

Your Guide to Résumés, Cover Letters & Interviewing



CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Netzer Administration Building, Room 110

SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY 13820

Office hours: Monday- Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Phone: (607) 436 - 2534 Fax: (607) 436 – 2094

E-mail: Career@oneonta.edu

www.oneonta.edu/career

Developing a Solid Résumé

The following categories are usually found in a résumé, adopt those that best fit your needs. Remember the key is to **SELL YOURSELF!**



What should be included?

1. **Contact Information-** Make sure your name is the most obvious piece of information on your résumé. Follow with your phone number, address, and zip code.
2. **Objective-** Gives your résumé focus. It is the career plan statement in relation to what the employer or company looks for. Be sure to make this specific for every position you apply to!
3. **Education-** List your educational background in reverse chronological order, starting with the highest degree.
4. **Experience-** This category includes volunteer or intern experiences as well as employment. Remember to concentrate on the positive and use action words. Remember to list the job title, city, and state of your place of work as well as the dates of the experience.
5. **Additional Information-** Skills, Activities, Honors, Awards, Public Service...
SELL YOURSELF, MAKE EMPLOYERS WANT TO BUY YOUR PRODUCT... WHICH IS YOU!
6. **References-** It is acceptable to use the phrase “Available upon request.” Generally a reference sheet includes name, title, work address, phone number, and email address of each recommender.

Top Ten Snags in Résumé Writing!

1. **Too long...** When writing your résumé restrict information to one page!
2. **Grammatical or Spelling Errors...** These errors and inconsistencies suggest carelessness, poor education and/or lack of intelligence.
3. **Hard to Read...** Looks unprofessional.
4. **Too Verbose...** Using too many words to say too little. Do not use complete sentences. Save some information for a detailed cover letter.
5. **Too Sparse...** Meaning give more than the bare essentials. You are the product; sell yourself! Describe related work experience, activities, and interests.
6. **Irrelevant information ...** Customize each résumé and cover letter to the position you seek.
7. **Obviously Generic...** Stand out; too many résumés scream “*I need a job - any job.*” Make your employer feel that you are interested in that position with their organization.
8. **Too Snazzy...** Can be distracting, use good quality bond paper. Avoid exotic fonts and colored paper.
9. **Boring...** Make your résumé as dynamic as possible. Do not write what someone else told you to do; write what you did. Avoid repeating words.
10. **Too Modest...** Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsifying information, or sounding arrogant.

Use Some of these **Action** Words to Develop a Winning Résumé!

Abstracted	Counseled	Indicated	Questioned
Achieved	Created	Influenced	Raised
Acquired	Critiqued	Initiated	Ran
Acted	Cultivated	Inspected	Ranked
Adapted	Dealt	Instituted	Rationalized
Addressed	Debated	Integrated	Read
Administered	Decided	Interpreted	Reasoned
Advertised	Defined	Interviewed	Recorded
Advised	Delegated	Introduce	Received
Advocated	Delivered	Invented	Reduced
Aided	Developed	Inventoried	Referred
Allocated	Designed	Investigated	Related
Analyzed	Directed	Judged	Relied
Answered	Displayed	Kept	Reported
Anticipated	Documented	Launched	Researched
Applied	Drafted	Learned	Responded
Appraised	Drove	Lectured	Restored
Approved	Edited	Led	Revamped
Arranged	Eliminated	Logged	Reviewed
Ascertained	Empathized	Made	Scanned
Assembled	Enabled	Maintained	Scheduled
Assessed	Enforced	Maximized	Schemed
Assisted	Established	Mediated	Screened
Attained	Estimated	Mentored	Set goals
Augmented	Evaluated	Monitored	Shaped
Authored	Examined	Narrated	Skilled
Bolstered	Exceeded	Negotiated	Solicited
Briefed	Excelled	Observed	Solved
Brought	Expanded	Obtained	Specialized
Budgeted	Expedited	Offered	Spoke
Built	Explained	Organized	Stimulated
Calculated	Explored	Originated	Strategized
Cared	Extracted	Overcame	Streamlined
Charged	Facilitated	Oversaw	Strengthened
Checked	Fashioned	Participated	Stressed
Clarified	Financed	Perceived	Studied
Classified	Fixed	Perfected	Substantiated
Coached	Followed	Performed	Succeeded
Collaborated	Formulated	Persuaded	Summarized
Collected	Fostered	Planned	Synthesized
Comforted	Founded	Practiced	Supervised
Communicated	Gained	Predicted	Supported
Compared	Gathered	Prepared	Surveyed
Completed	Gave	Presented	Sustained
Composed	Generated	Prioritized	Symbolized
Computed	Handled	Produced	Tabulated
Conceived	Headed	Programmed	Talked
Conducted	Helped	Projected	Taught
Conserved	Identified	Promoted	Theorized
Consulted	Illustrated	Proposed	Trained
Contracted	Imagined	Protected	Translated
Contributed	Implemented	Proved	Upgraded
Converted	Improved	Provided	Utilized
Cooperated	Improvised	Publicized	Validated
Coordinated	Inaugurated	Published	Verified
Copied	Increased	Purchased	Visualized
Correlated	Indexed	Queried	Won

Résumé Layout

Name (18 pt)

E-mail Address

Local Address

Address

City, State Zip

Phone #

Permanent Address

Address

City, State Zip

Phone #

Objective

Write a clear, concise statement about your job objective. This must be specific to each position you apply to!

Education

State University of New York (SUNY) College at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY

Degree (B.S./B.A.), Major, Minor, Concentration

Graduation Date

GPA (If above a 3.0)

List each of the colleges that you have attended in reverse chronological order. Do not include High School information!

Experience – (Related and Other)

Position Title, Employer, Location (City & State)

Dates of Employment

- List each of your work experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent on top).
- Be sure to include internships, Resident Assistant positions etc.
- Provide a bulleted summary of your experience – start each new bullet with an action verb.
- Give clear and concise information – focus on responsibilities and outcomes. Use numbers when appropriate!

Volunteer Experience

Name of Organization, Location (City & State)

Dates of Employment

- List each of your volunteer experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent on top).
- Provide a bulleted summary of your experience – start each new bullet with an action verb.
- Not all volunteer activities require a bulleted summary. One day activities can simple be listed.
- Give clear and concise information – focus on responsibilities and outcomes. Use numbers when appropriate!

Field Experience (Typically for Education majors)

Dates of Observations

List Observations and Participation with number of total hours

- Combine observations and participation by school district
- Do not list each 5 hour observation separately, because this would use too much space! Condense!

Activities

List college activities and dates of participation, such as college athletics, student government, residence hall committees, Greek affiliations, community service.

Awards/Honors

List college awards and honors - if any - with date of receipt

Special Skills

List skills that would be of interest to potential employers, such as computer skills, foreign languages, extensive travel, etc.

References

List people who could speak positively about your work abilities, attitudes and experiences

As you can see, it takes time to build experiences that may be marketed to employers.
Choose your sites for experiential learning carefully. Those will later be used to build your résumé.

THIS IS NOT A TEMPLATE!

Use as a general guide and outline for what you need to include on your résumé.

DO NOT just list information.

Organize and format to direct the reader's eye to what is important such as your degree and job titles.

Sample Résumé

PAT STUDENT

415B Curtis Hall, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY 13820
5555 Garrett Place, New York, NY 10017
(212) 555-1234 • studpa82@suny.oneonta.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain an entry-level position in psychology with a focus on counseling.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Psychology; Minor in English May 2015
State University of New York (SUNY), College at Oneonta, Oneonta, NY
GPA 3.6

Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts May 2013
State University of New York (SUNY), Rockland Community College (RCC), Suffern, NY
GPA 3.5

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Resident Assistant, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY January 2014 - Present
• Assist 40 undergraduate students with personal and academic issues
• Develop monthly educational and recreational programs for a building of over 300 residents.
• Ensure safe environment, and enforced college regulations

Intern, Patient Services, New York Presbyterian Hospital, White Plains, NY January - May 2015
• Interacted with patients and families in recreational areas
• Observed patient support groups and therapeutic sessions
• Assisted with maintaining confidential records for over 50 patients

Camp Counselor, Riverdale Neighborhood House, Riverdale, NY May - August 2013
• Supervised groups of 10 children ages 5 to 8
• Planned and monitored craft and sports activities

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate, TJ Maxx, Suffern, NY October 2011 - May 2013
• Increased personal sales by 15% in a 6 month period to over \$15,000
• Responsible for keeping inventory of over \$100,000 of merchandise

VOLUNTEER WORK

St. Vincent Elementary School, St. Vincent, NY September 2011 - May 2012
• Coordinated an after school program for 25 children, ages 5 to 8
• Maintained a safe and conducive learning environment

AWARDS/HONORS

Psi Chi, (Psychology Honor Society) SUNY Oneonta Chapter September 2014 - May 2015
Dean's List, SUNY Oneonta December 2013 - May 2014

ACTIVITIES

Leadership Institute, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY March 2014, 2015
Psychology Club, SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta, NY August 2013 - May 2015
Intramural Basketball, RCC, Suffern, NY August 2011- May 2013

SKILLS

Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Outlook, SPSS
Conversational Spanish and Sign Language

REFERENCES

Available upon request

Cover Letter Writing Guidelines

1. Ask yourself before contacting an employer...Do I have the definite interest in the organization – its products, services, and goals, etc?
2. Is the work in line with my interests, education, and experience?
3. Is the place of employment within the boundaries of where I want to live?
4. Am I willing to invest the time necessary to do a successful and thorough job search with this organization?

Suggestions: *Things you should keep in mind while writing to a prospective employer.*

1. Present your reason for writing.
2. Create a desire for your services.
3. Ask for action, such as an interview.

DO

1. Follow rules of layout and format of a standard business letter.
2. Print on good quality paper. Always send an original letter when possible.
 - a. If submitting documents electronically – be sure to submit as a .PDF
3. Address, whenever possible, to an individual along with his or her correct job title.
4. Always address the letter to the person who will make the employment decision (not necessarily the personnel manager). Avoid using “To whom it may concern” if at all possible. A telephone call to the organization may help you obtain the correct information.
5. Spell, punctuate, and paragraph correctly. It should be perfect!
6. Tailor your letters to the employer as much as possible in regards to geographic location, your personal accomplishments, or colleagues you have in common. Be sure to address all required qualifications from the job ad in your letter.
7. Take advantage of any link to the employer that can put your foot in the door or give you an edge over the competition (i.e. mention names).
8. Slant letter toward what you can offer the employer, not what you think the employer should be offering you.
9. Refer to your résumé but do not rehash. You should be giving more information as it relates to the position.
10. Be brief, concise, and to the point.
11. Follow-up afterwards with a phone call asking to speak with someone regarding your letter of application.

DON'T

1. Develop one letter to send to all employers. One size does not fit all here.
2. Use stiff language or phrasing – avoid vagueness.
3. Be gimmicky in an attempt to be original or clever.
4. Overload with constant use of the word “I”.

Components of a Cover Letter

Your Street Address
City, State Zip code
Today's Date

(Four spaces)

Name Addressee
Title
Address of the organization

(Two spaces)

Dear (Mr. Ms. Mrs. Dr.) Addressee:

(One space)

Your opening paragraph should state the reason for the letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and how you learned of the job opportunity. You may want to state briefly why you are interested in the position.

(One space)

Your middle paragraph should sell your skills and explain how your academic and/or experiential background qualifies you for the position. Point out specific achievements or unique qualifications. Include any special skills that may be useful in the position, i.e., abilities with computers, administration. Don't just repeat information in your résumé, single out a few especially salient factors: expand on an item or two of special relevance. Be concise and to the point. Address all required qualifications from the job ad!

