



RESUME & COVER LETTER GUIDE

UC Berkeley College of Engineering
The Coleman Fung Institute for Engineering Leadership
MEng Career Development

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RESUME BASICS

The main objective of a resume is to *get you an interview* by summarizing your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience. This will be the first thing employers see before getting to know you so make a positive first impression!

HOW TO BEGIN: There are two ways to begin writing your resume:

1. Reflect on what key experiences, skills, and accomplishments you have that make you marketable to a *specific* position. Choose examples to write about that relate to what the employer values.

Example:

You had an internship in a lab. Write about what skills did you use and contribute to the organization:

“Built a Python crawler to download satellite images of NYC and vehicle crash data.”

To help you organize your thoughts, follow this guide:

Your Skill	Situation/Task	Result/Impact
Built a program	Search for images of vehicle crashes in NYC	program was able to identify and download vehicle crashes in NYC

**Make as many as you can, per experience*

2. Use a job description you are targeting to apply for and select ALL the important skills/experiences. When creating your professional stories, specifically think about the hiring manager and what are his/her needs; how can you meet his/her needs based on the skills and experiences you have.

Example:

Target job skill for a Process Engineer: *Troubleshoot and perform failure analysis of consumable components & subsystems*

Target Job Skill (job description)	Your Experience	
	Situation/Task	Result/Impact
Troubleshoot	malfunction in manufacturing process; need to resolve	traced the malfunction and created an improved process
Failure Analysis	find out what happened in the malfunction	ran improved algorithm that minimized failure by 10 %
<p>Polished story: >Identified equipment malfunction that affected the production of consumable components and subsystems. >Analyzed and upgraded algorithm to minimize failure by 10%.</p>		

* Suggested writing formula: start with the skill end with result

BEGIN WRITING:

FORMATS: Two typical styles are Reverse Chronological and Functional.

- **Reverse Chronological:** Lists content within each section starting with the most recent experience first. This is *useful for education and experience that directly relates to the posting.*
- **Functional:** Highlights specific skill sets as headings. Typically, this format is for *career changers* or for one who has acquired a desired skill set without directly related experience.

LAYOUT & FORMATTING: To create a stand out resume, you need to keep it straightforward and simple.

- **LENGTH:** Typically one page, in rare cases for someone with extensive related experience, two full pages is appropriate. If two pages, use the same header and add page number to both pages.
- **MARGINS:** Should be ½--inch to 1 inch consistently around the page.
- **FONT TYPE AND SIZE:** Use 10--12pt size font. Choose one or two easy to read font types and be consistent across the page. HINT: Fonts like Arial, Calibri and Verdana are best for keeping your resume clean and easy to read.
- **HEADINGS:** Choose descriptive titles that related to key attributes of the job i.e. "ROBOTICS EXPERIENCE". Consistently use formatting tools like **BOLD**, *italics*, and underline to help your headings read well.
- **ATS Friendly:** Resumes are reviewed first by Applicant Tracking Systems that scans your resume for keywords. Make sure you keep fancy formatting to a minimum. Avoid too many columns, tables, bullets, and logos.

CONTENT: If someone only had 30 seconds to review your resume, what would they want to know? Lead with the most relevant section headings to the specific position you are applying to.

- **SECTIONS TO INCLUDE:**

- **Contact Information:** Use a large header for your name. Include contact info (basic address, phone number, professional email), and perhaps your website or LinkedIn link. This should have the same look as your cover letter for consistency.
- **Education:** List in reverse chronological order. Include school name, degree name, expected or graduation date, and GPA if above a 3.0. Convert GPA if not on a 4.0 scale. A conversion formula can be found in this [GPA Guide](#).
- **Experience:** Any relevant experience to the position. You can group headings by type of experience (use key words to bolster each heading). Depending on your project, your Capstone project can be more fully described here or in a “Projects” section
- **Technical Skills:** Especially if applying to a technical position of any kind, group by type of skill then list. Remember to incorporate your technical skills into your content descriptions to show how you can utilize your technical tool kit.

