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Job Search Resources

## **Résumé and Cover Letter Guide**

# About Résumés

## Introduction

The primary purpose of a résumé is to represent your education, experiences, skills and interests in a way that creates a positive impression and ultimately secures an interview. Your résumé should be well done, to the point and merge facts with a relevant promotional approach. Preparation of your résumé requires planning, organization, and time.

## Résumé Formats

There are a variety of résumé formats. The traditional résumé summarizes education and experience in reverse chronological order, or most recent first. Whatever format you use, make sure it emphasizes your qualifications in the best possible way. Use a résumé that emphasizes only your relevant experience and not a complete work history. The samples in this brochure give you some format ideas. More samples are available at the Academic and Career Advising Center and online at [www.humboldt.edu/acac](http://www.humboldt.edu/acac).

## Helpful Hints

- Be creative—there is no single prescribed résumé format.
- Prioritize categories on your résumé to emphasize your strongest qualifications for a specific job or type of job.
- Use descriptive job titles such as Engineering Assistant, Peer Counselor, Accounting Intern Community organizer, etc.
- Emphasize skills that are transferable from one job to another, such as “communication skills” and “organizational skills”.
- Keep résumé relevant to the type of job you are seeking.
- Remember that people glance at resumes; they do not read them.
- Review for spelling, grammatical and formatting errors.
- Unless specifically asked not to do so, a cover letter should always accompany your résumé.

## Key Points When Designing Your Résumé

- Focus on key words from the job description provided by the employer.
- Font size throughout the body of your résumé should be 10-12pt. The header is typically 14pt.
- Use a maximum of two font styles.
- Convert to a PDF when sending electronically.
- Use all available space, keep margins between .5 and 1 inch on all sides.
- Use professional, light color, résumé paper.
- Use relevant skills and action verbs to describe your experiences.

## Keywords

Computer searches of résumés focus on “keywords” they have been programmed to find. These are words that describe the qualifications for a specific job or career field. In preparing your résumé for electronic scanning, use nouns to describe your education, relevant experience, special skills, activities, etc. Example: production management, supervisor, account executive, information technology, healthcare.

## Action Words

Describe your experiences in an action oriented manner:

accomplished	delegated	guided	researched
adapted	demonstrated	identified	reviewed
analyzed	designed	inspected	served
answered	developed	introduced	solved
audited	documented	issued	spoke
awarded	drafted	listed	submitted
built	earned	managed	supervised
categorized	edited	organized	tested
classified	ensured	persuaded	trained
combined	estimated	prescribed	translated
completed	expedited	presented	updated
conceived	explored	promoted	utilized
contracted	filed	purchased	worked
created	focused	reconciled	wrote

The résumé example provided is a standard resume format to provide you with ideas for your own format.

# Résumé Example

## Mariko Chen

1220 Janes Road, Eureka, CA 95501 - 707.555.5555 - mqzc2@humboldt.edu

EDUCATION	<b>B.S. Business Administration, minor in Computer Science</b> Humboldt State University (HSU), Arcata, CA Honors: Presidential Scholar, 2 years	May 20xx
COMPUTER	<b>Operating Systems:</b> Windows, UNIX, LINUX, OS <b>Applications:</b> Microsoft Suite, Dbase IV, Google Docs <b>Languages:</b> C++, JAVA, HTML, PERL, SQL <b>Graphics:</b> Photoshop, Illustrator, Drupal	
RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	<b>JELD-WEN</b> - Klamath Falls, OR <b>Information Technology Intern</b> Worked with a six-person team building and debugging a JAVA application to order product information. <b>Academic Computing (HSU)</b> - Arcata, CA <b>Help Desk Assistant</b> Trained students and faculty in the use of communications software. <b>The Lumberjack Newspaper (HSU)</b> - Arcata, CA <b>Ad Designer</b> Designed advertisements publicizing local businesses for the university's weekly news periodical. <b>Business Administration Department (HSU)</b> - Arcata, CA <b>Faculty Assistant</b> Designed web-based classroom in which both accounting and economics courses were taught online. Consulted with faculty regarding techniques that would best utilize their course materials.	Summer 20xx Aug 20xx-May 20xx Spring 20xx Fall 20xx
HONORS & ACTIVITIES	Outstanding Student of the Year Award <b>Ambassador</b> , Freshman Orientation Program <b>Member</b> , National Speech and Debate Honorary Fraternity	20xx 20xx 20xx

