



OCS

RESUMES & COVER LETTERS



Undergraduate Resource Series

Office of Career Services | 54 Dunster Street
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www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu

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CREATE A STRONG RESUME

A resume is a brief, informative summary of your abilities, education, and experience. It should highlight your strongest assets and skills, and differentiate you from other candidates seeking similar positions. Although it alone will not get you a job or internship, a good resume is an important element toward obtaining an interview.

Tailor your resume to the type of position you are seeking. This does not mean that all of your work history must relate directly, but your resume should reflect the kind of skills the employer would value. Find additional guidance on resumes and cover letters, as well as resume samples, on the OCS website.

NEED HELP?

- **Attend a Resume Workshop.** Learn the nuts and bolts of getting started. See the OCS website for dates.
- **Come to drop-ins.** Every day from 1:00-4:00pm—get any career question answered and have someone look at your resume.
- **Look for industry specific resume review clinics.** Listed on the On-Campus Interviewing Calendar.

RESUME TIPS

RESUME LANGUAGE SHOULD BE:

- Specific rather than general
- Active rather than passive
- Written to express not impress
- Articulate rather than “flowery”
- Fact-based (quantify and qualify)
- Written for people who scan quickly

DON'T:

- Use personal pronouns (such as I)
- Abbreviate
- Use a narrative style
- Number or letter categories
- Use slang or colloquialisms
- Include a picture
- Include age or sex
- List references on resume
- Lead each line with a date

TOP 5 RESUME MISTAKES:

1. Spelling and grammar errors
2. Missing email and phone information
3. Using passive language instead of “action” words
4. Not well organized, concise, or easy to skim
5. Too long

DO:

- Be consistent in format and content
- Make it easy to read and follow
- Use spacing, underlining, italics, bold, and capitalization for emphasis
- List headings (such as Experience) in order of importance
- Within headings, list information in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Avoid information gaps such as a missing summer
- Be sure that your formatting translated properly if converted to a .pdf

PLAN TO WORK INTERNATIONALLY?

Resume guidelines can vary from country to country. Check out Going Global at <http://www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/internships.htm>

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

Accelerated	Delivered	Impacted	Persuaded	Selected
Accomplished	Derived	Implemented	Planned	Served
Achieved	Demonstrated	Improved	Predicted	Shaped
Acted	Designed	Increased	Prepared	Simplified
Adapted	Determined	Initiated	Presented	Sold
Added	Developed	Inspected	Prioritized	Solved
Administered	Devised	Installed	Processed	Spearheaded
Advised	Directed	Instituted	Produced	Standardized
Analyzed	Discovered	Instructed	Programmed	Steered
Arranged	Documented	Interviewed	Promoted	Streamlined
Assembled	Earned	Interpreted	Proposed	Strengthened
Assessed	Edited	Introduced	Proved	Structured
Broadened	Enabled	Invented	Provided	Studied
Budgeted	Energized	Launched	Publicized	Suggested
Built	Enhanced	Lectured	Published	Summarized
Calculated	Established	Led	Purchased	Supervised
Centralized	Evaluated	Liaised	Recommended	Supported
Changed	Examined	Maintained	Recorded	Surpassed
Clarified	Executed	Managed	Recruited	Surveyed
Classified	Expanded	Marketed	Redesigned	Synthesized
Collaborated	Expedited	Mastered	Reduced	Taught
Collected	Fabricated	Maximized	Regulated	Tested
Compiled	Facilitated	Mediated	Reinforced	Trained
Completed	Followed	Minimized	Renegotiated	Translated
Composed	Formed	Modeled	Reorganized	Unified
Conducted	Formulated	Monitored	Reported	Updated
Conceived	Founded	Motivated	Represented	Upgraded
Concluded	Gained	Negotiated	Researched	Utilized
Constructed	Gathered	Operated	Resolved	Verbalized
Controlled	Generated	Optimized	Reviewed	Verified
Coordinated	Governed	Orchestrated	Revised	Visualized
Counseled	Guided	Organized	Revitalized	Worked
Created	Handled	Originated	Rewrote	Wrote
Defined	Headed	Participated	Scheduled	
Delegated	Identified	Performed	Screened	

WRITE AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

Your cover letter is a writing sample and a part of the screening process. By putting your best foot forward, you can increase your chances of being interviewed. A good way to create a response-producing cover letter is to highlight your skills or experiences that are most applicable to the job or industry and to tailor the letter to the specific organization you are applying to.

