

Developing Professional Documents: A Guide for Career Success

Writing a resume can be easy once you get started! Here are our suggestions:

Step 1: This guide is intended to help you **develop the first draft of your resume**, cover letter, and thank you letter. Start with a draft of your resume. The cover letter and thank you letters will follow after you've identified an opportunity to apply for.

Step 2: When you have a draft, call Career Services in ACCEL at 814.332.2381 to **schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor** for a full critique.

Step 3: After you **make the suggested edits** drop in while classes are in session for our Quick Questions to get 15 minutes with a Career Counselor (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 2-4 p.m.) when no appointment is needed.

Step 4: **Continue to update your resume** on your own during your time at Allegheny College. Come into ACCEL frequently to stay connected with career resources, job and internship search strategies, and interviewing skills.

For additional information on resume writing, visit the ACCEL Resource Library, where books can be checked out with your Allegheny College ID.

**Allegheny College
Career Services
Reis Hall ♦ 332-2381
ocs@allegheny.edu
www.allegheny.edu/accel/career/index.php**

In this guide, you will find:

THE COVER LETTER: An Introduction to Your Resume

- **Informational Cover Letter** to guide format and content

THE RESUME: An Introduction to You

- **Step-by Step Suggestions** on developing your resume
- List of **Action Words** to catch the attention of your reader
- **Informational Resume** to guide format and content
- **Example Resume** which displays experiences based on suggestions

REFERENCE PAGE: Supporting Your Candidacy

- **Informational Reference Page** to guide format and content

THE THANK YOU: Sending a Positive Message

- **Informational Thank You Letter** to guide format and content

THE COVER LETTER: An Introduction to Your Resume

Your Name (optional)
Address
City, State Zip

Include your contact information here, or in the header of the document to match your resume.

Informational/Example Cover Letter

Month Day, Year

Employer Name
Company Name
Address
City, State Zip

If you don't know the contact name of the person you're writing to, try calling the employer and asking directly, "To whom should I address my cover letter?"
Personalizing the letter is always a plus!

Dear Employer Name,

The first portion of the cover letter is an introduction. In this paragraph you should include how you were made aware of the position opening and how it pertains to you. You might have been referred to this company or position by a friend or relative. Maybe you found the position posting online or in a newspaper. Also in this paragraph you should include why you are writing. Tell them that you would like your resume and application materials submitted for consideration.

The second portion of the cover letter is the sales pitch! This is where you provide all the necessary information about yourself that will get the employer interested in reading your resume. Use examples from your resume to provide evidence of the skill sets and qualifications you possess and include reference to the required or preferred qualifications as listed in the job posting. Don't repeat your resume here; instead direct them to read it. This second section of the cover letter is usually one or two paragraphs at most.

The third portion of the cover letter is the logistical "wrap up" portion. Thank the employer for reading your information and provide a request for further contact. Include your contact information or a reference to where your contact information is located.

Sincerely,

Don't forget to sign your own cover letter to demonstrate its validity.

Your Name

Enclosure(s)

Since you don't staple or paperclip your professional documents, the word "Enclosure(s)" serves as a reminder to the reader that there are other documents that go with this letter. This isn't completely necessary but could be helpful.

THE RESUME: An Introduction to You

The Basics:

There is no *right way* to create a resume, but there are strategies provided in this guidebook to promote your abilities and to catch a reader's attention. Your resume should be formatted in a way that connects with your audience and targeted experience (job posting or graduate program) while reflecting you as an individual. Always be truthful and ethical in your self-representation.

One type of resume traditionally used within the academic community is the curriculum vitae (CV), which features teaching and research experience and a comprehensive list of publications, presentations and related activities. CVs are generally not used for undergraduate degrees, but rather for terminal degrees. For help in writing a CV, see the *Curriculum Vitae Handbook* at the ACCEL library.

We Suggest You Begin Here:

- Open a new word document. Avoid using resume templates which are too generic and don't allow you to easily update and make changes as you edit and add new experiences.
- Set all four margins to about .75" (or up to 1") wide so the "blank white space" in the document is minimized and the document has a "frame" for the reader to hold onto and write notes in.
- Set your font to about 11pt Times New Roman or 10pt Arial (or larger). Anything much smaller will be difficult for your reader to read.
- Open the "header/footer" and insert your name at the very top in a larger font (16-24point), with contact information. Include both your permanent and school addresses, one telephone number and one email address.
- Within the document, create the headings that you want to include in the order of importance (i.e. Education, Related Experience, Leadership)
- Under the headings, list your job title, company, location, and dates of related experiences. These experiences should be in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first). Use the "tab" key to align information rather than the uneven spacing of the "space" key.
- Create bullet points under each experience to describe what you accomplished and completed. Begin each of these phrases with an 'action verb' (there is no need to end with a "." as these are not complete sentences).

