cover letter if the employer requests it. It is a good idea to do it even if they have not (unless they state otherwise).
Cover letters can be put into three categories:
- ✓ Standard cover letter – matches a job description.

- ✓ Cold contact cover letter – no job exists but you write to an employer directly.

- ✓ Networking cover letter – use the name of your contact person in the first paragraph to: A) ensure that the employer will read it and, B) make a positive association between you and the job.

Each cover letter and resume that you send to an employer must be tailored to that specific job. You must deconstruct the advertisement or posting, research the company, and make some educated guesses to determine exactly what employers want. Translate your experience into their language, even using the exact words in the job description. Present yourself in their terms. It is the ONLY way an employer will recognize you as the best fit for the position.

The 4 Steps of Cover Letter Writing

Step 1: Read the job description carefully and look for key words/phrases throughout all parts of the job description (not just under "Required or Preferred Qualifications"). Take a moment to visualize yourself in this job.

Step 2: Highlight with a marker all key words or phrases that you will use to construct your sentences, OR type them directly onto a fresh clean Word document and highlight them in any color other than black. The highlighting tells you which key words came from the job description so you won't change them.

Step 3: Take each word/phrase and come up with your best skill match. If they are looking for someone with good communication skills, think about a specific example you can give from your own work/personal experiences to show (not just tell) the employer you have developed "good communication skills." Create sentences which showcase your match for every key word/phrase that you have chosen.

Step 4: Put those sentences into paragraphs. Your most relevant matches will go into the second paragraph, the next closest into the third and so on up to one page. You must prioritize your paragraphs according to your most relevant experiences, and how they match what the employer views as the most important functions of the job.   You may have to guess at the employer's priorities by noticing how often the job description uses similar key words.

Proofread, proofread, proofread! The number one reason employers throw out any application materials is due to spelling errors and typos!

CAREER SERVICES
UMassAmherst

511 Goodell Building
413-545-2224 | careerservices@umass.edu
www.umass.edu/careers

The "How-To" of Cover Letters

My Address
My Address

Today's Date

Company Name
Company Address
Company Address

> The Formatting:
>
> Left-hand justified with margins set 1 inch uniformly or business-style (left-hand justified at 1.25 inches).

Dear (insert the correct contact person's name here, or if not available, use "Dear Search Committee, Hiring Manager, Internship Coordinator" etc.):

First Paragraph—Must-Haves:

- ✓ Identify the position you are applying for or the purpose of the letter if it is a cold contact/internship opportunity.
- ✓ State where you saw the job/internship advertised.
- ✓ Answer the question "Why?" Why do you want this job?
- ✓ Demonstrate your knowledge of the company by including a reference to the organization. By acknowledging their mission/reputation/accomplishments, you form a positive connection from the start.
- ✓ Relay your enthusiasm for the job.

Second Paragraph Should: (You may have more paragraphs depending on the content.)

- ✓ Give specific examples of how your **strongest** qualifications match the position requirements.
- ✓ Introduce and sell your relevant skills and experiences.
- ✓ Describe how you meet the needs of the employer by providing evidence of your related skills and experiences.
- ✓ Use short narrative examples and showcase how your skills and experience are an excellent match for the position.
- ✓ Reinforce qualifications presented in resume.
- ✓ Show your strong writing skills.

Closing Paragraph—Must-Haves:

- ✓ Last chance to highlight skills/abilities. Do not replicate your resume.
- ✓ Thank the employer for the time and consideration given to your application.
- ✓ Suggest a plan of action (request an interview; indicate you will follow up in some way during a specific timeframe).

Sincerely,

My Name (typed)

> Your name signed in pen here if hard copy; if emailed, just eliminate these extra spaces or include electronic signature.

Boston Non-Profit Housing Association (BNHA) seeks a well-organized, self-motivated individual to help coordinate advocacy efforts as part of BNHA's regional work. BNHA is a thirty-two-year-old membership association that focuses government policy on housing solutions for low-income people who suffer disproportionately from the housing crisis, while promoting the preservation, development, and quality management of affordable housing. The program assistant will help pass policies and programs on the local and regional level that will support the development of affordable housing.

Job Duties and Responsibilities
Coordination/Advocacy
• Help **schedule meetings**, **draft agendas, take notes, and circulate information** to the Housing Action Network.
• Participate in meetings and discussions with local **advocacy** groups to ensure connection between the regional and local work.
Organizing/Training
• Help **coordinate regional trainings** on Inclusionary Housing, Community Acceptance, Housing Elements, and other local or regional housing efforts.
• Assist in organizing local support for regional efforts by attending meetings and doing some **outreach** around sign-on letters or hearings.
Media / Communications
• **Provide regular updates** for BNHA's update**, newslette**r, and for the Housing Action Network.
• Assist in the release of reports by creating an updated press list and assisting in pitching stories.
Qualifications
 Bachelor's degree required.
 Experience in either organizing or **campaign work** helpful.

