

# Resumes and Cover Letters



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**Academic Success and Career Center**

# ELEMENTS OF A RESUME

## Heading

- Contact information: Your name, email address, phone number and LinkedIn profile URL. Do not provide information that employers have no legal right to such as age, sex, race, religion, marital -status, or sexual orientation.

**Example:** Madison Cougar  
[Madison.Cougar@wsu.edu](mailto:Madison.Cougar@wsu.edu)  
509.335.0000  
[Linkedin.com/madisoncougar](https://www.linkedin.com/in/madisoncougar)

## Skills Summary/Summary of Qualifications

- The skills summary tells the prospective employer your most sought -after skills, abilities, accomplishments, and attributes. This should be tailored to the position for which you are applying. Mirror key words in the job description.

## Education and Related Coursework

- Degrees earned
- Your major/minor areas of study
- College, city and state where located
- Month and year of graduation
- GPA/Class Rank (if above a 3.0).
- If you are a member of the honors college, on the Dean's List, attended any special programs, elective coursework, trainings, courses, or participated in study abroad, you can also list them in this section. List in reverse chronological order with most recent experience first.

**Example:** Washington State University                      Pullman, WA  
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology                      Expected May 2022  
GPA 3.5

## Related Work/Internship/Practicum Experience

- Position title, the organization's name, city and state where located, when and how long you worked there, and what you accomplished while you worked there. Don't just list, your responsibilities, write about what your unique skill set and personality enabled you to accomplish. Describe your experiences in a way that highlights on the skills & abilities acquired, how you contributed to a team, or how you went above and beyond. Quantify your descriptions (how many people you managed, how much money you handled, workload, etc.) when possible.

## Leadership

- Use this section to highlight any leadership roles you have held both in and out of school. This can include offices held, projects led, groups led, etc. Describe the skills you have as an effective leader. Quantify your accomplishments (number of people you led, number of projects you were in charge of, etc.) to demonstrate the scope of your responsibility.

## Professional Development/Certifications

- Highlight additional training and certificate actions relevant to the position. This includes conferences, workshops, and seminars attended, as well as certifications or licensure.

## Publications

- Use this section to list any abstracts or articles you have had published during your education.

## Honors/Awards

- List any honors, scholarships, honorary organizations and awards received (both academic and non-academic related).

## Clubs/Organizations

- List any clubs or organizations in which you are an active member. Describe your role and the length of time you were involved.

## Volunteer/Community Service

- List your role and contributions to various organizations within your community.

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## How to write the bullet points?

- **WHAT** - explain your responsibilities briefly.
- **HOW** - with action words describe your tasks, how you contributed to the team or what skill set and personality enabled you to complete them. (refer page 4)
- **RESULT** - how did it affect the organization or what you accomplished. (Quantify: how many people you were in charge of, how much money you handled, etc. and qualify accomplishments).

**\*The shorter, the more concise, the better.**

## GENERATE A LIST OF YOUR SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Employers want to know what you have achieved in past jobs to see how you can contribute to their organization. Use this page to compose your skills summary and related work sections with strong and detailed statements. Be specific and descriptive about your experience.

### Use the acronym **CAR** (Challenge/Context -Approach/Actions -Results):

**C**hallenge (or Context) - Consider the problems you have faced

**A**pproach (or Actions) - Your unique contribution

**R**esults - Benefits that you have imparted

### Ask the following questions to compose your own accomplishment statements:

What did you do that

- Was faster, better, less expensive?
- Increased membership/participation/sales?
- Saved your organization time, money, or eliminate waste?
- Identified and/or helped solve problems?
- Instituted any new methods, systems, or procedures?
- Suggested a new service, product, or project?
- Re-organized or improved an existing system?
- Maintained a consistently high level of performance?
- Demonstrated leadership skills and exhibit good team player skills?
- Achieved results with little or no supervision?
- Accomplished something others thought could not be done?
- Involved in coordinating an event or project?
- Required training another person?
- Acquired industry-specific knowledge?