Additional Tips:

- Undergraduate experiences should fit on one page; if there are two pages (for pre-professional graduate school resumes) both pages should be completely filled (no half pages).
- Use somewhat varied text size and structure (bold, italics, underline) to separate headings and sub-headings, but keep formatting simple to avoid loss in electronic transfer.
- Write out words – avoid using personal pronouns or abbreviations, except for states (PA) and GPA.
- Begin each word in your thesis title with a capital letter.
- Use bold or underline separately, not together.
- Avoid using more than two font sizes or types in your document.
- Keep sentences short; begin with varied action verbs.
- Do both a "spell check" and a "grammar check;" Proofread, Proofread, Proofread.
- If mailed or submitted in person, print your resume on high quality bond paper ('24-pound' paper is available at the Print Shop and Allegheny Bookstore).
- If the experience is ongoing, use the present tense of the verb (Cooperate...). If it's happened in the past, use the past tense of the action verb (Organized...).
- Present your documents in this order: Cover Letter, Resume, Reference Page – do not staple or clip.
- If submitting via email, save documents as .pdf files and attach into the email. The body of the email should state that the documents are attached and offer an alternative format if necessary.

ACTION WORDS

The following is a list of action words to use in your resume. These words are action-oriented and represent skill areas you may have that would be beneficial to the prospective employer. Use the verb tense which best reflects your experience – if it happened in the past, use past tense; if it's current, use present tense.

Accomplished	Corresponded	Formulated	Monitored	Replaced
Accelerated	Counseled	Forwarded	Motivated	Reported
Achieved	Created	Founded	Navigated	Represented
Acted	Deferred	Fostered	Negotiated	Researched
Activated	Defined	Gathered	Observed	Resolved
Adapted	Delegated	Generated	Obtained	Responded
Adjusted	Delivered	Governed	Operated	Responsible for
Administered	Demonstrated	Guided	Organized	Restructured
Addressed	Designed	Handled	Originated	Retrieved
Adopted	Detailed	Headed	Oversaw	Reviewed
Advertised	Detected	Helped	Painted	Revised
Advised	Determined	Hired	Participated	Rewrote
Aligned	Developed	Identified	Perfected	Saved
Analyzed	Devised	Illustrated	Performed	Scheduled
Anticipated	Diagnosed	Implemented	Persuaded	Selected
Applied	Directed	Improved	Photograph	Served
Appraised	Discovered	Improvised	Piloted	Sewed
Arbitrated	Dispensed	Increased	Pioneered	Shaped
Arranged	Displayed	Indexed	Planned	Simplified
Ascertain	Disposed	Indoctrinated	Played	Sketched
Assembled	Disproved	Influenced	Predicted	Sold
Assessed	Dissected	Informed	Prepared	Solved
Assisted	Distributed	Initiated	Prescribed	Sorted
Attained	Diverted	Innovated	Presented	Sparked
Audited	Drafted	Inspected	Preserved	Specified
Bargained	Dramatized	Inspired	Presided	Spoke
Budgeted	Drew	Installed	Printed	Stimulated
Built	Drove	Instituted	Processed	Strengthened
Calculated	Edited	Instructed	Produced	Studied
Calibrated	Educated	Instrumented	Proficient at	Suggested
Catalogued	Effected	Integrated	Programmed	Summarized
Chaired	Electrified	Interpreted	Projected	Supervised
Changed	Eliminated	Intervened	Promoted	Supplied
Charted	Enforced	Interviewed	Proposed	Surveyed
Classified	Enlarged	Introduced	Protected	Synthesized
Coached	Entertained	Invented	Provided	Systematized
Collected	Established	Inventoried	Publicized	Tabulated
Communicated	Estimated	Investigated	Purchased	Talked
Complied	Evaluated	Judged	Quoted	Taught
Completed	Examined	Launched	Raised	Tended
Composed	Exhibited	Lead	Reasoned	Tested
Computed	Expanded	Lectured	Received	Timed
Conceived	Expedited	Located	Recommended	Trained
Conceptualization	Explained	Logged	Reconciled	Transcribed
Conciliated	Explored	Maintained	Recorded	Transferred
Conducted	Expressed	Managed	Recruited	Translated
Confronted	Extracted	Mapped	Reduced	Transmitted
Conserve	Fabricated	Marketed	Reinforced	Treated
Consolidated	Facilitated	Mastered	Revised	Tutored
Constructed	Familiarized	Measured	Referred	Unified
Consulted	Filed	Mediated	Rehabilitated	Upgraded
Contracted	Filtered	Mentored	Rendered	Updated
Controlled	Figured	Modeled	Reorganized	Vitalized
Coordinated	Fixed	Modified	Repaired	Wrote

