

# Resumes, References, and Cover Letters

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## *A Helpful Guide for Entering the Job Market*

### Resume Writing Tips and Instructions

#### Step 1

##### Brainstorm

Employment trends indicate workers will change careers not just jobs, but careers, several times in a lifetime. For this reason, resume writing is a skill you will use throughout your life.

Before beginning your resume, put together a list of experiences and accomplishments from work, volunteer projects, school, extracurricular activities, and international work or study. Keep this information on file and add to it throughout your career for future resume writing.

##### Write everything down and do not limit yourself!

Action verbs from the list on page 12 may help you remember things you have done and give you ideas for new ways to describe those activities. Friends or family familiar with your work and work style can be good sources of assistance as well.

Gather documents related to your experiences, such as performance reviews, letters of appreciation, job descriptions, documents, or presentations you wrote or prepared. This can be helpful now with your brainstorming, and later to review, check, and confirm details.

Categories to generate ideas and organize your information include:

- Education (universities attended, classes related to your career goal, certifications, special training)
- Experience (paid/unpaid, part/full-time, internships, military)
- Volunteer experience (church, civic groups, tutoring)
- Activities and honors (student organizations, professional associations, scholarships, academic achievements, sororities or fraternities)
- Important career-related skills (computer proficiency, foreign languages, problem solving, critical thinking, communication abilities)
- Personal achievements (financing your education, overcoming obstacles)
- Hobbies and interests (planning trips, managing personal investments)

Keep your accomplishments history file and add to it over time because this will not be the last time you write a resume. Once you compile and organize information in your accomplishments history, it will be invaluable for all resumes you write throughout your career.

### Possible Section Headings

- Education
- Relevant Experience
- Internships
- Employment History
- Professional Experience
- Research Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Study Abroad Experience
- International Experience
- Computer Skills
- Technical Skills
- Computer Software
- Certification
- Licensure
- Professional Memberships
- Specialized Training
- Languages
- Awards and Recognition
- Honors and Awards
- Activities
- Leadership
- Additional Experience
- Additional Information
- Work Authorization
- Objective
- Summary of Qualifications
- Profile

## Step 2

### Organize Initial Draft

#### *Name & Contact Information (Required)*

- Include your name, phone number, address (optional), and email. You may consider including your local address if it serves a purpose, such as applying for positions in that town. If posting online, you may choose to omit the address altogether or include only a city and state for personal safety reasons.
- If you use your cell phone as your contact phone number, be prepared to handle a professional conversation wherever you may answer your calls. Only use a work phone if it is appropriate for you to receive calls at work.
- Your phone number should be listed using one of these formats: 785-987-6543, (316) 123-4567, 785.555.5555.

- Your email address should be professional (DO NOT USE [hotlips@ku.edu](mailto:hotlips@ku.edu)). If you are a graduating senior, use a non-KU email address.
- Your name is generally bold and a few points larger in font size than the rest of the resume.
- Be consistent with the name you use across all of your materials, including resume, cover letter, references and online application.

### *What's in a Name?*

Students who go by a name different than their legal name or those who've changed their name (example: due to change in marital status) may be confused when it comes to deciding on what to use when applying for a job. It's best to be consistent across all job-related materials. Remember that employers will need to match up your resume, cover letter, online application materials, calls to references, and background checks.

Below are some tips for addressing this issue in your professional documents:

- Including your middle name is optional.
- If you go by your middle name, include your legal first name as well, (example: James (Dave) Phillips).
- If you go by a nickname or are an international student who has chosen an alternative name that you wish to be referred by, include your legal name along with your preferred name. For example: Wenfei (Cathy) Zhou or John "Jack" Smith, Jr.
- If you have hyphenated or multiple last names, you may want to use your middle initial, instead of your middle name, to signal to the employer where your last name begins (example: Mary J. Kelly Gregory).
- If your last name has changed, you may include your former last name such as Sarah (Williams) Hanson. It's also important to let your references know that your name has changed before an employer calls them for a reference check. They may not realize that Sarah Hanson is the same Sarah Williams they knew at one time.
- It's a good idea to send a copy of your resume (including both names) to all of your references prior to the reference check – it will give them a better idea of your professional activities and serve as a reminder that your name has changed.

### *Example of Contact Information:*

John "Jack" Anderson IV

1415 Louisiana Street

Lawrence, KS 66045

785-123-4567

[Jack.andersonIV@ku.edu](mailto:Jack.andersonIV@ku.edu)

### *Objective (Optional)*

In general, objectives are no longer commonly used. An objective may be useful if you need to clarify the position for which you are applying. For example, if a job posting lists several positions, an objective allows you to identify your preferred area.

Examples of objectives:

- To obtain an entry-level sales position in the consumer products industry.
- Seeking a summer internship in investment banking with XYZ Company.

### *Summary of Qualifications/Profile (Optional)*

Typically used by job seekers with more professional experience or varied experience, this summary should focus on the big picture and help the employer understand how your experiences fit together. Summary information briefly communicates your experience, training, and personal abilities as they relate to the specific job you seek. Information of this type may be included in a cover letter, eliminating the need to include it in the resume. Details of your experiences belong in other sections of the resume.