### Important aspects of resume writing:

- Focus on starting your accomplishment statements with strong action verbs. These action words will provide powerful examples of your skills and experience.
  - DON'T: Jane Doe is an excellent wedding planner and never went over budget.
  - DO: Managed numerous small and large events, always staying within budget.
- Do not use complete sentences! The shorter, more concise, the better. Bullet points are preferred!
- Quantify as much as you can! How many, how much, how often? This helps you demonstrate your value to the company. Prove you can get the job done faster, better, or most cost effective.
- Remember to use present tense for current experience and past tense for prior experience.
- Always include start date and end date when describing past work experience.

### Examples: Key phrases for powerful resume statements

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- First-hand experience with a wide range of cultures.
- Skilled at developing rapport with all types of people.
- Able to resolve conflicts in a diplomatic manner.
- Effective working independently and as a member of a team.
- Highly motivated and goal oriented.
- Diplomatic and tactful with both professionals and nonprofessionals.
- Poised and competent as a professional representative.
- Enthusiastic, creative, and willing to assume increased responsibility.
- Effective in developing programs which reach goals.



## CHOOSE ACTION WORDS CAPTURING YOUR PAST CAREER EXPERIENCES

Action Words - Use powerful, skill-based action verbs to start bullet points on your resume.

Communication Skills		Management Skills	Clerical/Detailed Skills	Teaching skills
Addressed Corresponded Directed Drafted Enlisted Influenced Interpreted Mediated Moderated Motivated Negotiated Promoted Publicized	Consulted Translated Summarized Interacted Formulated Collaborated Officiated Proposed Participated Observed Reported Marketed Recruited	Administered Assigned Consolidated Coordinated Delegated Executed Improved Organized Oversaw Prioritized Produced Recommended Strengthened Supervised	Approved Arranged Classified Collected Compiled Dispatched Monitored Prepared Processed Purchased Recorded Retrieved Specified Validated	Adapted Advised Coached Communicated Developed Enabled Encouraged Evaluated Explained Informed Initiated Instructed Persuaded Stimulated Trained
Research skills		Technical skills		Helping skills
Collected Diagnosed Examined Extracted Identified Inspected Interpreted Interviewed Investigated Organized Reviewed Summarized Surveyed	Integrated Justified Reported Substantiated Tested Formulated Estimated Deciphered Detected Formulated Gathered Evaluated Systematized	Assembled Built Calculated Designed Engineered Fabricated Maintained Operated Overhauled Programmed Remodeled Repaired	Coded Applied Constructed Devised Installed Utilized Remodeled Replaced Transmitted Applied Solved Upgraded	Assessed Assisted Clarified Coached Counseled Demonstrated Diagnosed Educated Expedited Facilitated Familiarized Guided Referred Rehabilitated
Financial Skills		Creative skills		Accomplishments
Allocated Analyzed Appraised Audited Balanced Budgeted Calculated Computed Forecasted	Projected Researched Adjusted Compared Quantified Reduced Measured Devised Estimated Planned	Acted Created Designed Established Illustrated Instituted Integrated Introduced Originated Conceptualized	Performed Planned Revitalized Shaped Modeled Visualized Displayed Developed Composed Improvised	Accelerated Maximized Enhanced Pioneered Surpassed Achieved Boosted Transformed Succeeded Spearheaded Reduced (problems) Resolved

## NACE Career Readiness Competencies

Continuous research done by NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS shows that the following skills are preferred by employers more than the technical skills of potential employees.

**Incorporate these in the skills or work experience section of your Resume or in your cover letter.**

### Career & Self-Development



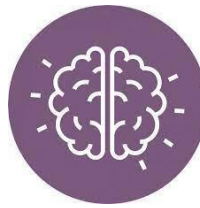
Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

### Communication



Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization

### Critical Thinking



Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information

### Equity & Inclusion



Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism

### Leadership



Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

### Professionalism



Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

### Teamwork



Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

### Technology



Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals

# CREATE A COVER LETTER SPECIFIC TO THE JOB COVER LETTER FORMAT

**Address**  
**City, ST Zip Code**  
**Date**

**Name**  
**Title**  
**Company/Organization Name**  
**Address**  
**City, ST Zip Code**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

## **Opening Paragraph:**

- What is your intent in writing this letter?
- What position are you applying for and how did you learn about it?

