

Our Suggestions: creating a resume/CV and preparing for interviews

Preparing a résumé or curriculum vitae (CV):

Your resume should be tailored to the job you're seeking and convey brief information about relevant work experience. Avoid crowding the text. Clearly list your contact information and provide clear, concise information about your level of education and employment. Generally, you should begin with your most recent experiences. You may wish to include a one-sentence statement that summarizes your current career or employment goal.

Remember, you'd like to be invited for an interview, where you'll be able to elaborate on your experience. A résumé may occupy up to two pages (front only!), especially if you have had a lot of relevant work experience or if reference contact information is provided at the end of the résumé. Ideally, though, a young professional should expect to fit the résumé on a single page.

A curriculum vitae or CV may include more detailed information than a résumé, particularly about education and specific project work / job responsibilities, and professional involvements. Most of the time a new college graduate, a relatively new jobseeker, or an internship candidate will not need to prepare a CV. Some graduate and postgraduate level internships, fellowships, and jobs do require a CV. A CV is an acceptable way to present more detailed information than is possible using a résumé.

Thoroughly check your spelling and grammar on ALL of application materials!

References and letters of recommendation:

Try to notify anyone you plan to ask for a recommendation in advance. Ideally, it is best to allow three weeks to a month, but occasionally a "windfall" opportunity may come up. In this case, ask as soon as you decide to apply for the position. Always make sure the recommending party has some information about the job, a copy of your résumé, and any other information that may make his or her task easier. If you've written an application statement or essay, a copy of that may assist the recommender, particularly if he or she has not been in recent contact with you.

Provide the recommender with addressed, stamped envelopes as needed, and don't forget to send a note of thanks!

Portfolio or examples of work:

Some, particularly visually or writing-oriented jobs and internships, require a portfolio or other work samples. While these items should speak to what is requested by your interviewer, they need not be more extensive or elaborate than that. Interviews can be lengthy and tiring for both the candidate and the interviewer(s), so be selective and remember to consider time constraints. Present your work as simply and neatly as possible, to allow for easy review.

Visit, tour, and interview tips:

Try to arrange tours and visits a week or two (or more!) before they are to take place. Avoid asking for impromptu and last minute visits if at all possible, and show up promptly. Nothing is wrong with arriving five to ten minutes early.

Even if you're told to dress "casually", wear something neat and presentable. That means no jeans, no t-shirts, no sneakers. Men should consider a button down shirt with a sweater or tie and slacks. Women should consider a modestly cut shirt or blouse and jacket with either slacks or a skirt (not too tight or short!). It's a good idea not to wear excessive makeup, jewelry (men and women!), or cologne/perfume, and to keep hairstyles simple, tidy, and neat.

Even if you feel you have no questions, it pays to ask at least a question or two about parts of the visit that interested you and that relate to the work you're hoping to undertake.

Manners count, particularly please, thank you, and a brief, firm (not painful!) handshake with eye contact.

Remember to send a handwritten thank you note to your hosts shortly after your visit and preferably within a day or two.