- **SOME OPTIONAL SECTIONS TO INCLUDE:**

- **Summary/Profile:** Highlights what makes you most qualified for the position instead of an Objective.
Example: “Seasoned Software Engineer with a strong technical curiosity, an interest in project management, and a commitment to excellence through effective teamwork.”
- **Academic Projects:** For someone especially who does not have much related experience outside of class coursework, this section is a great way to highlight past related academic projects, labs, and competitions.
- **Additional Information:** If there is room on the page, this heading allows you to add subheadings like “Awards and Honors”, “Professional Associations”, or any other specific piece of information you would like to market about yourself.

HOW TO SEND: After you have spell checked and had someone proofread your document, considering having both a .doc and PDF version of your resume. The PDF version could be more consistent when sending and often required. Save your work with a professional title like “YourName_Resume.doc” i.e.: JohnDoe_Resume.doc.

HINT: If you are uploading your resume to a company application site, it is best to use the .docx file. If you are sending your resume to an email address, a .pdf would suffice.

ADDITIONAL POINTS TO CONSIDER OVERALL:

DO:

- Be accurate, truthful, and error--free.
- Include as much positive information as possible.
- Be clear, concise, impactful in your presentation and content.
- Make sure the language you use reflect the language of the job posting.
- Clearly show direct fit of skills and experiences.
- Always spell check and proofread. A second pair of eyes is most helpful. The Career Services team is most happy to help!

AVOID:

- Listing your personal information. (ie. birthday, gender, etc.)
- Mentioning reasons for a previous departure or dismissal.
- Repeating the same words or phrases.
- Using stylized/complicated formatting.

COVER LETTER BASICS

The main objective of a cover letter is to connect your resume to the job you're applying for. This will convey what you can offer and how you can benefit the employer, *not* how the job will benefit you.

HINT: Only write a cover letter when it is specifically (stated) required by the job description. And, if your skills/experience does not directly match the job description, it is best to write one.

HOW TO BEGIN WRITING:

- Think about what makes you unique and how can you stand out among the applicants.
- If you need help getting started...make some lists, then translate them into a narrative letter.
 - Why do you want to work for this company? What do you like about them that relates to your own values and background? Research them if you don't know a lot about them.
 - Be sure that each cover letter is specifically tailored to the company to which you're writing.
 - Make a list of at least three things the prospective employer needs.
 - Make a list of at least six things that you bring to the position.
 - Make a list of at least three accomplishments that support your above skills.
- Learn as much as you can about the company from their website and from third party sources i.e. LinkedIn. Understand their products and services, values, structure, competition, future plans, and current developments. It's important to find out what's important to them so that you can align yourself with their goals. Use their words (from job description and website) when possible.
- These steps will also help you prepare for the interview as well!

BEGIN WRITING

FORMAT: A block formatted business style letter that is typically 3--5 paragraphs, one page, and ½--inch to 1 inch margins. Font size should be 10--12pt in an easy to read style.

SECTIONS TO INCLUDE:

- **Contact Information:** Should match the format of your resume.
- **Address/Greeting:** Address each letter to a specific person, their title, company, and company address. If you do not know whom you are writing to, write to either the Hiring or Human Resources Manager. Insert the date you are writing between the employer's contact information and greeting of the letter.

- **Introduction:** Provide a friendly opening stating who you are, why you're writing, the position you're applying for, and how you found out about it.
- **Body:** Target your skills and accomplishments to the job description. Sell yourself and what you have to offer. Mention one or two of your most relevant qualifications, why you're interested in the company, related experience, and refer them to look at your resume. Give examples of any claim. ("I am the perfect engineer for your position because..."). If you have space, mention how you specifically align with their goals/motto, not only do you have the technical skills, but you have the interest to work there!
- **Closing:** Restate your enthusiasm for the position, thank them for their time and consideration, and propose steps for further action such as an interview.
- **Letter Ending/Signature:** End the letter with a polite closing like "Sincerely" and leave three lines blank and then type your name. In the blank space you can include your electronic signature or leave blank.

ADDITIONAL POINTS TO CONSIDER OVERALL:

DO:

- Be direct, to the point, and don't ramble.
- Use action--oriented words for the most impact (see action word attachment).
- Keep your word. If you say you'll call to follow--up, call to follow--up!
- Give a range, if the employer asks for your salary requirements. This will keep them open to negotiation rather than excluding you off the bat for aiming too high or too low. Conduct a salary comparison analysis to determine the appropriate salary to request (See payscale.com, salary.com or glassdoor.com).

AVOID:

- Mentioning reasons for a previous departure or dismissal in your cover letter.
- Avoid beginning too many sentences with the same word such as "I" or "My."

EXAMPLE ACTION WORDS

Management Skills	Communication Skills	Detail--Oriented Skills
administered analyzed assigned attained chaired contracted consolidated coordinated delegated developed directed evaluated executed improved increased organized oversaw planned prioritized produced recommended reviewed scheduled strengthened supervised	addressed arbitrated arranged authored corresponded developed directed drafted edited enlisted formulated influenced interpreted lectured mediated moderated motivated negotiated persuaded promoted publicized reconciled recruited spoke translated wrote	approved arranged catalogued classified collected compiled dispatched executed generated implemented inspected monitored operated organized prepared organized prepared processed purchased recorded retrieved screened specified systematized tabulated validated

Research Skills	Technical Skills	Teaching Skills
clarified collected critiqued diagnosed evaluated examined extracted identified inspected interpreted interviewed investigated organized reviewed summarized surveyed systematized	assembled built calculated computed designed devised engineered fabricated maintained operated overhauled programmed remodeled repair solved trained upgraded	adapted advised clarified coached communicated coordinated developed enabled encouraged evaluated explained facilitated guided informed initiated instructed persuaded set goals stimulated

Financial Skills	Creative Skills	Helping Skills
administered allocated analyzed appraised audited balanced budgeted calculated computed developed forecasted managed marketed planned projected researched	acted conceptualized created designed developed directed established fashioned founded illustrated instituted integrated introduced invented originated performed planned revitalized shaped	assessed assisted clarified coached counseled demonstrated diagnosed educated expedited facilitated familiarized guided referred rehabilitated represented

RESUME SAMPLE

OSKI BEAR

Berkeley, CA | oskibear@berkeley.edu | 415.444.1582 | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/oskibear/>

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY one or two sentences about your skills, experiences and interests that relate to the job you are applying for

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley Expected 05/2019
Master of Engineering, Transportation Engineering

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia 05/2014
Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering; English Minor

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Operating Systems: Windows NT, Unix Software: MS Office
Programming: Visual C++

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Company/Organization Name, Location 8/2013-4/2014
Job Title

- What did you do + results (related to the job description)
- At least 3 bullets; max to 5
- Example: Developed algorithms that increased reliability of speed data by 5%

Federal Highway Administration, San Juan, PR Summer 2012

Engineering Assistant, Study: Continuous Process Improvement Review on Bridge Deck Construction

- Researched the actual and best practices in bridge deck construction and presented findings to board of directors
- Contributed work product in weekly meetings to evaluate actual practices against best practices.
- Prepared draft and final reports addressing deficiencies in actual practices that estimated a 20% increase in project efficiency

Civil Engineering Department, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA Fall 2011

Undergraduate Researcher

- Contributed to the design and testing of a freshwater chamber to replace methods used by the seafood industry to separate crabmeat from claw
- Analyzed the chemical make-up of resulting wastewater using membrane-filtration

Michael Baker Corporation, Annapolis, MD Summer 2010

Project Engineer Intern

- Performed quality assurance on traffic networks for emissions modeling
- Designed queries to extract information from MS Access traffic databases
- Created user interface for data entry in traffic databases

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Academic Excellence Workshop Facilitator, Office of Minority Engineering Programs, 2010 Waste Policy Institute

Undergraduate Research Award, Fall 2009 project

Society of Women Engineers Retreat Committee Chair, 2009-2011

RESUME SAMPLE

OSKI BEAR

Berkeley, CA | oskibear@berkeley.edu | 415.444.1582 | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/oskibear/>

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY A Transportation Engineer with over four years experience working on large-scale public sector projects.