	Your Street Address City, State, Zip Code
	Date of Letter
Use complete title and address.	Contact Name Contact Title Company Name Street Address City, State, Zip Code
Address to a particular person if possible.	Dear _____: Opening paragraph: Clearly state why you are writing, name the position or type of work you're exploring and, where applicable, how you heard about the person or organization.
Make the addressee want to read your resume. Be brief, but specific.	Middle paragraph(s): Explain why you are interested in this employer and your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you've had relevant school or work experience, be sure to point it out with one or two key examples; but do not reiterate your entire resume. Emphasize skills or abilities that relate to the job. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter as an example of your writing skills.
Ask for a meeting and remember to follow up.	Closing paragraph: Reiterate your interest in the position, and your enthusiasm for using your skills to contribute to the work of the organization. Thank the reader for his/her consideration of your application, and end by stating that you look forward to the opportunity to further discuss the position.
Always sign letters.	Sincerely, Your name typed

Some general rules about letters:

- Address your letters to a specific person if you can.
- Tailor your letters to specific situations or organizations by doing research before writing your letters.
- Keep letters concise and factual, **no more than a single page**. Avoid flowery language.
- Give examples that support your skills and qualifications.
- Put yourself in the reader's shoes. What can you write that will convince the reader that you are ready and able to do the job?
- Remember that this is a marketing tool. Use lots of action words.
- Have someone proofread your letter.
- If converting to a .pdf, check that your formatting translated correctly.
- Reference skills or experiences from the job description and draw connections to your credentials.

SAMPLE RESUME

Always use your @fas or @college email account and check it frequently, even if you have enabled forwarding.

If an employer asks for your SAT scores or GPA, you can include them in your education section.

433 Mather Mail Center
Cambridge, MA 02138-6175

Roberta Josephina Maddox
maddox@fas.harvard.edu
(714) 439-6547

17 Rodeo Road
Irvine, CA 92720

Education

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A.B. Honors degree in History. GPA 3.73.
Coursework in International Political Economics and the European Community.
Commit 25 hours per week to the Harvard Varsity Field Hockey Program.

Cambridge, MA
May 2014

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Study abroad coursework in Investment Analysis and Financial Accounting.

London, UK
Fall 2012

IRVINE HIGH SCHOOL

Graduated with high honors. SAT I: M:780 V:760.
National Honor Society. Member of Varsity Field Hockey Team.

Irvine, CA
June 2010

Related Experience

PEPSI-COLA NORTH AMERICA BEVERAGES

Marketing Analyst Intern

Examined profitability of foreign market for new fruit drink using analysis of comparable local brands.
Managed focus groups and consumer surveys gathering >500 data points. Created ideas for niche marketing campaigns including use of social networks and viral marketing. Presented findings to senior managers using quantitative analysis and creative visuals in a combined PowerPoint presentation.

New York, NY
Summer 2013

THOMAS WILCK ASSOCIATES

Assistant Account Executive

Researched and assembled requests for proposals for medium-sized public relations and communications firm.
Actively participated in staff meetings and brainstorming sessions. Generated correspondence with top executive officers.

Newport Beach, CA
Summer 2012

TECH HILLS

Technology Intern

Implemented new web site, including backend database storage system and dynamic web pages.

Laguna Hills, CA
Summer 2011

Leadership Experience

Note that relevant interests and skills can be demonstrated through campus and volunteer activities as well as through previous employment.

HARVARD UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN IN BUSINESS (WIB)

Executive Committee Member

Organized marketing and advertising campaign to increase membership. Coordinated business conference and networking reception for 50 business professionals and 500 students.

Spring 2011–Present

HARVARD COLLEGE MARATHON CHALLENGE

Training Program Director

Developed training program for 25 charity runners. Raised over \$25,000 to support Phillips Brooks House Association and The Cambridge Food Project.

Spring 2011

Watch out for typos!

Skills & Interests

Computer: Microsoft Excel, Power Point, and Access, Stata, SQL, Java and HTML.

Language: Fluent French and Conversational Spanish. Traveled extensively in Europe.