(One space)

In your closing paragraph, refer the reader to your enclosed résumé and focus on the action to follow. Indicate your desire for a personal interview – but don't be pushy. You may want to indicate your flexibility or state a time or times when you will be in the vicinity of his/her office. State that your references can be sent at their request. Also include your phone number where the employer can contact you with any questions.

(Two spaces)

Sincerely,

(Four spaces)

Your Signature (Scan and insert if sending electronically)

Typed Name

(Two spaces)

Enclosure:

Interviewing Tips

1. Your interview begins before you say “hello” - an interviewer begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. Make eye contact. Shake the interviewer’s hand. Do not be scared to extend your hand first; be **ASSERTIVE**. Now that it’s time to speak, be sure to use appropriate language and grammar.
2. **ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS** that an employer is likely to ask during the interview. i.e.: Tell me a little bit about yourself; Why are you interested in working for this organization?; What is your major strength/weakness? Practice these kinds of questions so that during your interview, you can respond naturally to them.
3. **RESEARCH** the organization you would like to work for. Be sure to look at the organization’s website. What is their mission? Where have they been in the news? Etc. You must demonstrate that you are knowledgeable about the organization!
4. After you have been interviewed, it’s your turn to **ASK QUESTIONS**. It is important to have a few ready. Questions should show your interest in the organization. Showing the employer you are serious about the organization and the position you are applying for. i.e.: How would you describe an average day on the job?; How would you describe the ideal candidate?; Is there room for personal growth and upward mobility?
5. The interview is not over until you walk out of the door. The last **FIVE** minutes are very important. Remain **enthusiastic and courteous**. Shake the interviewer’s hand and thank him/her for considering you for the position.
6. **Follow Up** - Always send a thank you letter conveying your interest in the position.

Remember: Interviewing is a two way street! You are interviewing the organization as much as they are interviewing you!

Questions Asked by Employers

During an interview there are several questions asked by an employer to get an understanding of who you are. These questions fall under several Categories. These Categories include *Personal, Education, Experience, and Career Goals.*

Personal

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your hobbies?
- What can you offer us?
- Define success. Failure?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Where do you want to be in five to ten years?
- Why should we hire you instead of another candidate?
- What do you know about our organization (products or services)?



Experience

- What job related skills have you developed?
- What have you learned from your work experiences?
- What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
- Have you ever quit a job? Why?
- Give an example of a time in which you worked under dead-line pressure?

Education

- Why did you choose your major?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- Which classes in your major did you like the least? Best? Why?
- Do your grades accurately reflect your abilities? Why or Why not?
- Why did you choose to attend your college or university?

Career Goals

- Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
- Would you be successful working with a team?
- What other types of positions are you considering?
- Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
- How do you feel about travel?
- How do you feel about working overtime?
- How do you feel about working in a structured environment?

Before interviewing think about these questions and possible responses. The key is to be prepared; having the ability to communicate your answers clearly in an interview may give you an advantage over other candidates applying for the position.

Sample Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State Zip Code
Today's Date

Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for interviewing me yesterday, January 6, 2015. It was very enjoyable to speak with you about the _____ position at the _____ Agency/Company/Organization. The job, as you presented it, seems to be a very good match with my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department. My artistic background will help me to work with artists on staff and provide me with an understanding of the visual aspects of our work.

I understand your need for administrative support. My detail orientation and organizational skills will help to free you to deal with larger issues. I neglected to mention during my interview that I had worked for two summers as a temporary office worker. This experience helped me to develop my secretarial and clerical skills.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you about this position. Should you have further questions, I may be reached at (607) 111-4321.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (Scan and insert if sending electronically)

Your Typed Name

NOTES:

Connect with your Career Development Center on
Facebook, Instagram & Twitter!
Like and follow us for news, announcements, and
career tips!



Login to your DragonLink account for up-to-date local and
national employment listings, information on events,
recruitment information, and to access your credential folder!
Look for this logo on the CDC website:

