

RÉSUMÉS, COVER LETTERS & REFERENCES

TIPS & STRATEGIES



CAREER AND
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

RÉSUMÉ WRITING: GETTING STARTED

First impressions count! Your résumé may be the first impression made to a potential employer or person in your network. It is a key marketing tool. Employers will spend **only 10-15 seconds** reviewing your résumé, so you must be clear and concise. The goal is to accurately show the “fit” between your skills and experiences and what the employer needs (look closely at the position description).

STEP 1

Before writing your résumé, it is critical for you to answer the following questions:

- **Who will be reading my résumé?**
- **What skill sets and qualifications are they looking for in my résumé?**
- **How can I demonstrate, through specific examples, my skills and experiences?**

STEP 2

Tailor your résumé for each position/company to which you are applying. Conduct thorough research to understand what is important to them and what value you offer them.

STEP 3

Employers are interested in your transferable skills. These are skills you can carry, or transfer, with you to various jobs. Develop a list of your accomplishments, skills, and personality characteristics. This will help you match your skills and abilities to the position requirements. Transferable skills demonstrate to the employer your range of abilities. Examples include:

Communication (verbal and written)
Critical thinking
Problem-solving
Leadership

Coordinating with Others
Multicultural Understanding
Creativity
Emotional Intelligence

Try the following exercise to document your skills while providing examples that showcase where you demonstrated these qualifications.

Skills desired by target employer/industry/graduate school	Specific examples from your experience
<i>Example: attention to detail.</i>	<i>Example: Demonstrated strong attention to detail while revising, editing and distributing a leadership manual for service trip members.</i>

CHECKLIST FOR AN EFFECTIVE RÉSUMÉ

- Do **NOT** use a template. Start with a blank document. This will be easiest to customize and edit.
- Font – Calibri or Cambria; nothing smaller than 10-point font and .5 inch margins.
- Length - one page, typically. *Talk with a career coach if you're having difficulty keeping it to one page.*
- Demonstrate your **FIT** for the position and employer's needs.
- Showcase your strengths and transferable skills as they relate to the position.
 - Target the most **relevant** and **transferable skills and accomplishments**; incorporate experiences such as internships, study abroad or international travel, research, part-time jobs, volunteer work, involvement in student or community organizations, leadership experience, significant class projects, etc.
- Organize information well with bullet points under each experience for easy scanning and visual appeal.
- Use consistent font and grammar.
- Error-free; contains correct grammar and punctuation.
- Printed on quality résumé paper and saved as a PDF for emailing.
- Presents a professional image.
- Uses compelling **action verbs** and “buzz words” (*See appendix for sample list of verbs*).
- Displays action-oriented and results-oriented bullet points under each experience.
- Avoids personal pronouns and lengthy paragraphs.
- Proofread it and ask several individuals, including a career coach in the CPDC, to do so.
- NO high school information, unless you are a first-year student OR you're applying for a job at your former high school.
- NO references; this should be a separate document.
- Further help may be found at: <https://www.udacity.com/courses/career>

Bring your résumé to the Career and Professional Development Center during **Drop-In Hours** to have it reviewed by a career coach! Check the CPDC's website for days/times!

SAMPLE - Internship Résumé

RACHEL KHAN

(717) 796-0000

rk1147@messiah.edu | rkhan@gmail.com | [linkedin.com/in/rachelkhan1](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachelkhan1)

OBJECTIVE To obtain a Biology Internship – Summer 2020

Make it simple, yet specific. Tell the employer which position you are applying

EDUCATION **Bachelor of Science, Biology**, Expected May 2021
Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA
GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

Employers want to see your GPA, if above 3.0

Shorten this list first, if you need room elsewhere

Relevant Coursework:

Molecular and Cellular Biology
Plant Form and Function

Genetics and Development
Ecology and Adaptation

RELATED EXPERIENCE **Research Assistant**
Messiah University, Department of Biology, Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

This area highlights work related to your objective stated above

Demonstrate your skill level through experiences

- Cataloged plant varieties across college property
- Photographed plants and uploaded to research website
- Plotted distribution of plants using ArborCAD and observed links to local wildlife

Field Researcher

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Summer 2018

- Documented rare, threatened, and endangered plants in Lycoming and Tioga counties
- Created executive summary of findings which was submitted for use on department website

SKILLS Minitab – intermediate level
Spanish – intermediate level

This should include language or specialized computer skills

WORK EXPERIENCE **Sales Associate** 6/17- Present
Banana Republic / Camp Hill, PA

