



Careers for Science Graduates

Seminar 2:
Writing Job Applications, Resumes and Selection Criteria

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Careers Centre

 University of Sydney Careers Centre



Lunchtime seminars

Finding graduate positions and work experience
Approaching graduate recruitment strategically
[Wednesday 2 April](#)


Writing job applications and resumes
Assessing skills, career goals and preparing your resume
[Wednesday 9 April](#)


Interview Skills
Approaching employers and succeeding at interview
[Wednesday 16 April](#)

All held in Eastern Ave Lecture Theatre

Lunchtimes 1:00 to 2:00 pm


Attend all three seminars in one series and receive a certificate of attendance


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Review last week


- Making use of your Professional Association/s
- Be aware of your career options
- Plan some short & long term career goals
- Seek out relevant vacation, volunteer and part-time work
- Prepare yourself for the graduate recruitment season
- Think about postgraduate study
- Identify your preferred employers (think broadly)
- Find out what employers are looking for in graduates
- Identify your skills gained at university (technical & generic)
- Make use of the Science faculty websites
- Make use of the Careers Centre, website, job alerts, CV checks


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Think about your suitability for the job


You		The Job
Knowledge	← Fit →	The knowledge and experience to understand the job
Skills		The skills required to perform the job tasks
Personal Qualities, Attributes & Interests		The appropriate personal style and interest in the job
Capabilities		The potential to cope with the demands of the job


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Identify your skills

Professional & Technical Skills and Knowledge	Generic or Transferable Skills	IT Skills
Research in ... Theoretical understanding of ... Preparing reports on ... Testing of ... Analysis of ... Lab work in ... Field-based data gathering Knowledge of relevant legislation & council regulations Use and care of scientific instruments	Presenting a report Chairing a meeting Writing article on ... Team work Managing time Managing projects Accuracy Problem solving Ability to work with complex information Customer service Leadership	MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint) Specific software relevant to your discipline or research area Use of specific databases Programming Networking Developing Internet

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Personal qualities and attributes

- Achievement-oriented
- Ambitious
- Common sense
- Confident
- Enthusiastic
- Friendly
- Hard working
- Honest
- Easy to get along with
- Loyal
- Motivated
- Persistent
- Risk-taker
- Reliable
- Sense of humour

These are lovely BUT they may not get you a job.

There is a difference between personal qualities and SKILLS

Make sure your CV reflects an accurate list of your work-based professional skills developed through your studies and any pracs undertaken

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Your achievements



- What have you done, produced, developed, wrote, researched?
- What are you proud of?
- What are your best examples to show potential employers?

Develop your portfolio

- A system for storing and displaying your work
- Hard copy in folder and/or soft copies on a website or memory stick
- Includes:
 - Academic transcripts & certificates
 - Evidence of your skills and achievements
 - Examples of your work eg research, experiments, prac reports
 - Photos of relevant activities
- Keep your system current
- Take to job interviews



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Today's seminar



Writing resumes that get short-listed

- Resumes and CVs
- Purpose of the resume
- Graduate resumes
- Layout and format
- Common mistakes
- Application forms
- Selection Criteria
- Cover Letters



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Resumes & CVs



Interchangeable terms

Resume means 'summary'
(French)

Curriculum Vitae means 'a brief account of one's life'
(Latin)

- Tips**
- Don't use either term as your heading
 - Use your name instead



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Purpose of a resume



To be selected for an interview

- Tips**
- Consider your resume as a marketing tool
 - Review your resume from the employer's perspective
 - List the most relevant information first
 - Provide detail where necessary (focus on uni, not school)



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Many resume formats



- There is no one single 'correct' way to present a resume
- Take the time to try different formats
- Your study and experience deserve a professional style
- Work in reverse chronological order for study and jobs
- Be honest
- Tailor your resume for each vacancy, especially your relevant skills
- Update your resume every 6 months

- Tips**
- Avoid resume templates (but good for a starting point)
 - Use a format to match your situation and experience



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Essential



Style & format

- Easy to read
- Concise
- Positive
- Specific
- Well structured
- Consistent style & format
- No spelling errors

Content

- Clear objective
- Link studies to vacancy
- Skills list
- Relevant experience
- Relevant projects
- Credible set of achievements
- Extra curricular activities



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Graduate resumes



- Name & contact details
- Career Objective / Career Statement / Profile
- Education / Qualifications / Awards
- Skills Summary
- Relevant Work History (includes clinical placements, internships)
- Other Work History
- Publications / Conferences / Research / Grants
- Courses Attended / Relevant Training
- Professional Memberships
- Languages
- Residency status / work visa (if applicable)
- Interests / Extra curricular activities
- Referees



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Career Objective



- Current study and relevant work (include number months/years)
- Career goals (short and long term) / field of interest
- 2-3 key skills you are offering
- Availability

Tips Be specific and factual
Use short sentences
Should inspire the reader to want to see the detail



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Bad example



I seek a challenging position in a progressive 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 while contributing to the goals of the organisation.