Informational/Example Resume

Your Name

Permanent Address: 1 Franklin Street, Hometown, State 16335
Campus Address: 520 North Main Street, Box 37, Meadville, PA 16335
email@allegheny.edu
814-332-2381

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science or Art – department May 2013
Allegheny College, Meadville, PA GPA: #.##/4.0
Minor: department

Title of Senior Thesis: brief description

Study Abroad and Experiential Learning Seminars:

- Title of seminar – Destination City, Country – Dates: Brief description of learning
- Experiential Learning Seminar – Querétaro, México – Spring 2011: Three week immersion in Mexican culture and language, stayed with Mexican host family, served local community as English-language teacher, earned four academic credit hours

Academic Honors:

- Title – Brief explanation of what was involved Dates
- Dean's List (Alden Scholar) – 6 consecutive semesters

Relevant Courses:

- Title of Course – Brief explanation of what was involved Dates
- Methods of Research Fall 2011

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Job Title Company Name, City, State Dates

- Action words start your phrases to qualify and quantify your accomplishments
- Action words describe your major responsibilities and skills gained that directly relate to skills and knowledge necessary for the position
- Action words should always begin these bullet points to enhance impact and grab attention
- Use bullets or dashes that are visually appealing

Research Intern U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington DC Summer 2011

- Provided research and administrative support to Service Center Operations and Office of Citizenship
- Evaluated and made recommendations to revise the application for permanent residency (I-485)

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Job Title Company Name, City, State Dates

- Action words should be varied to display a variety of skills
- Action words will make these powerful statements

Server Julian's Casual Dining, Meadville, PA May-August 2010

- Maintained cleanliness of restaurant to comply with customer requests and expectations
- Served customers, ran cash register, bussed tables

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and AFFILIATIONS

Title of Conference or Organization Dates
Collegiate Leadership Conference (CLC) August 2010

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Captain Women's Lacrosse, Allegheny College 2010-2013

LEADERSHIP and SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Your Title	Name of Organization, Place	Dates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action word to describe what you did as a member of this organization• Action word could relate to your involvement in student professional associations/clubs, intramural sports, volunteering, and community service	

President	Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honorary, Allegheny College	Spring-Fall 2010
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- Managed weekly meetings with about 25 student members
- Collected dues paid by members on a yearly basis
- Collaborated with additional members to achieve maximum participation and development of student members through community service projects

SKILLS

Certifications: CPR, First Aid

Computer: *Microsoft Office 97-2003*: Word, Excel, Power Point, Publisher; Adobe

Language: English (fluent), Spanish (fluent), Latin (reading, listening)

Personal: Listening, Public Speaking, Enthusiastic, Creative

REFERENCES

Article. First Last Name

Title of Job, Location

Address

Contact Phone

Email

Article. First Last Name

Title of Job, Location

Address

Contact Phone

Email

Dr. First M. Last

Psychology Professor, Allegheny College

520 North Main Street, Meadville, PA

814-332-2381

FLast@Allegheny.edu

Example Grad School Resume

Your Name

Campus Address:
Box 37, Allegheny College
Meadville, PA 16335

814-332-2381
email@allegheny.edu

Permanent Address:
520 North Main Street
Meadville, PA 16335

Education

Bachelor of Science - Biology

Allegheny College, Meadville, PA

GPA: 3.26/4.0

Minor: Psychology

May 2012

Honors

- ◆ Member of National Biological Science Honor Society, Beta Beta Beta 2009-Present
- ◆ Alden Scholar (Dean's List) 2010-2011

