

* This package is designed to be a quick reference for starting to assemble a résumé and cover letter. It is not comprehensive, as there are various ways to approach assembling employment documents and various opinions out there. Connect with further resources (some are provided here) for more detailed information.

Purposes of a résumé:

- To present your experience and accomplishments in a very concise document.
- To obtain an interview.

General tips:

- Rule #1 – **Tailor** your résumé to the job (i.e. choose experiences and accomplishments that are relevant to the job)
- 3 S – **Be specific. Be selective. Be succinct.**
- Keep it between **1 -2 pages**. (But if your second page is less than ½ a page, try to work it to one page.)
- Your personal info to include: First and last name, phone number, email address
 - If applicable, any other professional media (e.g. LinkedIn, website)
- DO NOT include your SIN number
- Leave out: “References available upon request.” (If they’re interested, they’ll ask you.)

Format tips: (also see Appendix A for sample)

- Keep it organized.
- **Use headings and bullet points.**
- Use a legible font (even if it looks boring) and minimum size 11 or 12. (Keep it easy to scan!)
- Let there be white space. (Too much text is unappealing)
- Use reverse chronological order (i.e. most recent first)
- For each work/volunteer experience include:
 - Your position title. Name of the company/organization. City, Prov/Country of the company/org. Start and end dates. And 1-3 bullet points of “content” (see below).

“Content” tips:

- Sections to **definitely include**: Education (especially as a recent grad); Work Experience; Volunteer Experience (or Community Engagement)
- Use **strong active verbs** (see Appendix B)
- **Answer**: “What did you accomplish in this role? How did you contribute to the company/organization? What did you do that no one else did/thought to do?”

While listing what you did (e.g. stocked products) might be enough to pass your Grad Portfolio, for a real job application aim to **STAND OUT** by stating what you accomplished (e.g. designed end-of-aisle product display).

Check for:

- Typos and bad grammar
- Do you have the correct punctuation!
- Vague language (e.g. “about”, “different”, “various”) → be specific.
- Alignment and overall presentation (a.k.a. does it look purdy?)

In a real job scenario, your résumé may only be given a 10-second scan (or less!). So be sure that it is easy to read, looks organized, and has **NO** errors. You may spend hours tweaking it, but this could be the difference between getting the interview or not.

Some further resources:

- Resume Genius (resumegenius.com; online résumé software): good for format, not necessarily the best for “content” options, BUT great flexibility for adapting and personalizing.
- Ask a [Hiring] Manager (blog): helpful posts and articles to read about various employment-related topics <http://www.askamanager.org/>
- Wake Forest U: a nice variety of sample résumés <http://career.opcd.wfu.edu/write-a-resume-or-cover-letter/resumes/>

Purposes of a cover letter:

- To show a little personality (while still being professional, of course!)
- Unlike a résumé (= fact-focused), the cover letter offers the employer/hiring personnel a glimpse at *who you are, what you are like* - to see if you will fit the ethos/culture of the organization
- While you do NOT want to convert your résumé into full sentences (=a waste of time for both you and the employer), you also do NOT need to include your life story.

General tips:

- Rule #1 – **Tailor** your cover letter to the employer (i.e. DO SOME RESEARCH, show that you care about working for THEM and not just about getting a job)
- Keep it to **less than ONE page**, roughly 3 short paragraphs (4-6 lines per paragraph). Some employers may be reading your cover letter on their phones or tablets (who wants to scroll forever and ever...?)
- **Every. Sentence. Counts.**
- Ditch the clichés – even though you may be “1 in a million” and “just the right person”
- Don't point out what you lack. **Include only what you can contribute.** (They can always ask in the interview if they want to know.)
- Be professional and personable rather than robotic, but also avoid yer slang.

Format tips:

- Use the same Personal/Contact Info heading as you did on your résumé, so it looks like a matching set.
- Formal business letter presentation. See **Appendix C** for sample
- Use the same font as in your résumé (i.e. legible font and minimum size 11 or 12)
- Left alignment, no paragraph indents (for easier electronic reading)
- **Follow directions** – Do they ask for a PDF?
- If you are sending a résumé via email, include your cover letter in the body of the email.

Questions to guide content:

- Why are you interested in working for **them**?
- What is **their** mission? *Are you motivated to help them achieve their mission?*
- What do **they** value? *Do your passions and work ethic align with theirs?*
- What are **they** looking for (stated in the job posting)?
 - *Where does your skills, habits, passions, and experience match with what **they** are looking for?*
 - *What experience (paid/volunteer, etc.) do you have that can compensate for areas you fall short in?*
 - *What can you offer to them that another applicant might not?*

Get to know them/Research: Check their website, on-site events, social media, etc.

Check for:

- Tpos and bad grammar
- Do you have the correct punctuation!
- Vague language (change to specific) and clichés.
- Alignment and overall presentation (i.e. does it look professional?)
- “I” to “You” ratio (Aim for a rough balance; use more “you/your” than “I/me/my” – literally.)
- Think about this:** If you were receiving this cover letter, would you be interested in meeting this person face-to-face? Does the letter convey an interest in the organization’s mission or does it seem self-focused?

