

CV Writing for International Students

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Workshop Plan

- Who are you?
- Today's job seeking environment and you
- Resumes – presentation, the elements, common mistakes
- Cover letter
- Returning home or moving onwards
- Finding work in Australia
- Other useful websites

Reality = DIFFICULT

The Employment Env

Skills shortages in Aus but visa requirements and language skills take precedence

Appreciate overseas experience – hard to confirm

Limited training/induction when start job

Hard to migrate then find work

Your Barriers

Visa → PR (Dept of Immigration and Citizenship)

Cultural fit and language skills

Competition from locals

What Written Applications Means

- Resume/CV – summary of you and experiences
- Cover Letter – introduction to you and highlight best points of resume
- Selection Criteria – addressing key competencies
- Application Forms

REFER TO JOB AD FOR REQUIREMENTS & CLARIFY WITH EMPLOYER IF UNSURE WHAT THEY WANT

Resume International Standards – Australia

2-3 pages long

Describe experiences in adequate detail

Evidence of well balanced lifestyle e.g. club & society membership, community volunteer work

<http://www.goinglobal.com/> has information on other countries' standards

What do I need to highlight?

A different resume should be written for each application – keep bulk of information the same but tailor it to each position/employer

Things to Highlight:

- **DEMONSTRATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS BY CONTAINING NO SPELLING & GRAMMAR MISTAKES**
- Skills you have that are directly relevant for the position/company e.g. you would highlight your admin skills for an office support role, research skills for an analyst role, communication skills for customer service role, etc...
- Any knowledge you have of the employer – personalise, make them feel special, especially if applying to different employers in same field e.g. Myers Vs DJS
- Most recent information in detail (focus on most recent employment experiences, focus on uni academic and extracurricular experiences rather than school)

Necessary Elements – what to include



RESUME EXPRESS

- Personal details (name you want them to call you/know you by and local contact details)
- visa status
- career objective & skills summary
- education
- employment history
- personal interests/extra-curricular
- referees (at least 1 employment and 1 academic)

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Necessary elements - format



Easy to read – clear, use spaces to separate

Concise – 2/3 pages maximum

Consistent use of styles e.g. font, bullet points, bolding, underlining

No spelling/grammar errors

Clearly links applicant to position – don't include sections that may not be necessary or leave out necessary sections

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Which works better?

Douglas Fairbanks

35 Harrington Road Telephone: 95698123
Petersham Mobile: 0414 087 098
Sydney NSW 2049 Email:
Dougie@hotmail.com

Career Goal
To integrate and apply my theoretical skills gained from university and to develop inspiring engineering solutions.

Education
1999-2003 Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, University of Sydney.
Achieved distinctions in all final year courses.
1993-1998 Higher School Certificate, Newington College, Starmore.
UAI: 90. First place in Mathematics. Scholarship award

Work History
2002-2003 Assistant Engineer, Engineering Solutions (Work Placement)
Duties: Assisted in drawing up client briefs, liaised with clients and senior management, contributed to new database design.
1997-1999 Assistant Manager, McDonalds
Duties: Staff supervision and training, responsible for all financial takings, developed high level interpersonal communication skills

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Petersham
Sydney NSW 2049
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Education
1999-2003 Electrical Engineering, University of Sydney
1993-1998 Newington College, Starmore
Scholarship award

Work History
2002-2003 Engineer, Engineering Solutions (Work Placement)
2000-2001 Engineer, BHP Engineering (Work Placement)
1997-1999 Assistant Manager, McDonalds

Career Objective

Optional to include – not required for casual job that is unrelated to rest of career e.g. bar work, recommended though if job fits in with overall career vision, good summary of yourself, acts as a "taster" for person to encourage them to read on

Include

- Current study and relevant work experience
- Long term career goal and field of interest
- 2-3 key skills you have to offer
- Availability

Be specific and factual, honesty is key, no bluffing
Use short sentences

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Bad example

I seek a challenging position in a global company which uses state-of-the-art technologies and will allow me to use my skills and develop leadership experience with a view to expanding my career horizons.

Good Example

Biochemistry graduate with strong academic record and one year commercial lab experience with XXXX. Interested in XXX and XXX fields. Key skills in XXX and XXX with ability to prepare research reports and present data. Enthusiastic and good attention to detail. Keen to undertake research assistant position while completing Honours year. Available Wednesday to Friday and full-time during vacations.

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Skills Summary

Think of your "soft" skills and "hard" skills

Use action words/verbs to describe

Correlate to those that have been specifically requested in job ad

Be prepared to support each claim with an example, be honest, don't put anything down that you are not confident about possessing, they will remember if/when you are hired

Examples -

- Communication, team work, analytical, organise, prioritise, research, train, manage, problem solving
- Computer systems, specialised equipment, languages e.g. Communication skills

Questioning customers to define their needs, active listening then negotiating skills to close sales deals

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**Education – Tertiary, Secondary, other INCLUDE HOME EDUCATION
(get it translated to Aus equivalent)**

Reverse chronological order

B. Science (Biochemistry)

University of Sydney

Distinction average results

Dates of study e.g. 19XX to Present

Key subjects – (list 4-6)

Major Projects – (list 2-4 by title or in more detail separately)

Course placements or practicums

State Academic Transcript is attached if required

Any other achievements e.g. member of Golden Key Society

Note

Don't assume degree title is enough – need to describe your experience and what makes you different from every other graduate

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Work History – ALL PAID AND UNPAID/VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

INCLUDE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY FROM HOME NATION (focus on aspects that will be most relevant to Aus employers)

Reverse chronological order or functional

Month Year – Month Year

Lab Technician

Bio Tech Labs, West Ryde

(Optional – give an outline of the company e.g. Australian-owned commercial testing laboratory specialising in diagnostics and vaccine production, employing 50 people nationally)

Responsibilities:

- Tested...
- Monitored...
- Wrote weekly reports....
- Supervised...