Experience

Independent Senior Thesis, Meadville, PA

Fall 2011-Spring 2012

Allegheny College Biology Department

- ◆ Determined the localization of gravity response initiation and the defect in auxin mechanism of auxin-resistant mutants of *Nicotiana plumbaginifolia*
- ◆ Determined the effects of auxin on gene expression
- ◆ Wrote an 80-page paper and defended it orally to a committee

Research Assistant in the laboratory of Dr. Fred Sack, Columbus, OH

Summer 2011

The Ohio State University Plant Biology Department

- ◆ Collected data for the characterization of sepals and hypocotyls of *Arabidopsis* mutant with altered stomata phenotypes with the use of microscopy and statistical analysis of phenotypic differences
- ◆ Assisted in characterization of GFP expression in transgenic *Arabidopsis* mutants
- ◆ Responsible for genetic transformation of *Arabidopsis*, maintenance of greenhouse plant collection, screening of transgenic plants, preparation of media

Research Assistant in the laboratory of Dr. Catharina Coenen, Meadville, PA

Summer 2010-Present

Allegheny College Biology Department

- ◆ Assisted with analysis of gravitropic responses of *Nicotiana plumbaginifolia*
- ◆ Responsible for maintenance of greenhouse plant collection, screening of transgenic plants, preparation of media, maintenance of general lab, supervision of younger student

Teaching Assistant in the laboratory of Dr. Susan Rankin, Meadville, PA

Spring 2010

Allegheny College Biology Department

- ◆ Plant Physiology - Conducted laboratory prep work, student assistance, and taxonomic instruction

Leadership and Activities

- ◆ Secretary, Beta Beta Beta Spring 2011-Present
- ◆ Orientation Leader, Allegheny College Community Fall 2010, Fall 2011
- ◆ Freshman Seminar Assistant, Allegheny College Fall 2010
- ◆ Volunteer, Humane Society and After-school Tutoring Programs Fall 2009-Spring 2010

Use the same header as your resume so that these pages appear to go together.

Your Name

Permanent Address: 1 Franklin Street, Hometown, State 16335
Campus Address: 520 North Main Street, Box 37, Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335
email@allegheny.edu
814-332-2381

Organic Chemistry Professor, Academic Advisor, Organic Workshop Supervisor

Dr. S. Shaun Murphree
Department of Chemistry
Allegheny College
520 North Main Street
Meadville, PA 16335

T: 814 332 5358
F: 814 332 2789
smurphre@allegheny.edu

Informational/Example Reference Page

You should have about 3-5 professional references, which could include your professors, academic advisors, or job/internship supervisors.

German Professor, Academic Advisor

Dr. Jochen Richter
Department of Modern and Classical Languages
Allegheny College
520 North Main Street
Meadville, PA 16335

T: 814 332 2327
F: 814 337 4445
jochen.richter@allegheny.edu

It is courteous to ask your references in advance of placing them on this page if they are able to serve as a positive reference for you. Give your references a copy of your updated resume and keep them informed of the opportunities for which you'll be applying.

Supervisor at Summer Internship

Dr. Kerstin Weissenbach
Research, Development, Technical Services Silanes
Degussa GmbH
Untere Kanalstrasse 3
79618 Rheinfelden
Germany

T: 011 49 7623 91 8131
F: 011 49 7623 91 68338
kerstin.weissenbach@degussa.com

Provide any necessary notes with your references to help make the connection easy and smooth for both parties.

Due to the time difference and her schedule, Dr. Weissenbach is best reached by email. Phone calls should be made 3-11 a.m. EST. She is able to communicate fluently in German and English.

THE THANK YOU: Sending a Positive Message

Informational/Example Thank You Letter

Your Name (optional)
Address
City, State Zip

Month Day, Year

Employer's Name
Company's Name
Address
City, State Zip

Write directly to the person you met. If you interviewed with a panel, you could write one letter to the chair of the interview committee and ask that your appreciation be shared with the group.

Dear Employer,

The first portion of the thank you letter expresses your appreciation of the time/energy of the individual(s) you met with or talked with over the phone. In this paragraph you should include specifics about what you appreciated in your conversation or meeting.

The second portion of the thank you letter reinforces your interest in the position and highlights more specific information about how you may fit into this position. This may be in regard to specifics of the job or of the personality/culture of the company/employer. You should include a few examples of your connection and potential areas of contribution.

The third portion of the thank you letter restates your interest/disinterest in this position. If you decide you are no longer interested in this position your letter should still reflect professionalism and appreciation, though it may be much shorter.

Sincerely,

Don't forget to sign your thank you letter.

Your Name