

Tips for Résumé Clinic Mentor



The Résumé Clinic is a popular event for students, and is flexible enough for mentors who may not have a lot of time to volunteer.

Students value the

feedback and support provided through this service. A Résumé Clinic Mentor will commit one hour or more during the Geological Society of America (GSA) Annual Meeting, to meet one-on-one with a student or early career professional to discuss their résumé or curriculum vitae (CV). Participants will come prepared with a paper copy of their current résumé or with a draft on their laptop. Mentors will have up to 30 minutes to review and provide verbal feedback to the student offering tips and advice on the overall format, organization, and content of the document.

General advice and links to additional resources are provided below as a summary for those preparing to be a Résumé Mentor at the meeting.

Inquire about what type of job or sector the student is planning to apply to. Start by asking the student some initial questions about what type of job or in which job sector they are seeking to apply. Students may have a particular position in mind that they want to apply to in the future. If they have a copy of the job description, this could be useful in tailoring their résumé during the session. It may be necessary to ask several follow up questions to students regarding their work history, research, and other non-academic experiences that may not be on their résumés, but could be transferrable or highlighted in their résumé.

Become familiar with the difference between a résumé and a CV. A résumé is widely used for jobs in industry, non-profit, and with local, state, and federal governments (*see section below for specifics on creating a federal job résumé*). Résumés are

limited to two pages in length and are a description of relevant skills for a particular position. Emphasize to students that their résumé should be tailored to the specific job they are applying to in order to best match the job description. Recommend students use key words from the job description in their résumé; this is a precaution in the event that computer software or Human Resources staff conducts the initial review.

A CV is used for jobs in academia, at research institutions, and colleges and universities. CV's do not have a page limitation and are used as a comprehensive document that highlights everything the student has done including education, presentations, professional memberships, honors, awards, etc., but with a stronger emphasis on teaching, research, and publications. If your student is seeking a job internationally, or if your student is from a foreign country, it may be important to point out that the term CV may be used, but refer instead to a résumé for overseas jobs.

Tell students that there are different types of résumé formats. Most student résumés will use a Chronological Résumé format with their most recent work experience listed in reverse chronological order. While this is standard, students may appreciate knowing that there are other types of résumé formats that can be used. A Functional Résumé is one which highlights skills and qualifications rather than work history. In this format work experience is placed at the bottom of the document. In addition there are ways to combine both a chronological and functional formats to find one that fits the student's own history and personal style.

Know that a résumé for a federal position will have some different requirements. Some students may be interested in a career with the federal government and in this case they will need advice on the federal résumé format. Federal résumés are different than an industry-standard résumé as they are typically longer in length and require more



detailed information. For example, federal résumés will require information on every position held in the last 10 years including start and end dates (months and years), salary, number of hours worked per week, and supervisor's name and contact information. It is advisable to recommend to students to do some research on the format and to use the federal résumé builder feature when logged into the USAJOBS website ensuring all the information needed is provided.

Recommend using the C.A.R. method. Students often use bulleted statements to describe their past experiences which are typically written as job duties that do stand out to the reader. Instead recommend students to think about their experiences using the CAR (challenge, action, result) method. This method challenges students to reflect on experiences with a result-oriented lens. Instead of describing the day-to-day of an experience, students can focus on accomplishments that will demonstrate their skills needed for the position they are applying to. Students can take examples of when they were in a challenging situation, what was the action they took, and what was the end result. This helps students think beyond responsibilities of past experiences and instead focus on the skills needed to be successful.

Be positive yet constructive. Looking for a new job can be a stressful, discouraging, and may lead to students doubting their skills and experience. Students have spent considerable time and effort in drafting a résumé and may feel defeated after finding out all the ways in which their résumés need improvement after the session. Therefore it's important to be constructive yet positive. Surveys reveal that all students find the résumé clinic session very helpful.

Resources

[What should I include in my federal résumé?](#)

[The Federal Résumés Guide](#)

[How to Get a Job in the Federal Government](#)

[The Mines Strategy: Tools for Engineering Your Job Search](#)

Check to see if your institution subscribes to [The Versatile PhD](#), which is an online resource for job candidates with advanced degrees that are looking for non-academic and non-faculty career paths

[Effective Technical Writing in the Information Age. Chapter 8. Résumés](#)

