

10 TIPS FOR CRAFTING COMPELLING RESUMES FOR POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS



- 1. Build a master document.** Keep a running list of relevant accomplishments (e.g., education, teaching/work experiences, publications, presentations, professional affiliations, licenses/certifications). Although this master isn't for public distribution, by having all your details in one place, preparing a targeted resume will take much less time. To customize, open the master and save with a new file name for each targeted resume that you need. Then apply KAD principles (Keep, Add, Delete) to the original content, tailoring it to the unique requirements of the specific position that interests you.
- 2. Find a focus.** Look for clues in the job posting, organization's website, or other relevant communications to help customize the new file. Use highlighters, post-its, and/or flags to mark key items to showcase. Prompted by these, reflect on the knowledge, skills, and abilities you could bring to this position.
- 3. Define your "value add."** Craft a convincing story of what makes you a great fit for this position. This unique, powerful, and consistent message should quickly and efficiently communicate to employers why they should hire you. Consider what benefits you bring to the employer; what skills, knowledge, and abilities you offer; and how you exceed the requirements for the position.
- 4. Stay true to your "brand."** Ensure all work-search documents, social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter), and other written/verbal communications portray a consistent, positive personal image aligning to that which you've communicated to potential employer.
- 5. Manage your real estate.** Select an appropriate resume format (e.g., chronological vs. functional), identify relevant sections (e.g., work experience, education), decide on the order of sections, and determine how much space to devote to each. Remove any unnecessary details or duplication. Ask yourself, "Is this relevant? Is this adding value?" If not, omit it.
- 6. Adjust and customize content.** Review the remaining relevant content and strengthen the link between you, the specific position, and the employer by embedding terminology/keywords from the posting. Use action verbs and SAR (i.e., Situation, Action, and Result) statements.
- 7. Add new content.** Fill gaps with carefully-crafted additional content. Ensure new content is updated in the master document so you'll have easy access to it later. Also update social media so your messaging/brand is consistent with your resume.
- 8. Prove it.** Identify specifically how you have demonstrated relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g., through special research projects at work or in school), quantifying achievements where possible.
- 9. Add in design elements.** Using textboxes, colour, emphasis through bolding or italics, and/or a variety of font types/sizes can add interest to your resume; however, avoid overuse of such features. Opt for a clean presentation, free from visual clutter, using one or two design elements to create interest and make your CV stand out from the rest. Use a consistent look and feel across all work-search documents.
- 10. Carefully review and edit.** Producing an error-free document is imperative so consider reviewing a printed document or asking a friend for a "second set of eyes." As the writer, you may have missed errors that would be obvious to others; your peer reviewer can also confirm whether or not your document flows, makes sense, and offers compelling support that you're the best fit for the posting.

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