Examples:

- Two years of experience in a medical environment; familiar with confidentiality issues and medical terminology.
- Strong analytical skills developed through lab experience in chemistry and biology.
- Proven communication skills as demonstrated through club leadership, debate competition at state level, and writing for the university student newspaper.

### *Education (Required)*

This section can include your higher education degrees and certificates as well as noncredit learning. Your information should include:

- Degree (i.e., Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts)
- Major(s)
- Minors, concentrations, or areas of emphases
- University name, city, and state
- Month and year of graduation
- GPA(s) (typically if above 3.0)—If you list anything other than your overall GPA, be sure to specify which GPA you are using.

### *Example of Education:*

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

Bachelor of General Studies in Geography, May 2022

- Minor in Geology
- Leadership Engagement Certificate
- GPA 3.65

Independently financed 75% of college education through scholarships and employment.

List your most recent degree first (Ph.D., Master, Bachelor). You don't need to list every college or university at which you have taken classes. Once you are in college, high school is not typically included on a resume unless you are a freshman or you have a good reason why you want an employer to know where you went to high school.

Including academic awards or scholarships can show academic breadth and intellectual accomplishment. Sometimes it may be beneficial to include courses relevant to the position for which you are applying.

If applicable, it can be a good idea to include a statement about your contribution toward financing your education.

### *Experience (Required)*

The experience section should communicate what you accomplished in past paid or unpaid work experiences.

- Include the position title, employer/organization name, location (city, state), and dates with months and years.
- Typically your experience is listed in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience first.
- Highlight transferable skills and abilities rather than describing work duties and responsibilities. Think about the types of things that you did in your job or activities that relate to the types of things you will be doing in your future professional positions.
- Do not use full sentences to describe your experience; use short phrases beginning with an action verb. Vary your verbs, limiting words like “worked” and “responsible for.”
  - For example, “Interviewed, hired, and trained new team members” or “Led closing of store by assigning roles at the appropriate time, balancing the cash registers, securing all cash, and setting the alarm.”
- Describe your experience in a result-oriented fashion because employers know the best predictor of future performance is past performance.
- Whenever possible, use concrete information to qualify and/or quantify your experience. For example, “Increased sales by 25% over a three-month period” or “Taught a class of 300 students.”
- Consider the type of position for which you are applying. You may want to try to use the words listed in the position description when describing your experience. Highlight the skills that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Generally new college graduates will not include experiences from high school or earlier. However, if you have relevant experience (i.e., you owned your own business) or if you are earlier in your college career (i.e., a freshman or sophomore), it may be appropriate to include experiences from high school.
- Include around 2 to 5 bullets to describe each experience.

- Use present tense when describing current positions. Use past tense when describing your past experiences.

### *Descriptions of Experience*

#### Example 1

- Not Good: Responsible for publicity.
- Better: Interacted successfully with public affairs representatives and local media.
- Best: Increased community awareness of agency through interaction with public affairs representatives and local media.

#### Example 2

- Not Good: Duties included handling customer complaints.
- Better: Resolved service and billing problems.
- Best: Recognized for promptness and professionalism for resolving service and billing problems.

#### Example 3

- Not Good: Responsibilities included adhering to safety policies and ensuring other lifeguards knew policies.
- Better: Carried out safety precautions and instructed staff in the proper use of equipment.
- Best: Carried out safety precautions and instructed staff in the proper use of equipment, resulting in a 50% reduction of injury accidents over the summer.

#### Example 4

- Not Good: Dealt with delinquent youth.
- Better: Explained team strategies and instructed youth on how to execute strategies.
- Best: Explained team strategies and instructed youth on how to execute them. Development of enthusiasm and skills led to winning the city competition.

### *Activities & Organizations (Optional)*

This section can include membership in campus or community activities, professional organizations, volunteer activities, or relevant interests. You may choose to format this section as a list, or you may choose to set it up with the same format as your jobs with descriptions of the leadership roles you performed in these organizations.

Activities might:

- Demonstrate a well-rounded person with more dimensions than just work.
- Point out skills that have been demonstrated in your nonprofessional life.
- Account for gaps in employment.

- Start conversations (possibly the employer shares or is intrigued by our interest).

#### Activities Examples

- University of Kansas Student Ambassador
- Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs
- Alpha Chi Omega Sorority
- Scholarship Coordinator
- Chairperson of Recruitment Committee
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters Volunteer

When you choose to include activities and interests, be aware of “hot buttons.” A hot button is an activity or interest to which some employers may have a strong positive or negative reaction, such as religious or political affiliations. When you have an activity or interest that is a “hot button,” you have three options. Make an informed and reflective choice.

Options include:

- Include this information on your resume—Many applicants feel the employer should know who they are, inside and outside of the workplace, and they may not want to work for an employer who cannot accept them as a whole individual.
- Omit this information—You may want the opportunity to present yourself as a candidate rather than be prematurely discounted due to the employer’s bias.
- Generalize these activities/interests—Present them in a generic form at (“Director of a choir” without specifying religion or denomination).

Interests are unstructured individual pursuits and can be included if relevant. Examples would be golf, marathon running, personal investment management. When considering if you want to include an interest, think about how the employer would view the activity as well as the space available on your resume.

#### *Honors & Awards (Optional)*

This section can include scholarships, honor roll, dean’s list, competitive awards, juried shows, and so on.

