

2011/2012

AUBURN UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER



PEER CAREER ADVISORS

Training Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Training Schedule.....	3
Policies	4 - 7
Career Center Overview	8 - 9
Resume & Cover Letter Writing	10 - 18
Giving Presentations.....	19 - 20

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 20, 2011 | 303 Martin Hall | 9 AM - 5 PM

9:00 AM	Welcome Breakfast Introductions	Torey
9:30 AM	Counseling vs. Advising/Coaching CC Policies/Procedures Role Play	Katie
10:00 AM	Overview of Services Website Tour	Torey
10:30 AM	TRL: Career Shift, Going Global, Interview Stream	Katie
11:00 AM	10 minute Break Icebreaker	Torey
11:30 AM	Presentation Technique Overview	Katie
12:00 PM	Lunch Game: Things	
12:30 PM	Events Review 30 Second elevator Speech Dress (Business v. Casual)	Torey
1:00 PM	10 minute Break Resume/Cover Letter Overview	Katie
2:00 PM	Art of Critique (15-20 Minutes) Critique your own Resume What did "we" say? More Resume Practice Role Play critique	Torey
4:00 PM	Respect the Voice Cover Letters Critique	Katie
4:30 PM	Wrap-up/ Icebreaker	Torey
5:00 PM	DONE! See you tomorrow for dinner!	

Sunday, August 21, 2011 | Katie's Home | 5:30 - 9 PM

5:30 PM	Dinner/Meet the Staff
7:00 PM	Team Building Activities

Policies

CAREER CENTER STUDENT WORKER POLICIES

We hope your experience working with the Career Center will be enjoyable and beneficial to you in the future. As a member of the Career Center staff you are expected to:

- Always arrive to work on-time.
- Prepare to perform quality work at all times.
- Communicate to your supervisor as soon as you know you will be late or absent.
- Put your belongings in the designated area for student assistants.
- Check with your supervisor at the beginning of each shift for daily assignments; complete them in a timely manner and be proactive in finding additional assignments upon completion.
- Work, not visit with other employees or friends while on duty.
- Wear your name badge at all times while on duty.
- Not plan to eat lunch while on duty. Light snacks and a soda or water are acceptable in your work space.
- Keep personal electronic devices (iPods, phones, etc.) out of site while on duty.
- Keep work areas clean and stocked with supplies necessary to perform required duties.
- Respond quickly and courteously to directions from your supervisor, advisor or director.
- Adhere to established policies and procedures.
- Complete time sheets accurately.

CAREER COUNSELING VS CAREER COACHING

Career Counseling

“The counselor’s job is to facilitate the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits and personal qualities that enable each client to create a satisfying life in a constantly changing work environment.” - Krumboltz, JD. Social Learning & Career Decision-Making.

Counseling focuses more on helping, processing and a diagnosis. The Career Center counseling staff help students with personality and career assessment interpretations and offer 50 minute sessions to counsel students through the major/career development process.

Career Coaching

“Coaching is a process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective.” - Peterson, D. Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research, 48 (2) 1996, p. 78-86.

Coaching focuses more on partnering, identifying strengths and forward thinking. Goals as a coach are as follows:

- Define goals.
- Provide a map and directions.
- Forge a partnership / provide support.
- Encourage and inspire.
- Monitor progress.

You may coach students through following strategies:

- Introduce students to Career Center services
- Review available career assessments (but don’t assign)
- Review resumes and cover letters
- Introduce job search and interview strategies
- Offer career fair preparation tips
- Explain how to utilize Mary Martin Hall walk-in hours or schedule an appointment



Statement of Confidentiality

AUBURN UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

YOUR CAREER. OUR MISSION.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as amended in 1976, and Auburn University policy restricts the release of information except for directory information. Information maintained in and generated from Auburn University Information System and Student Affairs, which includes original documents, stored electronic information, computer generated reports, etc., is covered by FERPA and University policy as private information. This information is available to Auburn University personnel only when required in the performance of their duties or when it serves a legitimate educational interest.

As part of my duties and responsibilities as an employee of Auburn University and the

Auburn University Career Center office/department, I may be given access to information that is confidential. I am responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information in my possession, whether this information is on an original handwritten document, displayed on a computer screen, contained in computer generated reports, communicated to me verbally or any other information related to budget planning or personnel issues.

