

Career Planning

Writing a Résumé and Cover Letter

for First Years and Sophomores



 **APEX WOOSTER**

Advising, Planning and Experiential Learning

SKILLS EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES

Employers place the greatest value on **demonstrated proficiency** in skills that cut across all majors.

Intellectual and Practical Skills:

- Oral communication
- Teamwork skills with diverse groups
- Written communication
- Critical thinking and analytic reasoning
- Complex problem solving
- Information literacy
- Innovation and creativity
- Technological skills
- Quantitative reasoning

Personal and Social Responsibility:

- Ethical judgment and decision making
- Work independently – set priorities, manage time/deadlines
- Self-motivated – ability to take initiative and be proactive

Employers are more likely to hire graduates with these experiences:

- Internship/apprenticeship with a company/organization
- Project in community with people from diverse backgrounds
- Multiple courses requiring significant writing assignments
- Research project done collaboratively with peers
- Advanced, comprehensive senior project/thesis
- Service-learning project with community organization
- Study abroad program

Source: Hart Research Associates, Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2018)

HOW TO PREPARE AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

****NOTE: The average employer spends approximately 30 seconds reviewing a resume. Make it count!**

I. Resume Essentials

Before you write, take time to do a self-assessment on paper. Outline your skills and abilities as well as your work experience, co-curricular, and volunteer activities. This will make it easier to prepare a thorough resume.

II. The Content of Your Resume

Name, Address, Telephone, E-mail Address, Web Site Address

All your contact information should go at the top of your resume.

- Avoid nicknames.
- Use a permanent address. Use your parents' address, a friend's address, or the address you plan to use after graduation.
- Use a permanent telephone number and include the area code. Be sure to record a neutral greeting on your voice mail.
- Add your e-mail address. Many employers will find it useful. (Note: Choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.)
- Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions.

Skill Summary (OPTIONAL)

A skill summary concisely tells a potential employer how the candidate is uniquely qualified for the job.

- Tailor to specific job description.
- Read what they are looking for and reflect on your own experiences that demonstrate those skills.

Examples:

- A skilled communicator able to synthesize and deliver complex information to diverse audiences.
- Exemplary problem-solving skills: able to identify problems and implement corrective measures.
- Computer skills – include MS Suite, Photoshop, Dreamweaver

Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first.
- Include your degree (B.A., etc.), institution attended, major, minor/concentration.
- Add your grade point average (GPA) if it is higher than 3.0.
- Mention academic honors.
- List relevant coursework.
- Describe your Independent Study.
- If you studied away from campus, add it to this section.

Experience

Briefly give the employer an overview of work and any other experiences (volunteer, committee membership, etc.) that has taught you skills. Use action words to describe what you did. Include your experience in reverse chronological order—that is, put your last experience first and work backward to your first, relevant job. Include:

- Title of position.
- Name of organization.
- Location of work (town, state.)
- Dates of employment (month/year – month/year, e.g. January 2020 – May 2020)
- Describe your responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements.

Other Sections

A staff member in Career Planning can advise you on other information to add to your resume. You may want to add:

- Key or special skills or competencies.
- Leadership experience in volunteer organizations.
- Participation in sports.
- APEX Fellowships, Health Coach, RA

References

Ask people if they are willing to serve as a positive reference before you give their names to a potential employer. Do not include your reference information on your resume.

III. Resume Checkup

You've written your resume. It's time to have it reviewed and critiqued by a career advisor. You can also take the following steps to ensure quality:

Content

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume.
- Get a friend (an English major would do nicely) to do a grammar review.
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected).

Design

These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan:

- Use white or off-white paper.
- Use 8-1/2- x 11-inch paper.
- Print on one side of the paper.
- Use a font size of 10 to 12 point.
- Margins: .5 – 1" all around.
- Use non-decorative typefaces.
- Choose one typeface and stick to it.
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words.
- Do not use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, or shading.
- Do not fold or staple your resume.

POWER WORDS FOR YOUR RESUME

Use powerful action words to describe your experience and accomplishments

accelerated	designed	inspired	provided
accomplished	detailed	innovated	purchased
achieved	devised	installed	recommended
acquired	directed	insured	reconciled
adapted	discovered	integrated	recorded
addressed	doubled	interpreted	recruited
administered	drafted	interviewed	reduced
advanced to*	earned*	invented	reinforced
advertised	edited	investigated	related
analyzed	educated	justified	reorganized
anticipated	effected**	keynoted	reported
approved	eliminated	launched	researched
arranged	engineered	led	resolved
assembled	enforced	licensed	reviewed
assisted	established	maintained	revised
audited	estimated	managed	scheduled
budgeted	evaluated	manipulated	selected
built	examined	marketed	separated
calculated	executed	mastered	served
centralized	expanded	minimized	set up
changed	expedited	modified	simplified
collaborated	explained	monitored	solved
collected	facilitated	motivated	sparked
compiled	financed	negotiated	specified
completed	forecasted	obtained	staffed
conceived	formed	operated	stimulated
conceptualized	formulated	organized	strengthened
composed	founded	originated	structured
condensed	generated	overcame	supervised
conducted	governed	oversaw	surveyed
constructed	graduated	participated	synthesized
contracted	guided	performed	taught
consulted	halved	persuaded	tested
controlled	headed	pioneered	trained
converted	hired	planned	transformed
coordinated	identified	prevented	transmitted
correlated	illustrated	prepared	tripled
created	implemented	presented	unified
cultivated	improved	processed	used
defined	increased	produced	verified
delegated	influenced	programmed	won
demonstrated	informed	promoted to*	wrote
developed	initiated	proposed	

