Preparing Your Cover Letter and Resumé
Tips and Frequently Asked Questions

INTRODUCTION

A resumé is a summary highlighting your qualifications, skills, training and education for the type of position you are seeking. It can also be in response to a specific job advertisement.

Employers use resumés to evaluate job applicants. Resumés received are screened in order to create a short list of applicants to be interviewed. Because screening is conducted by reading the applicants' resumés to determine if the screening criteria are met, an effective resumé is critical.

The following information provides some tips on how to write a resumé.

WRITING A RESUME

1. Reflect on your current and previous experiences
Start by writing down all the things that you can think of about yourself. This includes your goals, education, training and experiences (including paid, volunteer, part-time work).

You may want to consider saving this version as your master copy, one that you can continue to update with new skills, training and accomplishments.

Then, begin weeding out all those things that are not relevant to the type of position you are seeking, or to the job advertisement you are responding to.

Think about how your expertise matches the qualifications needed to be successful in this position and begin shaping, and organizing the information into a resumé.

2. Choose a resumé format
There are many ways to write a resumé. Three common formats include:
- Chronological
- Functional
- Combined

When choosing the format for your resumé, consider the type of jobs and employers you are applying for. Refer to the resources section for more information.

If your resumé is in response to an advertised position, a chronological resumé may work best at describing how you meet the qualifications listed in the advertisement.

3. Consider the following resumé writing tips

A resumé should contain more than a summary of your work and education history. It is also an opportunity to highlight past

accomplishments you have made with current and past employers.

When describing your work and education history you can also include part-time, casual, summer jobs, and volunteer experience, and special courses, updated skills and/or workshops. Don't forget to describe your computer experience and training.

Consider including additional information such as: special skills, languages, written works/publications, special honours or awards, memberships, personal interests, hobbies and/or volunteer pursuits, if relevant.

In the case of an advertised position, tailor your resumé for each position that you are applying to, identifying relevant experience and skills from each position you have held.

Ensure your resumé identifies clearly how you meet the qualifications of the position you are seeking.

Use a variety of action verbs to describe your experience, skills and accomplishments. A list of action verbs is included in this document.

Generally a resumé is two to three pages in length.

The key to resumé length is how well the information fits the job you are applying for. Does the information relate the position? Have you added enough facts to let the employer know your skills and experience?

It is better to add an additional page to your resumé than have the information look crowded. A resumé should be nice to look at and easy to read

Choose an appropriate font and size. Avoid too small or too large of a font size. A size 12 font Arial or Times New Roman is standard.

Use a standard 1" margin.

WRITING A COVER LETTER

An effective cover letter goes beyond describing the duties listed on your resumé. The following contains tips on how to prepare a cover letter.

A cover letter is an opportunity to:
- expand on the information contained in your resumé
- highlight the most relevant strengths, experience, skills and accomplishments

If you are responding to a job advertisement, ensure that your cover letter is tailored to the position you are applying for.

There is not only one way to write a cover letter. Consider using a table to summarize how you meet each job requirement or selection criteria.

Include the job advertisement number and the title of the position.

Ensure that it includes an email address and telephone number(s) where you can be reached. If you are going to be away for any period of time beyond one day, provide an alternate contact number. It is essential to respond promptly.

If the organization recognizes employment equity, it is a good place to self-declare employment equity.

REVIEWING YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME

Before sending your cover letter and resumé, you may want to consider reviewing them to ensure you have used plain language and correct grammar.

Avoid submitting a resumé that contains typing or formatting errors or handwritten corrections. Consider asking someone to proofread your resumé before submitting.

RESOURCES

The following resources may be of interest:

Civil Service Commission website on:
Preparing your Cover Letter and Resumé – Presentation
https://www.gov.mb.ca/govjobs/info/index.html

Preparing for the Job Interview – Presentation
https://www.gov.mb.ca/govjobs/info/index.html

Preparing for the Job Interview – Tips and Frequently Asked Questions
https://www.gov.mb.ca/govjobs/info/index.html

Employment Equity in the Competition Process: http://www.gov.mb.ca/govjobs/info/eequity.html

HELP ME FIND THE ACTION VERBS TO DESCRIBE WHAT I DO

Accomplish	Create	Implement	Provide
Achieve	Critique	Improve	Purchase
Adapt	Cut	Increase	Recommend
Address	Decrease	Influence	Reconcile
Administer	Delegate	Inform	Record
Advise	Demonstrate	Initiate	Recruit
Allocate	Design	Innovate	Refer
Analyze	Direct	Inspect	Regulate
Appraise	Develop	Install	Remodel
Approve	Devise	Instruct	Repair
Arrange	Diagnose	Integrate	Represent
Assemble	Direct	Interpret	Research
Assign	Distinguish	Interview	Restore
Assist	Draft	Lead	Restructure
Attain	Edit	Manage	Retrieve
Audit	Educate	Market	Revitalize
Author	Enable	Mediate	Save
Automate	Encourage	Moderate	Schedule
Balance	Enlist	Monitor	Screen
Budget	Establish	Motivate	Set
Calculate	Evaluate	Negotiate	Solidify
Catalogue	Examine	Operate	Solve
Chair	Execute	Organize	Streamline
Classify	Expand	Originate	Strengthen
Coach	Expedite	Oversee	Summarize
Collect	Explain	Perform	Supervise
Compile	Extract	Persuade	Survey
Complete	Fabricate	Plan	Systemize
Compose	Facilitate	Prepare	Tabulate
Compute	Familiarize	Present	Train
Conduct	Forecast	Prioritize	Translate
Consolidate	Formulate	Process	Travel
Contribute	Generate	Produce	Upgrade
Control	Guide	Program	Validate
Coordinate	Identify	Project	Work
Counsel	Illustrate	Promote	Write

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUMÉ FORMAT

1. **Personal Information**
   - Name
   - Telephone number (and alternate number) and email address (if applicable)
   - Employment equity status (if applicable)

2. **Work Experience**
   - Include full-time and part-time employment. Highlight activities that relate to the qualifications/duties stated in the advertisement. Use reverse chronological order; that is, start with most recent and work your way back.
   - Length of time employed (month and year if possible)
   - Job title
   - Name and address of employer
   - Description of duties performed using action verbs
   - Key accomplishments. For each position listed, include key accomplishments

3. **Education**
   - Names and addresses of schools attended and duration of attendance
   - Certificates, diplomas, degrees, and dates obtained
   - Areas of specialization

4. **Additional Training/Expertise/Skills**
   - Languages (noting fluency orally and/or in writing)
   - Computer skills (list software programs, typing and data entry speeds, if known. Describe your computer skills to demonstrate the breadth and depth of your skills)
   - Occupational training courses, seminars, workshops

5. **Optional Information**
   - Volunteer work experience - may be very beneficial if the volunteer work is related to the position (and its qualifications) for which you are applying
   - Professional affiliations

6. **References**
   - Provide two or three supervisory references; choose carefully and ask permission first
   - You do not have to list your references in your résumé, unless the advertisement requests that you do so.
   - You may choose to provide references later in the process and can therefore, indicate that references are "available upon request"