My duties and responsibilities may require that I be given access to the Auburn University Computer System, which is protected through the use of passwords. If given a password, I will keep my password confidential and not allow unauthorized access to the Auburn University System.

My signature on this document indicates that I have read this statement and am willing to comply with all regulations.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Career Center Overview

AUBURN UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

303 Mary Martin Hall | 844-4744 | auburn.edu/career

- Social Media: facebook.com/aucareer | twitter.com/aucareer | tigersprepare.blogspot.com
- Office Hours (schedule a 50 min appt): Mon - Fri, 7:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.
- Walk-in Hours (15 - 20 min session): Mon - Fri, noon - 4 p.m. (check the website for additional hours are available in the Student Center and colleges)

Job/Internship Search (www.jobs.auburn.edu)

- Tiger Recruiting Link (TRL): On- and off-campus part-time jobs, internships, full-time jobs, employer events, on-campus interviews and information sessions are posted at jobs.auburn.edu
- CareerShift: a megasearch engine to identify jobs as well as research companies of interest and find people within companies
- Resumes should be updated prior to posting to TRL as they must meet minimum qualifications to be approved
- Job search strategies are listed in the Career Handbook at auburn.edu/career
- Career counselors/coaches are available for one-on-one advising
- Salary data is available at auburn.edu/career under Web Resources
- Negotiation tips are available at auburn.edu/career
- Career Event dates are available at auburn.edu/career and jobs.auburn.edu

Major Selection/Career Direction

- It is normal for students to be undecided and/or to change their minds about major/career direction. Students must explore and clarify their vocational interests, personality, skills, work values. Available resources:
- Assessments: Career exploration (FOCUS), personality (TypeFocus) and interest (Strong Interest Inventory) assessments are available at auburn.edu/career
- What Can I do with a Major in...?: a resource that lists career options within various majors and provides links to additional resources
- Career Counseling: One-on-one coaching/counseling is available

Resume/Cover Letter Writing

- Start professional resume during freshman year, not senior year.
- Career Handbook/Tip Sheets: View samples and direction at auburn.edu/career (hard copies available too)
- Career Coach: Meet with a Career Center staff member for writing assistance (walk-in or schedule appt)
- eResume Review: Submit resume to eresume@auburn.edu for feedback within 48 hours
- TRL: Post resume to TRL to pursue job and internship opportunities

Interviewing Skills

- Practice interview skills for on-campus positions, jobs and interviews.
- InterviewStream: Software available at jobs.auburn.edu to video capture an interview for self-critique
- Mock Interview: Professional “dress rehearsal” for interview opportunity and must be scheduled in advance
- Career Handbook/Tip Sheet: View tips and sample questions at auburn.edu/career

Presentations

- Request a presentation for Classes and Student Organizations at auburn.edu/career

Resume & Cover Letter Editing

RESUME CRITIQUE FORM

Resources: Resume Tip Sheet and Career Handbook

GENERAL PITFALLS

- ☐ Headers (OBJECTIVE, EDUCATION, etc.) should be consistent in case (either all CAPS or mixed case)
- ☐ Resume should fill page but be no longer than one page.
- ☐ Check for spelling / typographical errors, use spell check AND proofread carefully!
- ☐ Use punctuation and formatting consistently.
- ☐ Use lower case AND upper case letters.

HEADER

- ☐ Name should be on top, 18 - 24 pt font.
- ☐ Include address, phone number and email address.
- ☐ Drop labels for obvious facts: "address", "phone", "e-mail".

OBJECTIVE / SUMMARY

- ☐ Does resume need an objective or summary?
- ☐ An objective is a "theme" statement that helps organize the supporting information in the rest of the resume.
- ☐ It should include a job title.
- ☐ It should focus on what one can do for an employer, not what one wants from an employer.
- ☐ A summary directs the reader to skills and personal traits listed in job description and supported in the resume.
- ☐ Delete filler/fluff material and lofty, long-term goals.

EDUCATION

- ☐ List name of school, city & state, major, degree, month and year of graduation with consistent format:
- ☐ Auburn University; Auburn, AL | Bachelor of Science in Physics; May 20xx
- ☐ Do not include time frame attended or use "expected" or "anticipated" before graduation date.
- ☐ List multiple degrees in reverse chronological order.
- ☐ Include a major or overall GPA if above a 3.0 and include scale: Overall GPA: 3.2/4.0.
- ☐ Do not include high school unless a freshman or first semester sophomore.
- ☐ Include only schools from which one has received degrees or are currently attending.
- ☐ If more than two honors or activities, create separate sections.

RELEVANT COURSES

- ☐ Consider creating a separate "relevant courses" section.
- ☐ Only include courses that will compliment qualifications and are not implied by major or minor.
- ☐ Use course titles, not course numbers and list in columns if more than three.

EXPERIENCE

- ☐ Include employer, city and state, job title and dates with consistent format:
- ☐ Millionaires Club, Auburn, AL | Lifeguard; June - August 20xx

EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

- ☐ List in reverse chronological order (present to past).
- ☐ Consider separating relevant experience into its own category (including paid, volunteer, etc.) and combining unrelated work experience under other work experience.
- ☐ Include descriptive phrases (no full sentences starting with "I") that start with action verbs, (see list in the Career Handbook or Resume Tip Sheet available at www.auburn.edu/career).
- ☐ Avoid passive phrasing such as "responsibilities were", "duties included", "in charge of", etc.
- ☐ Avoid using same verbs repeatedly; vary usage.
- ☐ Communicate skills used and past accomplishments / successes. Avoid just listing tasks completed.
- ☐ Quantify when applicable (How many customers did you serve? work with in team? How much money did you manage? etc.).
- ☐ Use present tense for current job, past tense for former employment.

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- ☐ Create Key Skills section to include: computer skills, language skills, engineering skills, etc.
- ☐ Class Projects could be its own section or incorporated into the experience section. Include the course name, semester / year enrolled and project description.

ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Include relevant professional affiliations, awards, honors, campus activities, or community involvements that relate to your objective.
- ☐ Use a column format to increase readability.
- ☐ Avoid abbreviations.
- ☐ Omit references to specific religious denominations or political parties.
- ☐ Use a consistent format such as: AU Marching Band, Member, Fall 2003 – Present

REFERENCES

- ☐ State "References Available upon Request but omit if limited space as is understood.
- ☐ Build reference list on separate page. Use same header.
- ☐ Reference information should include: name, title, organization, work address, city, state, zip code, e-mail and work phone number (including area code)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ☐ Layout: space information evenly throughout page, margins should be .5" - 1".
- ☐ Font: Header, 18 - 24 pt; Section Headers, 12 - 14 pt; content, 10 - 12 pt.
- ☐ Paper (if applicable): copier friendly white, off-white, or ivory resume paper.
- ☐ Use highlighting (i.e. CAPS, italics, bold) to attract reader's eye to key areas of content.

COVER LETTER CRITIQUE FORM

Resources: Cover Letter Tip Sheet and Career Handbook

- ☐ Margins, fonts and header should match the resume.
- ☐ If applicable, the paper should match the resume.
- ☐ Do not exceed one page.
- ☐ Follow business letter format (include date and recipient's name, title and address).
- ☐ Address to Dear Mr./Ms. (or Dr.) LastName, followed by a colon, not a comma.
- ☐ Include recipient's name (research: call the company/organization or use CareerShift, your network or LinkedIn)
- ☐ If you can't identify a human to address your letter, address to Hiring Manager of xyz position.
- ☐ Sound positive and confident, avoiding "I think" or "I feel" statements.
- ☐ Use "I" sparingly, starting only one sentence per paragraph and one paragraph per letter with "I".
- ☐ Check spelling (Spell Check AND proofread)

What to Include

- ☐ Identify the skills sought in the job description (job description, requirements and desired qualifications).
- ☐ Brainstorm instances when you have demonstrated those skills.
- ☐ Develop a list of key words to utilize.
- ☐ Include the answers to these questions: Why should I hire this person? How is this person going to help my bottom line? Do I want to work with this person every day?

What not to Include

- ☐ Do not narrate your life-long dreams and ambitions.
- ☐ Do not commit four inches to a narration of how successful the company/organization is.

Opening Paragraph

- ☐ Communicate why you are specifically qualified as a fit for this position and the organization. This may include soft skills and personal traits.
- ☐ Tell the reader the position for which you are applying.
- ☐ Let the reader know how you learned of the position, identifying your contact if applicable.

