



Professional Development 101

Creating the resume, writing the cover letter, nailing
the interview... and landing the job!

*Brought to you by yours truly:
Terp Thon Alumni Network
Undergraduate Development Committee*

RESUME CHECKLIST

OVERALL DOCUMENT FORMAT

- ✓ Is your resume **one page** max?
- ✓ Are your margins 0.5 to 1 inch margins?
- ✓ Do you use 10-12 point font?
- ✓ Is your full name a slightly larger font?

- ✗ Don't include images, colors, fun fonts, etc.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ✓ Do you provide your contact information at the top of your resume? (Email, phone, address, LinkedIn URL)

EDUCATION

- ✓ Is your **degree, school, and anticipated graduation date** at the top of your education section?
- ✓ Do you list your GPA if it is over a 3.0?
- ✓ Do you include honors/awards if they are relevant?

- ✗ Don't include the course number, if you list relevant coursework. For example, write "Politics of Africa" rather than "GVPT484."

EXPERIENCE SECTION(S)

- ✓ Do you include **position title, organization name, location, and dates** for each experience?
- ✓ Do you list experiences within each section in reverse chronological order?
- ✓ Do you use **strong action verbs** to describe the work you've done?
- ✓ **Do you include keywords that are in the job description** and use career-field specific language? Using **buzzwords** will catch the recruiter's eye.
- ✓ Do you use present tense verbs for current positions you hold and past tense for previous positions?
- ✓ Do you include transferable skills in your bullet points, especially for experiences that are not directly relevant to the position you are applying for?

- ✗ Don't use generic action verbs like "assist" or "support."
- ✗ Don't use personal pronouns (my, I, me) in your bullet points.

SKILLS SECTION

- ✓ Do you list technical skills directly relevant to the position? (language, computer, software, programs, certifications, etc.)

- ✗ Don't include "soft" skills, hobbies, and interests in your skills section.
- ✗ Don't include references on a resume and don't include the phrase "references available upon request." If an employer wants your references, s/he will ask you after the interview.

Teddy Terrapin

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EDUCATION

B.S. Public Health Science

Anticipated May 2018

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- Minor: General Business
- Cumulative GPA: 3.5

Study Abroad, Netherlands: Public Health Practice

May- June 2016

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Health Connections Intern

May 2017- Present

Medstar Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C.

- Draft a manual for a mobile medical route project after receiving a \$4 million grant for a mobile clinic
- Manage logistics for weekly breastfeeding courses attended by 30 mothers and their newborn children
- Address 120 daily patient concerns about procedures, policies, medications, and next visits
- Correspond with pharmacies and insurance companies on behalf of doctors through phone/fax/email
- Assemble and update patient charts both in electronic medical records systems (AthenaNET, MDI)

Global Health Policy Center, Research Intern

September 2016- December 2016

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, D.C.

- Compiled daily news briefs on maternal health, HIV/AIDS, and sanitation for circulation to staff
- Wrote research briefs on malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, and malnutrition in children under 5 years old
- Prepared a 100 page report on attacks against health workers and facilities in Syria and Yemen
- Edited memos sent to USAID and Congress regarding U.S. and global policy for infectious diseases
- Tracked health performance data of countries affected by Zika to create weekly reports

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Corporate Relations Planning Team Member

October 2015- Present

Terp Thon, College Park, MD

- Execute organization's corporate relations strategy to raise funds for Children's National Health System
- Cultivate partnerships between companies and Children's National to raise \$1.7 million in two years
- Research mission statements of corporations to write tailored proposals to prospective partners
- Serve as the point of contact for all partners between the \$2,500 and \$5,000 donor level
- Collaborate with 15 team members to quickly address all corporate partner concerns during events

Sexual Health Peer Educator

August 2015- May 2016

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- Led presentations to groups of 10 students each week regarding sexual health and wellness
- Developed and implemented sexual health-related programming to reach over 450 students
- Managed the program's budget of \$5,000 to distribute funds for 15 annual events and campaigns
- Spearheaded Sex Week on campus to increase awareness of safe sex practices and to reduce stigmas

SKILLS

- CITI Training, Social and Behavioral Health Certified
- Adult/Child/Infant CPR/AED & First Aid, American Heart Association
- French—professional working proficiency (9 years)

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

OVERALL DOCUMENT FORMAT

- ✓ **Is your cover letter exactly one page—no more and no less?** If you have a lot of white space, it is a sign to the recruiter that you don't have a lot to say and that you may not be the right fit for the position.
- ✓ Do you use 12 point font?
- ✓ Do you have 1 inch margins?

- ✗ Don't indent your paragraphs. Your paragraphs should have a space in between them, but they should all start at the left margin of the paper.

HEADER

- ✓ Is your contact info, recruiter's information, and the date included in the header?
- ✓ Do you address the person you are writing to?

- ✗ **Don't use the phrase "To whom it may concern."** It is too generic. Complete research through the staff directory or on LinkedIn to determine the proper person to address.

BODY

- ✓ Do you complete **research** on the company before you start writing your cover letter? You may be able to incorporate your experiences into the projects the company is currently working on.
- ✓ Do you incorporate **career-specific language and buzzwords** in your cover letter? Before you start writing, you should read through the job description thoroughly so that you can mirror the same language.
- ✓ Do you triple check spelling and grammar before submitting the cover letter? Remember this is essentially a writing sample, and it should be a reflection of your best writing abilities!
- ✓ Finish off the cover letter with both a typed and handwritten signature in cursive.

- ✗ **Don't reiterate everything on your resume.** Rather, try and talk about what you gained and learned from those experiences (or how you contributed to the organization) rather than just listing out the tasks you completed.

**** Note: If a cover letter is optional for a job application, it is highly recommended that you always submit a cover letter. It shows initiative, provides a writing sample, and gives you an opportunity to speak more about your credentials and qualifications. View the cover letter as an opportunity to highlight a particular experience, explain your passion for the organization, interest in the industry, etc.*

Your Name
Your Address
City, State Zip Code

Date

Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____:

First Paragraph (Purpose): Be enthusiastic and indicate your reason for writing. Briefly state your reason(s) for your interest in the position, organization, and/or field of work. You may briefly demonstrate your knowledge of the company, but you should definitely state the specific position you are applying for. (If you were referred by someone—such as a current employee—this would be the appropriate place to mention that person’s name and that s/he suggested you write.)

Second paragraph (Background and Qualifications): If you have related experience/specialized training/unique qualifications, elaborate on the details that would be of specific interest to the employer. **Do not repeat the same information found in the resume.** This is a great opportunity to mention additional information not stated in your resume. Provide specific examples about your qualifications and skills. Your goal here is too match your skills to the employer’s needs. Explain how you would fit into the position and the organization.

Third paragraph: Use this as opportunity to expand on your previous paragraph or to highlight another experience that makes you the best candidate. It may also be good to tell the employer why you are particularly interested in their organization—you could mention something you read on their website or seen in a publication. If you feel that you lack relevant work experience, you can also consider touching upon how your academic background makes you qualified for the position. For example, you could discuss a relevant research project you worked on in class.

Final paragraph (Request for Action): Briefly restate how your qualifications match the position. Express your interest in further discussing your background and the position with the employer. Restate your contact information, including your telephone number and email address. Thank the reader for their time and consideration of your qualifications.

Sincerely,

Signature

Your Name (typed)

Email

Phone number

INTERVIEW TIPS

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Be sure that you know exactly how to get to your interview, what building it's located in, what suite number, etc. Take a **practice run** to the interview location, preferably at the same time you would be traveling on the day of the actual interview.
- ✓ **Research, research, research!** Be sure to research the missions and values of the company before you interview. You should become familiar with some of the company's latest projects and read through any company reports available on the website. The company may address their current projects in the interview, and you want to give an impression that you are familiar with this information. Showing your genuine interest in the company can only be possible if you are knowledgeable about the company.
- ✓ If possible, research the person(s) you are interviewing with before the interview. You can do a simple LinkedIn search.
- ✓ Practice interviewing for the most common interview questions such as "Tell me about yourself" or "Why are you interested in this position?"

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ **Offer a firm handshake with eye contact.** It's your interviewer's first impression of you!
- ✓ Offer copies of your resume.
- ✓ Use a pen and padfolio to take notes.
- ✓ Always maintain proper **eye contact** with your interviewer. If you are interviewing with multiple people, be sure to address all of them and not just one person.
- ✓ **Ask questions** at the end of your interview. Make sure these questions are thoughtful and relevant.
- ✓ Ask about the timeline and next steps moving forward. This way, you know when you can expect to hear from the hiring team.

- ✗ **Don't ask about salary until you are extended an offer.** However, you should research approximately how much you can expect to make in the role you are interviewing for because a recruiter may ask what your salary expectation is. Giving a number too high or too low can show the recruiter that you are unfamiliar with the industry and have not done your research.
- ✗ Don't use slang, bad language, or poor grammar. Interviews tend to err on the formal side.
- ✗ Don't say anything negative about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Write a thank you letter within 24 hours of your interview. If you interviewed with multiple people, make each thank you note unique and refer back to things that the specific interviewer mentioned.