*Advanced to rather than promoted to and earned rather than was given indicate a person who does things rather than receives them. ** Do not confuse with affected.

Name

Email
Phone

Home Address

1234 Wooster Rd
Wooster, OH 44691

Campus Address

1189 Beall Ave
Wooster, OH 44691

Education

The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Degree: Bachelor of Arts

Projected Major: Music Education

Honors: Dean's Scholarship

Paramus High School, Paramus, NJ

Graduation Date: June 2017

Honors: Tri-M Music Honor Society

Experience

The College of Wooster Music Department Wooster, OH
Usher

September 2017-Present

- Regulated entry and exit from a performance venue
- Maintained a respectful and appropriate environment for performers
- Distributed tickets and programs to patrons

Paramus Public Library Paramus, NJ

Summer 2017-Present

Summer Reading Program Assistant

- Guided K-5 students in individual reading programs
- Recorded students' reading habits using Beanstalk software
- Assisted parents in motivating children to read

New York Renaissance Faire Tuxedo Park, NY

Summer 2016-Present

House Band; Performing Arts

- Interacted with patrons through improvisational acting
- Accompanied cast performances with violin music
- Provided other cast members with transcribed sheet music

Leadership / Activities

Wooster Symphony Orchestra Wooster, OH

August 2017-Present

Assistant Principal Chair - 2nd Violins

Interfaith Scholars Wooster, OH

October 2017-Present

- Selected to meet weekly with other College of Wooster students to discuss topics regarding faith and religion

A Round of Monkeys (Acappella Singing Group)

September 2017-Present

Music Director 2018-2019

- Select and arrange new music; teach parts to members of the group

Skills

Language: English as first language, basic Korean and German, proficiency in Hangul handwriting

Technical: Competent with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Google Docs, MuseScore; familiar with Microsoft Excel

Communication: Strong written and oral skills acquired from writing assignments and speaking to groups of all ages

Example 2

Name

Email | Phone

Campus Address: 1189 Beall Ave, Wooster, OH 44691

Permanent Address: 1234 Wooster Rd, Wooster, OH 44691

EDUCATION

The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Degree: Bachelor of Arts

Major: Business Economics

Minor: Spanish

Honors: The Posse Foundation Full Tuition Leadership Scholarship (2017-2021)

EXPERIENCE

The Posse Foundation Atlanta, GA

June – August 2019

Summer Intern

- Research grant proposals while investigating donor prospects
- Manage logistics for career workshops and events, including data, marketing, and moderating panels
- Wrote scholar articles for the Posse local and national newsletters

Tracy Wyatt Recreation Center College Park, GA

June 2018 – August 2019

Head Camp Counselor

- Facilitated daily discussions of social concepts with camp youth
- Pioneered a creative strategy to ensure the safety of campers

Akron's Children's Hospital – The Commons Pilot Program Akron, OH

March – April 2019

Consulting Team Leader

- Developed an application for simplifying the healthcare process for adolescent teens and parents
- Collaborated with professional leaders and consultants to develop business outline and minimal viable products

The Sovereign Order of Malta Pécs, Hungary

June – July 2018

Consulting Team Leader

- Increased cultural influence and communication while persevering through language and cultural barriers
- Led a group of culturally diverse scholars and orchestrated charitable program for marginalized communities
- Created a social entrepreneurial program that provided transportation for impoverished communities

LEADERSHIP

Tartan Talk Committee Wooster, OH

October 2018 – Present

- Selected to meet biweekly with APEX staff to plan inspirational talks intended to positively impact students
- Assisted with marketing by developing unique strategies to appeal to students from all backgrounds

Posse PLUS SUMMIT Deloitte Leadership Center Houston, Texas

January 2016 - Present

Student Representative for The College of Wooster

- Elected to represent Wooster Posse to discuss the state of our union along with 150 Nationwide Scholars
- Presented groundbreaking ideas and strategies to diminish social inequality on national TV via Telemundo

1st Place International Video Pitch Competition Wooster, OH

March – April 2019

- Developed business proposal for innovative digital application aimed at promoting balance between smartphone usage and healthy lifestyles through a shared economy
- Facilitated group discussions with diverse populations
- Designed, produced, and presented two-minute video pitch for the application

SKILLS & INTERESTS

Technology: Final Cut Pro, iMovie, Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Light Room, After Effects, Canva, Microsoft Office

Language: Proficient in Spanish

Professional/Communication: Presentations, Strategic Planning, Teambuilding, Time Management

Interests: Barbering, Fishing, Paintball, Piano, Videography

Certification: CPR-Certified, QPR-Certified

HOW TO WRITE COVER LETTERS

The preliminary application for a professional position generally consists of two documents: a cover letter and a resume. The cover letter allows you to tailor your application to each specific job and introduces your resume. Your resume gives more complete details about your education and experiences. Effective cover letters are constructed with close attention to: **Purpose, Audience, Content, and Format.**

Purpose

Your cover letter and resume usually provide all the information which a prospective employer will use to decide whether or not you will reach the next phase in the application process: the interview. While your goal is an interview and, ultimately, a job offer, the more immediate purpose of your cover letter, in some cases, may simply be to gain an attentive audience for your resume.

Audience

A cover letter provides, in a very real sense, an opportunity to let your prospective employer hear your voice. It reflects your personality, your attention to detail, your communication skills, your enthusiasm, your intellect, and your specific interest in the company to which you are sending the letter.

Therefore, cover letters should be tailored to each specific company to which you are applying. You should conduct enough research to know the interests, needs, values, and goals of each company, and your letters should reflect that knowledge.

Content

A cover letter should be addressed to the specific company and the specific individual who will process your application. You can usually find this through research or simply by calling the company to find out to whom you should address your letter.

The letter should name the position for which you are applying and make specific references to the company. Indicate your knowledge of and interest in the work the company is currently doing, and your qualification for the position. You want the reader to know:

- why you want to work at that specific company
- why you fit with that company
- how you qualify for the position

In addition to tailoring your application to a specific job with a specific company, the cover letter should also:

- highlight the most important accomplishments, skills, and experiences listed in your resume that are relevant to the job description.
- not simply list everything that is in your resume; expand and demonstrate your skills.
- request specific follow up, such as an interview.

Format

A cover letter should be in paragraph form (save bulleted lists for your resume) with a conversational, though formal, tone.

Introduction Paragraph:

The first paragraph should be brief, perhaps two or three sentences, stating:

- the job you are applying for and how you learned about it.
- any personal contacts you have in or with the company.
- your general qualifications for the job – list three qualities/skills that qualify you for the position.
- what makes you unique/grab the reader's interest.

Body – 1-3 Paragraphs

The body of your letter should consist of paragraphs in which you expand upon your qualifications for the position.

- Pick out the most relevant qualifications listed in your resume and discuss them in detail.
- Demonstrate how your background and experience qualify you for the job.
- Give an example or two where you have demonstrated the skills/qualities you referenced in your opening paragraph.

Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph of your letter should request an interview (or some other response, as appropriate).

- State where and when you can be reached.
- Express your willingness to come to an interview or supply further information.

Close by thanking your reader for his or her time and consideration.

Name

Email | Phone

Campus Address: 1189 Beall Avenue, Wooster, OH 44691

March 21, 2019

Mrs. Marylou Lalonde
Career Planning
The College of Wooster
Wooster, OH 44691

Dear Mrs. Lalonde:

I am writing to apply for the Peer Advisor position in Career Planning I learned about on the College's Student Employment website. I believe my personal experiences have given me strong communication and computer skills along with various personal qualities to thrive in this particular job.

One of my best accomplishments, obtained through working closely with Career Planning, was being offered the Resident Assistant (RA) position as a first-year student. This has been one of the highlights of my time at the College, as this job almost never accepts freshmen due to the heavy responsibilities and maturity that comes with it. Additionally, during the process of applying, I have continuously used Career Planning services and become familiar with the process of editing resumes and cover letters and practicing for job interviews. I am certain that I have sufficient knowledge and can blossom in the position with further training.

I have long wanted to be a part of APEX since the first time I had my resume and cover letter edited in your Walk-in Wednesday event. I deeply understand how much of an important resource Career Planning is to students, and I earnestly want to contribute my abilities to help others.

I hope my skills, passion, and willingness to learn has stood out to you, and I look forward to your response. I can be reached anytime via email at (Email Address) or by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Name

CAREER PLANNING

APEX

1140 Beall Avenue • Wooster, Ohio 44691
Phone: 330-263-2496 • Email: career@wooster.edu
www.wooster.edu/offices/career/

MISSION STATEMENT

Career Planning engages motivated students and supports graduates by providing the guidance and the resources needed to integrate their unique backgrounds, liberal arts education, and experiences into meaningful career paths.

THE COLLEGE OF
WOOSTER