- You may want to provide some information on the context of the award if it is not evident. For instance, “One of ten students selected from across the nation for the Fullbright Scholarship.”
- Do not include dollar amounts for scholarships.
- Your honors and awards may be listed as a separate section or may be included within your Education section if there are only a few items in your list.

Honors and Awards Examples:

- Golden Key National Honor Society
- Dean’s List, six semesters

- Leadership Scholarship.

### *Skills (Optional)*

This section is included to highlight particular abilities. Technical skills, laboratory skills, and proficiency or fluency in a foreign language are found in this section. Skills should relate to the positions for which you are applying. The placement of this section on your resume may vary depending on the relevancy to the employer. Soft skills such as “great communicator”, “team player”, and “strong leader” should be reflected in your bullet points and your cover letter, not in your skills section.

### *Work Authorization (Optional)*

You can include this section if it is important for you to share your work authorization status. International students would not generally include their work status on their resume unless specifically requested by an employer.

Work Authorization Example:

- Work Authorization: United States Permanent Resident - fully authorized to work in the U.S.

### *References (Required but separate from the resume)*

The statement “References Available Upon Request” is not needed as this is a given in the job search process. Reference names and information are generally listed on a separate page (see References section in this handout). Usually references are provided to an employer once they are requested or at an interview.

Remember...

- Resumes do not get jobs; they get interviews.
- Resumes should convey your unique skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying.
- Some items may be appropriate under various headings. For example, scholarships could be listed under Education, Honors and Awards, or Study Abroad sections. Use your best judgement to determine which section makes the most sense for your resume.
- Resumes should not include every detail about you. They should highlight the specifics that make you a qualified candidate for the position you seek.
- Resumes should not be so short or so vague that an employer has no idea what your skills are or what you did in your last job.
- Human resources professionals know that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. In your resume, highlight the results of your experiences.



## Step 3

### Format It

Resumes will vary by profession and will change based on your experience level. It is your resume, so be sure to create a resume that reflects who you are while also targeting the employer's needs.

Pass the 15-second glance test. Employers see hundreds of resumes, and they skim first. If this first test is passed, they may look at your resume more thoroughly.

- When ordering information and sections in your resume, prioritize according to the needs of the employer. Put the most important information toward the top and to the left.
- Choose a format and headings that effectively communicate the combination of skills and abilities that highlight your qualifications for the position and provide insight into you as a unique person. Refer to Possible Section Headings box for ideas (See Page 2).
- Length of resume varies according to field of interest and level of experience. Generally, undergraduates with little or no professional experience will have a one-page resume. Experienced workers and some graduate students, along with students in certain disciplines, may have two pages. See your career services office for help in determining the appropriate length.

### Formatting and Writing Tips

- Make the resume easy to skim: bullets, short declarative phrases, easy-to-read font - 10 to 12 points, no abbreviations.
- Use one font style throughout the resume; avoid script fonts. Times New Roman and Arial are good choices.
- Do not use graphics, shadowing, clip art, or decorative bullets (use plain bullets).
- Use bold or underlining appropriately but sparingly.
- Arrange your headings, sections, and bullet points in order of importance and relevance to the employer/position.
- Put key information on the left and near the top of the page whenever possible (for example, job title rather than employment dates listed at the far left).
- Write your material in order of importance and relevance to the employer/position.
- Begin phrases with action verbs (See Page 18).
- Avoid generalities and focus on specifics about experience, projects, and products.
- Quantify experience when possible (Employee of the Month, Received customer service ratings of 9.8/10, Managed a budget of \$2,000).
- Be consistent in the format, layout, and spacing throughout.

### Resume Styles

#### *Reverse Chronological Resume*

The traditional resume style lists everything in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent experience and working backward. Most resumes for new college graduates are

written in this format, and employers are accustomed to seeing this style of resume. Reverse Chronological resumes are particularly effective in the following cases:

- You are or will be a new college graduate.
- You have experience in the field of interest.
- You can demonstrate measurable results from work activities (such as: “Marketed events, resulting in 50% increase in attendance”).
- You have held impressive job titles and/or have worked for big-name employers.
- You can demonstrate promotions and increased responsibilities.

### *Functional Resume*

The functional resume summarizes your professional “functions” or experience and minimizes employment history. Functional resumes are often useful for:

- Experienced workers and those returning to the workforce because it minimizes dates.
- Career changers because it outlines transferable work skills.
- Emphasizing knowledge and skills that have not been used in recent work.

Elements of both reverse chronological and functional styles can be combined if needed to show your experience.

### *Applicant Tracking Systems*

Applicant tracking systems (ATS) are a type of software application used by most large companies, as well as many small and mid-sized companies to sort through resumes and organize applicant information. Typically, a company will use their ATS to determine which resumes will be reviewed by a recruiter. Companies use different systems, so be sure to read through the instructions when applying. For example, some systems may require you to post your resume as .pdf while others may not be able to read a .pdf.

ATS’s will typically search for key words and try to find candidates with the greatest match to the company’s posting. It is important for you to look closely at the position description and try to use the same key words as the company whenever possible.

There are several websites that allow a job seeker to input their resume and a position description to be analyzed for the percentage of match. Use key words in a way that makes sense because eventually a person will review your resume.

