



Skillmax Resource Guide

JOBSEEKING WRITING SKILLS

RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION



Pathways to
Employment

SKILLMAX
RESOURCE
GUIDE 2012



AMES

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Welcome to Unit 3

Unit 3 focuses on preparing résumés. You will examine different résumé formats and appropriate positive vocabulary. You will also read articles by different recruitment experts giving advice on preparing your résumé.

Assessment

There are two formal assessment tasks in Unit 3.

Task 1

You will prepare a master résumé (Activity 5) that you will be able to adapt in the future when applying for specific positions. Your teacher will use the criteria listed in Learning Outcome E1 to assess your master résumé.

Task 2

You will adapt your master résumé in response to a specific job advertisement (Activity 6). Your teacher will use the criteria listed in Learning Outcome E2 to assess your adapted résumé.

Learning outcome: CSWE IV (E) E1

Prepare a résumé

Assessment criteria	Conditions and method of assessment
<p>1.1 Produce a master résumé that is accurate in structure, grammar and spelling</p> <p>1.2 Categorise information about self appropriately, eg bio-data, education, training and skills, employment history, referees, professional affiliations</p> <p>1.3 Sequence sections logically</p> <p>1.4 Date information consistently and appropriately</p> <p>1.5 Use appropriate grammatical structures, eg <i>Managed a small team</i></p> <p>1.6 Use appropriate vocabulary</p>	<p>Résumé is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least two pages in length • a master résumé of core qualifications, skills, experience, etc that can be modified in response to specific positions • word processed <p>Learners may use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dictionaries • spellcheck <p>Sample task</p> <p>Learners prepare résumés.</p>

Learning outcome: CSWE IV (E) E2

Modify résumé in response to job advertisement requirements

Assessment criteria	Conditions and method of assessment
<p>2.1 Search for and select a job advertisement relevant to own qualifications, experience, aspirations from a variety of sources, eg Internet, newspapers</p> <p>2.2 Identify specific sections of job advertisement, eg duties, essential criteria, desirable requirements, contact information</p> <p>2.3 Modify résumé to reflect job requirements, eg by adding, rewording, deleting or reordering information</p>	<p>Advertisement is authentic and relevant to learner's needs.</p> <p>Résumé is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modified appropriately in response to requirements of position • word processed • in response to authentic job advertisement <p>Learners may use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dictionaries • spellcheck <p>Sample task</p> <p>Learners select appropriate advertisements from, eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • print or online newspapers and journals • employment agency bulletin boards <p>and modify résumé developed in CSWE IV (E) E1: <i>Prepare a résumé.</i></p>

Evaluating résumés

Activity 1

Background to résumés

To create a good résumé you need to sell yourself. To do this you need to take into account who will read the résumé, why you are sending your résumé to this person or organisation and what kind of information will achieve the best results. Remember that the purpose of a résumé is to help the employer decide whether or not they would like to invite you in for an interview, so it is important that you sell yourself in relation to the key requirements of the position.

1 Discuss the following questions in groups. Choose one person to write down your group's ideas. Then discuss your answers as a class.

- a Who is going to read your résumé?
- b What is the purpose of the résumé?
- c How should you write your résumé in order to persuade the person reading it to consider you for the job?
- d What information should you include?

2 There are two common types of résumé.

A CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ:

- concentrates on your past work experience and sets it out in chronological order, starting with the most recent and working backwards.

A FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ:

- concentrates on your skills and achievements by grouping similar skills together, starting with the most important for a particular kind of job.

For outlines of how each type is organised, see the templates on the next two pages.

When do you think it would be best to use a chronological résumé and when would it be best to use a functional résumé?

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

<Name>

<Address>

<Phone nos.>

<Email>

Education (in reverse chronological order)

Employment history (in reverse chronological order)

<Employer>

<Company/institutional profile>

<Dates>

<Position held>

<Responsibilities>

<Significant achievement/s>



<Employer>

<Company/institutional profile>

<Dates>

<Position held>

<Responsibilities>

<Significant achievement/s>



<Employer>

<Company/institutional profile>

<Dates>

<Position held>

<Responsibilities>

<Significant achievement/s>



Professional development

Referees

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

<Name>		
<Address>	<Phone no/s>	
	<Email>	
Qualifications <i>(in reverse chronological order)</i>		
Skills, knowledge, attributes and abilities		
eg Communication skills		
<achievements>		
eg Leadership skills		
<achievements>		
eg Business management skills		
<achievements>		
eg Negotiation skills		
<achievements>		
Summary of work experience <i>(in reverse chronological order)</i>		
<Dates>	<Employer>	<Position held>
<Dates>	<Employer>	<Position held>
Referees		

These résumé templates are derived from the formats and layouts identified by Jim Bright and Joanne Earl (2004, 2nd ed.) Résumés that get shortlisted. Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

3 Below is a list of things expert recruitment consultants consider when shortlisting *résumés* (ie: deciding which candidates they would like to *telephone screen* or invite in for an interview).

