

**Resume & Cover Letter Assignment**

This assignment will help you develop your resume and cover letter to use when applying for internships, part-time and full-time positions.

**Steps:**

1. Locate a position you would apply for in the next six months or an internship that is related to your major/career interests. You can use [Dolphin CareerLink](http://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/dolphin-career-link-instructions-for-students-2013.pdf) to find a position.
2. Create a draft copy of your resume and cover letter tailored to the position mentioned above.
3. Review [Resume Resources on the CDS website](http://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/resume-resources) to develop a resume draft that includes all the relevant information mentioned in the resume handbook and checklist.
4. Bring the Resume Checklist (next page), position description of the job/internship, your resume and cover letter to the Career Development Center during [Drop-In Career Counseling](http://www.csuci.edu/careerdevelopment/services/counseling/).
5. Obtain a signature (Resume Checklist) from the CDS staff member who reviewed your documents.
6. Turn in your reviewed and signed documents by the deadline indicated by faculty/staff.

**FAQ**

1. **Why do I need to tailor my resume to a specific position?**

Editing your resume based on an actual position allows you to understand how to properly tailor a resume that effectively markets yourself to an employer. Generic resumes are unpopular with employers as they are looking for applicants that highlight their skills necessary for the position they are seeking. In addition, a position description is an “answer key” to what is needed on the resume/cover letter. You should be using the words, adjectives and information located on the position description to create a professionally polished resume and cover letter.

1. **I forgot to bring a position description/I don’t know what positions I could apply for; can I still complete my assignment?**

It depends on your professor/supervisor. If they do not require you to bring in a position description to complete the assignment, then yes. However, students who bring in a position description learn how to properly edit their resume. It is even harder to edit the cover letter without direct information about the position and the company.

1. **I’m confused about what I need to complete this assignment; can I just visit the Career Development Center for help?**

Please make sure you ask your professor or supervisor about the requirements to complete this assignment. The Career Development Center staff are knowledgeable regarding resume and cover letter content, however assignment requirements are designated by your professor or supervisor. We don’t have the ability to confirm the assignment requirements.

1. **I can’t visit the Career Development Center during Drop-In Career Counseling; can I make an appointment?**

Students who are unable to make it during Drop-In Career Counseling will need to call the Career Development Center at 805-437-3270. We cannot schedule appointments via email. Please try to avoid making last-minute appointments as the average appointment requires approximately three to five business days to schedule.

1. **Can I complete my assignment by email?**

Unfortunately, we do not offer services by email at this time. Please contact your professor or supervisor about potential alternative options they will accept from you.

1. **I waited until the last minute to schedule an appointment. There are no more appointments available and I cannot visit during Drop-In Career Counseling. What are my options?**

Please contact your professor or supervisor regarding assignment extensions. The only alternative option Career Development Services can provide when all appointments are filled is Drop-In Career Counseling on a first-come, first-served basis.

Career Development Services

1 University Drive, Bell Tower 1548 • Camarillo, CA 93012

Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm • (805)-437-3270 [career.services@csuci.edu](mailto:career.services@csuci.edu)

**Resume/Cover Letter Checklist**

**What is a resume?**

A resume is a brief summary of your experiences including work, volunteer, extracurricular activities, educational background, and relevant skills that highlights your qualifications for jobs, internships, specialized programs, or positions.

The purpose of a resume is to market yourself to employers by summarizing your education, experience and skills, ultimately aiming to convince employers to invite you to an interview. A resume is like an advertisement: it must attract attention, create interest, and generate action on the part of the reader. The resume tells a potential employer what you have done, what you can do, who you are, and what you know. It also states what kind of work you seek. A good resume will lead an employer to invite you to an interview to discuss how your background and personality fit the organization.

**Resume Format**

* All dates, bullets, and sections are aligned evenly and consistently throughout the resume.
* Resume is tailored to a specific position, job type or industry.
* Resume is easy to read, with proper grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Resume includes the following:**

* Name, Address, Telephone Number, Email Address
* A clear and specific job objective tailored to the exact position with a unique approach (or remove objective)
* Summary of Qualifications (only highlight skills relevant to the position you’re applying for)
* Education (including current education) in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
* Work/Volunteer Experience
  + A minimum of two to three statements, effectively communicating a demonstration of a skill, experience or ability
  + Includes: Name of organization, job title, location, and dates
  + Begins each phrase with an action verb and these verbs are not repeated several times

**Resume Do’s & Don’ts**

**Do:**

* Emphasize results produced, significant achievements, and recognition from others
* Quantify when possible and use specific examples
* Check the spelling of every word; make sure grammar and punctuation are correct
* Have someone else proofread your resume
* Get feedback from several people (different staff members, parents, faculty)
* Be truthful about your accomplishments
* Keep your resume to one page unless you have extensive experience directly related to the position you are seeking

**Don’t:**

* Use resume templates (or resume wizard). It is difficult to adjust sections and your resume looks like all other candidates who used the same template.
* Use of personal pronouns (i.e. “I”, “me”, “you”, “we”)
* Personal information such as marital status, social security number, age or national origin, photograph
* List unrelated duties that do not directly apply to the position
* Exaggerate your experience
* Start phrases in the experience section with “my responsibilities (or duties) included”
* Use of abbreviations or acronyms unrelated to the industry
* Use generic references such as: team player, excellent verbal and written communication skills, hard-work, flexible, people-person, easy to work with, fast learner, cashier, seeking challenging position, etc.
* A blank or mostly blank last page
* Leave areas of unanswered or unused template sections on resume
* Different font sizes or use of multiple colors (except for design/creative resumes)
* Autobiography of every bit of detailed information about your personal and work history

**What is a cover letter?**

A cover letter accompanies your resume to introduce you to a prospective employer as a knowledgeable and capable applicant. Ideally, the content of the cover letter should address why you would be a good fit for the organization to which you are applying. It should be written in business format and be no longer than one page. You are not trying to address or cover every aspect of the position in a cover letter. Remember that your goal is to market yourself by clearly explaining why the employer should consider hiring you. You should highlight what sets you apart from other candidates and how this difference will ultimately benefit the employer. Do thorough research on the organization so you can articulate your competitive advantage.

**Cover Letter Format**

* Cover letter has a heading (top contact information) that is identical to the resume.
* Include the full address and contact information of the company/organization
  + Contact name, contact title, company/organization, full address
* Use a three-paragraph structure that is approximately ½ page long to ¾ page long
  + Introduction paragraph – Three to four sentences indicating the exact position you are interested in and a brief reason why you feel you are qualified for the position
  + Main body – Majority of your cover letter that details why you are interested in the position and how your qualifications and interests align with the company
  + Final paragraph – End your letter with confidence (don’t beg) and a way to communicate with you for a follow-up interview. Make sure you thank the reader for their time.

**Cover Letter Do’s & Don’ts**

**Do:**

* Research the company and describe how their mission aligns with your own approach or professional interests
* Provide a simple and concise theme with your knowledge of the company/organization
* Explain why you are passionate about the industry or company
* Include relevant work experience, education, skills, and abilities to support your purpose for your interest in the company and position
* Address to a named individual and their title
* Is brief and to the point
* Project confidence and enthusiasm
* Minimize “I” statements, monotonous sentence structure, or excessive redundancy
* Proofread your letter

**Don’t:**

* Send your resume without a cover letter. You always send a cover letter even if an employer does not request one.
* Be negative or desperate (avoid using words such as: please, hope, honored etc.)
* Mention your lack of skill or experience
* Include false claims or exaggeration of your skill or abilities
* Wait for the employer to follow up with you
* Send written material with typos or poorly constructed sentence structure, grammar and/or syntax
* Indicate how you would benefit from, learn, grow, or use the position as a stepping stone or temporary position for your other goals
* Using only your education and personal interest as the purpose for pursing the position. It is important to translate transferrable skills from previous positions that would apply to the current position you are seeking.
* Rehash your resume or include too much detail that is already on your resume.

**Resume Reviewed by**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(PRINT NAME) (STAMP/SIGNATURE)

**Cover Letter Reviewed by**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(PRINT NAME) (STAMP/SIGNATURE)

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