

The Career Centre

Résumé Development

Professional
Cover Letters

References

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7 Steps to an Effective Résumé

Step 1 – Identify Your Skills and Experience

- ◆ Your entire job search starts by understanding what you are selling (your qualifications) and understanding to whom you are selling (a specific employer).
- ◆ If you have difficulty identifying your relevant skills or articulating how they will benefit an employer, visit the Career Centre.

Step 2 – Research the Job Requirements

- ◆ There are numerous resources available to assist you with researching the relevant requirements for your target jobs. Job postings, professional association websites and informational interviews with professionals in the field can be a useful source of information.

Step 3 – Match Your Background to the Job Requirements

- ◆ Once you have listed the employer's key requirements, begin to match your experience and accomplishments to the job requirements. See chart for example:

Job Requirements	Your Experience	Your Accomplishments
Solid interpersonal communication skills; bilingualism would be an asset	Volunteer group facilitator	Redesigned and delivered a youth advocacy workshop which improved participation by 20%
	Member of Toastmasters International	1st Place winner, 20xx Regional Speech Contest
	French minor	Successfully completed 1 semester at L'Université de Bordeaux

Step 4 – Select a Résumé Format

- ◆ 3 basic types of résumés - Chronological, Functional, Combination

Step 5 – Create Content for Each Section of Your Résumé

- ◆ In 15 - 30 seconds, an employer must be able to find the key information s/he needs to make the decision to consider your résumé further. As a result, you have to make decisions about what to include and how to organize your information.

Step 6 – Summarize Your Best Qualifications

- ◆ One of the most effective ways to ensure you capture and hold an employer's attention with your résumé is to use the most prominent space in your résumé to answer the following questions:
 - ◆ Type of position you are seeking
 - ◆ What you can offer
- ◆ A targeted objective, executive summary and/or professional profile section can assist you in using the most attention-drawing space on your résumé (usually the top half of the first page) to highlight your most relevant qualifications.

Step 7 – Design Your Résumé

- ◆ Your résumé needs to be attractive and visually appealing to your target audience....for a five second scan! Ideally it will be suited to the industry, job and employer you are targeting. Your résumé appearance may demonstrate your personal style, but keep in mind your target audience.

Résumé

Do's and Don't

DO

- ◇ Include your personal contact information: name, address, phone number(s), email address, etc.
- ◇ Always put your name and phone number on the second page of your résumé
- ◇ Use quality paper - *not colour*
- ◇ Ensure your résumé is **error free**
- ◇ Keep it short – no more than two pages
- ◇ Use powerful action words and quantify accomplishments
- ◇ Keep your tenses in consistent format
- ◇ Always tailor your résumé for the job you are applying for
- ◇ Save your résumé in two separate places
- ◇ Make it easy for the employer to see the match between your skills and what they are seeking
- ◇ Specify all languages you can write or speak
- ◇ When listing employment experiences, include your position title and the correct company name
- ◇ ALWAYS check your spelling and grammar

DON'T

- ◇ Specify your: age, height, weight, marital status, gender, ethnicity, political/religious affiliations, physical description, health information, photograph or SIN
- ◇ Include any salary expectations (*unless requested in job ad*)
- ◇ Oversell yourself or make false misrepresentations about your qualifications
- ◇ Have more than two pages
- ◇ Put the word 'Résumé' at the top of the page
- ◇ Use personal pronouns (i.e. I, me, my)
- ◇ Use abbreviations or acronyms (*unless the acronyms are commonly used in the industry*)
- ◇ Start sentences with 'Responsible for' or 'Duties included'. Start with action verbs that describe your skills
- ◇ Include your high school education (*unless it's relevant to the job*)
- ◇ Include your references in your résumé (*unless requested in the job ad*)
- ◇ Send your résumé to every ad you see on-line or in the newspaper. Be selective and apply only to those jobs for which you are qualified.
- ◇ Indicate your reasons for leaving your previous employers, or include negative comments about your previous work experience

Résumé

HEADING

- Your contact information must be clear and easy to read
- Ensure your phone number and e-mail address are up to date
 - Use a phone number that has an answering machine with a professional message
 - Ensure your e-mail address is professional
- Be creative; use **bold**, lines, *italics* and shading to create your own letterhead
- Use the same heading for your cover letter, references and portfolio
- Include:
 - Your Name
 - Address
 - City
 - Postal Code

OBJECTIVE

Alternate Titles

Career Goal
Career Objective
Goals
Employment Objective

- One or two lines that summarize you and your job search
- Optional; use it as a method to focus your résumé on the position you seek
- Alter for each position you apply for
- Mention the type of work you are looking for if applicable, such as
 - Summer
 - Part time
 - Full Time
 - Placement

SKILLS

Alternate Titles

Highlights of Qualifications
Key Competencies
Personal Profile
Professional Qualifications
Career Related Skills
Computer Skills

- Focus on job-related, hard skills
- Cross reference with the job posting
- Use industry buzz words
- Use strong language / action verbs (see attached page)
- List your technical skills, related experience and educational qualifications in bullet form
- Mention any experience you have that is relevant to the job
- Be concise and to the point
- List any unique selling features such as languages, professional associations or computer skills
- **SELL** your skills and abilities!
- **Your 5-6 strongest qualifications for the job should be presented here**

EDUCATION

Alternate Titles

Academic Background
Academic Training
Educational Background
Professional Education
Additional Training
Professional Development
Special Training
Certifications

- Loyalist (or your most recent education) should be first
- Included when you will graduate, when you did graduate, or which year of your program you are in
- Include highlights of studies or examples of courses you have taken
- Mention special projects, accomplishments or marks
- Include any awards you have received
- Include any specialized training or certificates you have achieved
- **Bold** the full name of your **Diploma, Degree and/or Certificate** (listing highschool is optional)
- Education should be listed at the beginning of the résumé if it's recent and at the end of the résumé if not

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Alternate Titles

Employment
Additional Experience
Professional Background
Professional Experience
Relevant Experience

Related Experience Includes:

- Placements, Internships and Co-ops, Volunteer Experience, Related Work History

Include details such as:

- Job Titles, Business / Organization, Location - Dates
- Responsibilities
- Skills Gained
- Accomplishments

Use action words to describe your experience. Do not under-sell yourself by stating “Handled Customers.” Use Powerful sentences.

Try to make each point *accomplishment oriented* by:

- 1. Using an action verb**
- 2. Describing the object of the action**
- 3. Explaining the benefit that resulted**

Examples:

- Implemented a new employee training manual to minimize employee turnover
- Provided excellent customer service in a high volume store ensuring repeat business

WORK HISTORY

Alternate Titles

Employment History
Additional Experience

- If unrelated to your career, use to demonstrate your history as a steady and reliable employee
- Does not have to include a list of responsibilities
- Should Include:
 - Job Title
 - Business/Organization
 - Location

ADDITIONAL HEADINGS OR OPTIONAL SECTIONS

Conferences Attended	Community Service	Activities
Professional Associations	Club Memberships	Interests
Professional Memberships	Hobbies and Interests	Presentations
Community Volunteer Activities	Related Activities	Publications
Activities and Interests	Volunteer Activities	Affiliations
Community Involvement	University Activities	Associations
Extracurricular Activities	Papers Presented	Memberships

ADDITIONAL RÉSUMÉ ADVICE

- Focus your résumé on the job you are applying for
- Use bold, italics and lines to highlight sections, job titles and important information
- Use bullets; make it clear and easy to read
- Use 12 point font; select a legible and common font
- Keep your résumé to 1 or 2 pages
- Make it your own and avoid the use of templates
- Use a consistent format to make your résumé pleasing to the eye
- Be honest and accurate
- Answer the question ‘so what?’; identify outcomes, results, achievements and skills
- Remember that there are many variations on a résumé—find what works for you and your skill set
- List experience in reverse chronological order
- Do include dates; they are important and employers want to see them
- Have another person **review your résumé** and check for spelling and grammar errors that you may have missed

Accomplishment Statements

A key part of your résumé is your description of each experience you list (whether it is paid, volunteer or placement experience).

- The most basic descriptions identify the **duties** of each position or experience.
- A stronger résumé will describe the **skills** used and / or learned in each experience.
- The strongest résumé will use **accomplishment statements** to describe the accomplishments you achieved in each experience.