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123 Amherst Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002

June 30, 2015

Ms. Mary James
Program Director
Boston Non- Profit Housing Association
100 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Ms. James:

It is with enthusiasm that I apply for the Program Assistant position as seen on the University of Massachusetts Amherst Career Services website. I am passionate about and have a personal interest in advocating for affordable housing for all. I am a University of Massachusetts Amherst senior looking to relocate to Boston this spring.

Last summer I had the opportunity to intern for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Boston, where I was exposed to a variety of **advocacy** efforts and **campaign work**. I used my strong organizational skills to **schedule regional meetings, take notes and provide regular updates** for the program directors. I aided in creating promotional publications, such as the monthly **newsletter** and **circulated the information** both via hard copy and internet in order to advertise our events and provide **outreach** to potential members. Additionally, I was the liaison for our local branch and **coordinated** Skype teleconferences for the five **regional** chapters to participate simultaneously.

I am someone with a lot of self-motivation. For the past four years I have worked during the school year at Amherst Pizza and was recently promoted to manager. This, coupled with my strong desire to make a difference for others, makes me an excellent candidate. I look forward to discussing the position with you in more detail. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emma Good

Action Verb List - Use the verbs from the job advertisement first, then pick from this list.

Communication Skills
- Addressed
- Arranged
- Authored
- Collaborated
- Composed
- Consulted
- Contacted
- Corresponded
- Directed
- Drafted
- Edited
- Enlisted
- Expressed
- Formulated
- Furnished
- Incorporated
- Influenced
- Interacted
- Involved
- Marketed
- Mediated
- Negotiated
- Observed
- Outlined
- Promoted
- Proposed
- Publicized
- Recruited
- Solicited
- Spoke
- Summarized
- Synthesized
- Wrote

Creative Skills
- Acted
- Adapted
- Began
- Combined
- Composed
- Created
- Customized
- Designed
- Developed
- Directed
- Entertained
- Established
- Fashioned
- Formulated
- Founded
- Illustrated
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Introduced
- Invented
- Modified
- Originated
- Performed

- Planned
- Revised
- Shaped
- Solved

Financial Skills
- Administered
- Adjusted
- Allocated
- Analyzed
- Appraised
- Assessed
- Audited
- Balanced
- Budgeted
- Calculated
- Computed
- Corrected
- Determined
- Estimated
- Managed
- Marketed
- Measured
- Planned
- Prepared
- Programmed
- Projected
- Reconciled
- Reduced
- Researched

Helping Skills
- Adapted
- Advocated
- Aided
- Arranged
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Coached
- Collaborated
- Cooperated
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Diagnosed
- Educated
- Encouraged
- Ensured
- Expedited
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Furthered
- Guided
- Helped
- Prevented
- Provided
- Referred
- Rehabilitated
- Represented
- Resolved
- Simplified
- Supplied

- Supported
- Volunteered

Management Skills
- Administered
- Analyzed
- Appointed
- Approved
- Assigned
- Authorized
- Chaired
- Contracted
- Controlled
- Coordinated
- Delegated
- Developed
- Directed
- Eliminated
- Enforced
- Enhanced
- Established
- Executed
- Generated
- Handled
- Headed
- Hosted
- Incorporated
- Increased
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Led
- Merged
- Navigated
- Organized
- Originated
- Overhauled
- Oversaw
- Planned
- Presided
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Recommended
- Reorganized
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Secured
- Selected
- Streamlined
- Strengthened
- Supervised
- Terminated

Organizational Skills
- Arranged
- Catalogued
- Categorized
- Classified
- Collected
- Compiled
- Corrected
- Corresponded

- Distributed
- Executed
- Filed
- Generated
- Inspected
- Monitored
- Operated
- Ordered
- Organized
- Prepared
- Processed
- Provided
- Purchased
- Recorded
- Registered
- Responded
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Screened
- Submitted
- Standardized
- Systematized
- Updated
- Verified

Research Skills
- Analyzed
- Collected
- Conducted
- Critiqued
- Detected
- Diagnosed
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Experimented
- Explored
- Formulated
- Gathered
- Inspected
- Invented
- Investigated
- Located
- Measured
- Reviewed
- Solved
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Systematized
- Tested

Teaching Skills
- Adapted
- Advised
- Coached
- Communicated
- Conducted
- Coordinated
- Critiqued
- Developed
- Evaluated
- Explained

- Facilitated
- Focused
- Guided
- Individualized
- Informed
- Instilled
- Instructed
- Motivated
- Persuaded
- Simulated
- Taught
- Tested
- Trained
- Transmitted
- Tutored

Technical Skills Applied
- Assembled
- Built
- Conserved
- Converted
- Designed
- Determined
- Developed
- Engineered
- Fabricated
- Installed
- Overhauled
- Regulated
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Restored
- Specialized
- Standardized
- Studied
- Upgraded
- Utilized