

## What is a Resume?

A resume or C.V. (Curriculum Vitae) is an important part of any job application. It often represents the first document a HR professional or recruiter looks at when receiving a job application. In a resume, you summarize your professional history which should include education, employment history and volunteer work. By presenting these pieces of information, you can demonstrate that you are a suitable candidate for a particular role. Resumes are not a “set and forget” type of document. You should keep it constantly updated and you need to adapt it for every job application, to ensure you demonstrate the potential employer that you have the right skills for the advertised role.

## Types of Resumes

The most common types of resumes are: Chronological, Functional and Hybrid/Combined.

### **Chronological**

Generally speaking, this is the most frequently used type of resume. As the name suggests, this format lists information in a chronological order, starting with the most recent experience. This type of resume is particularly useful for people which have a strong history of employment.

### **Functional**

A functional resume is characterised by having its focus on skills that are relevant to a given application. While the employment history is mentioned, the relevance of it is not as significant. The use of a functional resume is recommended for people that do not have much work experience or are going through a career change.

### **Hybrid /Combined**

As the name suggests, the format takes the advantages of both the chronological and the functional resume. This approach allows people to both highlight their skills as well as their detailed work experience. You could use this format if you want to tell the hiring manager a story about your career and what you are like as a staff member. Alternatively, recent graduates could benefit from this format, as it allows for telling more about the personal learning that occurred throughout all aspects of tertiary education.

## General Tips

In preparing the resume, keep in mind the following tips:

- It must be correctly formatted, well presented and without grammar or spelling mistakes
- It must be written with consistent font types and sizes throughout the document
- It must not be extremely colourful or “polluted”
- It must be no more than 4 pages long (2 sheets)

Remember that the hiring managers are forming a first impression of you the moment that they lay eyes on your resume. You will be judged on your organizational skills, attention to detail, literacy and proactiveness just on how your resume is presented. You want to ensure that you appeal to the hiring manager. That means if your resume is uninspiring, messy or carries a lot of errors and inconsistencies you will most likely have your chances to move to the next round reduced.

Do not forget to save everything in PDF format. Never email a “.doc” file. Word documents generally change formatting when opened on different devices.

If you need assistance with your next job application, please contact Career Identity on 0458 970 470 or via email on [jens@careeridentity.com.au](mailto:jens@careeridentity.com.au)

## Resume Sections

A resume is a document that summarizes your professional history, education, employment history and volunteer work. When preparing your resume, make sure that you include information within clearly defined sections, preferably under the following headings:

### **Personal Details**

Here you provide all personal details: Name, address, telephone number and email address. If you have a LinkedIn profile, you can also list the web address here. For immigrants, it is also useful to list your Visa and/or legal work permits. It is not advisable to list your age, your civil status or add photos, as it opens up the opportunity for hiring managers to form opinions about you without having the chance to meet you first.

### **Career Summary Statement**

In this section, you will use three to four sentences that summarize your career and talk about skills and general experiences that are relevant to the particular job application. The section must be in line with the information that follows in the rest of the resume. It should be written in third person and the sentences should be sharp and to the point.

### **Employment History**

Mention here the organizations you have worked for in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent job role. You should add a brief description of the company's activities (one short sentence) if it is not a well-known organization in your industry or if it is an overseas company. Add the role/title you held and the duration of your time with the company.

If you held multiple roles within the same organization, have a separate section entry for each position to demonstrate your progression.

In addition to this, you will need to highlight the "Key Responsibilities" - tasks that generally you completed as part of that role and "Key Achievements" - significant accomplishments within each role.

### **Education**

This part of the resume provides the space to mention qualifications that you have obtained (i.e. University degrees). List them in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. List the name of the education institution, the title/course and the start and finish year. If relevant, you can also add professional development courses that you have undertaken.

### **Professional Memberships**

If you are part of a professional association, please add a section to mention this.

### **Referees**

You should provide the contact details of at least two professional referees in this section. If you feel uncomfortable about listing your referees openly, you may opt to write "To be provided upon request" If you provide professional referees details, please ensure that you list their name, organization, job title and contact details. Do not forget to inform your referees that you are listing their contact details in your resume prior to applying for jobs, so that they are not caught unaware.

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## What is a Key Selection Criteria request?

As part of many job applications, candidates are required to provide a separate document responding to Key Selection Criteria (KSC). Especially for people who have not worked in Australia, this is a foreign concept. Key Selection Criteria is nothing more than a list of required qualifications and experiences that the employers are looking for in a candidate that wants to apply for the advertised position. The requirement to present responses to the KSC is generally mentioned in the job advertisement.

### Why do employers ask for KSC?

Despite the fact that a cover letter and resume provide a solid overview about the knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences of a candidate, some employers will also ask for a response to the KSC to help them filter the candidates and select the suitable ones for interviews.

In preparing a document responding to a KSC, a candidate has the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability in more detail based on specific examples. Through the answers you can take your application to the next level and demonstrate you are a very competitive candidate.

When preparing the response to the KSC document, you should ensure that its “look and feel” is aligned with the cover letter and resume you prepared, to ensure consistency throughout the application. Create a sub-heading for each criteria that requires a response (e.g. Minimum of three years’ work experience post-graduation) and write below the heading a paragraph outlining how you meet/exceed the requirements of that criteria.

While it is generally recommended to submit a KSC response, please check the job advertisement carefully, as in some cases employers do not want to receive such a document. If you have to write this document as part of your application, please take your time and produce a quality and impressive document.

### Responding to the KSC

You should try to write your response paragraphs using the STAR methodology, as below:

#### *Situation*

Write the first sentence describing the context of the situation in which you gained the experience relevant to the KSC.

#### *Task*

Write another sentence or two providing more details, such as your role and what specific tasks you completed.

#### *Action*

Based on the situation and task, write one to three sentences describing what action(s) you took to deal with the situation.

#### *Result*

In the last sentence, which is the most important, clearly state what the outcome of your actions was. Employers like to read about the impact you have made, as this shows them that you could make a difference to their organisation.

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## What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is your formal introduction to the HR professional or recruiter with a request that they read your resume and consider your application. When applying for a job, the cover letter is often the first document an employer looks at. Consequently, you need to make sure your cover letter stands out in comparison to other applicants.

### Key elements in a cover letter

These are some of the key things a cover letter needs to include:

- Outline what prompted your application
- Link your qualifications, skills and experience to the role
- Provide some insight into your personality and working style
- Contact details including address, phone number and appropriate email address

### Tips for writing a good cover letter

- A cover letter must be specifically written for each application
- The document needs to present a snapshot about your professional life
- There needs to be a natural flow from one point to the next
- Keep it to one page, preferably A4 size document. While some colour can be added, keep it nice and simple
- Must be graphically/visually consistent with the resume and Key Selection Criteria documents. That means the same fonts, colours and styles used across all documents
- Sentences and paragraphs should be kept short
- Avoid starting every sentence with “I”

### Things to consider

The goal is to write as much relevant information as possible without writing too much. Sometimes less is more. While some information (e.g., accomplishments) is valuable, it is not practical to condense everything into a cover letter, as it will become long and boring. Try focusing on the main points that you would like to bring across. Each aspect needs to relate back to the position description in the job you are applying for.

Think of the cover letter as a “polite hand shake and introduction”, before you show them in more detail what you are capable of through the other documents. A well written cover letter aims to increase the reader’s interest in the candidate. They need to feel that they want to find out more about you.

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