

RESUME AND JOB SEARCH BASICS

What is a resume?

A resume is a one- to two-page document that details your accomplishments as they relate to your suitability for a job. Normally, this includes your academic, work, and volunteer experience presented in reverse chronological order, plus descriptions of any skills you have that would help you in this role. A resume also provides a potential employer with several ways to contact you.

What is a CV?

Outside North America, the terms “resume” and “CV” are used either interchangeably or to refer to slightly different documents than we use here. In North America, a CV is a highly technical version of a resume that is used to apply to specialized jobs and graduate school programs.

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter accompanies a resume or CV in almost all cases. It explains your intent to a potential employer and concisely articulates – in persuasive full paragraphs of mechanically correct sentences – why you are a good candidate for the role to which you are applying. Most cover letters are a single page in length.

So a cover letter is just a version of a resume in the form of a letter?

Well, not quite. Ideally, a resume and cover letter should complement each other. In both cases, your goal is to prove your skills and abilities. It's best to use your cover letter to further explain why the experience and skills on your resume matter. Why simply restate something a hiring manager will already know from reading your resume? Also, never copy and paste anything directly between your resume and your cover letter.

Do I submit my application package online or in person?

The job posting will specify what the employer prefers. Some companies use online submission forms, some accept applications via email, and others prefer a physical paper copy.

Wait. What's an application package?

When we say “application package,” we're referring collectively to your resume or CV, cover letter, and any other documents required by your employer. Some examples include letters of reference (more on that later), university transcripts, or work samples.

So, what's the best way to write this stuff?

Unfortunately, there is no “standard,” universally accepted format for writing any of the aforementioned documents. Before you apply to any position, read the posting carefully to see if the employer or institution prefers or mandates a certain format. If not, follow our general guidelines.

Everybody lies a little bit on their resume, right?

Actually, no. Exaggerating or outright inventing accomplishments is simply not a good idea. Today's recruiters and hiring managers are skilled at identifying suspicious claims, and online search tools only make their job easier. Aside from the ethical problems associated with lying, “techniques” that may have worked in the past are no longer effective. It's not worth the risk.

Okay, so what is a reference?

A reference is a statement from a credible person (“referee”) that provides evidence of your hireability. Some employers will require that your referees write and submit formal letters, while others simply require their contact information. For students or recent grads, one of your references may come from a professor. Other appropriate referees include supervisors at work or volunteer organizations. Never use a family member.

How do I find job postings?

There are many ways to look for employment opportunities. Searching for a job is hard work, but it should be. A Biology midterm, say, involves tremendous amounts of hard work and concentration, and finding a job after graduation is more important than that. The point is, be prepared to expend serious effort as you begin your job search. One day, it will all be worth it.

- Some jobs are still posted in newspaper classified sections, but many are now advertised online. Start with the Workforce Windsor-Essex, submitting a resume to the WESkills Database, and browsing the Government of Canada Job Bank. See our External Resources section for many more options.



- Many jobs are posted directly by companies. Follow the social media accounts of companies for which you'd like to work, and check their websites periodically (look for a "Careers" section).
- The majority of employers create job postings that they don't advertise publicly. See our Networking, Informational Interviews, and other resources for some tips on making connections that might eventually turn you on to a great opportunity.

Some of my friends are changing their Facebook names and switching their Instagram accounts to "private." What's that about?

If you apply for a job, it's very easy for employers to quickly Google your name and find your public social media profiles. Do you have anything on yours you'd prefer they didn't see? Read our Tips for Using Social Media resource for much more information.

What about LinkedIn? Is that really a thing?

Increasingly, the answer is "yes." Some industries rely more on LinkedIn than others, but hiring managers in most fields now regularly use this professional social network to post job opportunities and screen applicants. It's almost always worth it to, at least, spend a few hours putting together a thorough profile. See our LinkedIn resource for much more information.

I've heard there are no jobs in Windsor. Do I have to leave to find work?

The short answer is "no." Thousands of people continue to work in Windsor-Essex. That said, in many industries, it's possible to find good jobs here but difficult to find an entry level position that will allow you to gain the skills necessary to climb the corporate ladder. For example, a smaller company in Windsor may employ a Director of Communication but no Junior Copywriter. That's not much help to a recent graduate. Many successful Windsorites relocate for work in their early 20s, gain valuable experience, and return five or ten years later to settle down. It's not for everyone, but it's worth considering. (Nb. When looking at jobs in other cities, consider the cost of living. A higher wage may be used up covering increased housing expenses.)

What is the "corporate ladder," anyway?

In most cases, the job you take immediately out of university is likely not where you want to end up. Almost all workers take an "entry-level" position to start. These jobs allow you to learn new skills, gain experience, and make connections. Over time, you'll be more qualified to apply for (and get) higher-paying jobs with more responsibilities. See our Career Pathfinding resource for more information.

Look, I've tried. Absolutely nobody will hire me.

Many of the skills and experiences that employers look for in applicants can be acquired through volunteer work. If that's an option for you, see our Volunteering resource for more information.

You know what? Maybe I don't want to leave school yet after all.

Graduate and professional programs make a lot of sense a lot of the time. That said, if you're really lacking direction, going further into debt and spending more years of your life in school may not be the best solution for you. This is getting predictable, but have a look at our Graduate and Professional School resource.

No offence, but can I talk to a real person about this?

Of course. The University of Windsor employs career advisors and regularly runs free, helpful workshops. Contact Career and Employment Services or log in to mySuccess to book appointments and browse the career events calendar.

Co-op, Career and Employment Services: www.uwindsor.ca/cces | mySuccess: success.uwindsor.ca



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CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFERS A VARIETY OF RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LAUNCH YOUR CAREER:

Job searching • Career planning • Work experience • Career preparation workshops • Personal appointments • Resume critiques
Mock interviews • Interest testing and assessments • Job fair and networking opportunities • Volunteer Internship Program (VIP)



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