If you have no related experience, move this section up and expand it

- Manage multiple tasks, including monitoring sales, ordering and stocking of product
- Provide quality customer service to approximately 45 people each day

ACTIVITIES Leader, Earthkeepers Club
Volunteer, Special Olympics

SAMPLE - Job Résumé

FLEX FALCON

ffalcon@messiah.edu | 555.555.5555 | linkedin.com/in/flexfalcon

- EDUCATION** **Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration**, May 2020
Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA
- Cumulative GPA: 3.5/4.0; Major GPA: 3.8/4.0
 - Financed
 - 70% of college expenses through summer jobs and HOPE Scholarship

- RELATED EXPERIENCE**
- Financial Network Services**, Sydney, Australia, May-August 2019
System Administrator Assistant
- Used IBM Power9 for development and testing in various geographical regions
 - Led team of four to configure notebooks and install multilingual software for overseas consultants
 - Created user accounts and set permissions and passwords
 - Performed hardware maintenance, technical support, and software research

- PROJECT EXPERIENCE**
- Mechanicsburg Area Humane Society**, Mechanicsburg, PA, January 2018-May 2018
MIST 4620: Systems Analysis and Design
- Served as project team leader and developed a database to track the adoption of animals
 - Designed website that allowed viewing of specific animals for adoption
 - Used Visual Basic to set up the user interface
 - Incorporated Java, HTML, and Flash interactive website (www.aahumane.gov)

- ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**
- Student Government Association (SGA)**, Messiah University, September 2017-May 2018
Treasurer
- Managed a budget of \$10,000 and allocated funds as needed
 - Handled all transactions and purchases while ensuring proper account balances

- Self-Employed Lawn Service**, New Cumberland, PA, Summers 2015-2017
Lawn Maintenance
- Established and retained customer base in local neighborhoods
 - Gained experience establishing a small business

- COMPUTER SKILLS**
- **Programming Languages:** Visual Basic, SQL, C, C++, Java, Scala
 - **Operating Systems:** Windows 10, Apple Mojave
 - **Database:** SQL, MS Access, Oracle
 - **Internet:** ASP, VB Script, JavaScript, HTML, XML, ASP.NET, Java Server, Perl
 - **Software:** JCL, MS Visio, MS Excel, MS Word

- HONORS/ACTIVITIES**
- Boyer Scholar Recipient – recognizes academic accomplishments, distinguished leadership, and service
 - Member of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)

SAMPLE - Job Résumé

STARRY BOYER

Sboyer@messiah.edu | 555.555.5555 | linkedin.com/in/starry.boyer

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Politics (Honors Program), Expected May 2020
Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA GPA: **3.7/4.0**

Certificate in Personal and Organizational Leadership

- Participant in highly selective, individualized two-year leadership development program including academic courses, personal assessments, externships, team building, and community service

Semester Abroad: University of Barcelona, Spain, Fall 2017

- Immersed in intensive Spanish language program while also living with a Spanish-speaking host family resulting in enhanced language proficiency
- Demonstrated flexibility and interpersonal competence within a diverse context by interacting daily with international students representing 15 countries
- Exhibited self-initiative and organizational skills while coordinating a group trip to neighboring countries
- Volunteered at a local shelter to learn more about social challenges facing the local people as well as business practices in a non-profit setting

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Marketing Consultant, ABC Company, Harrisburg, PA, August 2018 – Present

- Analyze market investment trends in business and real estate
- Create strategic marketing plan for business-to-business and consumer marketing
- Manage external communications and lead consulting team project

Intern, The Population Institute, Washington, D.C., June – August 2018

- Conceptualized, created, and negotiated student scholarship program serving 15 students per year
- Managed public relations for World Population Day Symposium with international press, NGOs, and government employees
- Successfully wrote grant proposals and worked to improve effectiveness of direct mail fundraising
- Advocated for issue awareness in legislative decisions with Congress and NGOs

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Resident Assistant, Messiah University Residence Life, Mechanicsburg, PA, August 2018 – May 2019

- Designed, implemented, and evaluated educational programs for up to 100 residents
- Extensively utilized communication and counseling skills in supervising 65 women in residence hall
- Responded to various crises in a building housing 200 residents
- Explained, interpreted, and enforced College housing policies
- Compiled an annual facility inventory and report

