

Getting into Graduate/Professional School Workshop Series Writing a Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Dr. Angela Jones, Department of English
September 29, 2009
125 Cherry Hall
4:00-5:30 p.m.

To begin today's workshop:

What questions do you have about writing or revising your résumé or CV? Jot them down here while you wait for us to begin, and raise them at any point during our workshop.

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What two mentors will you consult while writing or revising your résumé or CV? Why are you selecting these two people specifically—what particular help will they be able to provide?

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To begin the process of writing or substantially revising your résumé or CV:

- Start early and budget time and energy for each stage of the process.
- Analyze your audience: graduate school review committee, potential employers in your field.
- Analyze your purpose.
- Determine if you need a résumé or a CV (or possibly both).
- Collect examples of the document(s) you plan to create.
- Talk to your mentors to help with your analysis of the overall situation.
- Remember that your résumé or CV is part of your larger graduate-school or job application package.
- Remember that your résumé communicates both through its content and through its appearance: notice focus on revising and editing on p. 3 of this handout.
- Avoid temptation to use a template or a résumé-preparation service.

For more information contact: Dr. Audra Jennings, OSD
Sponsored by the Office of Scholar Development, the Writing Center, and the Honors College.
Planning Committee: Amy Eckhardt, Jane Fife, Audra Jennings, Angela Jones, and Jeanne Sokolowski.
Many thanks to all of the professors who are participating in these sessions.

To draft your résumé or CV:

- Aim for *comprehensiveness* in your first draft: worry about editing later.
- Determine what general format and organization presents your qualifications most effectively:
 - avoid templates unless you are willing to revise them substantially
 - leave generous margins (1" on all four sides)
 - decide if one of the general organization patterns will work for your résumé: chronological, skills-based
 - decide which of the following general categories you'll include and how you'll order them:
 - *identifying information* (required; be thorough: complete address, including zip code; phone number; email address)
 - *objective or summary of qualifications* (check with mentors and examples to see if expected)
 - *education history* (required; consider what information is most effective: degree; institution, with full name; location of institution; date of graduation; GPA or major GPA; list of relevant courses; special project or accomplishment; honors and awards; information about other colleges/universities attended)
 - *employment history* (if applicable and assumes paid employment; focus on results; consider what information is most effective: skills; equipment; money you were responsible for; documents; personnel, including supervision experience; clients)
 - *honors* (should include if you have them: if you have several, consider giving them their own category)
 - *computer skills, language ability, interests, co-curricular activities, military service, and/or willingness to relocate* (return to your audience analysis and seek help from your mentors as you select; consider the following: community-service organizations, career-related hobbies, sports, university-sponsored activities)
 - *references* (select references carefully, keeping in mind strategies presented at last week's session on letters of recommendation; consider advantages and disadvantages of listing them but need a category heading either way; generally final section; consider listing them on a separate page)
- Use reverse chronological order in each section of your résumé or CV.
- Consider creating multiple versions of your résumé or CV if you are responding to different rhetorical situations.
- Select typefaces strategically to enhance your documents' readability: serif typeface for body text and sans-serif typeface for headings (note: this handout follows that model).

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To revise and edit your résumé or CV:

- Allow time to elapse before you review your draft.
- Read with an eye toward your tone / approach first: do you present specific evidence of your qualifications throughout?
- Share drafts with multiple readers for feedback: mentors, potential readers.
- Decide what feedback to incorporate and how (realize that comments will often be contradictory and you will have to reconcile them or accept some and ignore others).
- Balance the information on the page, both horizontally and vertically.
- Aim for *clarity* and *consistency* in your fine-tuning:
 - is all information in each entry parallel?
 - are entries across categories parallel?
 - are all jobs described with active verb phrases in the appropriate tense?
 - are all verbs strong action verbs that effectively describe your experiences?
 - is white space used effectively, both within sections and between them?
 - does all indentation match throughout and enhance the document's readability?
 - do all bullets look professional and indicate the level of information correctly?
 - are all states' names treated the same way?
 - are all dates treated the same way?
 - if the résumé or CV runs to a second page or has a separate references page, does that second page include a header? if so, does the header visually match the first page's identifying information?
- Realize that your résumé should be the most error-free document you create.

To produce your résumé or CV:

- Budget time and possibly money for quality printing (high quality paper and laser printing).
- Continue to update your résumé or CV as you gain experience.