Six general guidelines can help you in writing your accomplishment statements:

- Begin with stimulating action verb
- Write in past tense
- Show result gained from your action
- Be brief, yet stimulating
- Demonstrate what you are proud of
- Suggest what skills you used

Accomplishments are compiled in three parts:

The **situation or task** which had to be completed

Why did you take the action?

- It was inefficient
- It was too slow
- I wanted to learn a new skill

The **actions** you took to complete it

What did you do under that job description?

- Did I create something new?
- What tasks did I perform?
- Did I train someone?
- Did I coordinate something?

The **results** of your actions

What benefit did you create from that action?

- Did I reduce costs?
- Did I improve productivity?
- Did I save time?
- Did I receive an award or something special?

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

- Consistently exceeded sales quota each shift.
- Commended by management for outstanding customer service
- Known for reliability, regularly called in for extra shifts
- Reorganized filing system, creating a more efficient and organized work environment
- Promoted to team leader for showcasing outstanding team work
- Organized and implemented a Food Drive with a team of volunteers, effectively raising \$2,000 for needy people in the community.
- Administered campus tours and served on informative panels for prospective students.

HAVING TROUBLE THINKING OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS? USE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENT MEMORY JOGGERS:

1. Describe a specific situation in which you solved a problem or took charge of an emergency situation.
2. Describe an instance in which you developed an idea.
3. Explain how you showed leadership during a challenging situation.
4. Recount a time when you achieved a goal by following instructions.
5. Explain what you did to help others reach their goals.
6. Write down all of your academic achievements.
7. Describe when and why you were promoted or transferred from one job to another.
8. Describe a time when you were recognized for a good work record.
9. List any work-related training courses you have attended.
10. Describe how you increased sales or reduced costs for your employer, even if it was only a summer job.
11. List awards, scholarships or commendations that you have received.
12. Describe compliments you have received from employers or teachers.

Résumé Example

JANE SMITH

54 Dundas Street East, Belleville, Ontario K8N 1B8 • 613-966-0205 • jane.smith@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

Biotechnology Technologist graduate, pursuing a fulltime position as Lab Technician with Aquinox Pharmaceuticals Inc.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Ability to perform DNA/RNA manipulations such as cloning/sub cloning, sequencing, and gene amplification
- Utilized appropriate microscope, biochemical, culture, and immunological techniques to identify cell cultures within lab setting
- Proven ability to work individually and as team member
- Effective and efficient time-management and multi-tasking skills
- Strong knowledge of related computer software including Microsoft Office Suite, database systems and the process of computer validation
- Knowledge of purification techniques for macromolecules and using chromatographic and electrophoretic procedures

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Biotechnology Technologist Advanced Diploma, Loyalist College, Belleville, Ontario (2015)

- Courses included Pharmacology, Nutraceuticals, and Data Analysis

Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Napanee District Secondary School, Napanee, Ontario (2012)

- Athlete of the Year, 2008

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Lab Technician Intern, Bioniche Life Sciences, Belleville, Ontario (2014,2015)

- Gained 320 hours of field placement experience with veteran Lab Technicians
- Followed good laboratory practices in accordance with accepted principles and quality assurance
- Adhered to procedural health, safety, and waste management requirements

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Cashier, A&P, Belleville, Ontario (2011 - 2015)

- Promoted to team leader for showcasing outstanding team work
- Known for reliability, regularly called in for extra shifts

Customer Service, Tim Horton's, Belleville, Ontario (2010 - 2012)

- Commended by management for outstanding customer service

Action Verbs

FINANCIAL

administered
adjusted
allocated
analyzed
appraised
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
conserved
corrected
determined
developed
estimated
forecasted
managed
marketed
measured
planned
prepared
programmed
projected
reconciled
reduced
researched
retrieved

RESEARCH

analyzed
clarified
collected
compared
critiqued
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
extracted
gathered
formulated
inspected
interviewed
invented
investigated
located
organized
researched
solved
summarized
surveyed
tested

TEACHING

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
facilitated
guided
instructed
motivated
persuaded
simulated
stimulated
taught
tested

HELPING

adapted
advocated
aided
answered
arranged
assessed
assisted
cared for
clarified
coached
collaborated
contributed
cooperated
counselled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
encouraged
ensured
facilitated
familiarized
furthered
guided
helped
insured
intervened
motivated
prevented
provided
referred
rehabilitated
represented
resolved
simplified
supplied
supported
volunteered

CREATIVE

acted
combined
composed
conceptualized
condensed
created
customized
designed
developed
directed
displayed
drew
entertained
established
fashioned
formulated
founded
illustrated
initiated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
modeled
modified
originated
performed
photographed
planned
revised
revitalized
shaped

TECHNICAL

adapted
applied
assembled
built
calculated
computed
conserved
constructed
converted
debugged
designed
determined
developed
engineered
fabricated
fortified
installed
maintained
operated
overhauled
printed
programmed
rectified
regulated
restored
solved
specialized
standardized
upgraded
utilized

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

achieved	pioneered	succeeded
completed	reduced	surpassed
expanded	resolved	transformed
exceeded	restored	won
improved	spearheaded	

ORGANIZATION / DETAIL

arranged	implemented	reserved
catalogued	incorporated	responded
categorized	inspected	reviewed
charted	logged	routed
classified	maintained	scheduled
coded	monitored	screened
collected	obtained	set up
compiled	operated	submitted
corrected	organized	supplied
corresponded	prepared	standardized
distributed	processed	systematized
executed	provided	updated
expedited	purchased	validated
filled	recorded	verified
generated	registered	

MANAGEMENT / LEADERSHIP

administered	emphasized	managed
appointed	enhanced	motivated
approved	established	organized
assigned	executed	oversaw
attained	generated	planned
authorized	handled	produced
chaired	hired	reorganized
consolidated	hosted	replaced
coordinated	improved	scheduled
decided	increased	selected
delegated	initiated	strengthened
directed	instituted	supervised

COMMUNICATION / PEOPLE

addressed	developed	judged
advertised	directed	marketed
arbitrated	discussed	mediated
arranged	drafted	moderated
articulated	elicited	negotiated
authored	enlisted	participated
clarified	explained	persuaded
collaborated	formulated	publicized
composed	incorporated	reconciled
convinced	influenced	reinforced
corresponded	interacted	reported
debated	interviewed	resolved
defined	involved	suggested
described	joined	summarized

Résumé Critique Checklist

by Kim Isaacs

Résumé normally get less than a 15-second glance at the first screening. If someone has asked you to review their résumé and you want to help ensure it gets read -- or want to know if your own is up to par -- be sure you can answer yes to the following questions:

First Impression

- ◇ Does the résumé look original and not based on a template?
- ◇ Is the résumé inviting to read, with clear sections and ample white space?
- ◇ Does the design look professional rather than like a simple typing job?
- ◇ Is a qualifications summary included so the reader immediately knows the applicant's value proposition?
- ◇ Is the length and overall appearance of the résumé appropriate given the career level and objective?

Appearance

- ◇ Does the résumé provide a visually pleasing, polished presentation?
- ◇ Is the font appropriate for the career level and industry?
- ◇ Are there design elements such as bullets, bolding and lines to guide readers' eyes through the document and highlight important content?
- ◇ Is there a good balance between text and white space?
- ◇ Are margins even on all sides?
- ◇ Are design elements like spacing and font size used consistently throughout the document?
- ◇ If the résumé is longer than a page, does the second page contain a heading? Is the page break formatted correctly?

Résumé Sections

- ◇ Are all résumé sections clearly labeled?
- ◇ Are sections placed in the best order to highlight the applicant's strongest credentials?
- ◇ Is the work history listed in reverse chronological order (most recent job first)?

Career Goal

- ◇ Is the career objective included toward the top of the résumé in a headline, objective or qualifications summary?
- ◇ Is the résumé targeted to a specific career goal and not trying to be a one-size-fits-all document?
- ◇ If this is a résumé for career change, is the current objective clearly stated, along with supporting details showing how past experience is relevant to the new goal?

Accomplishments

- ◇ Does the résumé include a solid listing of career accomplishments?
- ◇ Are accomplishments quantified by using numbers, percentages, dollar amounts or other concrete measures of success?
- ◇ Do accomplishment statements begin with strong, varied action verbs?
- ◇ Are accomplishments separated from responsibilities?

Relevance

- ◇ Is the information relevant to hiring managers' needs?
- ◇ Does the résumé content support the career goal?
- ◇ Is the résumé keyword-rich, packed with appropriate buzzwords and industry acronyms?
- ◇ Is applicable additional information, such as awards and affiliations, included, while personal information, like marital status, age and nationality unrelated to the job target, omitted?

Writing Style

- ◇ Is the résumé written in an implied first-person voice with personal pronouns, such as I, me and my, avoided?
- ◇ Is the content flow logical and easy to understand?
- ◇ Is the résumé as perfect as possible, with no careless typos or spelling, grammar or syntax errors?

Cover Letter

Your Heading

Today's Date

Name of employer / contact
Correct title or position
Name of company / organization
Street Number & name
City, Province
Postal Code

Salutation: Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. (his or her last name):

Opening Paragraph:

State why you are writing to this individual. Is it in response to an advertisement? Were you referred by someone, and if so by whom? Or have you been interested in working for this company or this field for a long time? Are you studying related courses in school? It is important to change this paragraph for each position you apply to.

Second and Third Paragraphs: Relate your skills, interests, knowledge and abilities to the needs of the employer; point out relevant training, education, and employment; elaborate on your courses and experience if appropriate; highlight extracurricular and volunteer experience. Highlight your special skills, achievements and qualifications that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Specify how your qualifications match specific requirements found in the job advertisement. You should discuss your areas of expertise and job-related personal characteristics that set you apart from other applicants.

Explain why you are interested in working for the employer, specify your reasons for wanting this position; try to convince the employer of your ability, suitability and interest in the position. Discuss specifics using examples. You may have one or two paragraphs for this section.

Closing Paragraph: Summarize the main points you have conveyed. Initiate follow up stating when you will contact them to arrange a meeting time, or request that they contact you.

Yours truly,

Your Signature

Your name typed here

Cover Letter Example

JANE SMITH

54 Dundas Street East, Belleville, Ontario K8N 1B8 • 613-966-0205 • jane.smith@gmail.com

May 8, 2015

Pam Sanderson
Human Resources Coordinator
Aquinox Pharmaceuticals Inc.
PO Box 10
Consecon, Ontario
K0K 1T0

Dear Ms. Sanderson:

This letter is in response to your job posting on both Aquinox Inc.'s website and Workopolis seeking a Lab Technician. I was excited to read your ad as I have long desired to work in the pharmaceutical industry and am confident that my skills and experience will enable me to meet the challenges of the role.

I recently graduated from the Biotechnology Technologist program at Loyalist College where I achieved Dean's List standing. This program provided extensive hands on learning in state-of-the-art labs. I have learned how to prepare samples using proper techniques and I have had the opportunity to work with a variety of technical instruments used in a chemical, biological, and technical laboratory setting. I have recently been asked to return to my part-time position at A& P, because I demonstrated great leadership skills, and I look forward to using this quality and others in a role with Aquinox.

I would like to speak with you directly in order to further discuss how my qualifications match the requirements for the Lab Technician role. I will be in touch with you next week by telephone. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jane Smith

References

Think of **3 strong references**.

Some possible references would include:

- Past employer
- Co-worker
- Family Friend
- Volunteer supervisor
- Teacher
- Religious leader

Ensure that your choices **will only say positive things** about you and your abilities.

When you leave an employment, co-op or volunteer position, try to get a **reference letter**. The letter should address the specific achievements and contributions you have made.

It is important to **contact your references and ask for their permission and co-operation**. Ask them to support your job search by providing a positive reference. Send a copy of your résumé to each reference in the event that they are contacted.

EXAMPLE

BOB SMITH

184 Diego Street, Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0
613-476-1122 bob.smith@yahoo.ca

REFERENCES

BOB JONES

Volunteer Coordinator
Quinte Detention Centre
Napanee, Ontario
613-354-8889
bjones@quinte.ca

PAT SMITH

Coach, Junior Boys Hockey Team
Prince Edward Collegiate Institute
Picton, Ontario
613-476-2222

ANN DONOVAN

Facilities Manager
The Carriage House Retirement Residence
Cherry Valley, Ontario
613-476-3333