Middle Paragraph(s)

- ☐ Identify three to five skills you possess that are listed in the job description and communicate how you have used them successfully in the past.
- ☐ Do not state, "As you will see in my resume..." as it is a waste of space.
- ☐ Do not regurgitate your resume.
- ☐ Communicate how the employer will benefit by hiring you.
- ☐ Communicate knowledge of the company or industry (show you've done research) and how you are a fit.

Closing Paragraph

- ☐ State what you will do next (call to discuss meeting and your qualifications) listing a specific time when you will call or email to arrange a meeting. (If you say you are going to follow up, do so!)
OR
- ☐ State what you would like the reader to do next, asking for an interview and writing "Do not hesitate to contact me at xyz email or xyz phone number."

The End

- ☐ Type "Sincerely" or "Regards", enter four times and type your name
- ☐ Enter two more times and type "Enclosure" to indicate that your resume is attached. If there are additional documents, type "Enclosures."

Training Paraprofessionals In the Art of the Resume Critique

By Marianne E. Green

The most successful resume critiques provide students with a heightened sense of their own strengths and skills, and can show them what steps they could take to increase their skills repertoire.

Mention the words “student assistants” to any one of the six career services staff members at the University of Delaware (UD) and “What would we do without them?” immediately follows. Our six paraprofessionals—we call them student assistants (SAs)—are carefully chosen and trained each year and provide invaluable service that goes far in offsetting staff cutbacks, reduced budgets, and an escalating demand for career services.

Selection

Rising juniors and seniors, our SAs are selected from a pool of applicants who respond to the following: an advertisement placed in the *Review*, the student newspaper; online advertising in *Blue Hen Jobs*, a data base of job opportunities; and/or information and recommendations by professors or

staff. These applications are reviewed and the finalists invited to interview for the positions. Any SAs who stay on from the previous year are asked to help with the interviewing process. The applicants are screened for evidence of academic achievement, leadership abilities, relevant work experience, and interpersonal and communications skills. Those selected must commit to devoting at least 10 hours each week to staffing the career library (up to six hours), engaging in publicity/outreach activities (one hour), conducting occasional resume preparation workshops (one floating hour), performing resume critiques (three hours), and a required weekly training meeting (one hour). SAs at UD earn a modest stipend for their efforts.

Training

An intensive three-day training period kicks off the student assistants’

academic year. They are given a thorough introduction to all of the career services center’s programs and services with particular emphasis on the career resource library and online information. The first day of training concentrates on team building, office services, and procedures. The second day focuses on the library. The third is devoted to learning about resume construction and how to provide critiques and conduct resume preparation workshops. Monitoring the SAs’ performance continues throughout the year. Occasionally, staff members sit in unannounced on the SAs’ resume critiquing sessions, library staffing hours, and workshop presentations. Performance evaluations are filled out by students receiving services and by the staff observers, and the results are discussed in the weekly training sessions. Problems encountered by the SAs are also addressed and resolved during these meetings.



Resume and Cover Letter Training-Day Schedule for Career Services' SAs

9:00 to 9:15 a.m. Resume quiz and pretest of assistants' knowledge of resumes.

9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Discussion and run-through of the manual, *The Resume Critique: A Gentle Art*.

10:30 a.m. to Noon... Hands-on experience critiquing sample resumes.

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. SAs critique each others' resumes.

2:15 to 4:00 p.m. Cover letter discussion using the manual. Sample cover letter critiques.

4:00 to 4:45 p.m. Schedule SAs' critiquing hours. Answer questions.

Critiquing Process

Students may have their resumes critiqued by coming to the career library any day or time, if a student assistant is available. And Wednesdays from noon to 7:00 p.m. are promoted as "Walk in Wednesdays," a fully staffed period when students' resumes and cover letters will be critiqued on a first-come, first-served basis by three or more SAs. Occasionally, a student who has had his or her resume critiqued by an SA will request additional feedback from a professional staff member. Also, sometimes a student assistant will suggest that the student make an appointment with a professional staff member for further feedback.

In the course of a typical academic year, the SAs critique nearly 500 undergraduate resumes and conduct approximately 70 resume preparation workshops. It is critically important,

therefore, that they receive substantial training in both the mechanics and the counseling strategies necessary to deliver these services effectively. We have found that one full day of concentrated training is sufficient to provide them with the basic tools to begin critiquing resumes within the first two weeks of the academic term. An additional two hours of workshop observation time is required before SAs are assigned to conduct a resume preparation workshop on their own.

