

MNAIPG Student Support Committee

Suggestions for Effective Resumes

Most students entering the job market have only their education and part time jobs, such as summer employment, to include on a resume. Employers looking for entry level staff know this and do not expect to see pages of job experience and a list of every class you have taken. The purpose of the resume is to introduce yourself and provide sufficient information for a prospective employer to decide to call you in for an interview.

We developed these suggestions based on years of work experience in both the private and public sectors. Collectively, we have reviewed thousands of resumes. We will not rewrite your resume but provide comments and suggestions. Using these suggestions will not guarantee that you will be called for an interview; however, we believe it will increase your chances.

Below are suggestions and guidelines for writing and developing an effective resume.

Basics:

- Concise, well composed summary of your knowledge and experience.
- Contact information (no home address - especially recommended for women – just email and phone numbers, city name acceptable. Include an address for school since these typically are PO Box addresses).
- Use action words at the beginning of bullet points, and be specific, rather than “I taught students,” say “Instructed intro geology students.”
- Statement of the type of position sought - this should be tailored to the specific job you seek or company of interest.
- Resume should be tailored to the position you are applying for.
- One page unless you really have that much to include.
- Try not to use resume templates from Word or other processing software. They look like templates and are considered lazy.
- Use a “normal” font, for example, Times New Roman, Arial, Cambria, and Calibri. Do not use any exotic or cutesy font.
- Research the company before you submit your resume and cover letter. Points you highlight should fit with their work and mission statement.
- Submit your resume to the potential employer as a pdf, not as an editable word document.
- Honest, accurate information.

Include:

- Type of work you seek - avoid generalities and cliché-type statements. Short one-line statement should pertain to the position or type of position sought.
- Knowledge - what courses will be of interest to the employer for that position. Include writing experience, organizational skills, field experience. Include any special class work that is applicable to the position you are applying for or work that was later included in a publication.
- Field experience - try to highlight this as you would your work experiences. Many employers want to see field experience for geologist, especially entry level.
- Internships held and accomplishments.
- Knowledge of other areas - finance, budgets, marketing, selling.
- Employment history - summer jobs are only that, but did you learn any skills that apply? (human interaction with difficult customers, jobs that help pay for education (work study)).
- Professional society membership - especially involvement with the organization.

- Volunteer work.
- GPA - the jury is out on this one, if you have a great GPA, include it, if not, maybe not! If applying for a position and GPA is required, then include it.
- Foreign language, if proficient, how was that obtained? Travel or work in another country?
- Software experience, specific to that profession, GIS, database, models relevant to the position.
- Publications and presentations.
- Certifications - OSHA HAZWOPER training, as an example.
- Hobbies or skills – jury out on this one too! For example, geologist like people who like doing things outdoors (Suggest you leave this off, if an interviewer wants to know about your hobbies, they’ll ask during an interview).
- References - Do not include unless required to. You may state: “References are available upon request” or just omit anything regarding references.
- Photo of yourself – NO!

Things that will result in your resume going into the garbage can:

- Misspellings - do not depend on spell check, “form” and “from” are both correct spellings.
- Incomplete sentences except when using bullets points.
- Bad grammar or slang.
- Poor formatting and presentation.
- Political, religious, or community activism (you might be avid about environmentalism, but many companies represent companies that “green” non-profit groups target).
- Religious affiliation info.
- Cute abbreviations.
- Overused buzz words - DO NOT USE “AWESOME!”
- Superlative descriptive modifiers – “highly motivated,” “extremely enthusiastic,” “very hardworking,” etc.
- Long resume. Remember one page. Do not embellish or pad your resume.

Have an independent person review and proofread your resume.

Include a SHORT cover letter when submitting a resume.

- Address cover letter to a particular person (spell their name correctly and do not use Mrs.). If you do not have a name, call the company and explain you are submitting a resume and ask to whom you should address it to.
- Specifically address a particular position being sought.
- State who you are and why you are applying.
- Explain how your skills meet job requirements.
- Ask to be considered for the job.
- Tailor the cover letter to the position.

The cover letter is the first example of your writing skills your potential employer will see, do not make it the last.

Have an independent person review and proofread your cover letter.

Once you complete your resume, do not consider it the final product. Your resume is a dynamic document and should be updated for each job you apply for.