### *Resume Formatting Tips for Applicant Tracking Systems*

- Remove any stylized formatting (i.e. bullets, bolding, italics) for easy passing into online forms.
- Use a hyphen (-) or asterisk (\*) instead of bullets or other special characters.
- Use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS for section headers (warning: spell check won’t catch mistakes!).
- Indent lines using the space bar.
- Save your document as a text file (.txt).

### *Resume Templates and Resume Wizards*

Your resume is a reflection of you and your accomplishments. Utilizing a word processing resume template or wizard that produces a document similar to others may reflect that you did not give significant thought and consideration to your application. It is important that you learn how to write and produce an effective resume that best represents the value you can bring to an employer. Difficulty in formatting and inappropriate headings are just two of the issues that often arise with resume templates and wizards. KU Career Services staff members are available to assist you in getting started and finding the most appropriate resume writing solution for you.

In addition, ATS's often see templates and wizards as viruses and will not read them. It's also important to keep section headings simple, use consistent formatting for text and dates, and avoid tables or text boxes, and use a .docx or a .pdf file format (depending on the posting's instructions). Some of the older systems may not be able to discriminate verb tense (e.g. "manage" vs. "managed") so you may want to match the key words exactly. You may be able to search which ATS the company you are applying to is using, which can give you an idea of what that system can read. Some systems can't read serif type fonts, such as Times New Roman, so you may want to stick to a sans serif font such as Calibri for Arial.

## Step 4

### *Proofread and Edit*

Many human resource directors see the resume as a reflection of the applicant. Spelling errors, poor grammar, misalignment, poor organization, smudges, wordiness or vagueness will produce negative impressions.

- Contact the University Career Center and make an appointment to have a professional career advisor look over your resume.
- Ask your references, a family member, friend, or roommate to review your resume. They are often great at catching errors.

### *Checklist for Proofreading Your Resume*

- Spell check your resume but be aware that it will not pick up on all errors.
- Does it fit comfortably within the page? Is there an appropriate amount of white space?
- Is the resume on cotton bond paper?
- Is the print clear, unsmudged, and large enough to read - does it pass the photocopy test?
- Did you use too much bold, italic, or underlining? Does content support the objective?
- Could you be more concise?
- Is it too short? Does it look as though you struggled to fill a page?
- Has extraneous material been eliminated?
- Does the format present your qualifications in the most effective manner?
- Is all important information included and easy to find? Is the format uniform throughout?

- Does the resume market your abilities and paint a picture that makes an employer want to know more about you?

## Step 5

### Prepare Different Versions

Paper Versions are highly designed with bullets, underlining, and other highlights. For the finished paper resume, use good quality paper (at least 20% cotton bond): white, ivory, or a very pale gray. Avoid patterns that would give a “dirty” appearance when copied. Typically you would bring paper copies of your resume to a career fair or an interview.

Electronic Versions look the same as your paper version when emailed or pasted into a company resume database. Send it as a PDF file to preserve formatting. Saving your resume as a Google document may affect the format negatively.

Plain Text Version: you would remove any stylized formatting (i.e., bullets, bolding, italics) and then it can be pasted into an email message or cut and pasted into online forms.

- Save as text files.
- Enter no more than 65 characters (including spaces) across the screen, then hit the “return” or “enter” key to force the line to wrap. In some instances 65 characters per line may be too many.
- Indent lines by using the space bar.
- Use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS for section headers.
- Surround formerly bolded subheadings within major sections with asterisks (\*).
- Rebuild lists using a hyphen (-), asterisk (\*), or plus sign (+) at the beginning of each line instead of bullets or other special characters.
- If horizontal lines are desired, create them by using a series of dashes.

Email your resume to yourself and a friend to see how it looks. Identify and correct any formatting problems before sending it to potential employers.

### Online Resumes

Before posting your resume on the Internet, consider whether you want your resume to be public. There are security issues inherent in posting personal contact information online. Check the confidentiality of the database or service where you are posting your resume. Never use your Social Security Number, date of birth, or other information that might make you vulnerable to identity theft.

There are ways to control the information you make available online:

- Consider creating a free email account at Yahoo! Or Gmail to use only for job-search purposes with the possibilities that you will stop using the email account once employment has been secured.

- Consider renting a post office box or a private mail box from a mail receiving agency to use during your job search. This will eliminate the need to use a street address as your mailing address in the information posted on the web.
- Determine whether your posted resume can be updated at no cost and whether it will be deleted from the databank if you do not update it within a specified time.

### *Business Resume Examples*

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading left justified in bold as student's name. For example, Joe Business. There is a black bar running horizontally separating the name from the body of the resume. Underneath the bar is the students address, city, state, zip code, phone number, and email. The resume is structured as the following:

- Heading title left justified
- Business/organization left justified, location right justified on the same line.
- Position left justified, date right justified on the same line.
- Position details in list format.

The example given in the resume example is as follows;

- Education (Heading title)
- The University of Kansas (Organization left justified) Lawrence, KS (Location right justified)
- Bachelor of Science, Marketing (Position left justified) May 2013 (Date right justified)
- International Business and Chinese Concentration
- Overall GPA: 3.85; Marking GPA: 3.92 (Details in list format)

This format is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. This paper is formatted in the same way as the previous resume with different examples. Some format changes include the student name is bolded and centered at the top of the page with the students details and contact information also centered underneath, and underneath the Education section is a line for Accounting Majors intending to do the MAcc which says: Intend to complete Master of Accounting.]