The Manual

The resource manual, **The Resume Critique: A Gentle Art** was developed by UD's career services center to help new student assistants quickly learn, assimilate, and apply the basic tenets of resume and cover letter construction, as well as the most effective techniques for providing their peers with helpful

feedback. The impetus for this manual came from the complaints of many SAs through the years who pointed out that none of the hundreds of available resources on the subject of resume and cover letter preparation really explain how to conduct resume and cover letter critiques or why certain conventions are used. They also said they needed one basic source of information they could refer to throughout the year. Based on anecdotal evidence, this manual, while undergoing periodic updates, has served their needs.

The manual presented in this article has proved to be a useful tool for training SAs to critique resumes and cover letters while enhancing the self-esteem of their peers. The manual's step-by-step format and attention to problem-solving strategies gets SAs off to a good start and provides ongoing support.

continued



The Resume Critique: A Gentle Art

A Resource Manual for Career Services Paraprofessionals

First, here are a few of the common expectations, beliefs, and fears you'll encounter. Before you even look at the resume presented to you at a resume critique session, you need to be aware of the agendas that some students may bring with them:

- Your student's concerns about his or her resume might be just the tip of the iceberg; that is, other problems and issues may emerge during a resume critique that are initially masked by resume concerns. These issues can include coping with parental expectations, indecisiveness, fear of commitment to any one career, self-esteem problems, or any of a host of others. Once you have determined that there's something else involved besides the resume, it is appropriate for you to assist the student in dealing with it by referring him or her to the professional staff.
- Some students are under the impression that advisers at career services should write part or all of their resumes for them. They bring a rough draft of the resume to the critique session—it might be only an outline of names, dates, and places in their academic and vocational lives, illegibly scrawled on torn notebook paper or poorly formatted on their computer. They expect that you will compose the resume—which, of course, you'll gently tell them is not part of your job.
- Many of your peers may be intent on getting you to tell them the "right" way to put together a resume. Maybe they've gathered conflicting information from parents, employers, professors, and/or friends, and now feel entitled to get the final, definitive viewpoint from you. Of course, there is no one best way to construct a resume, and not you nor anyone else in career services can or wants to tell them that there is. You'll need to lead each student gently into building the type of resume that will work for him or her as an individual.
- Whether they acknowledge it or not, many students feel uneasy about exposing such a personal document as "my resume" to the cold eyes of outsiders. The student may see

his or her resume as a symbol of his or her real value in the world and seek reassurance from you that he or she has achieved an acceptable level. Sometimes a student may react as though any criticism of the resume is actually a criticism of his or her life and choices. You'll likely decide to refer this type of person to the professional staff.

- Some students may be required by their instructor to create a resume and have it critiqued at career services. They may or may not take the exercise seriously. Use this opportunity to indicate the importance of the resume for internship searches, scholarship applications, graduate school, and the job search.

Creating a Positive Environment

It is up to you to set up an environment of trust and acceptance during the resume critique sessions. It is important that we all show students that we are far more interested in them, as people, than in any advice we give. So, listen with a "third ear" to the feelings behind the student's statements. Does he or she seem anxious, angry, pleased, confused, resigned? Try to smile frequently, make good eye contact, and be aware of the student's reactions to your advice. Some questions you might ask include: "What do you think about my suggestions?" "What are your reactions at this point?"

Beginning the Critique

Look over the resume and find something positive to say about it, such as: "You've done a lot of traveling, haven't you?" "Your job at the prison sounds really interesting." "It's impressive that you were involved in so many campus activities and maintained a high GPA!" "You seem to have a diverse work history!" Starting out with negative feedback can get things off to a bad start.

Next, ask your student something like: "How do you feel

about your resume?" or "Do you think this resume says what you want it to say?" The student's response will tell you a great deal about his or her level of confidence in what is on paper. If the student's opinion of the resume is very different from your own, extra sensitivity in your response may be needed to address how the resume might be altered to improve it.

If the resume in front of you states a job objective, you can use that objective as a "guiding principle" or "thesis statement" with which to evaluate the contents of the resume. The closeness of the match between the desired occupation or industry and the student's educational background, work experience, and activities may determine the resume's effectiveness as a job-search tool.

If no job objective is listed, ask: "For what type of job or employer will you use this resume?" or "To whom do you plan to send this resume?" If the student has several employers and occupations in mind, make separate readings of the resume, each with one of the objectives in mind. Evaluate how effective this shotgun approach might be. Separate resumes for individual goals may be indicated.

Giving Advice

Stay positive. Avoid negative statements. Never attack—use gentle arguments to try to get the student to see your vision of what the resume should look like. Some verbs and phrases you might use in giving advice: "My recommendations are that you...", "You might consider changing this...", "Employers who recruit at Delaware tell us that they like to see _____ on a resume; maybe if you...", "There are several points of view on the subject; you have to decide which one is right for you."

Questions to Ask

Probing questions are useful in discovering information that your student has forgotten, overlooked, or downplayed. Examples include:

- Missing categories. Find out why they're not on the resume. "Do you have any extracurricular or volunteer experience you can include?" "What about your computer experience or foreign language skills?" Students may have left off activities they don't deem necessary.
- The work experience listed does not support the objective, either stated or implied. "Did any of your assigned tasks in your three summer jobs relate in any way to your goal of finding a writing position?" "Did you compose letters, edit or proof copy, take minutes, write summaries, etc.?"
- Job or internship descriptions are sketchy or focus on duties and responsibilities rather than on accomplishments. "Did you initiate anything new in this job?" "Were you recognized by your boss for any achievement—employee of the month, bonus, etc.?" "Did you train others to do a job?" "How was your work used by your supervisor? Was it included in a manual, annual report, publication, research report, book, article, or presentation?" "Did you have responsibility for

money?" "Did you have organizational or coordinating functions?"

- Very general information that lacks quantification. "How many clients did you call each day?" "What was the total amount of cash for which you were responsible?" "How many new employees did you train?"

Two Ways to Improve a Resume

By Magnifying

Focus the reader's attention on skills, tasks, and activities related to the student's job objective. The degree of importance is emphasized by positioning and by how much detail is included. (Psychologically, people tend to pay more attention to items that are near the top of a list.) Here are some suggestions regarding magnifying:

- For each job description, put the most relevant task at the beginning of the list. Provide details for related tasks only. Quantify and include outcomes, and indicate any special recognition.
 - Before magnifying:
Job Objective: Entry level technical writer
Secretary, Monmouth, Inc., New Brunswick, New Jersey
Filed court documents and billing receipts. Entered data into IBM PC using Lotus. Contacted clients to update information on corporate holdings. Wrote letters and reports.
 - After magnifying:
Composed more than 50 letters sent to corporate clients such as Scott Paper, Zeneca, and Campbell, Inc. Wrote narrative for statistical report on white-collar crime that was included in the annual report sent to nearly 1,000 organizations nationwide.
- If two or more positions show relevant skills or occupations, group them into a Related Experience category and position it high on the resume. Provide a description of accomplishments using action verbs and quantification where appropriate.
- Incorporate related volunteer work, club activities, community work, and class projects into the Related Experience category.
- Include only related course work that corresponds to your field of interest under the Education category. Omit introductory course work. For example, the history major who wants to go into business should stress such business-related courses as written communication in business, economics, or marketing (if those courses are part of his or her academic transcript).
- For experienced alumni or career changers' resumes, add a Highlights or Qualifications Brief category following the job objective that summarizes the relevant career high points and skills.
- Show skills rather than tell about them. For example: "Possess excellent communication skills" can be rewritten

as: “Successfully addressed the needs of an average of 50 customers daily from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.” “Have financial management skills” can be rewritten as: “Demonstrated financial management skills by effectively completing spreadsheets, cash flow accounts, and ledger balances.”

- Include certifications, licenses, and special skills in CPR, real estate, etc. Any special recognition for competitions (i.e. blue ribbons for showing horses, Eagle Scout ranking, runner-up in Miss Teenage Delaware Pageant) should be mentioned. Include the fact that the student financed 50 percent or more of his college education, if applicable.
- High school activities and accomplishments should be included if they are particularly relevant to the job objective. Dates should make it clear when these activities took place.
- Develop a portfolio of writing samples, photographs, reports, brochures, art work, articles, certificates, etc. that provides concrete evidence of accomplishments. An ePortfolio is an excellent way to showcase artifacts online. Google Sites makes it possible to set up a free online portfolio. Include a statement at the end of the resume, such as “Portfolio and/or References are available upon request,” along with a link to the ePortfolio.