How can you improve this career objective?

- Be specific about your skills and experience
- Aim to stand out from the crowd
- Focus on what you could do for the organisation, not on what the organisation can do for you
- Inspire the reader to read the rest of the resume



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Better example



Biochemistry graduate with strong academic record and one year commercial laboratory experience with xxx. 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.

Tips Key skills in your career objective must match the vacancy
Indicate relevant work, clinical experience and projects
Use key words



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Qualifications



B. Science (Biochemistry)

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Distinction average results
Expected completion December 20XX
Key subjects (list 4-6)

.....

Major projects (list 2-4 by title, or in more detail on a separate page)

.....

Tip Don't assume the degree will speak for itself
Give detail that will help you stand out from the crowd
Use 'Education' as your heading while studying, change to 'Qualifications' once completed



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Skills Summary



- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • Advise ... | • Monitor ... |
| • Analyse ... | • Organise ... |
| • Calculate ... | • Prepare ... |
| • Coordinate ... | • Produce ... |
| • Create ... | • Research ... |
| • Design ... | • Supervise ... |
| • Edit ... | • Survey ... |
| • Implement ... | • Train ... |
| • Manage ... | • Write ... |

Tips Use action words to begin each descriptor
Select the most recent and relevant examples
Be prepared to support each claim with evidence



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Relevant Work History



Lab Technician

XXX BioTech Labs, West Ryde

Australian-owned commercial testing laboratory specialising in diagnostics and vaccine production. Employing 80 staff nationally

November 20XX to current (part-time and vacations, averaging 15 hours per week)

Responsibilities

- Tested xxx
- Monitored xxx
- Maintained xxx

Achievements

- Prepared audit of chemical storage and disposal against international benchmarks (5 of 6 recommendations implemented)



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Other Work History



Sales Assistant

Myer, George St, Sydney

August 20XX to October 20XX

Duties

- Customer Service and sales in menswear and kitchenware departments
- Stock monitoring, presentation, annual stock take
- Maintained product knowledge
- Shift supervisor on weekends, trained 10 new staff
- Money handling, operated EFTPOS and credit card facilities



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Achievements



- Promoted to position with more responsibility, trained new staff
- Increased sales, profits, efficiency
- Improved quality, systems, methods
- Decreased complaints, waste, turnaround time
- Reliable employment record, minimal sick leave
- Received consistently positive feedback from staff, customers
- Projects completed on time, met standards, within budget
- Elected to a committee, represented a group
- Given a leadership role (at work, uni, sport, club)

Tip Describe and quantify each claim, where relevant



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Courses Attended



- List any relevant short courses
eg supervision, teamwork, first aid, training in specific techniques or equipment
- Include the training organisation, location and year
- Ensure you have certificates of attainment as evidence

Tip Keep this list current



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Professional Membership



- List any professional associations you have joined
- Include level of membership (student, associate, professional)
- List most recent year of membership

Tips Get involved by attending events, training, conferences
Keep knowledge current by reading journals & research
This does not include clubs and societies or interest groups



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Interests



- Include your interests and hobbies
eg sport, social, community, volunteer involvement
- Include and extra-curricular activities
eg clubs and societies on campus

Tips Detail can vary depending on your level of activity and amount of more relevant experience you can offer
Be honest



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Referees



Prof John Davidson
Honours thesis supervisor
University of Sydney
Ph 02 9351 XXXX
j.davidson@usyd.edu.au

Ms Jane Burrows
Manager
XXX BioTech Labs, West Ryde
Ph 02 9123 4567
M 0414 333 333
jane.burrows@biotech.net.au

Tips 2-3 referees
Must be able to comment on your work & technical skills
Always ask their permission first
'Referees on request' also permissible in certain circumstances