Achievements:

- Head of social committee in XXXX, organised mid-year event and Christmas Party, increased attendance to events by 20% and created budget surplus that was given to charity

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Achievements

Promoted to position with more responsibility, more staff

Increased sales, profit, efficiency – QUANTIFY where you can

Improved quality, systems, methods

Decreased complaints, waste, turnaround

Reliable employment record – minimal sick leave

Received consistently positive feedback from staff, customers, recommendations made

Projects completed on time, met standards, met budgets

Elected to a committee, represented a group

Given a leadership role

Recipient of any awards, merit prizes

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Professional Association Memberships

Excellent method to demonstrate your commitment to a particular field

e.g. CPA, APESMA, PRIA etc

Often have free or discounted student membership

Interests

Excellent way to offer up aspects of your personality and also demonstrate further strengthening of skills

List interests that will be credible e.g. karaoke Vs member of netball team

Referees

Adds credibility rather than "Available upon request"

Ask permission first and give correct contact details and best time to contact e.g. Business Hours

1 or 2 professional referees or academic/community leader referees if no work history

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Common Mistakes

Spelling and grammatical errors

Use of photos

Font too small (<10) or too large (>11)

Not personalised to the vacancy ad, too generic, possible "cut and paste" from other resumes

Too short, too long

Too general – no specific examples, quantification

Fancy gimmicks – borders, fonts, pictures, coloured paper

Unprofessional email address

Lack of information about studies

Overstated claims

No relevance to the position

Too much focus on school

Referees are fictitious

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Application Forms and Cover Letters

Mostly on-line now for jobs from casual, p/t jobs to formal Graduate Recruitment Programs

May include testing and attaching resume

May need to answer questions relating to experience and selection criteria

Approach preferred organisations directly

Don't discount newspaper and cold-canvassing/drop-ins

Tips

- Download copy of application form and print out – draft answers to questions before typing in
- Have all necessary information ready

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Cover Letter Essentials



- Traditional business letter format
- No longer than 1 page
- Positive tone
- Formal, concise language – be economic, no vague claims
- Standard paper, standard font
- Address to a specific person
- NO SPELLING or GRAMMAR ERRORS**

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Information in Cover Letter



- Relevance**
Make direct references to words/criteria used in the job ad throughout
- Opening**
Tell them why you are applying "to apply for the position of XXXX I saw in the XXXX on XXXXX"
- Why Me**
Start with a very brief summarising statement about yourself
Persuade them that you meet all the criteria for the job by correlating your skills, experiences, knowledge and personality to what has been stated in the job ad
- Why Them**
Explain what interested you about the position/organisation
Demonstrate your knowledge about the job/company
Focus on what you can do for them rather than what they can do for you
- Ending**
State you are enclosing your resume, can repeat your contact number if you would like
Tell them what you hope will happen from here e.g. you look forward to gaining an interview
If posting it, sign a copy and have your name typed below your signature

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Some suggestions for finding information on returning home or moving elsewhere



- Consulates/Embassies/Chambers of Commerce/Tourism Offices
- Local university Careers Centres websites
- International job search websites
- Multinational companies and corporations
- International newspapers – print, online
- International recruitment agencies
- Personal contacts

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Some suggestions for finding work in Australia



- GET ANY LOCAL EXPERIENCE**
Graduate Programs are for PR only and very competitive – consider alternative entry point/junior role in smaller or local company
Use ANY local connections (e.g. family, friends & their parents, lecturers)
Consider volunteer work to get local experience
→ emphasize the skills you've learnt from the experience that will be useful to the employer (communication, flexibility, problem solving, working in teams, initiative etc) and how well you'll fit in
- LANGUAGE SKILLS** – utmost importance
→ Learning Centre W.E.L.L. course, Centre for English Teaching
Have cultural understanding – relaxed/informal, humour, colloquial/direct communication, body language, flat structure (managers & workers are close)

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Some suggestions for finding information on finding work in Australia



- Spend time researching the local labour market & recruitment expectations & visa requirements
- Know differing closing dates
- Understand cultural differences
- Go to effort to demonstrate your commitment to working in Aus & culturally integrating e.g. clubs & socs, local community groups

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Some helpful websites



- Australia:**
 - www.seek.com.au
 - www.career1.com.au
 - www.mycareer.com.au
- International Recruiters (General)**
 - Michael Page, Hudson, Julia Ross, Hays
- General International Websites**
 - www.monster.com
 - www.jobserve.com
 - www.goingglobal.com
 - www.overseasjobs.com
 - www.hobsons.com (Asia, UK, Americas)
- Asia**
 - www.contactsingapore.org.sg
 - www.jobdragon.com
- UK/Europe**
 - www.gumtree.com
 - www.prospects.ac.uk
 - www.efinancialcareers.com
 - www.eurojobs.com
 - www.iagora.com
- US**
 - www.aftercollege.com
 - www.jobweb.com

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Where to from here?



Theory based  Practice

Then...

- Resume Express on www.careers.usyd.edu.au
- Careers Centre 24 Hour CV check Service
- 1:1 consultation with Careers Adviser
- Careers Centre CV Clinic
- Use resources in Careers Centre
- Download handouts from website

www.careers.usyd.edu.au/students, Download

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