By Minimizing

It is important not to distract the reader’s attention from the “good” information by mentioning items that are unrelated to the purpose of the resume.

- Leave out details that are unrelated to the job objective. Everything listed in the job descriptions—and especially in the Other Experience category should be relevant to that objective.
- Omit naming non-degree-granting institutions, irrelevant course work, and unrelated hobbies.
- Leave out “References available upon request” unless there is extra space that you think should be filled to improve the visual appearance of the resume.
- In general, leave out personal information that has no bearing on the student’s ability to do the job. And leave out details that imply irrelevant personal information, such as age. Also avoid race, religious, and politically-related data unless there’s a strong reason to include it, such as to indicate leadership ability or to show a job-related link.

Style and Format of Resume

The one-page resume, arranged in the chronological format, is usually expected of new college graduates, regardless of major. Explain to your student that concerning resumes, less can definitely be more. If two pages are needed, however, they should be full pages (not back-to-back); readers tend to disregard pages that carry only small amounts of material. Name and page number should appear on the second page in case

the two pages become separated; but it’s best not to staple the two pages together.

The functional format, with its concentration on skills, can sometimes give the impression of exaggerating or puffing up typical student experiences. Similarly, a listing of personal qualities at the beginning of the resume (such as hard-working, good communicator, efficient worker) without documentation by referral to experience is usually dismissed by employers for the same reasons. Urge students to adopt the more conventional format for their first “professional” resume.

The print resume should be produced on neutral paper of good quality. Matching paper for cover letters and envelopes creates a professional appearance. Use of colored paper is not advisable unless the student has inside knowledge about how such resumes have been received in the past. It is always better to err on the conservative side when it comes to resumes and cover letters. Since the student’s resume is often scanned, it should be produced on white paper with no underlining to ensure accuracy of copies. If the student wishes to develop a creative, unconventional resume for a position in advertising, graphic communication, or another field known for valuing creativity, it is advisable to include a conventional resume along with it to show that the student knows the “rules of the game” but has chosen to depart from them.

For today’s job search, it is useful to also develop an additional unformatted, plain text resume to copy and paste into e-mails or text boxes. Remind students that electronic resumes or attachments should be in the PDF format for security purposes.

Your student may ask questions such as: “*Do you think I should bold these words?*” “*Should I use italics or underlining here?*” “*Are asterisks or bullets better if I want to draw attention to my activities?*” Answers to these questions really depend on personal taste if the resume will be sent via traditional mail or FAX. As long as the information is easy to read and easy to find, and the method of highlighting important points is consistent, the decision about these fine points is really up to the resume writer. You can give your opinion about what you think looks best, but be sure to add that it’s just your personal taste and not necessarily a guideline to follow.

On the other hand, the only formatting needed for plain-text documents are dashes and capital letters. Other formatting such as bullets, indenting, or underlining may not transfer successfully to text boxes or e-mails.

Templates are an easy way to format your resume. However, many templates are poorly organized, omit important information, have font sizes that are too large or too small and tend to look “cookie-cutter.” Be cautious about adopting any templates; be prepared to justify your formatting.

Concluding the Resume Critique

Check out the student’s reaction to your critique: “What do you think about some of my comments and suggestions today?” If there are hurt feelings or conflicting ideas, this is an opportunity

to reiterate that resume writing is an art, not a science, and that it comes with many different points of view, none of them absolutely right or absolutely wrong. Say that you have given him/her the best advice you have available, based on employer recommendations and training, and if it seems appropriate, invite him/ her to schedule an appointment with a professional staff member. Avoid taking negative reactions personally and remember that the student's well-being is more important than any advice you may give.

The Cover Letter

Ten years ago, some informal surveys indicated that many employers failed to read cover letters that accompany resumes 40 percent of the time. Often, the search committee would receive a bare copy of the applicant's resume from the human resources department without the cover letter attached. In today's competitive job market, however, the cover letter is being scrutinized more closely. It is being used as a writing sample, a barometer of the applicant's interest and creativity, and an indicator of how he or she would fit with the organization's mission. Thus, pains must still be taken to make it an effective and carefully written and edited advertising piece.

Customize each letter to show familiarity with the nature of the position, the organization, and the required responsibilities. Avoid generic letters.

