Career Advancement Prep. Workshop

COLLEGE OF MARIN

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AGENDA

Gain an understanding of the interconnected ways cover letters, resumes, and interview preparation can highlight your experience/qualifications

Gain an understanding of how to connect your cover letter and resume to specific position you are seeking

Review tangible language/feedback to incorporate into your resume, cover letter, and other materials

WHERE TO START?

1. An accomplishment you're proud of

2. A time you went above and beyond

3. A conflict that was resolved successfully

4. A challenge that you overcame

5. A mistake that you learned from

- Pick one of the 5 questions above and write a 2 – 3 sentence.

THE COVER LETTER

Cover letter should indicate WHY you are interested in, and WHY and HOW you are uniquely qualified for, the position.

Should demonstrate your ability to communicate effectively.

Tailor your letter to the institution/organization and the position's requirements, desirables, and essential functions. Demonstrate that you've done your research/homework.

Your letter should reflect some of your personality, but it should appear professional – use a standard business-style format and font.

Proofread! Proofread! Proofread! Also make sure you've addressed your letter to the correct institution and referenced the correct job title.

COVER LETTER REVIEW #1

- This one has a bunch of things to teach us. Some very basic review points:
  - Don't use "To whom it may concern". Do your research and find a name. Try hard. If you can't, use something like **"Dear Hiring Manager"**.
  - Please … no texting lingo. Use real words written in plain **English**.
  - Cool it on exclamation points!!! ☺
  - Help them see why you fit the job and what you can do for them.
  - Give your phone number so they have it right there in front of them on the letter itself. **Shows you are considering their needs — and may make them more likely to pick up that phone.**

COVER LETTER REVIEW #2

- Ah on Molly…Some very basic review points:
  - Great glimpse into who you are as a person but *hiring managers don't need to know your life story.*
  - The cover letter should be about any skills you've acquired and used over the years that *match the job description of the position you want now, even if they are not directly related.*
  - And whatever you do, keep your cover letter *respectfully short*.
  - Use a few well-written paragraphs at most, sticking to the essentials with enough personality and tempting job-related attributes thrown in to get them to want to call you.
  - **Consider highlighting preferred qualifications and how your accomplishments contribute to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.**

THE RESUME/CV

Resume should include relevant jobs, internships, extracurricular activities, volunteer experience, and leadership experience.

Use action words.

Quantify your resume where possible to further convey your achievements.

Tailor your resume to showcase the knowledge, skills and abilities that qualify you for the job specifically.

If your work history is limited, consider using a *CV* or *Functional Resume* versus a Chronological Resume, or a combination of the two types.

Keep it clean, tight, and lean – don't use cutesy fonts and ensure your formatting is consistent.

To satisfy ATS scanners, consider labeling your resume's sections with standard resume terminology - "Work Experience", "Skills", etc.

SAMPLE RESUME #1

The Header

Hilary's email address isn't especially appropriate. You don't need to give up your "fun" email address (or that old AOL handle that you just can't let go), but at the very least before you start your job hunt, *create a new email address that's a variation of your name.*

The Summary Statement

You know I love a good parenthetical joke, but there's really no place for jokes, snarky asides, or emoji-like expressions in a resume. *You want to be taken seriously, so make sure you set that professional tone.*

The Skills

Again, Hilary is trying to be funny, which doesn't work here. She also leads with "sense of humor," which is a good quality to have, but is it her number one skill? The skills section is a chance to emphasize what qualifies you for the job at hand. *Hilary says she wants to get a full-time writing job, so shouldn't she emphasize her writing skills?*

The Experience

There are two issues here. First, Hilary goes chronologically, rather than the backwards chronological order most common in resumes. Second, Hilary includes jobs that don't necessarily apply to the job for which she's applying.

SAMPLE RESUME REVIEW #2

- Formatting is inconsistent, different texts, fonts, some items in bold, etc.

- Grammar mistakes and inconsistencies, some bulleted items have periods and others do not *(use one consistent way).* Spelling errors.

- Verb tense inconsistencies.

- *Formatting* of dates, company names, position titles, educational institutions, degree titles and any certificates should be consistent throughout.

- Inclusion of work experience not related to the position is generally not necessary and can be distracting to a reviewer.

- In this example, the applicant is applying to a Counseling position. *If applicant does not have much or any related work experience, should include other related volunteer or internship experiences or workshops, related projects, etc. in addition to their recent work experience.*

INTERVIEW TIPS

- ***Research the organization.***

- Know why you're interested in this position at this company.

- Study the duty statement (job description) and prepare how your skills align with the position.

- Brush up/Practice—but don't memorize—your answers to common interview questions.

- ***Try some mock interviews.***

- Prepare your responses to the critical skills of the job which are outlined in the duty statement (job description) by using the ***STAR method.***

  - S: Situation
  - T: Task
  - A: Action
  - R: Result

- Anticipate possible interview questions. You can look online and get yourself familiarized with common behavioral based interview questions to give you a baseline of the types of questions your interviewer may ask.

- ***Plan for what you'll do if you're caught off guard.***

- Write down questions you'll ask them.

- ***If your interviewer asks for specific documents (references, etc.) ahead of time, make sure to bring them.***

- Look appropriate and professional.

- ***Follow up after the interview with a thank you email.***

STAR Method

The STAR method is a simple formula for answering behavioral interview questions. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Situation	What was going on?	2-3 sentences
Task	What was your goal?	1-2 sentences
Action	What did you do?	2-3 sentences
Result	What was the outcome?	2-3 sentences

Five Key Success Stories

For any interview, prepare these five success stories, ready to discuss in STAR format.

1. An accomplishment you're proud of
2. A time you went above and beyond
3. A conflict that was resolved successfully
4. A challenge that you overcame
5. A mistake that you learned from

These five topics cover the most common behavioral questions and will allow you to showcase your successes, communication skills, adaptability, professionalism, and willingness to learn. You may also find it necessary to develop other types of stories related to your field and the skills, values, and attributes most important for a particular job or program.

STAR Method Interview Prep Packet is available in your packet.

Infusing Equity Into Your Application Materials and Interview

Equity means recognizing the historical and systemic disparities in opportunity and outcomes and providing the resources necessary to address those disparities

Being equity-minded means we assess and acknowledge our practices may not be working. It takes understanding inequities as a dysfunction of the various structures, policies, and practices we can control. "Equity-Minded" staff question their own assumptions, recognize stereotypes that harm student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change. This means we become accountable for the success of our students and see racial gaps as our personal and institutional responsibility.

THE APPLICATION

- ✓ Complete all sections – don't leave anything blank and don't enter "See resume".
- ✓ Enter work history from last **10-15 years**. Include any additional experience on your resume.
- ✓ Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS): Some employers utilize their ATS's scanning feature to search for trigger words within the application. ***To ensure that your application meets their scanning criteria, consider spelling out acronyms while also including the acronym (e.g., Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).***
- ✓ Proofread and review the Required Application Documents (or similar) section before submitting your application to ensure you've attached everything required. ***Incomplete applications are quickly disqualified at most institutions.***

REFERENCES

- ✓ Professional references should include your knowledge, skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you have applied.

- ✓ References should be <u>current</u> and should include the full name, job title, organization, phone number, email address, and their relationship to you.

- ✓ Make your references aware that they may be contacted by a prospective employer – do not leave it to surprise or they may not be prepared to provide an adequate and deserving reference.

- ✓ References can carry significant influence in the recruitment process – ***be sure that your listed references are qualified and knowledgeable enough to speak on your behalf.***

- ✓ At COM, references are checked during the final stages of the recruitment process, but other institutions may check references earlier in the process – be prepared to provide them at any point in time.

Interviewing & Resume Resources

College of Marin

- COM's Job Site – job/pool postings and to apply
- COM's Career Opportunities Web Page
- COM's Employment FAQs Web Page
- California Community Colleges Registry
- TheBalanceCareers.com
- Indeed Career Guide
- The Muse Career Advice

Indeed.com

- https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/job-interview-tips-how-to-make-a-great-impression

- **Monster.com**

- https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/Top-10-Interview-Questions-Prep

- https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/100-Potential-Interview-Questions

HERC – Higher Education Recruitment Consortium

- https://www.hercjobs.org/career-advice/

Topics include:

- CV/Resume Advice
- Faculty Career Advice
- Interviewing

Higher Ed Jobs.com

- Career Resources – Higher Ed Jobs

Topics include:

- Job Search Tips
- Resume/CV Writing Service
- Salary Data in Higher Ed
- Diversity Resources

Thank you!

Sources

- https://www.resume-now.com/job-resources/cover-letters/bad-cover-letter-examples-how-to-fix-annoying-mistakes

- https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OHR/Careers/6How-to-Prepare-for-an-Interview

- https://community.thejobnetwork.com/3-incredibly-bad-resumes-that-will-make-you-facepalm-092016/

- https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-ultimate-interview-guide-30-prep-tips-for-job-interview-success