

RESUME AND COVER LETTER SELF-REVIEW

The following check list covers the items that the Career Services office will look for when reviewing your resume and cover letter. Before submitting your documents for our review, please use these review/checklists to do your own review and try to meet the standards shown.

Remember: Employers may spend thirty seconds to a minute and a half examining your resume in the initial screening process. They may then discard, file or further consider your qualifications (invite you in for an interview). Your resume and cover letter must be perfect (**no errors!**) in order to pass the first minimal level of screening.

RESUME SELF - REVIEW

FORMAT (Chronological, Functional, Combination)

_____ This format showcases my background and qualifications

_____ If Chronological format, items are in REVERSE chronological order (most recent first and work backwards)

_____ If Functional or Combination format, section headings showcase strongest achievements and skills

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

_____ Contact information: Full name at top of resume; may be in CAPS or **bold face**

_____ Accessible address, telephone number(s) and email; include permanent and school addresses, if different
PSU.EDU email address is recommended

_____ Objective, if included, is clear, naming specific skills to be utilized; brief and to the point; not “me- centered” (Graduate students or others with extensive experience may use a Professional Summary or Profile section instead).

_____ Section headings are descriptive (minimum: EDUCATION and EXPERIENCE) to showcase relevant information.
SKILLS section supports objective

CONTENT AND SKILLS SELLING ABILITY

_____ Highlights main points (bullets, CAPITALIZATION, underlining, *italics*, or **bold**)

_____ Includes relevant points (relate to the objective; **communicate a strength; emphasize results**) Not just a list of job duties

_____ Uses descriptive phrases (begin with strong action verbs; **include concrete examples**)

_____ Ends with a strength (organizations, volunteer service, or extracurricular activities)

_____ Uses goal directed, specific, self-confident statements showcasing accomplishments and results or skills used

_____ Statements specify quantifiable or qualitative results, if possible

STYLE

_____ Consistent punctuation and formatting style throughout resume

_____ Error free, **no misspellings** (Use spell-checker, but don't rely on it exclusively!)

_____ Grammatically correct; appropriate and consistent verb tense used within sections

_____ Designed for skimming; concise and to the point; phrases begin with verbs; no prose or “I” statements

OVERALL APPEARANCE

- _____ Appropriate length (1 page preferred; 2 page maximum—name and page number appears at top of second page)
- _____ High quality paper (moderate to heavy weight cotton bond in a conservative color)
- _____ Letter quality, laser-printed, or type-set text
- _____ Balanced page (ample margins, sections, lines and words evenly spaced).
- _____ Easy to read type-size (10 – 12 pt. usually) and font style
- _____ Visually pleasing; professional looking; easy to pick out main points

ADDITIONAL HINTS

- _____ "References available on request" at the end of the resume; references' names and complete contact information are on a separate page
- _____ Personal information (religion, age, marital status, etc.) is **NOT** included
- _____ Abbreviations or acronyms are written out, unless very commonly understood (e.g. MBA)

COVER LETTER SELF-REVIEW

- _____ Acceptable business letter format is used (generally left justified items, single spaced paragraphs, with double spaces between paragraphs)
- _____ Heading at the top includes my 2 line address and the current date
- _____ Inside address of the recipient is included with his/her job title, if known
- _____ Greeting is professional- **Dear Mr. / Ms. So-and-So:** Alternate example- **Dear Intern Recruiter:**
- _____ Letter is customized to individual employer and is not just a generic letter
- _____ First paragraph makes a strong start as to why I am writing to this particular employer
- _____ Middle paragraph(s) highlights some of my strengths and skills as they relate to this job or company
- _____ Closing paragraph indicates how to contact me, and that I will follow-up in a week
- _____ There is space for my signature below the closing phrase ("Sincerely") and my name is typed below my signature
- _____ The word "Enclosure" is below my name, to indicate that my resume is included with the letter

Additional resume and cover letter information (books, tapes, samples, etc.) are available to borrow from the Career Services and the campus libraries.