YMCA Camp Program, Carlisle, PA

Leadership Counselors Program, June – August 2017

- Developed leadership training curriculum to be used by 36 counselors
- Taught leadership lessons to groups of 5-15 children ages 10-15
- Managed cabin of 12 students

Head Counselor, June – August 2016

- Interviewed, hired, and trained 35 counselors
- Designed camp schedule; maintained order in daily activities involving 250+ campers

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Mentor, Harrisburg City Mentor Program, January – May 2018

SAMPLE - Job Résumé

LARSEN S. UNION

717-555-5555 | LUI440@MESSIAH.EDU | LINKEDIN.COM/IN/LARSENUNION

OBJECTIVE

To utilize my organizational, leadership and teamwork skills in community development through a non-profit

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Minor in Peace and Conflict Studies, Expected May 2020

Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA

GGPA: 3.8/4.0

Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, January – May 2018

- Engaged in intensive Thai Language and Culture Study

Messiah College SALT House, Harrisburg, PA, August – December 2017

- Developed skills in community engagement through education and service within an urban context

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Student Director

Agapé Center Outreach Teams, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, PA, September 2019 – May 2020

- Coordinated and led 13-person team in organizing local service opportunities
- Managed the Outreach Team budget of approximately \$6,500 in funds
- Communicated with student body about outreach activities through email, print, and various social media sites

Delegate Member

NGO Committee on the Status of Women 2020, New York City, NY, February 2019

- Attended the conference with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom delegation

Development Intern

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia, PA, September – December 2018

- Assisted in fundraising work and development for national campaigns
- Organized lodging arrangements for the fall board meeting
- Attended the United Nations Security Council meeting on Resolution 1325

GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Thailand, May – August 2018

- Interned for eight weeks at Chiang Mai Home for Boys and assisted staff in English translation
- Cared for children of migrant workers for six weeks at Burmese Childcare Center

Bolivia, May - August 2017

- Cared for young girls at Bolivian Youth Ministries for five weeks

Mexico, December – June 2016

- Worked at a home for children, facilitated youth activities, and built homes

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Food Service Worker, Messiah University Dining Services, Mechanicsburg, PA, August 2016 – May 2017

Planning Team Member, Unlearn Week, January – May 2019

Member, Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society, April 2018 – Present

Student Member, Student Government Association Forum, Fall 2018 and 2019

COVER LETTERS

Always send a customized cover letter with your résumé. An effective cover letter will tell the reader why you're interested in the position and highlights your experiences which meet the organization's needs. The letter should demonstrate excellent written communication skills.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- Do not exceed one page in length.
- Do your best to address the letter to a specific individual as opposed to "To Whom It May Concern." You may need to contact Human Resources to request this information.
- Avoid starting every sentence with "I"
- Focus on what you have to contribute to the employer – not what you hope to get from them
- Refer to specific experiences that will grab the reader's attention
- Synthesize and provide examples of your most significant and relevant skills
- The core emphasis of the letter is stating why you're a good fit and how you can contribute to the company
- When emphasizing your "fit" for the position, demonstrate your knowledge of the company
- Avoid clichés or slang
- No flowery language; stick to three, or at most four, concise paragraphs (see the following samples)
- Watch for spelling and grammar errors
- If being sent hard copy: always sign the letter; use the same high-quality paper that you did for your résumé; never staple your résumé and cover letter, and mail résumé and cover letter in a large envelope to avoid folding.

EMAILING A COVER LETTER

The cover letter is often your first introduction to a prospective employer. You should use the body of the email for your cover letter and attach your résumé saved as a PDF. Keep in mind the focus of your cover letter should demonstrate:

- 1) your written communication skills
- 2) outline how your skills and experience match the employer's needs and
- 3) express your interest and enthusiasm for the position.

Compose a new cover email for each organization to which you are applying – one that responds specifically to the organization's needs. Do not use a generic cover email to send to several, or many, employers. Most cover letters follow a general format, as follows, with three brief paragraphs:

Subject line of the email should be descriptive: "Résumé - Spring Justice Internship - Lauren Bacall"

Dear _____: (Do NOT use "hey" or "Hi". Always use a title – e.g., "Ms. Chopra" or "Dr. Tan"; never use their first name! You may use something like "Dear HR Director" or "Dear Search Committee")

(First paragraph) Explain why you are writing and indicate the internship position for which you are applying. Tell how you heard about the position and the organization. Mention something you appreciate about the organization, such as their emphasis on community involvement or a certain product or service. The first paragraph should catch the attention of the reader and create interest in you as a potential candidate.

