

Resume and Cover letter Guide

General Resume Tips

FORMAT

- Maintain a one to two page resume; two pages are recommended if you have worked for five or more years; exceptions include federal resumes, resumes uploaded into text boxes, and CVs
- Keep format consistent throughout the document
- Avoid fancy or difficult to read font styles
- Keep font between 10-12 point size
- Ensure your name is prominently displayed on the resume (use bold, a larger font size, or all caps)
- Bold or capitalize section headings to make them stand out; headings should be centered or on the left
- Single space within sections
- Use standard 8.5 x 11 paper in white or ivory when printing the resume

CONTENT

- Tailor your resume to the position you are seeking and integrate key words pulled from the job description; have different resumes for different career areas
- Focus on results and outcomes of work experiences to establish accomplishments
- Quantify information whenever possible
- Use positive language to sell yourself and your accomplishments; avoid being negative
- Leave out personal information (e.g. social security number, marital status, non-smoker, etc.)
- Provide accurate information that can be verified; avoid exaggerations
- Prioritize content by listing the most important sections first; entry-level candidates should list education towards the top of the resume, but more experienced candidates can prioritize the work experience above the education
- Use reverse chronological order: list your most recent experiences first and then work back in time; applicable for the education and experience sections
- Place all references in a separate document from the resume; do not include "References Available Upon Request" on the resume
- Spell out all abbreviations

SECTIONS FOR THE RESUME

- **Heading:** list your name, address and contact information, both phone and email
- **Objective:** clearly define the objective and avoid general statements that provide no information to a reader; experienced candidates with work in a consistent field may leave off the objective; focus the objective on what you can offer the employer and not what you will gain from the job
- **Summary or Profile:** summarize qualifications and accomplishments in this section; best used for experienced candidates
- **Education:** include the name of the institution, the location (city, state), the degree, minors/ specializations/areas of concentration and the expected or completed date of graduation (month year); can include GPA if applicable; high school information should not be included on a professional resume unless the institution provided a specific skill related to the job
- **Experience:** provide the job title, organization name, location (city, state), and dates worked; use bullet points to provide concise information; begin each point with an action verb; focus on key accomplishments by listing relevant skills, examples and outcomes of experiences; can include part time, contract or volunteer work if applicable

- **Skills:** detail computer, language, or technical skills
- **Additional Sections:** ensure that each additional section helps focus the resume on the job you want: training, certifications, flight ratings/time, activities, professional memberships, awards/commendations, relevant coursework, project experience, volunteer experience, etc.

General Cover Letter Tips

FORMAT

- Use a standard business letter format where the content is aligned to the left
- Maintain a length of one page and divide the content into three to four main paragraphs
- Use the same font as your resume if possible
- Sign your cover letter in blank ink; if submitting electronically, type your name

CONTENT

- Always address the letter to a specific contact person; if you do not have a specific contact, use "Dear Sir or Madam"
- Write out all abbreviations
- Use the job description to customize the cover letter
- Use the cover letter to expand on the resume and avoid repeating exact information
- Maintain a positive tone, accentuate skills, and illustrate how these skills translate into assets for the position you are seeking
- Format

Paragraph One: focus on why you are writing; list the position title, company name, how you found the position and any company specific information

Paragraph Two: Detail your qualifications for the position; provide examples of experiences, skills and achievements that relate to the position

Paragraph Three: Conclude the letter with a statement that sums up your purpose; provide an action statement; list your contact information; always thank the reader for his or her time

Finally **proofread** all your career-related documents for content, grammar and structure. Ask your program manager any questions you have concerning your specific situation for the resume and cover letter.

Sample resumes and action verbs: <http://careers.erau.edu/land-offer/resumes/index.html>

Sample letters: <http://careers.erau.edu/land-offer/references-letters/index.html>