



Students and alumni –
for the right job, start here.



ph: (403) 220-8020 | fx: (403) 282-8342 | e-mail: recruit@ucalgary.ca



www.ucalgary.ca/careers

How to Write an Effective Actuarial Resume and Cover Letter

September 14, 2005

Resumes and Cover Letters

- An honest advertisement marketing you
- Identify you as technically competent to do the job advertised
- Focus on the needs of the employer and how you are qualified to meet those needs (targeted)
- Living documents that change as your experiences, knowledge and skills change
- Perfectly typed with flawless grammar



DO NOT...

- Give reasons for termination
- Mention references
- Use exact dates, just month and year
- Include a photo or personal information like height, weight, physical appearance, marital status

DO NOT...

- Use acronyms (e.g. “U of C” should be “University of Calgary”)
- Use superlatives; the employer decides whether or not you are “excellent”
- Provide salary information
- Include information over ten years old, unless it is a significant accomplishment

Target

- Research the company; Use the Internet (http://www.ucalgary.ca/careers/students/Job_search_links/index.html), company annual reports, and friends
- Know the values and needs of the employer and how YOUR skills meet those needs
- Understand the job being advertised; on the posting, highlight all requirements and desirable skills



Target

- Analyze the duties to decide what skills are required to perform them
- Choose up to five skills you have highlighted or written in the margin on the posting; use these skills on your resume and in your cover letter
- Provide specific examples with numbers to explain your ability to do the job

Resume Sections

- Objective (optional)
- **Education**
 - **SOA Exams**
- Skills (optional)
- **Work Experience**
- Volunteer Experience (optional)
- **Interests**

Format

- Professional presentation
- Positive in tone
- Most important information first
- Consistent throughout, both in style and format
- Highlight by bolding, italicizing and using alternative font sizes; No Underlining

Format

- Two pages long, maximum
- Name and page number on the top of second page
- Round, black bullets; do the “squint test” to check first impression
- Maximum of five bullets per heading, maximum of two lines of examples per bullet; no periods at the end of bullets
- Spell out numbers under ten



Format

- Present information in reverse chronological order (present to past)
- Justify dates in margin, either left or right
- Font size, 11 or 12, with headings 14, your name 16 font
- Use white or cream paper with no shading to ensure good quality photocopy and fax

Style and Language

- Never use personal pronouns; “I, we, they, he, she”
- Begin each bullet with an action verb
- Use correct tenses; present tense for current activities, past tense for past activities
- Avoid passive language like “although”, “believe”, “just”
- Edit and proof-read your resume



Education

- Education Section Subheadings
 - SOA Exams
 - Relevant Courses
 - Major Projects
 - Additional Training e.g., Certificates or Diplomas
 - Scholarships, Honors and Awards
- Add GPA if 3.0/4 or higher
- Add high school, only if there are outstanding awards/achievements or you want to indicate where you grew up

Work Experience

- Position title first, bolded, then company
- Reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent job
- Action verbs to start each bullet
 - [Action Verbs Tip sheet](#)
- Focus on achievements and skills, and a list of business related duties if unique; make powerful by quantifying whenever possible
- Emphasize team experiences or examples of initiative
- Limit the duties when the title is descriptive enough, e.g., Lifeguard



Work Experience Examples

2002-2004 **Maintenance Worker**

Summers

Calgary Golf and Country Club

- Exceptional Service Award for Summer 2004
- Trained five new employees individually and in groups
- Helped develop new program for bunker maintenance resulting in enhanced playability
- Interacted with club members in a professional and courteous manner on a daily basis

2002-2004 **Program Coordinator**

12 hrs/wk

Glenwest Centre for Children

- Create and implement daily age-appropriate activities for 50 children aged five to twelve
- Employ behaviour modification techniques aimed at the reduction of aggressive and inappropriate behaviour
- Develop extreme patience, effective communication skills and the ability to function well under high stress



Interests and Affiliations

- Hobbies, sports (three or four), and special accomplishments; be specific about teams, how often you played, what you read and your magazine subscriptions, (e.g. “Backpacking” should be, “Four years backpacking including a six day hike in Northern British Columbia last summer”)
- For a risk-free resume, avoid naming religious or political groups; use “community” as the generic term



Top Job Search Tips

- Know what you want from employment – know what you can offer employers
- Research Employers
- Develop a 30 Second Commercial
- Use All of the Job Search Strategies
 - Networking – Personal and professional contacts
 - Contact Employers Directly – Marketing letters, phone calls
 - Internet – What information do you seek?
 - Job Postings – Web-based and print
 - Professional Involvement – Associations
- Purchase Personal Business Cards



Resources

- Resume Critiquing
 - Half-hour meetings
 - Call 220-8020 or stop by the office – MacEwan Student Centre, Room 188 to make an appointment

What is Co-operative Education?

- Co-op Education is an **academic** program which integrate university study with career related **work experience**

Co-op – What is It?

- Academic program
 - form of experiential learning
 - course work
 - Extra to your degree
 - evaluated
 - Academic reports
 - Performance evaluation completed by your supervisor
 - Completed Requirements or Fail grade for each work term
 - recognized

Co-op – What is it?

- Work Experience
 - Co-op work terms are:
 - Full-time
 - Paid
 - Related to your major

Why Co-op?

- apply classroom knowledge in a real world setting
- gain work experience prior to graduation
- establish a network of contacts in your field
- confirm your career choice
- learn job search strategies, resume writing and interview skills
- Co-op designation on your degree



Students

- Fees
- Time
 - work search activities – placement not guaranteed
 - academic reports
 - adds a year to your degree program

Admission Requirements

- Must be full time student
- Must be a declared ACSC major
- Meet the departmental requirements
 - In calendar
- Complete the Career Development workshops



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Other Sources of Information

- Career Services - MSC 188
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/careers/students>
- Department Representative
 - Dr. David Scollnik
 - scollnik@math.ucalgary.ca
- Career Services Representative
 - Nicole Wheeler, MSC 188
 - nwheeler@ucalgary.ca





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