Interests: Snowboarding, cake decorating, and foreign films.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

September 20, 2013

Ms. Ellie Wells
Senior Manager
Wallaby Yogurt Company
110 Mezzetta Court
American Canyon, CA 94503

Dear Ms. Wells:

I am a senior at Harvard University and would like to be considered for the Manager in Training opportunity at the Wallaby Yogurt Company. I am very interested in the field of marketing and would welcome the opportunity to contribute my research and writing skills and experience to your growing business.

I am excited about Wallaby's commitment to organic, all-natural ingredients in its products. As a varsity field hockey player, I am very aware of the importance of healthy food as the foundation for a healthy life. Your emphasis on "learning by doing and leading by serving" is also consistent with the training I received as an athlete. Whether on the field learning new drills in the worst weather conditions or patiently working with a new team member, I am most fulfilled when contributing to the team effort.

At Harvard, my concentration is in History while also exploring coursework in Economics. My academic work has strengthened my research and writing skills as well as my understanding of the economics of business growth and development. Working with Harvard Undergraduate Women in Business (WIB) over the last two years gave me the experience and confidence to work in a dynamic, fast-paced organization where learning quickly and pitching in are instrumental to success. As a member of the Executive Committee, for example, I managed campus advertising campaigns that increased overall membership and attracted more than 500 students from 12 different schools to our annual Intercollegiate Fall Conference.

Thank you for your consideration. I very much look forward to the opportunity to speak with you in person about my interest in this position.

Sincerely,

Roberta Maddox

SAMPLE RESUME

Peter J. Lee

250 Winthrop Mail Center – Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
781-444-6892 – pjlee@fas.harvard.edu

Education

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Cambridge, MA

A.B. in Social Studies with honors and language citation in Spanish expected, May 2015. GPA 3.56.
Awarded Mill-Taylor Prize for one of two top papers out of 100 students in yearlong sophomore tutorial;
Starting Shortstop, Varsity Baseball Team.

MARINA BAY HIGH SCHOOL

San Diego, CA

Valedictorian, Class of 2011. Captain, Speech and Debate team; First Cello, Marina Bay High School
Orchestra; Shortstop, Varsity Baseball team; President, Best Buddies. SAT V-800 M-750.

Public Service and Education Experience

MISSION HILL AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Be consistent presenting data. Use either numerals or words but not both.

Boston, MA
Summer, 2013

Director

- Managed staff of 20 student coordinators and 120 volunteers to work with 50 elementary and middle school children
- Partnered with community leaders, parents and school board committee to develop programs that support educational and personal growth
- Raised more than \$40,000 through phone-a-thon and dance contest

CRIMSON SUMMER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Hong Kong, PRC
Summer, 2012

English Language Teacher

- Developed curriculum for teaching English to over 800 high school students
- Trained 75 undergraduate and graduate students to teach classes over 8-week period in cities throughout China
- Created learning activities based on Olympic theme for 2 classes of 40 middle school students

OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Sacramento, CA
Summer, 2011

Communications Intern

- Researched and wrote talking points, newsletter articles and memoranda which summarized issues relating to high school youth
- Collaborated with Governor's Summer Youth program to deliver academic enrichment programs to over 12 inner-city communities throughout state

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

New Orleans, LA
Spring, 2010

Volunteer

- Built 2 houses over spring recess

Computer and Language Skills

Proficient with Excel, PowerPoint, Stata, and Dreamweaver

Fluent in Spanish

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

May 5, 2014

Mr. Joseph Turner
Save the Children Foundation
54 Wilton Road
Westport, Connecticut 06880

Dear Mr. Turner:

I am writing to express my interest in the Early Childhood Development Research Assistant internship with Save the Children. I am completing my Junior year at Harvard University and will graduate with a B.A. in Social Studies in May, 2015.

I believe strongly in the need for social change, especially as it affects children. The work that Save the Children delivers both advocating and taking action in countries throughout the world has set the standard for more than seventy-five years. It is your history and persistent search for solutions on behalf of children that makes me eager to join your team. Early childhood development is central to my academic interests. Next year I hope to complete my thesis on the influence of after-school programs on homework performance among children of immigrant Chinese families.

The opportunity to work with your ECD unit this summer will allow me to apply experience that I have gained in the classroom both as a student and a teacher. My concentration in Social Studies requires extensive research and writing across a broad spectrum of subjects. I am also adept at managing large sets of Excel data and preparing graphs, charts and other visuals to illustrate research findings. I spent two summers teaching in diverse classroom settings. The experience I gained in China taught me to manage my time carefully in order to complete the curriculum I had created. Managing a team of more than 120 volunteer teachers for an after-school program in Cambridge, Massachusetts required attention to detail around scheduling, training and orientation that will help me contribute to your project.

I understand that the internships with Save the Children are unpaid and I am prepared to seek grants or fellowships to support myself. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the internship in more detail.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Lee

SAMPLE RESUME

CAROL SOZAKA-DIAZ
sozaka@fas.harvard.edu

499 Kirkland Mail Center
95 Dunster Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

66 Wedgewood Road
Providence, RI 02906
401-532-1184

Education

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

A.B. with anticipated concentration in Molecular and Cellular Biology, May, 2016

Recipient: Herchel Smith Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Summer 2013.

Providence High School

Providence, RI

Valedictorian, Class of 2012. National Merit Scholarship; Rhode Island Governor's Academic Scholarship; Rhode Island Distinguished Merit Senior in Math, Science and English.

Research Experience

Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Division of Tumor Immunology

Boston, MA

Lab Research Assistant

June-August 2013

- Conducted lab research on oncogene lck in T lymphocytes using cell culture, microscopy, gel electrophoresis, and FACS analysis.
- Managed all cell lines, created lab reagents and media, and conducted related assays and experiments including ELISA, BCA, Western, and spectrometry; tracked experiments in lab notebook.

The Miriam Hospital, Department of Behavioral Medicine

Providence, RI

Research Assistant

July-August 2012

- Conducted statistical analysis of data for study which determined effects of personality on heart risk factors.
- Summarized results of analysis and presented to Principal Investigator and senior research team.

Activities and Leadership Experience

Harvard Undergraduate Council

Cambridge, MA

First Year Social Committee Representative

October 2012-May 2013

Planned social events for first-year students including Valentine's Day Dance, which was attended by 70% of freshman class.

HealthLeads

Boston, MA

Volunteer Asthma Prevention Educator, Boston Medical Center

January-May 2013

Conducted weekly classes on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise for families with children suffering from asthma.

Providence Science Support

Providence, RI

Founder Providence High School tutoring service

September 2011-June 2012

Provided after-school science and math support for local Middle Schools; recruited 20 volunteers to work one-on-one with 50 eighth grade students.

OCS Note about this sample:

Carol is interested in a scientific research position and includes technical skills and scientific jargon in her descriptions. If she were applying to non-lab or non-science positions, she would use lay terms to describe her accomplishments such as "Conducted basic scientific research designed to isolate the role that T cells play in cancerous tumor growth." She chose a visually appealing and balanced format highlighting science and additional experience to provide a complete picture of her skills.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

300 Currier Mail Center
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

December 20, 2013

Dr. Peter Walker
Cancer Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital
220 Longwood Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

Dear Dr. Walker:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Clinical Research Assistant in the Cancer Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital. I am in my sophomore year at Harvard University, where I'm planning to concentrate in molecular and cellular biology. My professional interests lie in both lab research and clinical healthcare related to cancer, and I'm eager to make a positive impact while interacting with patients undergoing treatment.

This position particularly caught my attention as it involves clinical research trials, which would complement my previous activities conducting lab research and statistical analysis. My experience last summer at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute allowed me to work with Dr. Jane Hagopian, performing assays and experiments supporting tumor research. I learned valuable lab techniques and analysis, and the experience further solidified my interest in the area of cancer research. My research assistant role at the Miriam Hospital introduced me to data related to the effects of personality on heart risk, and I was able to use my analytical skills to organize and assess that data for future research efforts. These experiences have reinforced my strong interest in healthcare, and inspired my goal for a career in public health.

In addition to the skills developed in my research experiences, I also strengthened my oral and written communication and organizational skills through two campus positions at Harvard. My Advertising Representative and Office Assistant experiences have required me to successfully multi-task, work under pressure, prioritize, and solve logistical or organizational problems. These skills will be valuable in the Clinical Research Assistant role, enabling me to analyze and organize data while communicating and interacting with patients. I look forward to relating with patients on a personal level while effectively helping them benefit from the center's medical care services.

I have included my resume for your review. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you about my candidacy in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Carol Sozaka-Diaz