### REFERENCES

Xavier Steinberg  
General Manger  
JELD-WEN  
1505 Encinitas Blvd.  
Klamath Falls, OR 92129  
503.632.0222

Piya Bose  
Professor  
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Didi Yamaguchi  
Director  
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## Résumé Checklist

- Personal Data:** Name, e-mail, contact phone number and address if available. Your name should be the biggest item on the page.
- Objective:** (Optional) State either the specific job or the broader occupational field you want and how your background prepares you.
- Education:** You may also include GPA, research or class projects, educational honors or related coursework.
- Experience:** Use multiple, relevant categorical experience section where possible. Describe duties with skill/action words and highlight accomplishments.
- Special Qualifications:** Emphasize skills, activities or interests that might appeal to your targeted employers.
- Professional Development, Community Service, Memberships, Leadership Experience, Additional Experience, International Travel:** Pick categories relevant to your employers.
- Activities:** Highlight relevant honors, leadership, school activities, and hobbies.
- References:** (List at least 3) List name, job title, organization, address, phone number, and email of faculty, employers or advisors. **Seek permission first.**

## Notes

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## The Cover Letter

**There are many different types of Cover Letters. These can include:**

- Letter of Inquiry
- Letter of Interest
- Letter of Application
- Networking Letter (for sending your résumé to contacts you know)
- Follow-up Letter (perhaps including additional information you are sending)
- Thank You Letter

Because of the number of applications received, human resources departments are unable to interview every person who contacts them. Therefore, a screening process is set up to narrow the field. Vague résumés and cover letters are eliminated early.

Write a draft of the cover letter specific to the position and have your career advisor critique it. You will want your letter to be warm, personal, and pleasant but professional.

Always send an original letter. The same advice given for résumés regarding neatness, spelling and professional appearance applies to your letter. The impression created by your letter may determine whether or not the reader gives careful attention to your résumé.

**When preparing the cover letter, keep the following in mind:**

- Produce it neatly on 8½ x 11 résumé paper.
- If you are emailing your résumé and cover letter, attach them to your email as PDF documents, and include a professional message in the body of your email.
- Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific person by name and title.
- Share how you learned of the employer and why you are interested in the organization.
- Tell the employer how you are uniquely qualified for the position.
- Let the letter reflect your individuality, but do not appear overly familiar, inappropriate, humorous, or overconfident. You are writing to a stranger about a subject that is serious to both of you.
- Remember to conclude by seeking an action—asking for a response, or requesting an interview. If the organization is located at a distance, request a preliminary telephone interview, especially if you have to pay expenses.

The cover letter example provided is a standard Letter of Application and will give ideas for tailoring your cover letter.

# Cover Letter Example

**Mariko Chen**

1220 Janes Road, Eureka, CA 95501 - 707.555.5555 - mqzc2@humboldt.edu

December xx, 20xx

Mr. John Vasquez  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
The Linton Company  
144 Republic Square  
Oakland, CA 94112

Dear Mr. Vasquez:

I am excited to submit my résumé for your Sales Representative Trainee position with the Linton Company. Your product line has a reputation of being top quality, and I have discovered through research that customer service is a high priority for your sales team.

In addition to having sales experience, I am an enthusiastic person who strives to do my best in all my endeavors. My college leadership activities and academic achievements demonstrate my drive and strong interpersonal skills that are needed to be an effective sales representative. You will find me to be an outgoing, friendly individual who enjoys developing strong interactive relationships with customers. My passion for action and service orientation would serve me particularly well in responding to the needs of clients. My determination and leadership are well evidenced by the following accomplishments:

- 1 ½ years retail sales experience
- Grade point average of 3.6
- Business and Economics Club President in my senior year
- Varsity women's basketball team - 4 years
- Humboldt Orientation Program, Co-director

I would like the chance to put my energy and enthusiasm to work for the Linton Company. I look forward to the opportunity to further discuss my interests and qualifications during a personal interview.

During the week of March 15, I will be in your area and would like the opportunity to introduce myself, if you are available. I will contact your office to follow up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(signature here)

Mariko Chen



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& career  
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