Some further resources:

- Helpful post on how to get started: <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/careers-cafe/the-cover-letter-getting-started/>
- Ask a [Hiring] Manager (blog): helpful posts and articles to read about various employment-related topics <http://www.askamanager.org/>
- Avoid fill-in-the-blanks online cover letter templates, unless you want to sound insincere and robotic.

Appendix A: Sample Résumé

**Disclaimer: This is a sample. Again, there are a variety of ways to present your résumé. Feel free to search the web for other ideas.

eunice chow

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts Global Studies, Minor in History 2014
Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK

WORK EXPERIENCE

Academic Coach, Student Success Centre September 2014 - April 2015
Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK

- Coached 15-20 students in strengthening academic strategies
- Tailored learning approaches to students with a range of academic strengths
- Collaborated with students to meet their learning goals
- Provided accountability and encouragement throughout the student's educational journey

Faculty Assistant, Assistant Professor of Mission September - December 2013
Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK

- Provided constructive comments on papers and recommended student support services
- Evaluated assignments of 30 students

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Aboriginal Awareness Committee September 2014 - present
Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK

- Recording meeting minutes and sending meeting invitations
- Assisting Aboriginal Director with the execution of Aboriginal Awareness Week

Student Vice-President of Administration and Student Life September 2013 - April 2014
Briercrest College Student Government, Caronport, SK

- Initiated a small-scale mentorship pilot project
- Prepared and delivered a speech to 350 people
- Communicated with and supported a team of five student coordinators

GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Volunteer English teacher, Camp West 20 July - 16 August 2014
Neues Leben, Wölmersen, Germany

- Modified lesson plans to increase student engagement
- Delivered classroom instruction to various class sizes ranging from 6-15 youth

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Appendix B: Strong Active Verbs

Berkeley - <http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/action-verbs.pdf>

The Conference Board of Canada - <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx>

Appendix C: Sample Cover Letter

Remember:

- Rule #1 – **Tailor** your cover letter to the employer (i.e. DO SOME RESEARCH, show that you care about working for THEM and not just about getting a job)
- Also, check your “I” to “You” ratio. (Aim for a rough balance; lean towards using more “you/your” than “I/me/my” – *literally*.)

Eunice Chow
123 Tree Street
Caronport, SK S0H 0S0
306.123.4567

December 31, 2015

Karen MacDonald
Director, Human Resources
Assiniboine Community College
1430 Victoria Avenue East
Brandon, MB R7A 2A9

Dear Ms. MacDonald,

RE: Competition 35 (14/15) Full-time Learning Strategist – Glassdoor.ca

I am interested in coming alongside college students and helping them to be successful during their time at Assiniboine Community College. As a recent Bachelor of Arts graduate and as an Academic Coach at Briercrest College and Seminary, I can offer a keen understanding of the personal and academic needs of your college students.

Over the past four years, I have taken on both paid and unpaid positions that encourage student success and foster a higher level of student engagement (as evidenced in the attached résumé). The opportunity you are offering resonates with my passion and experience in initiating support strategies tailored to each student served, as well as in providing encouragement to students during their educational journey.

To help determine if your staff and students at Assiniboine Community College could use someone like me, it would be great to have a meeting with you. You can reach me at 306.123.4567 (cell) or through echow@somedomain.com. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Eunice Chow

Commented [EC1]: Include your own contact information. Alternately, use the same format as on your résumé.

Commented [EC2]: Date of application submission.

Commented [EC3]: Include contact info of the recipient.

Commented [EC4]: If name is unknown, you can address it to the position title of the recipient (e.g. Director of Human Resources) or omit it. AVOID “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern”

Commented [EC5]: Use a SUBJECT LINE to indicate which position and posting information. This way you can get straight to the point about why you’re interested in working for them.

Commented [EC6]: First paragraph: Grab their attention about why you’re interested in working for them.

Commented [EC7]: Optional: Make brief reference to your résumé.

Commented [EC8]: Remember to thank them.

Appendix D: Reference Page (to have ready if asked)

- **BEFORE** you use someone: ALWAYS remember to ask the person if you can use them as a reference.
- **IF** they say yes: Confirm with them how they could like to be contacted (e.g. business number, home phone) and share with them the job posting and a copy of your application (e.g. résumé).
- **REMEMBER** to thank them.

- Use the same Personal/Contact Info heading as you did on your résumé.
- Use the same font and size as used in your résumé.
- See sample below.
- Reference page is in addition to the 1-2 page résumé. Provide when asked.
- Further resources: UCDavis <https://icc.ucdavis.edu/materials/references.htm>

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REFERENCES

Abraham Ur

General Manager
Sinai Travel Agency
12 Genesis Avenue, Bethel, ANE 5B0 C0E
(121) 151-2215
abramham.ur@machpelah.com

Relation: Current supervisor

Daniel Belteshazzar, Ph. D.

Executive Director
The Lion's Den Corp.
605 Chal Dean Highway, Babylon, ANE 6B0 C0E
(610) 161-9280
daniel.b@thelionsden.com

Relation: Internship supervisor

Esther Haddasah

Director
Royale Catering
54 Golden Boulevard, Susa, ANE 4B8 C0E
(284) 141-6858
e.haddasah@royalecatering.com

Relation: Mentor

Questions? Suggestions?

Connect with the Student Success Centre
(Located across Academic Services or email studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca)