

Resume & Cover Letter Guide

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CAREER CENTER OVERVIEW FOR THIS GUIDE

This guide focuses on providing an overview of resume and cover letter tips. Throughout our overview, we acknowledge the general differences between resumes, which are focused more on experiences and industry achievements as well as curriculum vitae (CVs), which are focused more on academic pursuits and research or publications. Please note that exact content and format of your resume and cover letter will vary by industry, years of experiences, and purposes for writing. The ultimate goal is for you to be “career ready” by writing precise, concise, and relevant documents for your field of interest and career pursuits from networking to job shadowing to internships to employment.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), “career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management... Career readiness is the foundation upon which a successful career is launched” ([NACE: “What Is Career Readiness?”](#)).

At Suffolk University, we are dedicated to the success of our students and alums, and we believe every graduate should engage in the following to be career ready:

- [Ongoing Career Planning](#)
- [Articulating Professional Value](#)
- [Building Social Capital](#)
- [Social Identity Reflection](#)
- [Experiential Career Development](#)
- [Strategic Career Transitions](#)

We acknowledge that the word “professional” or “professionalism” has been used in ways that perpetuate systemic bias and inequity. We strive to empower seekers to recognize the importance of context and make informed decisions based on their background, goals, and priorities. We welcome you to have a conversation with us regarding “professionalism” and to access our resources on [Equity and Access](#).

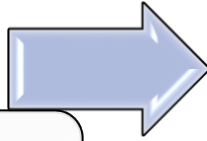
Being *career ready* requires inquiry and inventory of your goals, interests, priorities, strengths, and areas of growth. Being *career ready* encourages ongoing reflection and exploration. Being *career ready* strategizes your next steps as you learn more about yourself and the organizations you aspire to join. Writing detailed and strategic resumes and cover letters are ways you may embark on your journey to career readiness!

For more information, [make an appointment](#) with a Career Advisor through the Career Center or email careers@suffolk.edu today!

RESUMES VS. CURRICULUM VITAE

Resumes

- Most relevant experiences
- 1-2 pages in length
- Focus on industry or job-related skills
- Highlight related work experiences



Curriculum Vitae

- Whole course of your career
- 4-10 pages in length
- Focus on academia
- Highlight research, teaching, publications

Generally, when networking and applying for positions outside of academia, resumes are customarily used in the United States of America (U.S.); this includes networking, internships, and formal employment opportunities. However, internationally and even domestically the terms resume and curriculum vitae or “CV” are often used interchangeably for shorthand. When determining which you will need for your career interests or application purposes, review the differences above. Please note that graduate school applications, including doctoral programs, may be willing to accept both types of documents and will often be looking for research and publication achievements, so it is important to prepare a curriculum vitae accordingly.

OVERVIEW OF RESUMES

Your resume should be designed to catch the interest of your readers, distinguish you from other candidates, and generate an interview. Just as an advertisement cannot say all things to all audiences, a resume cannot be so general that it is appropriate for all jobs.

It should be focused and targeted to a specific audience whether that be an admissions committee for a graduate school application, a prospective employer, or even a new networking lead.

While planning and writing your resume, you will need to research your targeted field and particular positions of interest, look closely at job descriptions or program missions, and use

keywords and phrases you find to describe your knowledge, experience, and activities. You should pay special attention to the transferable skills and competencies desired by your field of interest.

You may find it helpful to have a few versions of your resume that you will use to target specific employers or types of positions.

General Guidelines

- Focus your resume on quantifiable accomplishments and results.
- Use action verbs to describe your achievements. Read on for samples!
- Keep the resume to 1 page with recent and relevant roles but no more than 2 pages.
- Ensure that it is error free by avoiding grammar, spelling, or formatting mistakes.
- Save as a .pdf to ensure no formatting conversion errors but keep a .doc/.docx version.

Please note that certain employers use Applicant Tracking Systems or Resume Parsers, which are software that screen candidates based on document content, matching language from a candidate's specific skills or achievements to the language of the job description (i.e. KEY words or themes that repeat throughout).

Some of these systems may require or function more accurately in screening candidates through a .doc/.docx format. Alternatively, if no preferences exist, .pdfs will ensure there are no formatting conversion errors when your readers access your resume using different systems and computers as well as more protection against document alterations.

If explicit instructions have not been provided to you for the employer's preferred format, consider including both formats as long as the application fields allow multiple uploads.

However, if you are submitting your resume via email, then you may consider more simply and securely using a .pdf format.

Presentation

- Incorporate 0.7 to 1.0 margins on both top/bottom and left/right margins.
- Use different font styles consistently to emphasize different headings vs. subheadings.
- Capitalize formal titles from degrees, employers or institutions, and roles held.
- Ensure consistent spaces between entries and sections; minimize to save space.
- Add month and year ranges for *all* entries (ex: Sept. 2020-May 2021).
- Use key words and phrases appropriate to your field, including skills and experiences.

Content

- **Contact information:** identify preferred name, phone number, email, LinkedIn, and personal webpage address (if available), and physical address (if relevant). *Omit* personal details such as date of birth/age, country of origin, social security number for resumes in the U.S.
- **Summary:** summarize your qualifications and career goals which may include a specific job title or target industry in 3-5 lines of text; this may take the place of an objective statement that targets a specific type of position or exist in addition to it as long as the content of each is not redundant.
- **Education:** list most recent or advanced degrees first, including certificate programs, study abroad, or other trainings.
- **Honors:** identify any awards or honors, including merit or academic recognitions as well as scholarships.
- **Experience:** list in reverse chronological order (i.e. most recent first), include accomplishments and results, work activities, and responsibilities. Your experiences may be broken down into multiple sections such as employment, related work experiences, leadership, community outreach or service, teaching, research, etc.
- **Skills:** include a separate section highlight technical, software, language, laboratory, and other industry-specific expertise. You may include these in list format but note proficiency levels where applicable from beginner to intermediate to advanced to native or fluent, especially for languages.
- **Professional affiliations:** note any professional associations related to your major or employment objective with which you have engaged for networking, continuing education, or specific career development.

Please note that even though some samples or resources may suggest including a “References” section or statement on the resume, you are not required to include one. Typically, employers and program admissions will ask for references when applicable *separately*, so you do not need to occupy space on the resume to acknowledge this.

Creating a Summary Section

A summary consists of two to three sentences detailing what you have to offer an employer or program in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience. It also conveys what kind of candidate you are. Here is an example:

SAMPLE 1: Certified paralegal with legal experience ranging from personal injury, immigration law, criminal law, business litigation, and international arbitration. Experienced legal researcher and writer with excellent oral and written communication skills. Fluent in French and Spanish.

Summary sections on resumes are a marketing tool that enable you to highlight your most important qualifications. Summaries are used as the first section of a resume, and they function as a mini advertisement for the other sections that highlight the specifics of your different experiences. For those with a diverse background, a summary helps you guide the reader towards understanding the many parts of your story!

To create your summary, collect job postings to understand what hiring managers find desirable for the types of positions you seek or will eventually seek. Then review your past positions and accomplishments and develop a list of your matching qualifications. If you are targeting 2-3 different types of positions or industries, you can create different resumes with a targeted summary for each.

Keep your summary brief and avoid listing vague skills or clichés, such as “team player with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.” Instead, provide facts about your work history or training that would entice your reader to contact you. Consider including a bulleted list of 4-6 areas of expertise.

Any claims that you make in the summary section should be supported by examples of accomplishments in various roles in the rest of the resume; otherwise, they will not be convincing.

More sample summary statements include the following:

SAMPLE 2: Healthcare industry professional with product marketing, market research and clinical management experience. Proven strengths in:

Strategic planning

Project management

New business development

Problem resolution

Analytic assessments

Collaborative teambuilding

SAMPLE 3: Ten years of consultative account management experience in identifying new clients, analyzing customer needs, proposing business and technology solutions, and negotiating and overseeing the placement of new products and services.

SAMPLE 4: Creative entrepreneurial executive with comprehensive management experience gained in both business start-up and Fortune 500 environments. Industries include financial services, computer sales and product distribution, and telecommunications. Demonstrated success in:

- *Creating new business ventures*
- *Securing venture capital*
- *Implementing and managing sales and marketing strategies*
- *Managing large departments*

Action Words

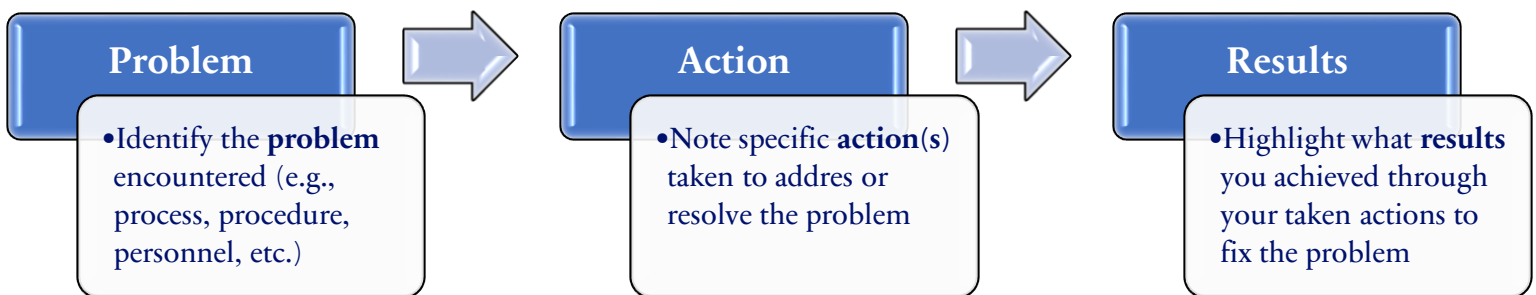
Lead with active verbs to describe your experiences and accomplishments. The following is a brief list of verbs you may use to guide your resume descriptions. Such active verbs often not only mark technical achievements, but also your interpersonal, organizational, and leadership skills.

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| • accentuated | • adjusted | • anchored | • audited |
| • accomplished | • administered | • anticipated | • balanced |
| • accelerated | • advanced | • applied | • brainstormed |
| • achieved | • advised | • arranged | • briefed |
| • acquired | • aligned | • articulated | • budgeted |
| • adapted | • altered | • assembled | • built |
| • addressed | • analyzed | • assisted | • calculated |

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| • cataloged | • crafted | • drafted | • guided |
| • centralized | • created | • edited | • hired |
| • coached | • critiqued | • eliminated | • implemented |
| • collaborated | • cultivated | • encouraged | • improved |
| • collected | • decreased | • enforced | • informed |
| • compared | • demonstrated | • engineered | • insured |
| • compiled | • designed | • enhanced | • interpreted |
| • composed | • determined | • established | • interviewed |
| • computed | • developed | • evaluated | • launched |
| • condensed | • devised | • exceeded | • led |
| • conducted | • differentiated | • expanded | • leveraged |
| • consolidated | • directed | • explained | • maintained |
| • constructed | • discovered | • forecasted | • managed |
| • contracted | • displayed | • formed | • marketed |
| • converted | • documented | • founded | • mastered |
| • coordinated | • doubled | • generated | • measured |

Bullet-Point Description Statements

Accomplishment statements go beyond just describing your experience or what you did in a job or internship. Accomplishment statements show your effectiveness and success as a candidate who *solves problems* (P) using *specific actions* (A) that *lead to results* (R). When writing accomplishment statements, use the PAR system:



Read below for more specific examples that may come up in your resume – how they may have been framed more simply versus more strategically upon PAR revisions!

BEFORE	AFTER
Filed papers for a doctor's office	Developed updated filing and organization system, which resulted in less time spent locating and retrieving patient files
Served customers at a restaurant	Promoted weekly specials resulting in a 20% increase in sales
Supervised camp activities	Supervised 10 children, ages 5-13, ensuring safety and experiential learning in a summer day camp
Volunteered as Program Council Treasurer	Saved \$10K annually by implementing new auditing system for the Program Council
Trained new employees	Trained more than 15 new employees over 12 months leading to improved customer satisfaction
Conducted market research	Researched media buying for two clients using databases, telephone surveys, and competitor data
Provided customer service	Provided attentive, high quality customer service leading to referrals generating over 50 new clients
Counseled youth	Completed diagnostic assessments, treatment plans, quarterly updates on up to 20 clients
Managed budget	Managed a \$350,00 budget, with a reduction of costs totaling 15% over two years

RESUME SAMPLES

Preferred Full Name (Personal Pronouns)
City, State | Phone Number | Email | Updated LinkedIn URL

Education

Suffolk University, Boston, MA September 2014 – May 2018
Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry, GPA 3.6, College Honors Program

Laboratory Skills

Basic Laboratory Techniques: Preparation and sterilization of solutions and buffers, pipetting
Biochemistry: Nickel affinity chromatography, SDS-PAGE, Bradford assay, western blot, UV-Vis spectrophotometry, coupled enzyme ATPase assays, fumarase assays, plate reader
Molecular Biology: PCR, basic primer design, agarose gel electrophoresis, plasmid and DNA purification, Nano-Drop, site-directed mutagenesis, bacterial transformation

Honors and Awards

College Honors Program and Dean's List September 2015 – May 2018
Excellence in Chemistry Award for Organic Chemistry May 2016

Research and Lab Experience

Suffolk University, Boston, MA January 2018 – May 2018

Advanced Biochemistry Research Course with Dr. Melanie Berkmen

- Conducted novel research on fumarase, the highly conserved Krebs cycle enzyme and tumor suppressor
- Utilized site-directed mutagenesis to make clinically relevant mutation in gene encoding human recombinant fumarase

Novartis Institute for Biomedical Research, Cambridge, MA June 2017 – September 2017

Virology Intern

- Analyzed the ability of DMSO differentiated Huh 7 cells in cell culture to acquire hepatocyte specific functions such as the metabolism of compounds, cytochrome P450 activity, albumin synthesis and urea excretion
- Investigated protein-protein interactions via mammalian 2-hybrid systems

BIDMC Molecular Virology Lab, Boston, MA

April 2016 – June 2017

Lab Technician

- Worked with Herpes Simplex Virus I (HSV), focusing on the ICP22 protein and its role as an activator of other HSV immediate early genes
- Used cell culture and molecular biology techniques such as transfections, cell counting, DNA isolation, cloning, PCR amplification, ELISA assays, Western blots, enzyme kinetics and immunofluorescence to determine ICP22's role as an activator

Publications and Presentations

Name A, Troke P, Osborne C. "Characterization of Huh7 cells and their permissivity for Hepatitis C Virus" 2007. Novartis Intern Poster Presentations

A.Kushnir, T. Thompson, J. Hilliard, M. Link, L. Pitcher, **A. Name**, P. Schaffer, D. Davido. (2007) HSV-1 ICP0 phosphorylation site mutants are attenuated for viral replication and impaired for reactivation. *In preparation*.

Teaching Experience

Suffolk University, Boston, MA September 2017 – Present

Genetics Study Group Leader

- Working with students to encourage interactive learning through member participation to the greatest extent possible, encouraging critical thinking, and time management.
- Role includes establishing the scope and objectives of the course, introducing basic concepts, keeping the group on target, and clarify areas of confusion.

/

Biochemistry Lab Teaching Assistant

- Assisting with preparation for the biochemistry labs
- Preparing written instructions for making solutions, reagents, and other important materials to be used in the lab.
- Working one on one with students to introduce them to basic biochemical techniques.

Educational and Scientific Associations

Suffolk Chapter of the American Chemical Society September 2016-Present
Beta Beta Beta Biological Society September 2017-Present
Member of Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society May 2015-Present

Preferred Full Name (Personal Pronouns)
City, State | Phone Number | Email | Updated LinkedIn URL

Education

Suffolk University	Boston, MA
<i>Bachelor of Science in Big Data & Business Analytics</i>	September 2016 - May 2020
<i>Honors & Awards: Dean's List</i>	
<i>Activities: Student Government Association</i>	
<i>Relevant Courses: Cybersecurity Fundamentals, Coding for Business, Experiential Financial Analysis</i>	

Experience

Wolf & Company, P.C.	Boston, MA
<i>Tax Intern</i>	January-April 2019

- Worked on and finished individual tax returns for high net worth individuals
- Assisted in completing corporate tax returns
- Trained on how to handle new tax laws and how they would affect the current year's returns
- Successfully kept up with the pace of completing work during busy season

Colony Grill	Milford, CT
<i>Hostess</i>	July 2017 & 2018

- Greeted and sat all customers, handled takeout orders and trained new employees
- Ensure that every guest felt welcome and important, even if we were on a wait for tables
- Handled all takeout orders and made sure they were all correct and given to the right customer
- Trained new hostesses and made sure they understood their responsibility/job as a hostess

Leadership & Volunteer Experience

Suffolk University Open House	Boston, MA
<i>Volunteer</i>	November 2016

- Helped deliver last minute items to Admissions the morning of the event
- Held signs and greeted every car as they came onto campus
- Stood at a checkpoint and answered any questions that passing visitors had including directions, and information about the campus

Skills & Interests

- Computer Skills: Proficient in CCH Axcess, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Languages: Some conversational Spanish, Introductory Italian
- Interests: tennis, reading, fashion, music



PREFERRED FULL NAME (PERSONAL PRONOUNS)
City, State | Phone Number | Email | Updated LinkedIn URL

EDUCATION

Suffolk University, Sawyer Business School Boston, MA
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Degree September 2017–May 2021
Major: Accounting; Minor: International Business; GPA: 3.7
Honors: Dean's List; SBS Accounting Faculty Term Scholarship Recipient
Study Abroad: **Suffolk University Madrid Campus**, Madrid, Spain January – May 2019

Bunker Hill Community College Boston, MA
Associate of Science Degree September 2015–May 2017
Major: Accounting; GPA: 3.8
Honors: Commonwealth Honors Program; Dean's List

ACADEMIC COURSES

**Federal Taxation; Intermediate Accounting I & II; Cost Accounting; Accounting Theory & Practice
Financial Reporting & Analysis; Global Business Ethics**

CAREER-RELATED EXPERIENCE

MassHousing Boston, MA
Treasury Department Intern June 2018–August 2018

- Calculated prepayments and payoff dates for loans to maintain accurate records
- Analyzed Affordable Housing Trust loan advances
- Updated vendor payment information using Excel; thoroughly documented all transactions

Suffolk University Free Tax Prep Center Boston, MA
Volunteer Tax Preparer January 2017–April 2017

- Attended 10 hours of training; passed certification exams for resident and nonresident tax return preparation
- Prepared tax returns using TaxWise software for nonresident, low-income, and veteran taxpayers
- Interviewed clients to gather financial, tax, and health care information
- Explained tax return results to clients and answered questions related to taxes owed or refund due
- Assisted fellow volunteers during busy times; provided encouragement and support

EMPLOYMENT

Starbucks Boston, MA
Customer Service Representative September 2015–June 2017

- Recorded customer orders; accurately prepared food and beverage items as requested
- Processed payments through cash, credit card, and mobile application transactions

VOLUNTEER AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Saint Francis House Boston, MA
Volunteer December 2018–Present

- Prepare and serve meals for homeless guests; provide companionship and engage in conversations

Suffolk University Student Government Association Boston, MA
Class Senator September 2017–Present

- Represent class of 2021 at meetings; communicate concerns and issues of interest to student body
- Coordinate two university-wide social events each semester resulting in increased student engagement on campus

SKILLS

Proficient in: TaxWise, Microsoft Office Suite, Intermediate Excel, Windows and Mac operating systems
Knowledge of: CCH Axxess, RIA Checkpoint, Bloomberg, Adobe Photoshop, Canva
Languages: Fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese



PREFERRED FULL NAME (PERSONAL PRONOUNS):
CITY, STATE | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL | UPDATED LINKEDIN URL

EDUCATION: SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY Boston, MA
Bachelor of Arts Candidate, English Major. September 2018–May 2022
GPA: 3.5
Member, Marketing Club

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL Lexington, MA
Diploma/Honors Curriculum September 2014–June 2018
Captain of Cheerleading Team, 2018
Cheerleader, 2015-2018
Business Manager and Writer, The Musket School Newspaper, 2017-2018

**EMPLOYMENT
EXPERIENCE:** CELLULAR ONE Waltham, MA
Customer Service Representative June 2019–August 2019

- Responded to customer inquiries to provide excellent service
- Marketed services to potential customers through demonstrations of products
- Managed scheduling of 10 part-time employees to ensure proper staffing of the customer service desk

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL Boston, MA
Community Health Nursing Intern March 2019–May 2019

- Reviewed and selected literature for use in pre-natal classes for new parents
- Measured, recorded, and charted blood pressure of personnel
- Observed and assisted nurses while they collected specimens ensuring accuracy

MARSHALLS Burlington, MA
Sales Clerk January 2016–March 2019

- Operated and balanced cash registers while processing customer purchases
- Earned Employee of the Month May 2013 by regularly meeting sales goals for TJX credit cards

**COMMUNITY
SERVICE:** LEXINGTON YOUTH SERVICES Lexington, MA
Youth Council Representative June 2014–June 2018

- Developed programming for town youth with a team of 6 volunteers
- Aided in raising funds over \$1000 for BYS youth foundation
- Maintained an active leadership role and participated in the Holiday Toy Drive, Santa Fund, Java Jam, Telethon

RESUME CHECKLIST

Formatting & Mechanics

- Resume is 1 page without appearing too dense (or 2 pages depending on experience and industry; check with a Career Advisor if not sure whether this applies to you); margins are no smaller than .5 inches.

- Font size is 10-12 point and is uniform throughout the resume. Recommended font styles include Garamond, Arial, Calibri, Georgia, Times, and Helvetica.

- Use of bold, italics, underlining, and capitalization is consistent per purpose (e.g. showcasing role titles in bold as a subheading) enhancing appearance and readability.

- Each education and experience entry is consistently formatted and includes: school and name of degree for education, employer and job title for experience, locations (city, state/country) as well as date ranges (typical month and year) for all entries.

- List degrees and experiences in reverse chronology (current to oldest) in each section.

- The document has been reviewed at least once or twice for typos, accuracy, and formatting.

Contact Information

- Resume includes accurate phone number, email address (school or personal – whichever you plan to check most frequently for your career pursuits), physical address (city, state and zip code – especially if you will be relocating while applying), and LinkedIn page.

- Links for a personal website or professional website are included if relevant to the industry.

Summary or Profile Statement

- Statement communicates your interests and major qualifications to the employer.
- Significant 2-3 skills and/or experiences for the role are highlighted in the statement.
- Statement is concise – no more than 3-4 sentences.

Education

- Education is generally the first section or the next section to appear on the resume after your summary or objective statement.
- Any honors/awards may be included (e.g. Dean’s List, scholarships, GPA over 3.0, etc.).
- Each educational institution attended after high school is listed. Freshmen and sophomores may include high school; juniors and seniors typically do not but certain private or specialized high schools (IB, international) are an exception.
- Study abroad is listed (institution, country, courses, and dates of study) if applicable.
- Degree titles are written formally avoiding abbreviations and including major(s) and/or minor(s).
- Specific coursework is optional and/or can be a separate section. Only list selected courses relevant to a position sought.

Experience

- Can be divided into different types (e.g. employment, leadership, community outreach, experiential learning, research, even career-related shadowing or assisting for those pursuing healthcare, etc.) to best highlight your skills and achievements.

- Include paid, volunteer, intern, and course-based experiences related to position sought.

- Each entry must include 4 items: employer/organization name, job title/role, location (i.e., city, state or country), and date range.

