

## NOTES FOR COVER LETTER/RESUME DISCUSSION

### COVER LETTERS AND RESUMES

A resume (or curriculum vita) is a brief summary of your abilities, education, experience, and skills. Its main task is to convince prospective employers to contact you for an interview. Resumes are used for most jobs and are generally 1-2 pages. Curriculum vitae are used in academics and can be longer although 2 pages should be sufficient at this stage of your career. A cover letter should generally be a single page that summarizes the most important aspects of your education and experience, and lets the employer know where and when you can be contacted for an interview. The cover letter should be brief and formally written (even if sent by e-mail).

#### General recommendations:

- Tailor your resume to the target audience. If you are posting it on a web site or sending it to multiple employers then you may want to make it more general. But, in most cases you should highlight the skills you have that fit the specific job for which you are applying.
- Make your resume concise and easy to read. Employers often are skimming through hundreds of resumes so you want them to get the important points quickly.
- Before you start writing your resume make a list of your skills and what experiences (jobs, internships, volunteer positions) you have done that demonstrate your skills.
- Try to appear confident, but not aggressive or arrogant. Do not exaggerate your skills.
- Use spell check and have somebody else proof your resume.
- If you are sending your resume as an attachment make sure to name it clearly (i.e. "Holl-resume", not just "resume")

**Resume format** (note: information modified from guidelines at [www.JobWeb.com](http://www.JobWeb.com)). Please also see guidelines from the UCSC Career Center - <http://www2.ucsc.edu/careers/student/resume.html>

1. All your contact information should go at the top of your resume.
  - Avoid nicknames and choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.
  - Use a permanent address and telephone number.
  - Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions.
2. You can include an objective or summary statement that tells employers the sort of work you are hoping to do that is targeted to the specific job.
3. List your post-secondary education in reverse-chronological order.
  - Include your degree (A.S., B.S., B.A., etc.), major, institution attended, minor/concentration, and GPA (if you have one).
  - Mention academic honors.
  - You can include a short list of relevant courses that illustrate skills requested by the job.
4. Briefly give the employer an overview of your work experience that has taught you skills.
  - Use action words to describe your job duties.
  - You can either organize your work experience in reverse chronological order (most recent position first) or functional (organized by skills) format.
  - Include: title of position, name of organization, location of work (town, state), dates of employment, and describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements.
5. You may want to add additional skills that are not demonstrated by your education or former positions (e.g. leadership experience in volunteer organizations, foreign language abilities)

6. You can either submit a list of references or note that they are available upon request.

- Make sure to ask people if they are willing to serve as references and able to give you a good reference before you give their names.

7. For a curriculum vita you should list presentations and publications.

8. General layout tips:

- Use white or off-white paper.
- Use 8-1/2- x 11-inch paper.
- Print on one side of the paper.
- Use a font size of 11 or 12 points.
- Use a single, nondecorative typefaces.
- NO typos
- Repetition of words is kept to a minimum
- Capitalization, punctuation, font, and date formats are consistent
- Margins and line spacing keep the page from looking too crowded
- No right justification

**Cover letter format** – For more details and examples see

<http://www2.ucsc.edu/careers/student/coverltr.html>

1. Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and how you heard of the opening or organization.

2. Middle paragraph: Explain why are interested in this job and/or employer, highlight your most relevant skills (do not reiterate the entire resume). Be clear, concise, and confident; remember that the employer will view this as an example of your writing skills.

3. Closing paragraph: Refer the reader to the enclosed resume and state where and when you can be contacted for an interview.

### **Other resources and samples of resumes**

UCSC Career Center - <http://www2.ucsc.edu/careers/student/resumecoverltr.html>

Jobweb.com <http://www.jobweb.com> - [Sample resumes](#)

Jobstar.com <http://jobstar.org> – [Samples resumes](#)

Purdue University Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResumeW/index.html>

### *How to Ask a Faculty Member for a Letter of Recommendation*

- Ask at least one month before your deadline.
- Let faculty know to what program you are applying, why, and your ultimate career goals. Are there special selection/admission criteria for the program/scholarship/etc.?
- Provide, preferably in **one** package, whether electronic or hard copy:
  - θ Copies of evaluations from **all** of your UCSC classes, including those taken with your letter-writer. Also, indicate in what capacity you are known to the faculty (course taken? internship or independent study? research topic?)
  - θ A copy of your draft statement of purpose, as well as your resume or curriculum vitae. Also, indicate your particular qualifications/strong points for the program/scholarship to which you are applying.
  - θ Stamped, addressed envelopes
  - θ **Make sure you've clearly indicated the deadline and destination for the letter(s).**

Ask the faculty if there are additional items needed.

- If the recommendation is to go on a pre-printed form, make sure you've completed your portion.
- If you've been out of school for more than a couple of years, reconnect with the faculty by phone, email or in person: refresh their memory about who you are, then ask if they are willing to write a letter for you.
- Note that some faculty may ask you to visit them to discuss your application or letter.
- About confidentiality: You don't have to, but it is generally in your best interest to agree to the letter being confidential. If you are uncomfortable with this, or concerned that the letter will be positive, discuss it with the faculty member.

#### *Please remember*

- It is **in your interest** to provide as much information as possible -- the more informed your letter-writer is, the better your letter will be.
- And please keep in mind that the faculty member is doing you a favor -- be considerate by allowing plenty of time and providing all the necessary information.