- skills, qualifications and experience in relation to the job requirements
- an understanding of a person's motivation (their reason for leaving previous positions, the types of roles they have done previously)
- a comparison between the types of organisations the person has worked for, compared to the job they are applying for (eg: size of organisation, industry sector, public sector or private company)
- current and desired salary
- career path
- accountabilities, objectives and achievements of previous positions
- readability of *résumé* (ie: logical format, easy to read and plenty of *white space*, use of bullet points)
- suitable language pitched at the appropriate level for the role
- spelling or grammatical errors
- career objectives
- interests and hobbies (some recruitment consultants have placed candidates predominantly due to the candidate having similar hobbies and interests to the employer)
- specific and quantifiable details (especially in regards to achievements)
- the use of positive or action words
- availability of up-to-date referees
- presented on A4 paper

While there are various ways you can lay out your résumé, it is important to remember the key purpose of your résumé is to sell yourself and convince the employer that they should interview you for the job. To do this, you need to present the information in a way that highlights the most important strengths you could bring to the role. One way to do this is to consider the *newspaper principle*. When you read a newspaper, you will notice that the most appealing or interesting stories are in big print on the front page, in order to get your attention and stimulate you to pick it up, read it and turn the page to read more. You can use the same principle when writing your résumé. Depending on the job you are applying for and what experience you have to offer, you may decide to put education, skills or experience at the start of your résumé, based on what would be most appealing to the potential employer.

Activity 2

Format, content and presentation are all important elements in achieving a good résumé. Remember, first impressions count, and your résumé is often the first information an employer will consider in your job application. Therefore it is very important to ensure your résumé convinces the employer you are worthy of inviting in for an interview. To assess the effectiveness and impact of a résumé, it can be useful to compare and assess two versions of the same résumé.

On pages 26 and 27 you will find two résumés for the same person (Résumés 1 and 2). Study both of them and then, working in groups, answer the questions below.

- 1 Which résumé seems more effective and why?
- 2 Discuss the *Guidelines for effective résumés* on the following page. Analyse Résumés 1 and 2 using the guidelines and make notes. Is there anything in Résumé 2 that you would change?
- 3 Discuss your ideas with the whole class.

Guidelines for effective résumés

INFORMATION/CONTENT

- **Readability**
writing is clear, information is easily found and presented in a logical sequence
key information on first page
presented in simple MS Word format, eg do not use PowerPoint etc
- **Relevance to jobs being applied for**
skills - training - experience - achievements
previous company/workplace job titles match
- **Tone**
confident - professional - positive
achievement orientated (*use of action/positive words as discussed on pages 30-33*)

STRUCTURE

- **Format**
consistent
length - spacing - margins
bold or underlining (eg: your name should be in larger font and in bold, as this is key information you want an employer to remember.) There is no need to have a large, bold heading saying Résumé or CV, as it is obvious to a reader what the document is without this.
size and type of font
capital letters - headings - neat
use of bullet points
- **Sequencing of information**
work experience - usually starts with most recent job, although not necessarily in a functional résumé
appropriate sequence of sections
remember the *newspaper principle*
- **Choice of information**
include only information relevant for the job - give specific details
avoid irrelevant information, eg there is no need to include a photo of yourself

LANGUAGE

- **Sentence structure**
point form - short sentences
no personal pronouns (I, he/she) or articles (the/a)
- **Vocabulary**
appropriate headings
positive, professional choice of nouns and action verbs
appropriate up-to-date technical language
no obscure abbreviations
- **Grammar and spelling**
appropriate use of grammar and accurate spelling

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

RÉSUMÉ 1

MS ELIZABETH ESPINOSA

2/36 Wells Street,

Campbelltown NSW

Tel: 02 520 93855

Date of Birth: 21.9.61

Marital Status: Married

Languages: Tagalog

Permanent resident of Australia

EDUCATION

1. Bachelor of Science in Sanitary Engineering,
1991 - 1993 National University, Manila, Philippines
2. Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering
1979 - 1984 University of the east, Manila, Philippines
3. July to September 2006
Skillmax Program, Newcastle, Australia
4. July 2005 Course in Business Administration & Reception,
Employment and Training Australia, Gosford, New South Wales

I have also attended several seminars and workshops in my field.

EMPLOYMENT

1. Engineering Assistant with Kue-S Services
Feb. - Apr. 2005
Duties:
I studied the architectural and engineering drawings of the prospective projects and calculated the quantity of materials needed. I also had meetings with client's etc.
2. Civil Engineer in Design Science Incorporated,
Philippines 2002 – 2003
Duties:
I made investigations on-site and went over the work with engineer 's etc. I also had to do analysis and testing.
3. Design Engineer for the N.I.A, Philippines. 1986 - 1990
Responsibilities included designing and checking other engineers work etc. for which I was awarded a certificate of appreciation
4. I was a lecturer at the Far Eastern University, in the Philippines.
1985 –1998

I am eligible to be a member of the Institute of Engineers, Australia.

COMPUTER SKILLS: Microsoft Word Processing, Microsoft Excel, EDP concepts with Wordstar, Algorithm Language Formulation, Turbo Pascal Programming, Lotus Smart Suit

INTERESTS: I am interested in travelling, going on picnics, volleyball, reading, gardening, sewing, golf, reading, movies etc.

REFERENCES: I have enclosed my references with the résumé

RÉSUMÉ 2

Ms Elizabeth ESPINOSA

2/36 Wells Street
Campbelltown NSW 2560
Resident Status: Permanent Resident of Australia

Phone: (02) 52093855
Mobile: 0416 643 819
Email: e-spinosa@optus.com.au

EDUCATION

1991 – 1993

Bachelor of Science in Sanitary Engineering

National University, Manila, Philippines

1979 - 1984

Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering

University of the East, Manila, Philippines

*(Assessed by Department of Education and Training
as comparable to Australian Bachelor Degree)*

FURTHER TRAINING

July to September 2006

Skillmax Program, Newcastle, Australia

Job-seeking skills Course for Overseas Professionals

July 2005

Course in Business Administration & Reception

Employment and Training Australia, Gosford, New South Wales

COMPUTER SKILLS

- EDP Concepts with Wordstar
- Microsoft Word Processing
- Algorithm Language Formulation
- Microsoft Excel
- Turbo Pascal Programming
- Lotus Smart Suite

EMPLOYMENT

February - April 2008

Engineering Assistant

Kue-S Services, St Mary's, NSW

*Sub-contractor conducting estimates for construction of residential
and commercial properties*

Responsibilities

- Studied architectural and engineering drawings of prospective projects
- Calculated quantities of materials according to contract and specifications
- Liaised with clients, estimators and contractors Achievement
- Completed assigned tasks before stipulated deadlines

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

2004 - 2006

Civil Engineer

Design Science Incorporated, Philippines

Private engineering firm that carried out structural designs

Responsibilities

- Conducted on-site investigations pertaining to soil mechanics, hydrology and hydraulics
- Drafted conceptual design-plans using consolidated field data.
- Verified and collated data with engineers and construction staff.
- Analysed hydrologic and hydraulic conditions of underground streams
- Tested statistical stability of proposed structures
- Coordinated site activities with surveyors, geologist and government officials

Achievement

- Selected to represent company in reviewing tenders of contractors sent to Bureau of Public Works and Highways

1997 - 2000

Design Engineer

National Irrigation Administration, Philippines

Government Department carrying out overseeing of irrigation plans

Responsibilities

- Designed lay-outs of canals and adjoining roads
- Prepared preliminary estimates and cost of materials
- Established canal elements from collated field data
- Analysed and evaluated hydraulic and structural designs
- Reviewed work of other engineers prior to final design Achievement
- Awarded Certificate of Appreciation for work by Chief Engineer
- Promoted to position of Acting Head of Design Section field office in Palawan but declined offer due to other work commitments

June 1990 - October 1996

Lecturer

Far Eastern University, Philippines

Responsibilities

- Planned and delivered lectures to civil engineering undergraduates
- Conducted tutorials, seminars and class sessions
- Advised students on academic matters
- Demonstrated application of engineering principles at class sessions
- Organised seminars on current changes / development in technology
- Participated in cost development and at departmental meetings

Achievement

- Awarded plaque of appreciation for active participation in the academic and social activities of university
- Chosen by Dean of Engineering to prepare program of activities for continuing development and education of faculty members

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Eligible for membership of Institute of Engineers, Australia.

SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

March 2005	Orientation in the Use of Laboratory Apparatuses for Materials and Soil Testing <i>Geotesting International Inc., Philippines</i>
November 2002	Zonal Consultative Conference on the Policies and Standards for Engineering Education <i>University of the Philippines</i>
September 2001	Computers in Engineering Education <i>Development Academy of the Philippines</i>
February 1999	Solid Waste Management <i>National University, Philippines</i>
September 1994	Water Resource Engineering <i>University of the East, Philippines</i>

INTERESTS

- Volleyball
- Gardening
- Sewing

REFERREES

Ms Lucy Perez
Structural Engineer
Design Science Inc.
301 Los Santos Avenue
Manila, Philippines
Ph: (632) 457 8062
Email: lperez@hotmail.com.
Ph: (632) 924 5778

Mr Ramon Ledesma
Chief Engineer
Design & Specification Section
National Irrigation Administration
Expana Avenue
Manila, Philippines
Ph: (632) 924 5606
Fax: (632) 941 5607

Choosing résumé vocabulary

Activity 3

When writing about previous work experience it is important to:

- choose appropriate verbs/nouns which give a positive and professional tone to your résumé
- be consistent in your choice of verbs/nouns; begin each element of work experience with the verb in the same tense, eg analysed, estimated, solved, rather than analysing, estimating, solution

Now form small groups with people who have similar work backgrounds to you and complete the following two tasks.

- a Talk about your work experience in a positive way. Choose positive/ action verbs from the tables on pages 19 and 20 and give examples of what you did. For example:**

Verb	Who/What
<i>demonstrated</i>	<i>new products to customers and retailers</i>
<i>liaised</i>	<i>with supervisor about progress reports</i>

Look in all categories in the table because even though you might not have worked as a supervisor, for example, some of your functions might have been supervisory.

- b** Now talk about your achievements in a positive way. They should be measurable. Choose action verbs from the list below and give examples of what you did; then add details about: *how much? how long? how big? or how many?* For example:

Action verb	Who/What	%/ \$	Details
<i>reduced</i>	<i>lost time on repair work by</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>through standardising checking procedures</i>
<i>introduced</i>	<i>new system for keeping records</i>		<i>which increased efficiency</i>
<i>increased</i>	<i>number of computers serviced each week</i>	<i>by 3%</i>	<i>through introducing new roster system</i>
<i>promoted to</i>	<i>service manager</i>		<i>after two years</i>
<i>completed</i>	<i>projects</i>		<i>ahead of deadlines</i>
<i>won</i>	<i>an award from Department of Town Planning</i>		<i>for renovation of historic hotel</i>

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

POSITIVE VERBS

Investigating & researching		Setting up	Training	Improving/ Changing
analyse	save	adapt	adapt	achieve
assess	simplify	apply		
	solve	arrange	conduct	change
classify	structure			combine
collate	study	conceive	deliver	convert
compile	survey	create	demonstrate	
cost	synthesise	demonstrate	develop	decrease
		design	consolidate	devise
define	tabulate	develop	guide	edit
design	test			eliminate
determine		establish	instruct	expand
diagnose	verify		improve	
document	visualise	formulate		gain
		generate	train	
estimate			update	illustrate
evaluate		implement		increase
examine		improve		
		initiate		minimise
forecast		innovate		modernise
		introduce		modify
gather		invent		
generate				recommend
group		open		redesign
				reduce
identify		plan		refine
interview		prepare		reorganise
inquire		promote		resolve
inspect				restructure
interpret		schedule		revise
investigate				
observe				
organise				
perceive				
plan				
recognise				
re-evaluate				
report				
research				
review				

POSITIVE VERBS

Supervising/Managing/Training		Financial/ Accounting	Performing other duties	
act	manage	analyse	assemble	recommend
administer	motivate	appraise	assist	record
advise				repair
allocate	observe	budget	build	represent
analyse	organise			
anticipate	originate	calculate	calculate	schedule
appraise		compile	carry out	service
attend	participate	compute		summarise
authorise	prepare	estimate	check	
	present		complete	tabulate
brief	propose	project	construct	transfer
			contract	troubleshoot
conduct	recommend	review	contribute	
control	represent			undertake
coordinate	resolve	tabulate	deliver	utilise
create	review		dispatch	
	revise		distribute	write
define			document	
delegate	select		expedite	
deliver	supervise			
determine			finalise	
develop			handle	
devise				
direct			illustrate	
			interview	
establish				
evaluate			maintain	
examine			market	
execute				
expedite			negotiate	
formulate				
			operate	
guide			organise	
implement			participate	
initiate			perform	
instruct			prepare	
integrate			present	
interpret			prioritise	
investigate			produce	
			program	
			proof-read	
			provide	
			publish	

Choosing your résumé format

Activity 4

Form small groups with people who have similar work backgrounds to you and complete the following tasks.

- 1 Look at the headings in the table on the next page. These can help you organise information in your résumé. Also read the explanatory notes about résumé headings on page 23.
- 2 Under some sections, you may need to divide your information into separate categories. Look at the category headings under each section on page 22 and underline any you might want to use. Also add any other headings you want to use in any section.

Résumé headings

<p>PERSONAL DETAILS Name Address Phone/Fax Email (no need for headings)</p> <p>CAREER OBJECTIVE Career goal Career objective</p> <p>PROFILE SUMMARY Career profile Career summary</p> <p>SUMMARY OF SKILLS Key skills Professional skills Field of expertise Demonstrated expertise/skills Skills, experience and personal attributes</p> <p>EDUCATION Qualifications Academic qualifications Educational achievements Relevant training</p> <p>OTHER TRAINING Business training Professional development Professional workshops Short courses Further training Currently studying</p>	<p>OTHER SKILLS Computer skills Equipment used Keyboard skills Licences Languages</p> <p>ACHIEVEMENTS Career achievements Professional achievements Personal achievements</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT Professional experience Work experience Employment history Employment Local experience Overseas experience</p> <p>INTERESTS OUTSIDE WORK Interests and activities Community involvement Sporting and leisure activities Community activities</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP/S</p> <p>PUBLICATIONS</p> <p>SPECIAL AWARDS</p> <p>REFEREES</p> <p>REFERENCES</p>
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Explanatory notes about résumés

Personal details do not need headings or subheadings such as name and address. On the other hand you can include subheadings such as *phone*, *email* and *fax*. There is also no need to include a photo in your résumé - the employer is more interested in the skills you have to offer the role than what you look like. Remember the newspaper principle: one of the things you want a potential employer to remember is your name. It is therefore a good idea to write your name and contact details in bold print so it stands out.

Career objective/profile summary is critical when sending your résumé to an agency or *on spec* to a company but it could also be used when applying for an advertised position. It is also quite a good idea for new graduates or those with little work experience in their chosen field, eg: people who want to change their career path. It is important to remember that your career objective must be relevant to the job you are applying for. This could mean tailoring your career objective to different jobs you are applying for.

Your career/skills overview is a good way of getting your best selling points on the first page of your résumé. See the example given by Kate Southam in her article at the bottom of page 32. Many recruitment agencies now use various word recognition tools to search through large volumes of résumés. For example, a recruitment consultant may search their database for a *business analyst* with *MS Excel* experience. If your résumé does not include these specific words, it would not come up in the search and you would not be considered for the job. If you are sending your résumé via email, you need to consider key words that may be used to search résumés and ensure those relevant to the jobs you are looking for are included in your résumé.

Education: Only your highest achievements. You need not talk about your high school results if you have tertiary qualifications.

Other training and skills: Only if relevant to the job applied for. However, remember that you may have skills in one area that are transferable to another.

Achievements: Write these to demonstrate your strengths, such as using your initiative, organisational skills or capacity for hard work. Duties/responsibilities can often be turned into achievements and if possible the best idea is to write an achievement-oriented résumé. (See Activity 3)

Employment: Give details of relevant employment for the previous ten years. Any experience before that needs less detail. Describe the companies you have worked for (using italics is good for this) so that employers can see at a glance if you have worked for similar companies to the one you are applying to.

Interests outside work: Not too many - show you have time for work! - and show how they might be beneficial to you as an employee of their company, eg sporting activities keep you fit and relaxed while team strategies can be transferred to the workplace. You can also put interests related to your work. However, to show some interests unconnected with work can indicate that you are a well-rounded person and interesting to work with. Often interests require personal skills that are needed in your job. For example, if your interests include sewing or carpentry this could indicate a good eye for detail.

Professional membership/s: Current and/or Australian. Do not use acronyms or abbreviations that would be difficult to recognise.

Publications: These can be added near the end of the résumé or in an appendix if there are a lot.

Special awards: For training or employment. *Don't forget to include these.*

Referees/References: Two or three is a good number. Make at least one of them Australian. A referee from a place of work is ideal, your supervisor/manager would be best; a fellow employee would be possible. The person must be very familiar with your work and you could help them by giving details of the position you have applied for and the kinds of questions they might be asked. It is also important that referees speak good English. If yours do not, then the next best thing is to get a written reference which you might have to prepare yourself for your former employer to sign, if they do not write in English. Most importantly you must be truthful about your referees and references as they are usually checked.

Remember résumés sent to employment agencies or *on spec* to companies will probably need to be more comprehensive than those written when applying to a company for an advertised position. When sending your résumé to an employment agency, it is important therefore to be aware that they may search their database of résumés using a word search facility. This means that, when a job becomes available, the recruitment consultant will enter key words that relate to the job into their database to identify all résumés that contain those words. When writing your résumé therefore, you may want to consider the key words that may be used to search for résumés for the types of jobs you are interested in and include them in your résumé.

Online résumés

Your CV has a fatal error

You haven't been rejected until you've been rejected by a computer. Software programs are now automatically assessing - and deleting - job applications, reports Steve Dow.

Job applications are being automatically assessed and rejected by an artificial intelligence technology developed in Sydney.

There is no doubt the Internet has revolutionised job searching. But along the way it has created an unexpected headache for bosses: too many people are applying for jobs. Internet sites have made it easy for jobseekers to apply for dozens, even hundreds, of jobs with a few mouse clicks.

"Ease of application has created an email bottleneck," says the website of the Sydney firm Recruit Advantage. There are "masses of unqualified job applicants" and there is "no time to respond to job applicant emails".

So Recruit Advantage invented a software program that did it automatically. The program, TurboRecruit, "automatically pre-screens job candidates to YOUR requirements".

The technology can spit out hundreds of "thanks, but no thanks" letters every morning before employment agency consultants even switch on their computers, and many job-seekers will never know.

The technology is already being used by companies such as Coca-Cola Amatil and government departments, including Centrelink, Sydney Water and the Department of Defence. It is in place at many of the big recruitment agencies such as Olivier, Talent2, Kelly Services, Manpower, Slade Group, ARS

Recruitment, BTI Consultants, Talisman Group and IPA Personnel.

Some job seekers have wondered at the speed with which rejection letters are appearing in their inboxes. Thomas Davey, 42, worked in marketing for P&O Cruises for five years. Since leaving that position, he's spent the past six weeks sending out 20 job applications for similar positions, mostly to recruitment agencies that post ads on job websites.

Of the 20 applications, Davey received 10 swift, form-like responses within a day or two, informing him his application had been rejected or that a decision was pending. The other 10 got past the preliminary round, with one interview now scheduled.

Davey likes the convenience of applying for jobs online but is unimpressed to learn that computers have made many of the decisions on his applications without human eyes ever so much as taking a peep.

"It's great to get access to daily job vacancies as they're listed," he says. "It would be nice, however, to think that someone's looking at your resume. I'm concerned that if the CV gets scanned and the computer doesn't see the right words, then good candidates are slipping through the cracks."

Private and government recruitment agencies, including Centrelink, claim that the use of sophisticated software to sort employment

applications has become necessary to cope with the huge number of online applications.

Internet job advertisements, although down 1.2 per cent in July, have grown by more than a third in the past year, according to the ANZ Job Ads series. ANZ counted more than 100,000 job ads on the internet each week in July, compared to about 20,000 in newspapers. The number of online job applications, however, is much higher.

But some employee advocates are critical of computerised rejection. Phil Powell, a director of Professional Career Strategies, which helps employees negotiate the job market says computer rejection might be fair at entry-level positions, which can attract hundreds of applicants. But in senior positions, such as a marketing job for which Davey is suited, a computer is inadequate for assessing capabilities.

"People aren't generally aware what's happening to their application," Powell says. "They either get a rejection letter or a phone call. But in either situation, they're not aware of the process beyond the surface."

Recruit Advantage introduced its TurboRecruit "job candidate management software" in Australia in late 2001. Chief executive Jafeth Rodriguez says the software screens and ranks candidates. Recruitment agencies then decide, based on the ranking, whether to read a resume or not.

In the past fortnight Recruit Advantage has been trialling voice-enabled technology as a further way of screening job candidates. If the trial succeeds, some job advertisements are likely to require applicants to call a number and answer preliminary screening questions prompted by a recorded message.

"You get all sorts of reactions," Rodriguez says. "Yes, I guess you get a bit of frustration. But that's all about managing expectations.

"There's going to be some level of frustration from a candidate when a decision is made by a computer. But you have to realise some positions attract hundreds of applications. It's become a management problem and that's what we're trying to fix."

Centrelink declined to comment. However, its national recruitment contract manager, Steve Bond, recently confirmed in *Online Recruitment* magazine that much of the agency's communication with job applicants was now automated, reducing time and costs.

"The advantage we saw in TurboRecruit was, apart from managing job postings and capturing candidate responses, we were able to tailor the questionnaire to meet the needs of any given recruitment campaign," he said.

A spokesman for Coca-Cola Amatil, Alec Wagstaff, insisted job applicants were "not really being rejected by a computer. This is a process that previously would have occurred in an inefficient way. It's only a first-cull process."

In June the then federal Employment Services Minister, Mal Brough,

trumpeted an increasing shift to internet job advertising as vindication of the Federal Government's enhancement of its JobSearch website, which offers around 70,000 jobs. Many of the big job agencies, using software such as TurboRecruit, post ads on the JobSearch site.

Big commercial job sites such as Seek are now also offering electronic candidate screening. For an extra \$50, employers who place an ad on Seek's website can nominate criteria that, if the job applicant fails, will ensure a computer spits out a rejection letter.