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley Expected 05/2019
Master of Engineering, Transportation Engineering

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia 05/2014
Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering; English Minor

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Operating Systems: Windows NT, Unix Software: MS Office
Programming: Visual C++

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Civil Engineering Department, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 8/2013-4/2014
Graduate Research Assistant

- Analyzed data and suggested improvements for TRANSIMS (TRansportation ANalysis and SIMulation System, an integrated system (C++ on Linux) of travel forecasting model designed to give transportation planners accurate, complete information on traffic impacts, congestion and pollution
- Developed by the Los Alamos National Laboratory for FHWA

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Society of Women Engineers Retreat Committee Chair, 2009-2011

COVER LETTER GENERAL SAMPLE

YOUR HEADER (Same as Resume Header)

Recruiter's Name

Title

Company Address

City, State Zip

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name: (or Recruiting Manager:)

First Paragraph: Introduce yourself by identifying what is the job you are applying for. Tell why you're the best fit for the job by stating your top 3 skills/experience related to the job description. Mention how you will be an asset to the company.

Second Paragraph: Specifically write about how you applied the top 3 skills/experience you mentioned above directly to the job you are applying for. Include any research/special project you've done (or currently doing) that shows how you compliment the goals of the company. If you have related experience, point it out to highlight the relevant skills you bring to the position or company. (It's ok if you're repeating something from your resume. Resumes don't always get a thorough read-- through.) Refer the reader to the enclosed resume, which will give additional information concerning your background and interests.

Third Paragraph: Close by stating your desire for an interview. Make sure that your closing isn't vague, but requests a specific action from the reader. Be sure to thank them for their time.

Sincerely,

Oski Bear

COVER LETTER SPECIFIC SAMPLE

OSKI BEAR

Berkeley, CA | oskibear@berkeley.edu | 415.444.1582 | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/oskibear/>

Mr. Earl Jones
Recruiting Coordinator
EcoDrive
234 E Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 94567

June 1, 2015

Dear Mr. Jones,

After reviewing the Hybrid Development/Validation Engineer position on your website, I was excited to apply for it as I know my skills in statistical modeling and forecasting, as well as project management matches the job requirements precisely. I know EcoDrive values an inquisitive mind and bias to action which I share and would prove to be an asset in designing hardware and implementing systems testing in you company.

In my projects with a focus in energy efficient automotive design, I have a strong understanding of the theoretical and practical applications of the engineering principles required. My work with Tesla about the “Hybrid Powertrain for A Commuting Vehicle”, helped me enhance the electronic propulsion and Powertrain System Development using ICE and supercapacitor technology. Additionally, I have gained high-level managerial and administrative experience by designing this extensive project, leading a team of three engineers, and interfacing regularly with senior level management at Tesla.

I developed hardware that improved unit performance on the 2013 hybrid model by 25%, as an Engineer at ABC Motors. As a team leader for two years, I led a team of five engineers that developed test criteria and systems requirement specifications for all hybrid models using Matlab and Simulink. I presented our findings to senior leadership monthly. As a result, I am easily able to work with a variety of component engineers to create a seamless and team-oriented approach to large scale and complex problem solving. I was awarded the 2014 Team Leader Recognition Award for my efforts.

EcoDrive is at the forefront of bringing affordable energy efficient cars to the mainstream population. I share this important goal and vision. I would be excited to work with EcoDrive to expand its vision and goals. For your review, I have enclosed a resume that provides more detail about my professional experience. Please don't hesitate to contact me to further discuss this opportunity. Thank you in advance for your time and interest.

Sincerely,
Oski Bear