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Common mistakes



- Spelling and grammatical errors
- Font too small
- Obvious 'cut and paste'
- Too wordy, too brief, poor wording
- Not tailored for the vacancy or organisation
- Not clear, leaves reader with questions
- Fancy gimmicks (borders, highlighting, underlining, many fonts)
- 'Fun' email address
- Lack of detail about your studies
- Overstated claims, bluffing



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Common questions



- Are graduate resumes different for each profession / discipline?
- I've heard that a resume should only be one page, is that true?
- Should I include a photograph?
- Do I need to state my date of birth?
- Do I include marital, family or health information?
- Do I include my school information?
- Do I hand my resume to employers at the careers fair?
- Do I need to pay a resume service to have my resume prepared?
- Will a recruitment agency write or check my resume?
- I just updated my old school resume, is that sufficient?
- I just sent out 100 resumes, how come I didn't get a response?



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More resume help



- Resume Express
On-line guide to writing your resume
- CV Checking Service
24 hour turnaround
- CV Clinic at Careers Centre
Bring your resume and receive guidance on how to make improvements

www.careers.usyd.edu.au

www.lifelonglearning.science.usyd.edu.au

www.graduatecareers.com.au

For guides on resumes and cover letters



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Applications



- Mostly on-line for graduate recruitment programs
- May include mix of resume and question format
- May need to attach your resume as well
- Often by email (with attachments) for other roles
- Will need to address selection criteria

Tips Download and complete in word format first
Have all your necessary details handy
Check if you can complete in stages and save
Don't leave it to the closing day
Keep a copy of each application and resume sent



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Selection Criteria



- Summarises the key requirements of the position
- Used by the panel to short-list for interview stage
- May include essential and desirable criteria
- Common for public sector and larger corporate organisations
- Prepare a Statement Addressing the Selection Criteria (separate document to your resume and cover letter)
- Use specific examples to demonstrate your skills & knowledge
- Your responses can draw from university, clinical experience, paid and unpaid work, relevant community activities, maybe school
- If it was a team effort, indicate your role and contribution
- Expect the interview questions to be based on the criteria



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Selection Criteria



Examples

- Demonstrated ability to respond accurately to complex enquiries (both verbal and written) and prepare written responses with reference to relevant policy and procedures. Ability to write information suitable for the website.
- Aptitude to perform a leadership role and motivate a team.

Tips You MUST address each criteria
Ensure you respond to each part of the criteria
eg verbal and written communication skills
Select your strongest and most recent examples
Write ¼ to ½ page per criterion
Structure your response



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Structure



Situation

give a context

Task

what was the goal?

Activity

clear strategy

Result

so what? outcome



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Example



Demonstrated capacity for leadership and decision making

- S** While in my final year I worked on a team-based project involving XXX where we were required to produce XXX and XXX to industry standards.
- T** There were 5 other students in this team and although there was no designated leader, we each took on a leadership role. I tended to be the team coordinator—ensuring tasks were allocated according to strengths, progress was made and deadlines were met.
- A** I liaised with the academics and industry contacts regularly and read widely on the topic to provide the broad perspective required of this type of project.
- R** My ability to analyse available data and guide the group in joint decision-making was an important element in the success of the project. I have developed skills in managing meetings and discussions. We receive a High Distinction and presented at a faculty meeting to visiting academics and industry representatives.



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Cover Letter



- First impressions count
- Prepare a basic design and content
- Tailor the letter for each vacancy
- Keep the tone positive
- Avoid vague claims eg hard working, fast learner

Tips No longer than ONE page
Ask someone to check your cover letter and resume



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Cover Letter



Address Blocks, Date, Salutation, Heading

Paragraph 1 Introduction

Paragraph 2 Why me

Paragraph 3 Why them

Paragraph 4 The hoped-for result of your letter

Tip Use formal letter-writing conventions
Refer to Careers Centre and faculty websites for examples



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Guest Speaker



Daniel Campos
B Science (Hons) Applied Mathematics
Quantitative Analyst/Trader
Tudor Capital Australia

Will talk about

- The student experience of graduate recruitment
- How I am using my tertiary education



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Next seminar



Interview Skills

Wednesday 16 April 2008

- Eastern Ave Lecture Theatre
- Lunchtime 1:00 to 2:00 pm
- Certificate of attendance



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Careers Centre



Ground Floor, Mackie Building
Arundel Street
(across the Parramatta Road footbridge)

Phone 9351 3481

www.careers.usyd.edu.au
careerinfo@usyd.edu.au

Have you completed the evaluation sheet?
Has your student card been scanned?



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