(Second paragraph) Emphasize your skills and qualifications, and demonstrate how your experience meets the requirements for the position. Do not merely repeat the information listed on your résumé, but expand on the experiences that are most relevant to this particular employer. Outline the skills you will bring to the specific position and communicate how you think you will contribute to the organization.

(Third paragraph) Refer the reader to the documents you have attached, such as your résumé, application, transcripts, etc. Close the email by asking for an opportunity to meet to discuss the internship position. Take the initiative and note that you plan to follow up with a phone call. Thank the reader for taking the time to consider your résumé.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name

Phone

Email

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

One University Avenue
P.O. Box 5555
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

February 2, 2019

Ms. Fran Smith, RN
Director of Nursing
Children's Hospital Boston
P.O. Box 549252
Waltham, MA 02454

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing to express my interest in a position as a registered nurse at your hospital. In May 2019, I will graduate from Messiah University with a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. As one of the top pediatric hospitals in the United States, your hospital offers the opportunity to further develop my knowledge and skills, and to grow as a professional pediatric nurse. I would strongly consider any staff nursing positions that may be available.

As indicated in my résumé, I have worked with children in a variety of settings. These experiences, along with an excellent clinical rotation at Hershey Medical Center, have provided a broad foundational understanding regarding the issues of child health. In addition to my nursing skills, I will bring strong leadership and organizational skills gained through my extra-curricular involvement. Advisors, supervisors, and clinical instructors have commented on my ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously while maintaining a level of enthusiasm for the project at hand. I would be honored to join Children's Hospital Boston as a highly functional team member and would be able to contribute to the care of your patients in the manner you so clearly require of your staff.

Thank you for giving my résumé careful consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 717-555-1212 or via email at doe@internetprovider.com if you have any questions.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Enclosure: Résumé

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

632 Job Search Lane
New York, NY 55555

January 12, 2019

Ms. Wanda Miller
Vice President of Operations and Federal Relations
The Capitol Association for International Affairs
9999 Federal Street
Washington, D.C. 14444-0003

Dear Ms. Miller:

I am writing in response to the email from the International Affairs Organization regarding summer internships with The Capitol Association for International Affairs. As a junior Politics major at Messiah University, I am very interested in applying my academic experience while gaining relevant skills and experience through an internship. Additionally, I would like to explore career options in the field of international affairs, cultivate professional networks, and develop greater awareness of global issues. I believe the combination of my education, along with my campus leadership roles make me a strong candidate for this internship.

As the Fundraising Committee Representative for Student Life, I have demonstrated the ability to operate in a complex environment. My duties consisted of marketing fundraising opportunities to members and managing a budget of \$15,000. This responsibility has taught me careful attention to detail as well as working successfully as part of a team. I hope to have the opportunity to apply these skills and experience as an intern at The Capitol Association for International Affairs.

I am a team player and an active and enthusiastic contributor in all of my endeavors. If given the opportunity, I would be committed to contributing my fluency in French and Spanish, leadership and communication skills, and positive attitude to meet the needs and goals of your organization.

Thank you for giving my application careful consideration. I look forward to hearing from you regarding potential internship opportunities. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at mwilliams@jobsearch.net or 555.555.5555.

Kind regards,

Maya Williams

Enclosure(s)

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #3

85 Unemployed Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17777

October 1, 2018

Ms. Charlotte Johnson
Director of College Recruiting
City Textiles Company
987 Locust Lane
Boston, MA 55555

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am writing to inquire about professional sales opportunities at City Textiles Company. As someone with a genuine interest and respect for the apparel industry, I am very eager to learn about career opportunities with your prestigious organization. My business education, work experience, and strong interpersonal and persuasive skills have provided me with valuable skill sets which could be an asset to your organization.

With a Business Administration major and marketing minor, I have acquired excellent quantitative and analytical skills. In addition to my academic coursework, my internship with XYZ, Inc., and volunteer work with Children First have taught me valuable skills in time management, leadership, interpersonal communication, and self-directedness. During my internship with XYZ, Inc., I was required to meet strict deadlines, learn to be resourceful, and demonstrate flexibility in the midst of a fast-paced environment. These are skills that I know would be useful in a sales position with City Textiles Company.

