

Job Search Checklist

Organize the Search

- What kinds of jobs are you qualified to do?
- What kinds of jobs are you interested in doing?
- In what geographical area would you like to work?
- What types of companies are you interested in?
- Are you interested in telecommuting opportunities?
- Where can you find jobs that meet these needs?

Prepare Your Application Materials

Resume

- Does your resume give an accurate representation of your accomplishments and credentials?
- Have you included complete and up-to-date contact information?
- Have you organized your resume to best fit your credentials?
 - Chronological (for applicants with a stable work history and logical progression toward job currently being sought)
 - Targeted (for applicants who want to emphasize how particular experiences fit a particular job)
 - Function-oriented (for applicants who want to highlight capabilities instead of accomplishments)
- Have you included the following key sections, in the order that makes most sense for your present situation?
 - Educational background, including relevant courses and projects.
 - Experience, including specifics about duties and responsibilities.
 - Professional affiliations, including any offices you have held or special projects you have led.
- Have you considered whether to include these additional elements in your resume?
 - Computer skills.
 - Publications.
 - Honors and awards.
 - Special credentials, licenses, or certifications.
- Have you included an objective? If so, is it tightly focused and relevant to the position for which you are applying?
- Can employers easily find information in your resume?

- Limit your resume to two pages.
 - Use white space to frame related information.
 - Use headings and emphasis to call attention to key sections of the resume and reveal the hierarchy of information.
 - Use conventional fonts and an organization that will be familiar to the reader.
 - Use concrete nouns and action verbs.
 - Make the text as concise as possible without sacrificing clarity.
 - Don't overuse adjectives.
 - Don't include personal information such as age, religion, marital status, sexual preference, or even gender.
- Have you carefully proofread your resume to ensure that you have no typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors?
 - Have you prepared a resume that will generate appropriate "hits" when placed in an on-line database?
 - Have you compiled a reference list to hand to a potential employer if requested?
 - Have you asked your references for permission to include them?

Cover Letter

- Does your introduction clearly state the following?
 - The job for which you are applying.
 - How you heard about it.
 - Why you want it.
- Do you discuss, in a compelling and persuasive manner, the special experience or qualities that set you apart from other applicants?
- Do you highlight your educational background?
- Does the tone of your letter make you sound confident, competent, and sincere?
- Does every sentence in your letter count? That is, does the letter make its point concisely and without resorting to clichés?
- Is the length of the letter appropriate?
 - It should not go beyond one page.
 - It should be long enough and detailed enough to allow the reader to get to know you a little
- Do you demonstrate in the letter that you know something about the company and have thought about how you and your credentials would fit in?
- Do you conclude the letter in a compelling way, using one or more of the strategies outlined on p. 461?