- Select and integrate a consistent bullet point style to lead your description of role accomplishments and skills; aim for 3-5 bullet points depending on the relevance of the job.

- Start descriptions with a variety of active verbs: present tense for current work; past tense for completed work.

- Emphasize quantifiable achievements as much as possible (e.g. percentages of growth or increases in sales or operations; increases in Social Media followers for new branding initiatives; numbers of procedures shadowed or assisted, etc.). Remember that your readers have not lived your experiences, so don't take what you may think of as "smaller" details for granted! If you are struggling to note achievements through your experience, then highlight interpersonal skills in this section (e.g., how you established teamwork, communication, organization, work ethic, etc.)

Skills

- Skills are identified by category such as technical, software programs, language, laboratory, and/or industry specific such as research or clinical, etc.

Proficiency level is included for languages (e.g. native, fluent, advanced, intermediate, proficient, beginner). Be sure you accurately express your proficiency level for interview follow up.

Remember to refer to your resume skills as you develop reflections in your cover letter and/or during the interview process with specific situations and experiences. These will serve as your road map for later highlights of your experiences and qualifications.

Additional Reminders

Make sure date ranges for activities and other involvements have been listed for all entries.

Document does not include use of personal pronouns (e.g., I, me, we) or subject statements such as “I ...” Narrative language such as this will be integrated in the cover letter instead!

Remember to review your document for spelling, typos, and other mechanics.

A list of references should NOT be included in the resume, nor should a reference statement. You may create a separate document for this using the same formatting and layout of your resume (contact information header, heading and subheading styles, fonts, etc.) to provide to employers when asked.

Save multiple formats of your resume, including .doc/docx/.pdf and upload the appropriate format based on the application instructions. If explicit instructions have not been provided to you for the employer’s preferred format, consider including both formats as long as the application fields allow multiple uploads.

OVERVIEW OF COVER LETTERS

The primary purpose of a cover letter is to indicate your interest in a particular position or employer and to highlight the skills, knowledge, and qualities in your background which relate to your pursuits. While a resume is a technical overview of your achievements, a cover letter is a narrative approach to provide meaning to your distinct experiences in pursuit of your next goal. For some applications, employers may not require cover letters or even provide an additional upload option separate from the resume. There are other times when it might be best to have your cover letter in the body of an email to an employer with your resume as an attached .pdf. *When in doubt but an opportunity presents itself to add an additional document to your candidate profile, you should include a cover letter.*

Presentation

The structure of the cover letter should represent a 1-page business letter, including a header, recipient, 3-4 paragraphs of content, and a sign-off salutation.

Your Header

- Can be the same header you use for your contact information in your resume
- You should put the date on the letter along the left margin

Employer Information

- Hiring Manager's name if known
- Hiring Manager's title if known
- Company name if known
- Full street address of company if known
- All information should be aligned along the left margin in letter format.

Salutations

- Open your letter with "Dear..."
- Close your letter with "Best/Regards/Sincerely..."
- Sign off with your name and/or relevant titles or degrees: i.e. "Anastasia Sivak, MSW"

Content

The cover letter is an opportunity to promote your skills, the relevant achievements you have had thus far, and the way that you will give back to your prospective community. Consider a 4-paragraph structure where you introduce yourself and why you are writing; describe your qualifications dynamically and concisely, quantifying accomplishments as much as possible; identify what you value about the pursuit at hand; and close with your gratitude for the opportunity. It is important to not only capture your story and your interests, but also reflect from the perspective of the employer: focusing on how your skills and expertise would be value added to their community.

Remember, as you determine your highlights, the employer has your resume as a companion document to look at for other information about you. Avoid discussing points that are not connected to the most important needs of the employer *and* do not list your achievements in resume format, simply copied and pasted into the letter. This will read redundantly! To begin strategically:

- 1) Read through the description and list the major needs or requirements indicated.
- 2) Prioritize your list according to what you perceive is most important to the employer; the more a skill or qualification is repeated in a description, the more likely it is a priority for the employer!
- 3) Address the top 3-5 needs in the letter, in order of importance, by relaying how or why you meet each need through connecting your relevant skills, experience, or accomplishments.

First Paragraph: The Introduction

- Introduce yourself and identify why or for what role you are writing.
- State how you learned about the position.
- Identify why you are interested in the position or employer.
- Indicate what qualifies you for the position as a preview of the next paragraphs by listing 2-3 key skills or qualifications you possess relevant for the role.

Second Paragraph: The Evidence

- Choose 1-2 experiences, courses, or projects that support your strength for the role and connect reflections of those individually with the needs of the employer based on the job description.
- Provide specific examples of how you have fulfilled similar requirements or responsibilities in the past, highlighting your results and achievements and making your skills transferrable this way.

Third Paragraph: The Connection

- Identify specifically what you know about the employer (their mission, brand, values, etc.) and how that excites you given your experiences and interests.
- Make explicit how you will support, enhance, and/or innovate within such a setting.

Final Paragraph: The Wrap-Up

- Reiterate your interest in the position.
- Note your preferred method of follow up (email, phone, etc.).
- Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

Process

As you write the cover letter, be sure to build in time for review. It is important to draft the content in at least two stages: *first* where you focus on content first to make sure nothing relevant has been missed and *second* where you focus on ensuring appropriate formatting and mechanics – no typos!

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Anastasia Sivak (she/her/hers)

Address
City, State

Phone Number
Email

Attention to **Hiring Manager**
ABC Communications
99 Atlantic Ave.
Boston, MA 02108

July 27, 2021

Dear Hiring Manager,

Introduction

I am contacting you regarding the position of Public Relations Assistant with ABC Communications. As a BSBA/Marketing honors graduate (3.7 GPA) from Suffolk University, I believe I bring the attention to detail, flexibility, and determination to excel in the role. The ABC Communications portfolio of dynamic public relations, social media, event management, and business development activities truly represents the work to which I hope to contribute my talents and enthusiasm. The current clients you serve, X, X, and Y, are addressing challenges I am interested in supporting.

Evidence

My concentration in public relations has prepared me well for the field. My public relations internship at Snow Partners required strong writing skills, experience interacting with clients, and knowledge of web design and analytics. Of particular interest, you will also see that two courses, Integrated Marketing Communications and eMarketing, provided a real focus on the interaction between the message and the customer or the client. Integrated Marketing Communications focused on creating a new identity package for the Andover Tutors & Associates. Activities included redesigning the client's brand and logo to coincide with the company's evolving services and developing targeted media lists and radio advertising. In eMarketing, I designed an event to raise money for the Boston Harbor Association, and then created comprehensive web and social media advertisements and messaging to generate an audience for the event.

Connection

I am confident that I bring the right portfolio – writing abilities, knowledge of current media resources, determination, and interpersonal skills – to meet the needs of ABC Communication and its growing clientele. Having had experiences in different organizational setting, I can offer a range of perspective on customer service while emphasizing collaboration and communication amidst your team.

Wrap up

Thank you for your time and consideration. Attached is my resume for your review, and I look forward to the follow up. I will reach out in a few weeks to inquire about where you are in your hiring process.

Sincerely,
Anastasia Sivak

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Formatting & Mechanics

- The final cover letter reads at 1 page, 3-4 paragraphs and includes your contact information header for brand consistency with your resume.
- The letter is addressed to the correct person with their correct title. If there is no person listed, you may use a general term such as “Dear Hiring Manager.”
- It does not repeat everything listed on your resume but focuses on what is most relevant.
- The letter is personalized to the employer and the specific job with concrete examples of how you can fulfill the most important needs for the role in formal letter format.
- The letter includes why you are sincerely interested in the job or employer and how you heard about the position.
- There are no spelling or grammatical errors or typos.
- Electronic versions are saved and delivered as .pdf or .doc/.docx depending on the application requirements and online application system compatibility.

CAREER CENTER CONTACTS

Department Line: 617-573-8480

Department Email: careers@suffolk.edu

Website: <https://www.suffolk.edu/career-center>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/suffolk_careers/

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sucareers/>