### *Computer Engineering Resume Examples*

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading left justified in bold is student's name. Underneath student's name is current address and Permanent address (left justified) and email and phone number (right justified).

The structure of the resume is as follows;

#### **EDUCATION:**

##### **Organization**

*Position and date*

Details in list format

One example of this structure within the resume is as follows;

#### **INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:**

##### **Koch Industries, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota**

*Project Manager Intern, Summer 2013*

Provided engineering support for the Build-it and Construction group including design, permits, and certification for planned projects.

Organized and led all client meetings and oversaw all project communication.

Managed five projects, estimated at \$1.5 million.

This format is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. This resume has the same structure as the previous resume with different examples. Some format changes include no use of italics, and there is a line underneath an Education section which instructs "Only include your high school if you are a freshman or there is a specific reason why the employer needs to be aware of this information." This section has the example as follows:

Free State High School, Lawrence, KS.

High School Diploma, Awarded June 2013

GPA 3.9/4.0]

### *Journalism/Creative Resume Examples*

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading is right justified at the top of the page as follows:

Student's name

Address

City, State Zip Code

Phone number

Email

The structure of the main resume is as follows:

The body is split into two columns, with headings on the left and descriptions on the right.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. The students name is in large font and bold while centered at the top of the page. Underneath the name is the students work title "Multimedia Visual Journalist". The body of the resume is split into two column by a vertical bar. The left column is structured from the top down as follows;

Website

Phone number

Email address

Social media link

Education

Details

Skills

Details

Activities

Details and dates

Awards

Details

The right column is structured from the top down as follows:

Work

Position

Details in list format

Position

Details in list format

This structure is repeated for the rest of the page.]

### *Liberal Arts and Sciences Resume Examples*

[Inserted illustration of a resume. Black text on white background. Student name is in large font and bold print while centered at the top of the page. Underneath the name, also centered, is address and contact information. The structure of the resume is as follows;

Heading title (for example Education)

Position (for example Bachelor of Arts, Environmental Studies) left justified. Date and location right justified.

Details in list format.

This structure is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume. Black text on white background. Student name is in large font and bold print left justified at the top of the page. Email is right justified. Address is underneath student name. Phone number and website underneath email address. The structure of the resume is the same as the previous resume with one exception. Before the first heading is a summary section titled “Summary of Qualifications” followed by details in list format.]



Action Verb List

Accomplishments

achieved  
awarded  
benchmarked  
completed  
expanded  
exceeded  
improved  
pioneered  
reduced (losses)  
resolved (issues)  
restored  
reversed  
spearheaded  
succeeded  
surpassed  
transformed  
won

Analytical & Research

analyzed  
assessed  
calibrated  
clarified  
collected  
compared  
conducted  
critiqued  
detected  
determined  
diagnosed  
evaluated  
examined  
experimented  
explored  
extracted  
formulated  
gathered

identified  
inspected  
interpreted  
interviewed  
invented  
investigated  
located  
measured  
observed  
organized  
proved  
researched  
reviewed  
searched  
screened  
solved  
specified  
summarized  
surveyed  
tested  
validated

Communication &

Persuasion  
addressed  
advertised  
arbitrated  
arranged  
articulated  
authored  
clarified  
collaborated  
communicated  
composed  
condensed  
consulted  
conveyed  
convinced  
corresponded  
debated  
defined

demonstrated  
described  
developed  
directed  
discussed  
dissuaded  
documented  
drafted  
edited  
educated  
elicited  
enlisted  
established  
explained  
expressed  
formulated  
furnished  
illustrated  
incorporated  
influenced  
informed  
interacted  
interpreted  
interviewed  
involved  
joined  
judged  
lectured  
marketed  
mediated  
moderated  
negotiated  
observed  
outlined  
participated  
persuaded  
presented  
promoted  
proposed  
publicized  
published  
reconciled  
recruited

referred  
reinforced  
reported  
resolved  
responded  
solicited  
specified  
spoke  
suggested  
summarized  
synthesized  
translated  
wrote

Creative

acted  
adapted  
began  
combined  
composed  
conceptualized  
condensed  
created  
customized  
designed  
devised  
developed  
directed  
displayed  
drew  
entertained  
established  
fashioned  
formulated  
founded  
illustrated  
initiated  
instituted  
integrated  
introduced  
invented  
modeled

modified  
originated  
performed  
photographed  
planned  
revised  
revitalized  
shaped  
solved

Financial & Data

administered  
adjusted  
allocated  
analyzed  
appraised  
assessed  
audited  
balanced  
budgeted  
calculated  
computed  
conserved  
controlled  
corrected  
cut  
decreased  
determined  
developed  
estimated  
managed  
marketed  
measured  
planned  
prepared  
programmed  
projected  
purchased  
reconciled  
reduced  
researched  
retrieved

tabulated  
 trimmed  
 tracked  
 quantified

**Helping**  
 adapted  
 advocated  
 aided  
 answered  
 arranged  
 assessed  
 assisted  
 cared for  
 clarified  
 coached  
 contributed  
 cooperated  
 counseled  
 demonstrated  
 diagnosed  
 educated  
 encouraged  
 ensured  
 expedited  
 facilitated  
 guided  
 helped  
 intervened  
 motivated  
 prevented  
 provided  
 referred  
 rehabilitated  
 represented  
 resolved  
 simplified  
 supplied  
 supported  
 volunteered

**Interpersonal  
 & Teamwork**

advised  
 collaborated  
 enabled  
 focused  
 initiated  
 interacted  
 involved  
 listened  
 mediated  
 mentored  
 moderated  
 negotiated  
 partnered  
 teamed

**Leadership &  
 Management**

accomplished  
 acted  
 administered  
 advanced  
 advised  
 analyzed  
 appointed  
 approved  
 assigned  
 attained  
 authorized  
 chaired  
 completed  
 considered  
 consolidated  
 contracted  
 controlled  
 converted  
 coordinated  
 counseled  
 decided  
 decreased  
 delegated  
 determined  
 developed

directed  
 dispatched  
 disseminated  
 diversified  
 eliminated  
 emphasized  
 enforced  
 enhanced  
 enlisted  
 ensured  
 established  
 examined  
 executed  
 explained  
 founded  
 generated  
 governed  
 guided  
 headed  
 hired  
 hosted  
 improved  
 incorporated  
 increased  
 influenced  
 initiated  
 inspected  
 inspired  
 instigated  
 instituted  
 instructed  
 integrated  
 introduced  
 launched  
 led  
 lowered  
 managed  
 merged  
 modified  
 motivated  
 organized  
 originated  
 overhauled  
 oversaw

pioneered  
 planned  
 presided  
 prioritized  
 produced  
 proposed  
 recommended  
 recruited  
 reorganized  
 replaced  
 represented  
 restored  
 reviewed  
 saved  
 scheduled  
 secured  
 selected  
 shaped  
 solidified  
 stimulated  
 streamlined  
 strengthened  
 supervised  
 terminated  
 trimmed  
 verified

**Organization  
 & Detail**

approved  
 arranged  
 catalogued  
 categorized  
 charted  
 classified  
 coded  
 collected  
 compiled  
 contained  
 coordinated  
 corrected  
 corresponded  
 distributed  
 executed

expedited  
 filed  
 generated  
 implemented  
 incorporated  
 inspected  
 logged  
 maintained  
 monitored  
 obtained  
 operated  
 ordered  
 organized  
 planned  
 prepared  
 processed  
 provided  
 purchased  
 recorded  
 registered  
 reserved  
 responded  
 restructured  
 reviewed  
 routed  
 scheduled  
 screened  
 set up  
 standardized  
 submitted  
 supplied  
 updated  
 used  
 validated  
 verified

**Teaching &  
 Training**

adapted  
 advised  
 appraised  
 clarified  
 coached  
 communicate

d	motivated	calculated	implemented	replaced
conducted	persuaded	coded	inspected	restored
coordinated	set	computed	installed	retrieved
critiqued	stimulated	computerized	located	solved
demonstrated	taught	conserved	maintained	specialized
developed	tested	constructed	monitored	specified
educated	trained	controlled	networked	standardized
enabled	transmitted	converted	operated	studied
encouraged	tutored	debugged	overhauled	supported
evaluated	<b>Technical</b>	designed	prevented	trained
explained	adapted	determined	printed	troubleshoot
facilitated	advised	developed	programmed	upgraded
focused	analyzed	diagnosed	proposed	
guided	applied	drafted	recorded	
influenced	assembled	engineered	rectified	
informed	automated	fabricated	regulated	
instilled	built	fortified	remodeled	
instructed		identified	repaired	

## References

Resumes and cover letters win interviews; excellent references can win job offers.

If you are being considered for a job, it is likely that the potential employer will speak with your references following the final interview.

You must be certain that your references will provide a good recommendation. A less-than-enthusiastic reference decreases your chance of being hired, so select your references carefully.

### Who

To identify as many potential references as possible, consider current and former bosses, professors, advisors, volunteer coordinators, co-workers, and subordinates who have first-hand knowledge of your work and abilities.

Be sure to find references who know you well enough to speak on your behalf and represent different facets of your experience. Your references may change based on the position for which you are applying, or as your career progresses. Roommates, friends, and family members do not make good professional references.

### What

Next, call or meet with the people on your list who are likely to deliver a very positive report and have seen you perform well. Begin by explaining that you are in a job search, and then ask whether they would be willing to act as a reference for you. You might say something like: “Dr. Thomas, I will be graduating in May and will be seeking a full-time position. Because you were my instructor for several courses and can speak to my work ethic, I was wondering if you would be comfortable serving as a reference?”

The answer will usually be positive. Be prepared to provide a brief idea of what you have been doing recently and the type of position you seek. With past co-workers or supervisors, you may want to state why you left that job because they are likely to be asked by the potential employer. Deliver a current copy of your resume to your references so they will be familiar with your experiences and what you have highlighted for employers. You may also want to provide a copy of the job description.

### How Many

You will generally be asked to provide at least three references. It is a good idea to have a “backup” on the list in case one or more of your references is unavailable.

### Where

Do not include references on your resume. Names and contact information for references take up a lot of space and usually have little meaning to a potential employer at the “resume stage.” Make a separate reference page. Be sure to include your name and contact information at the top. Use the same fonts and formatting as your resume and cover letter. When delivered with your resume and cover letter, the three documents should be

complementary and professional. It is a good idea to print all three on the same high-quality bond paper.

Include each reference's name, current title, agency or organization with which they are currently affiliated, city and state, preferred phone number(s), and email address. In some cases, you may also want to note your relationship to the individual, such as a former supervisor at KU Library, particularly if your reference has moved to a new organization. Be certain everything is correct!

### When

Provide your reference list to a potential employer only when requested. Be sure to thank your references at the completion of your job search.

### Helpful Tips

Alert your references that potential employers may be calling and provide them with your most recent resume.

Notify your references if your name has changed since they knew you.

[Inserted image of a reference page. The structure of the reference page is as follows;

Name is bolded and left justified at the top of the page.

Address and contact information.

Heading is bolded and left justified (Professional References).

Reference name (relationship to the reference in italics and within parentheses).

Details including the reference's current job title and where they work along with current contact information (work phone and work email address).

There are some reference tips in red text pointing out some areas of the reference list. These tips are; Ask your reference how they would like to be contacted and include only those phone numbers or emails. If your reference has changed jobs since you worked with him/her, note that on your reference page.]

## Cover Letters

### The Purpose of Cover Letters

The purpose of the cover letter and resume package is to motivate the employer to take action and invite you for an interview. When delivered together, the two documents should be complementary and work together to accomplish your purpose. The appearance of your resume/cover letter package will be enhanced if both documents are printed on the same high-quality bond paper.

Employers report that an impressive cover letter is often more important than the resume when making a decision whether to interview a candidate, so it can be a mistake to focus too

much attention on the resume and ignore the potential value of a well-written letter. Like the resume, the cover letter is not intended to get you the job—it is intended to get you an interview.

### When to Use a Cover Letter

Many employers will require a cover letter as part of your application. Include a cover letter with your resume when you cannot present it in person, for example if sent through U.S. Postal Service or email. Remember, whatever you write in your email IS your cover letter. A cover letter is not necessary when you deliver your resume to a potential employer at a career fair.

A cover letter should:

- Catch the reader’s attention (opening paragraph)
- Communicate skills and experience (middle paragraph)
- Support your statements with specifics (middle paragraph)
- Compel the reader to act (final paragraph)

### What to Include in your Cover Letter

The most important aspect of a cover letter is employer focus. Present the employer with indications of your personality and style along with your skills and abilities. Highlight your qualifications for the specific position you seek, clearly stating your interests and qualifications relative to the employer’s needs. Use the job description as an outline for writing your cover letter.

A cover letter can also help explain special circumstances, such as a gap in schooling or employment, qualifications for a position outside your exact major (i.e. a chemical engineer seeking employment with an environmental engineering firm) or a drop in GPA.

Always customize your cover letter! Include the position title and the organization’s name. Sending out a general cover letter and resume to hundreds of employers is rarely successful. It can create a perception on the employer’s part that you are not a serious and thoughtful person, that you are desperate for a job, or that you don’t really care enough about their organization to learn about them.

Your letter should be just a few paragraphs and only one page in length. While there is no “perfect formula” regarding length and what to include, keep it relevant and relatively brief.

### Things to Avoid in Cover Letters

- Starting every sentence with “I” or “my”.
- Extraneous words and wordy phrases, such as “in order to” and “for the purpose of”.
- Confusing and complex language and sentence structure (HINT: Read your letter aloud to identify awkwardness, then correct it).
- Long sentences and paragraphs.
- Weak or overused words.
- Font sizes smaller than 10 point and larger than 12 point.

- Nondescript phrases such as “I was a computer lab assistant.” Instead, say: “I provided technical assistance”. “I conducted research activities using observation and data analysis skills while...” instead of “I worked as a research assistant.”

### *Sample Cover Letter*

[Inserted illustration of a cover letter. The structure of the cover letter is as follows:

Your Address

Date

First and Last Name of contact person or “Human Resources Manager” if name is unknown

Title of Contact Person

Employer Contact Information

If employer name is not available, address letter to Human Resources Manager, Director or Hiring Manager

First Paragraph should include:

- Why you are writing
- What position you are applying for
- How you learned about the position
- Who referred you (if applicable)

Body paragraphs should include:

- Why you are interested in the position
- What you can contribute
- How your qualifications would benefit the organization
- How your skills and experience match their needs

Closing paragraph should:

- Refer to documents enclosed or available such as list of references
- Give the phone number and time that you can be reached or when you will contact them
- Thank them for their time and consideration of your application
- Sign off with “Sincerely” or “Respectfully” and then type your first and last name

Leave four spaces so you can sign your name in ink after it is printed. Leave only one blank line and type your name for emailed letters.]

## Professional Communication

Whether you are submitting an application for a position or developing a networking contact online, all of your communication needs to be done with professionalism. Employers are evaluating your communication skills with every piece of correspondence, so be sure they will get a good impression.

Many of your connections with professionals will be done through electronic media. In online correspondence it is important to follow the same basic guidelines as you would in any other formal style of communication. Below are some examples.

### Networking Through Email

[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Request to Connect from a KU Student

Dear Ms. Ellsworth:

Dr. Studia, professor of sociology at the University of Kansas, suggested that I contact you. As a fellow Jayhawk, she felt you might be willing to visit with me about my career path.

I am a junior at KU, majoring in sociology, and am currently exploring career options. Your background in human rights work and your leadership in non-profit organizations are both very interesting to me. I would like to learn more about what it's like to work for a nonprofit, and was hoping you might be willing to give me advice on how to prepare myself for this career path.

Would you be willing to visit with me briefly about your experiences? I'm available between December 5 and January 10 and would be happy to connect through email, on the phone, or in person.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

### Informational Interview Request Through Email

[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Informational Interview Request from Jay Hawk.

Dear Mr. Budig:

I am currently a junior finance student at the University of Kansas and am interested in learning more about careers in the finance industry. After a class discussion and personal research, one particular career that has sparked my interest is financial advising.

Would you be willing to take 20 to 30 minutes out of your day to provide me with advice and expertise based on your experiences in this field? I am available on Monday and Friday



afternoons through the next four weeks. If this is a possibility, please email me back or contact me at 555-555-5555. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

### Job Prospecting Through Email

[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Positions in Software Development.]

Dear Mr. Haworth:

After reading a description of your company on LinkedIn, I would like to know about possible job opportunities in your software development department. I am a senior in Computer Science, and will earn my bachelor's degree in May.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to do an internship for the XYZ Solutions Firm where I worked closely with a team to develop business technology programs. My training also included testing existing systems. This experience confirmed my interest in a career in software development, and I believe your company would be an excellent match for my skills.

My resume is attached for your consideration. I realize that you have many demands on your time, but I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss employment possibilities with your company. Would you be available the week of January 10 to meet briefly? If you would prefer to contact me by phone, my number is 555-555-5555.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Jay Hawk

Jayhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

### Networking Introduction Through Social Media Messaging

[Inserted diagram of a message.]

Dear Ms. Fraser:

I am currently a psychology major at the University of Kansas exploring career options. While researching people who work in higher education and live in Chicago, I found your profile. I will be in Chicago during the week of March 18-22. Would you be willing to take 20-30

minutes of your time to talk to me about your experiences in this field? If you would rather connect by email, I can be reached at [jhawk@ku.edu](mailto:jhawk@ku.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

[jayhawk@ku.edu](mailto:jayhawk@ku.edu)

555-555-5555]

### KU Mentoring/LinkedIn Invitation to Connect Message (Someone you've never met)

[Inserted diagram of an email.]

Dear Mr. Sabatini:

I am a photo media major at the University of Kansas exploring career options. I joined the Photo Marketing group, and enjoy reading the discussions there. Would you be willing to connect with me so that I can learn more about your work?

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

[jayhawk@ku.edu](mailto:jayhawk@ku.edu)

### LinkedIn Invitation to Connect (Someone you already know)

[Inserted diagram of an email.]

Dear Ms. Higuchi:

I enjoyed the time I spent working for you at ABC Company. The help you offered me during my internship was invaluable. I hope you will connect with me so we can stay in touch in the future! Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

[jayhawk@ku.edu](mailto:jayhawk@ku.edu)

555-555-5555]

## Tips for Online Professional Communication

### DO:

- Spell check ALL written communication.
- Proofread electronic messages just as thoroughly as you would printed documents.
- Use a subject line in ALL emails such as "Application for Marketing Internship".

- Be respectful of the person you are contacting; don't ask for something they can't provide.
- Use formal greetings and closings when possible.
- Create an email "signature" that includes all of your contact information.
- Use a formal greeting such as Mr./Ms. unless they have given you permission to call them by their first name or you know them well.

#### DON'T:

- Use informal text shortcuts such as "ur" for "you are".
- Use emoticons in any of your communication.
- Use an informal tone in your writing.
- Attach a resume in a request to connect, or in a request for an informational interview.

## Career Services Offices

### Business Career Services Center

- Capitol Federal Hall, Room 1130
- Phone: 785-864-5591
- Fax: 785-864-5078
- Email: [kubuscareer@ku.edu](mailto:kubuscareer@ku.edu)
- <https://business.ku.edu/business-career-services>

### Engineering Career Center

- Eaton Hall, LEEP2, Room 1410
- Phone: 785-864-3891
- Fax: 785-864-5643
- Email: [ecc@ku.edu](mailto:ecc@ku.edu)
- [www.ecc.ku.edu](http://www.ecc.ku.edu)

### Music Career Center

- Murphy Hall, Room 460
- Phone: 785-864-4466
- Fax: 785-864-5387
- [www.music.ku.edu](http://www.music.ku.edu)

### Journalism Career Center

- Stauffer-Flint Hall, Room 120
- Phone: 785-864-7630
- Fax: 785-864-5318
- Email: [steve\\_rottinghaus@ku.edu](mailto:steve_rottinghaus@ku.edu)
- [www.journalism.ku.edu](http://www.journalism.ku.edu)

### University Career Center

- Summerfield Hall, Suite 206
- Phone: 785-864-3624
- Fax: 785-864-4572
- Email: [ucc@ku.edu](mailto:ucc@ku.edu)
- [www.career.ku.edu](http://www.career.ku.edu)