Olivier, a Sydney company recruiter, has been posting job vacancies online since 1995. Consultants were being inundated, spending three hours a day looking at resumes in their email inboxes before finding time to telephone candidates. For the past

People aren't generally aware what's happening to their application.

Phil Powell, director of Professional Career Strategies

two months, Olivier has been using the TurboRecruit program. For a recently advertised entry-level finance and accounting position, Olivier received 60 job applications, says director Robert Olivier.

An online form asked for a resume and posed two questions, assessed with artificial intelligence: did the applicant hold a university degree, and did the applicant hold an appropriate TAFE qualification?

The employer wanted a "no" to the first question, so about 30 applications with a "yes" answer were deleted without any human intervention. Of the remaining 25 to 30 applicants, the TurboRecruit software gave each a percentage

ranking based on key words found in the resume. In the end, three people were interviewed for the position.

But what if good candidates fall through the cracks because they have not included the correct key words? Olivier admits the system is not fool-proof. "I'd urge people to be more discerning in reading the job ads," he says. "[But] we'd probably have reached the same conclusion that we did. The system has helped us to focus on people who most likely fit the requirements."

Powell says the move to online job applications is here to stay. He says jobseekers can learn to maximise their chances by using certain key words the computer is likely to pick up.

But the technology is already advancing. Psychometric testing,

which determines a jobseeker's psychological competency for a job, is often carried out after an initial face-to-face interview.

Now, software is being introduced

to assess an applicant's psychological make-up online. A recruitment consultancy, Chandler MacLeod, already offers employers instant computer-generated reports on applicants, which it says have scientific validity and use "best-practice" psycho-logical methodology.

Robert Olivier, for one, says he is unlikely to use online psychometric testing at his agency. The process is too intrusive for people when they are yet to find out if they will get an interview, he says.

Activity 5

- a Recruitment agencies increasingly expect applications to be made online. Read the article on computer screening of online résumés entitled *Your CV has a fatal error* by Steve Dow, Sydney Morning Herald, 13 August 2004. On the basis of this article, what résumé format do you think would be safer to use for an online application? Why?
- b In a group, discuss whether online screening of résumés means you will have to do a different résumé for each job application. What alternatives are there?
- c Using language from Activity 3 as appropriate, prepare a master résumé for yourself. You will be able to keep this master résumé and adapt it to specific job advertisements in the future: Check assessment criteria in learning outcome E1.

NB If you want your résumé to be effective, make sure you complete the fields for *Personal profile* and *Skills summary*. It is also important to remember that if you are sending your résumé to a recruitment consultant, they are likely to see hundreds of résumés every week. You may therefore want to personalise and tailor your résumé so it is not presented in exactly the same way as other candidates who have also created their résumé using this tool. You will also need to remember to include key words that could be used by recruitment consultants when searching their database.

Preparing your résumé for the job market

It is now time to develop/refine your résumé for job applications. There are two articles following the résumé template that you may wish to read; they provide some further advice on improving your résumé.

Activity 6

- a Find an advertisement for a job vacancy you might be interested in applying for. Begin developing a résumé for this vacancy, using the template below.
- b Show your draft to another class member and then your teacher to get feedback. You may like to refer to the guidelines and positive/action words presented in this module when creating or refining your résumé.
- c You may need to go through several drafts before printing your final copy.
- d Check to assessment criteria in Learning Outcome E2.

Résumé template

[Title: Résumé]

Full name

Contact details

Contact telephone number: (area code) number
Mobile telephone number: full number
Email address: full address, case sensitive
Postal address: Street number
City STATE Postcode

Career objective

[Give a short summary of the kind of work that you would like to do and the skills you would like to develop. Try to think of this job as part of a career you would like to do for the next five to ten years]

Employment history

[You might list all the jobs or voluntary work you have done. Or you might just put down the jobs that will be most relevant to the places you are applying for. List each job by the year you started and the year you ended work there. Start with the most recent job you have held]

[month year – month year]

[Name of company/organisation]

[Indicate if it was work experience]

- [skill]
- [skill]

[month year – month year]

[Name of company/organisation]

[Indicate if it was work experience]

- [skill]
- [skill]

[month year – month year]

[Name of company/organisation]

[Indicate if it was work experience]

- [skill]
- [skill]

[month year – month year]

[Name of company/organisation]

[Indicate if it was work experience]

- [skill]
- [skill]

[month year – month year]

[Name of company/organisation]

[Indicate if it was work experience]

- [skill]
- [skill]

Education

[Start a list of the highest and most recent qualifications you have and end with the last year of high school that you completed. If you graduated from high school, write down the last two years of your high school certificate]

[Year gained degree]

[Name of course or degree]

[Name of TAFE or University]

[Year gained degree]

[Name of course or degree]

[Name of TAFE or University]

[First year-last year]

[Full name of secondary school]

[State]

[Name of Certificate]

Short courses

[Name of educational institution]

- [Title of the course, and the date you were awarded it]

Relevant skills

[List the most important skills that you have gained from your paid or volunteer work, or education that may be needed in your new job, eg customer service]

- [skill]

- [skill]

Special achievements

- [Give the title and date for any work or skills related awards you may have achieved]

Hobbies and interests

- [Pick activities that might bring skills to your new job. For example, mentioning any sporting clubs you belong to might show that you have team skills. Just provide the name of the club or the name of the hobbies that are relevant]

Referees

[Try to supply contact details for three people that you have recently worked for either in paid or volunteer work or teachers you have studied with at school, TAFE or university]

Full name

Position title, Business or educational institution

(area code) phone number

mobile phone number email address

Full name

Position title, Business or educational institution

(area code) phone number

mobile phone number email address

Full name

Position title, Business or educational institution

(area code) phone number

mobile phone number email address

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

MIGRANTS MUST ADAPT RÉSUMÉS FOR AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYERS

by Lisa LaRue, Careers Counsellor from CareerWorx Careers and Transitions. See website www.careerworx.com.au for other career information.