Electronic Cover Letters


Cover letters are often sent electronically, pasted into an e-mail message or attached to an e-mail. The method of distribution aside, the cover letter still needs to be respectful, proofread, and focused on the match between the job or internship and the candidate's qualifications.

How You Can Help

As with the resume, students may expect that you will either write the letter for them or correct all of their sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. If it seems that the student has some definite writing deficits, suggest that he/she make an appointment with a campus writing or study center. Your main job is to offer suggestions as to how the writer can

show a match between the desired position and his/her own skills and background, while adhering to the general guidelines that appear in the Job Choices series of job-search magazines published annually by NACE.

Here are some suggestions you can make to your students:

- Leave out any salutation if you do not know the name of an individual to whom to direct your resume and cover letter. "Dear Sir" or "Dear Personnel Manager" can be off-putting. "Attention: Hiring Manager," can be substituted for the "Dear" salutation.
- Try to inject something of your personality into the letter. The resume is a fairly dry document that can be "humanized" by the cover letter: The first paragraph is the place to try to grab the reader's attention and make the writer stand out.
 - For example, "The opportunity to apply for a position with Peterson's Lumber, a company with a reputation for excellent management, makes me very excited."
 - "The excellent care that my brother received when he was a patient in the rehabilitation department at St. Francis Hospital has convinced me that this is the organization I would like to work for."
 - "Camping at Vista Mountain on Cape Charles as a Boy Scout is one of my fondest memories, and I am thrilled by the prospect of relocating to the Cape to work for Myers Johnson."
- Always use the second paragraph to show a match between the applicant's background and skills and the requirements for the job. If you are writing a letter of inquiry and don't know if a job opening actually exists, describe the tasks you would like to perform and then give examples of how you have done these or similar tasks in the past. If you have a position description to refer to, try to show "fit" between the job requirements and your skill set and experience.
- Use a proper business-letter format, double-spacing between paragraphs. Do not use "I" to start more than one paragraph in the entire letter. Paragraphs should contain more than one sentence. Most cover letters should be limited to a single page.
- Customize each letter to show familiarity with the nature of the position, the organization, and the required responsibilities. Avoid generic letters. 



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This manual was developed by the Career Services Center of the University of Delaware. NACE members may photocopy this manual as a free handout to their own student paraprofessionals. Nonmembers should contact Claudia Allen, NACE editor/web content manager (610/868-1421, ext. 129, or callen@naceweb.org), for information on obtaining reprint information.

Presentations

Giving an Effective Presentation

Preparation

- Know your audience.
- Find out what AV equipment will be available (or not) and prepare accordingly.
- Prepare your PowerPoint or Prezi effectively:
 - Use appropriate font sizes: 44 for titles and no smaller than 28 pt. for text.
 - Don't use all CAPS. Avoid italics and use bold for emphasis.
 - Use contrasting colors and no more than three (3) for background and text. Plain is better than illegible.
 - Use white space generously. Don't fill the page with text and images.
 - Do not put too much information on any one slide, no more than seven (7) lines per slide.
 - Do not hyphenate words in line breaks.
 - Use bullet points instead of complete sentences on your slides. Each bullet should be one line. This is your outline, not your script.
 - Do not include information on visual aids that you do not intend to discuss.
 - Hyperlinks, audiofiles, etc are acceptable.
- Practice before you present. Never give a presentation without practicing at least once to be sure that it will fit into the time frame and that you know how to move from one point to the next.

Giving the Presentation

- Dress appropriately: business casual or PCA shirt with appropriate shorts, skirt or pants. (follow office dress policies)
- Get the audience's attention - with an applicable or humorous story, YouTube clip, etc.
- Introduce yourself.
 - Tell them your name, title with the Auburn University Career Center, your major and academic year.
 - Don't apologize for being nervous or that you're new at this.
- Identify your main point and agenda succinctly.
- Speak clearly and loudly.
- If using a PowerPoint:
 - Have a back-up if the AV equipment doesn't work.
 - Test sound and internet access before presentation starts if applicable.
 - Do not turn your back to the audience and talk to the screen.
 - Do not get in the way of the projector light. Use a pointer if necessary to identify a point.
 - Do NOT read the slide.
- Stick to your time limit.
- Give the audience the opportunity to ask questions.
- If you don't have an answer offer to take their contact information and follow-up within 48 hours.