Briefly introduce yourself, your major, and the degree anticipated. If you are aware of a specific opening, refer to it. If you are not aware of a specific position, state your area of interest. This paragraph can also be used to refer to the individual who recommended that you contact the organization, or other factors that prompted you to write. If possible, convey why you are interested in the organization and anything you know about their product or service.

## **Second Paragraph:**

- What are your qualifications?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- What would you enjoy doing for them?
- Sell yourself and be brief. Whet the employer's appetite so that he/she will want to read your resume and schedule an interview.

Describe highlights from your background that would be of greatest interest to the organization. Focus on skills, activities, accomplishments, and past experience you can contribute to the organization and its work. If possible, demonstrate that you know something about the organization and industry/field. Use action verbs that describe relevant skills and expertise you can contribute. Mention specific knowledge you may have such as computer applications, foreign languages, lab techniques, writing and editing capabilities. You are attempting to create a match or "notion of fit" between the employer's hiring needs and your interests, experience, and skills.

## **Third Paragraph:**

- What is your plan of action?
- Do you want to follow up with a phone call or do you want them to contact you?

Close your letter by stating that you would like to discuss employment opportunities or other information with the individual and that you will call to follow up on your letter. This demonstrates your initiative and follow-through and will help you maintain some control of your efforts.

Other points that can be made in the last paragraph:

- Express your willingness to provide additional information
- State a specific time when you will follow up by phone or email
- Let them know if and when you are going to visit their area
- Thank the person receiving your letter for their time and interest

Most importantly, remember to address the cover letter to a person. If you do not have a name, call the department or human resources to find out to whom your letter should be addressed. As a last resort, address your letter to the personnel manager, hiring manager, or recruiting representative.

Sincerely,  
Signature,  
Your First Name and Last Name.

## **SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

NAME  
123 Anywhere Street  
Pullman, WA 99163  
509-123-4567  
stillnschool.wsu.edu

February 18, 200X

Dr. Mark Green  
Owner  
Reno Lights Clinic  
1234 Casino Road  
Reno, NV 99999

Dear Dr. Green:

As a current third year student at Washington State University, I am flourishing in the College of Nursing program. Before beginning senior clinical practicum in August, I am interested in returning to a clinical setting and would like the opportunity to visit your practice and discuss the possibility of either summer employment or a senior internship.

I am a well-rounded student, recognized on the Dean's List and active in many extracurricular activities and clubs. Throughout nursing school, I have experienced many opportunities that foster teamwork, leadership, diagnostic skills, and problem solving. My studies have included courses such as pharmacology, pathophysiology, anatomy and physiology, psychiatric and mental health, chronic illness in adults, and laboratory values and analysis. In addition to my curriculum, I developed and implemented a thesis project on the positive effect of exercise on insulin levels in severe diabetics. At the end of the project, I presented the successful results at the state nursing convention in Seattle, WA and to the College of Nursing at Washington State University.

My past clinical experience includes two multi- doctor practices in which I fulfilled certified nursing technician duties. Beyond medical knowledge, I gained a great appreciation for a sound staff, teamwork, and respect in the work place. These experiences have shaped my work ethic and my definition of a successful practice. I also have a wide variety of experience working with obese and diabetic populations. My future career interests reflect my diverse background.

I will be in Reno during the third week of March and would like the chance to introduce myself in person and visit your practice. I can be reached at your convenience through the contact information listed above. I will follow up with a phone call during the first week in March. Thank you for taking the time to look over my resume. I look forward to hearing from you soon and meeting with you in March.

Sincerely,

*Still N. School*