One of the biggest mistakes new migrants make when attempting to enter into the Australian job market is sticking with the résumé from their country of origin.

It is absolutely crucial that newly arrived jobseekers tailor their résumés towards Australian employers. Lisa LaRue of CareerWorx Careers & Transitions specialises in adapting overseas résumés for the Australian job market.

A lot of migrant jobseekers contact me for help when they have been unable to find work for months after arriving in Australia. The first thing I ask them to do is email me their résumé.

Some of the most common errors are spelling and grammatical mistakes. Another mistake is including obsolete information or detail which has no relevance to an Australian employer. Many contain too much personal information, which is a major faux pas in an Australian environment. Australian labour market law prohibits employers from discriminating against certain jobseekers.

There is no need to divulge your marital status, age or religion in your résumé. Unless you are applying for a teaching position at a religious school, it is not necessary to inform your potential employer of your religious beliefs.

Although employers are prohibited from discriminating against jobseekers, it would be naïve to assume that all employers adhere to the law all of the time. With this in mind, it is best not to mention your age in your résumé or cover letter. There is always the possibility that you could be discriminated against should the employer feel you are too young or too old for the position.

Migrant jobseekers should also ensure that their qualifications will be accepted by Australian employers. Overseas qualifications need to be recognised by the appropriate body for them to carry weight within the Australian job market. Information about having your qualifications recognised can be found at www.immi.gov.au/asri/

It is a good idea to have your résumé appraised by someone in Australia to ensure that it is easily understood and appeals to Australian employers.

RÉSUMÉ WRITING – AUSTRALIAN STYLE

by Kate Southam, Editor of CareerOne.com.au. Reprinted from CareerOne.com.au. To view articles on the CareerOne site, use the News & Advice tab at the top of the www.careerone.com.au home page.

The thought of writing a résumé fills many people with dread. However, all you need is a plan that covers both layout and content. CareerOne's website editor and Ask Kate columnist, Kate Southam passes on advice from the experts.

The plan below should help you produce a résumé that is easy to read and packed with facts employers want to know.

Contact details

Centre contact details at the top of the page. Include name, address, phone number, mobile and email. Make sure your name and phone/email contacts are on each page just in case the pages get separated after being printed out in hard copy. Only use professional-sounding email addresses. Emails used by couples or zany nicknames like evilpixie@..... should be replaced. This is a marketing document promoting you so use some variation of your name.

Birth date and marital status

You are not legally obliged to include either detail. Including marital status in this day and age just looks plain weird to me. As for age, MANY recruiters advise against it - there is just too much age prejudice out there. However, if you think displaying your birth date would be an advantage to you then go ahead.

Layout

Again, this is really open to debate but the best advice I've heard is keep it simple. Font style should be easy to read like 11 point Times New Roman or Arial. I've noticed many candidates use a table format but I find this wastes a lot of space and is hard to follow and ugly. Centering contact details and your career history or career summary (see following sections) is fine and then placing the other information flush left.

Bold for headings is easier to read than bold and underline (overkill). Use dot points if you want, but just the one type. I have seen résumés with a variety of dot points. Also avoid colours. The content of the résumé is the most important thing.

Summarising your strengths upfront

You can do this in two ways, either via a list of Key Strengths represented as dot points or by creating a section under a heading like **CAREER PROFILE**.

Key Strengths

Based on my conversations with recruitment consultants, a key strengths area represented with dot points is the popular option. The aim of the section is to give the person reading your résumé a quick snapshot of what you have to offer in the hope they instantly place you in the shortlist pile; to maximise the opportunity, for example:

- High-level computer skills including Excel, Word and PowerPoint.
- Five years' experience in customer service both face-to-face and phone-based.

... and you fill in the rest. As a guide, six points is good but there is no real rule. Another tip, be specific. I see a lot of Excellent Communication Skills but what does that mean?

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills acquired via study and customer service work.

Career Profile, Career Overview, Career Summary, Career Objective?

Many people start a résumé with a Career Objective. I think this is fine for school leavers or recent uni grads. For the rest of us, a Career Overview might be better. Employers want to know what you are going to do for them. Putting your expectation of your next employer in the first line of your résumé could be off putting. By all means conclude with a career objective, eg *While currently a product manager, my career goal is to move into general management.*

A **Career Overview** should provide the reader with a quick preview of what he or she will find in your résumé. It should be a few sentences and written as one paragraph. It should include a smattering of your professional, academic and industry training. Some personal attributes are optional. As stated, your career goal could serve as the last sentence.

For example: Career Overview

A sales management professional with seven years' experience in the media industry, I have worked on newspaper, web and television products. I have a proven track record of developing new business and motivating a team to consistently exceed targets. I've recently completed a Masters of Business Administration and am now seeking a new professional challenge.

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

By the way, the example is totally made up, but you get what I mean.

Also, avoid airy, fairy statements. Ian Napier of Flexiforce says that if a sentence doesn't contain factual information, ditch it.

For example, Ian has seen more than a few candidates describe their career goal as: *to utilise my skills in a professional environment for the mutual benefit of myself and employer.*

I hate that line, Ian says. *Where is this sentence coming from? It is stating the obvious and tells me nothing.*

Professional history

Outline your career history in reverse chronological order.