Attached is my résumé which further details my experiences and qualifications. If any questions arise or you would like additional information, you may contact me at jfoster12@hotmail.com or 555.555.5555. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jack R. Foster

Enclosure

*This is known as a sample **letter of inquiry**. If no positions are publicly posted, you may want to send your application materials expressing your interest and what you have to offer.*

Jasmine Jobseeker

200 Seeking Employment Lane | Hireme, PA | 555-555-5555

givemeajob@zzz.com

REFERENCES

Dr. Winnie Pooh
Assistant Professor of Honeymaking
1000 Hundred Acre Wood
Makebelieve, PA 19999
555-555-5555
ilovehoney@zzz.com

Ms. Minnie Mouse
Social Director, Mickey Enterprises
999 Disney World Lane
Orlando, FL 00000
555-555-5555
whenyowishuponastar@zzz.com

Dr. Tinker Bell
Chair, Department of Fairy Sciences
1 Neverneverland Lane
Fairydust, PA 20000
555-555-5555
petespal@zzz.com

References are people who are willing to speak highly on your behalf to prospective employers.

Only submit references when asked; otherwise bring a hard copy along to your interview.

Be sure to communicate to all individuals who are serving as your references so that they are aware of the jobs to which you are applying. For more information on references, visit the Career & Professional Development Center's [website](#).

ACTION VERBS

FOR RÉSUMÉ S & LINKEDIN PROFILES

Management/ Leadership Skills

administered
analyzed
appointed
approved
assigned
attained
authorized
chaired
considered
consolidated
contracted
controlled
converted
coordinated
decided
delegated
developed
directed
eliminated
emphasized
enforced
enhanced
established
executed
generated
handled
headed
hired
hosted
improved
incorporated
increased
initiated
inspected
instituted
led
managed
merged
motivated
organized
originated
overhauled
oversaw

planned
presided
prioritized
produced
recommended
reorganized
replaced
restored
reviewed
scheduled
streamlined
strengthened
supervised
terminated

Communication/ People Skills

addressed
advertised
arbitrated
arranged
articulated
authored
clarified
collaborated
communicated
composed
condensed
conferred
consulted
contacted
conveyed
convinced
corresponded
debated
defined
described
developed
directed
discussed
drafted
edited
elicited
enlisted
explained

expressed
formulated
furnished
incorporated
influenced
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
involved
joined
judged
lectured
listened
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
outlined
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted
proposed
publicized
reconciled
recruited
referred
reinforced
reported
resolved
responded
solicited
specified
spoke
suggested
summarized
synthesized
translated
wrote

Research Skills

analyzed
clarified
collected

compared
conducted
critiqued
detected
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
explored
extracted
formulated
gathered
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
invented
investigated
located
measured
organized
researched
searched
solved
summarized
surveyed
systematized
tested

Technical Skills

adapted
assembled
built
calculated
computed
conserved
constructed
converted
debugged
designed
determined
developed
engineered
fabricated

fortified
installed
maintained
operated
overhauled
printed
programmed
rectified
regulated
remodeled
repaired
replaced
restored
solved
specialized
standardized
studied
upgraded
utilized

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
conducted
coordinated
critiqued
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
focused
guided
individualized
informed
instilled
instructed
motivated
persuaded
set goals
simulated
stimulated
taught
tested
trained
transmitted

tutored
**Financial/
Data Skills**
administered

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

Creative Skills

acted
adapted
began
combined
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
solved

Helping Skills

adapted
advocated
aided
answered
arranged
assessed
assisted
cared for
clarified
coached
collaborated
contributed
cooperated
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
encouraged
ensured
expedited
facilitated
familiarize
furthered
guided
helped
insured
intervened
motivated
provided
referred
rehabilitated
presented

resolved
simplified
supplied
supported
volunteered

Organization/ Detail Skills

approved
arranged
cataloged
categorized
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled
corresponded
distributed
executed
filed
generated
implemented
incorporated
inspected
logged
maintained
monitored
obtained
operated
ordered
organized
prepared
processed
provided
purchased
recorded
registered
reserved
responded
reviewed
routed
scheduled
screened
set up
submitted
supplied
standardized
systematized
updated

validated
verified

**More verbs for
Accomplishments**

achieved
completed
expanded
exceeded
improved
pioneered
reduced (losses)
resolved (issues)
restored
spearheaded
succeeded
surpassed
transformed
won

**Action verb list
credit: Wake Forest
University Office of
Personal and Career
Development*