The structure to follow for each role is:

Job title, employer, dates, what you did, for whom and when.

Description of employer

This is appropriate for those coming from overseas or in cases where the company might be largely unknown. Organisations like IBM, News Limited, Suncorp or the big banks, to name a few examples, will need no explanation.

I read a résumé from a candidate with fabulous IT experience gained while working for the largest children's hospital in India but he didn't say that. The hospital name, without that description, might not ring any bells with an IT hiring manager in Australia.

Responsibilities

People make the mistake of believing the more responsibilities listed the better. Include **only** the key things you *were responsible for* (accountable for). Don't list every single thing you did. I have seen CVs where people include: *Attended a weekly team meeting.* So what? *Chairing* the weekly team meeting is a responsibility. See the difference?

Achievements (up to three per job is good).

This is where you list the things that you did that you were not paid to do. Items would include staff awards, special commendations, suggestions you put forward, scoped out or helped to implement that led to cost savings or an increase in revenue, access to new clients, higher levels of customer service, time efficiencies and so on.

Please note *meeting* a target is *not* an achievement - it's doing what you are paid to do. Exceeding a monthly target by an average of 30 per cent with a top result of 56 percent is an achievement.

Achievements show potential hirers what you are made of - and what they can expect you will do for them.

Indent your achievements by one tab on your résumé to make them stand out.

Answers and additional information

Activity 1

Background information and possible answers

- 1a human resources manager, manager, head of appropriate department, line manager, employment agency personnel, interview panel
 - b to persuade reader/readers to give you an interview
to summarise relevant skills, experience, training and achievements
 - c Capture attention by making sure that your key selling points are on the first page of your résumé, preferably these will include relevant key achievements; tailor your résumé to *fit* the job:
 - match elements of the company you are applying to with companies you have worked for, eg large/small company, manufacturing similar products
 - show similarities between your previous job descriptions and the advertised job
 - provide referees who are familiar with your work record and appreciate your skills and knowledge
 - anticipate the questions you may be asked - an exercise you should do when preparing your cover letter and for interviews
 - write in a style that will indicate that your personality will fit in well with the kind of company you're applying to, eg are they looking for a creative person, someone who is ambitious, someone who pays great attention to detail
 - d relevant personal details, qualifications and training, experience, skills, achievements, interests, referees
- 2 Use a chronological résumé when you want to emphasise your experience.

Use a functional résumé when you want to emphasise your skills, eg you are applying for jobs in a different area or if you have been employed for long periods of time.

Based on industry research, Jim Bright and Joanne Earl recommend a combination of both chronological and functional résumés for many situations. (See *Résumés that get shortlisted* 2004 2nd ed Allen & Unwin, Sydney 2004)

Activity 2

- 1 **Résumé 2** is the most effective in every way. **Résumé 1** does not succeed because:
 - it is inconsistent in its layout
 - it uses numbers instead of bullets
 - it uses personal pronouns and articles
 - it includes unnecessary information
 - it is badly set out making it difficult to locate important information such as dates, degrees and previous employment
 - there are not enough employment responsibilities, which should be listed in bullet form
 - there are no achievements

UNIT 3: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

- it has spelling and punctuation mistakes
- it uses *etc.* instead of *including* or *such as*

Résumé 2 succeeds because:

- the layout is clearer with more headings and subheadings
- the information is consistent and easily located by listing dates on the left-hand side, using italics to describe companies and bold for headings, positions and companies
- as well as her home number Elizabeth has given her mobile number and her email address making it much easier to get in touch with her
- her computer skills have been given more importance
- Elizabeth has not put so many interests in Résumé 2, showing that she has time to do her job! The interests also illustrate that she has a means of coping with a high-pressured job
- Elizabeth has given two referees from her previous jobs mentioned in her résumé who should be extremely familiar with her work. After her work experience, she will be able to add an Australian reference

2 **The following points should be considered:**

- if Elizabeth is applying for an engineering position then her Further Training Section might not be relevant. It is quite alright to include the Skillmax Program when you are looking for unpaid work experience but probably not a good idea when you are seeking paid employment as you will not want to draw attention to the fact that you have not easily been able to find work
- the first achievement could be more specific and stronger, eg 100% of estimates completed before stipulated deadline
- dates could have been added to some of the achievements

Activity 3

b **Additional information**

- Some employers and agencies prefer to see prominence given to achievements over duties and it is a good idea to include at least one achievement for each year of work. If you are finding it difficult to think of an achievement, some career advisors suggest describing duties that you have performed particularly well as achievements.
- Write about your achievements in terms of outcomes and special results, again choosing appropriate verbs and giving specific details of what was achieved.

To make your résumé suitable for *electronic scanning*, besides using the appropriate jargon for your area you need to look at the format:

- use a conservative font, eg Times, Times New Roman, Optima, Arial, Palatino, or Courier and not bigger than 10 to 14 points
- no underlining
- 70-80 characters per line
- avoid columns
- each piece of information on a fresh line - left aligned
- don't fold if sending by mail

If you want to email your résumé it is easiest to send it as an attachment. Sending it any other way can affect the format as there can be too many characters per line - 70-80 characters per line is the best number.

Activity 4

- a A functional résumé, because it is more likely to contain the keywords from your experience that the computer will scan for.
- b If the keywords the computer is searching for come from the job specifications or the selection criteria, they will vary from one job to another.

An alternative, especially if you are applying for a public sector position, is to address the selection criteria as sections in your cover letter (see *Units C and D of this module*). In which, case you can just include a quite brief generic résumé as an attachment.