

# Colgate University

Center for Career Services



# Résumé & Cover Letter guide



**Did you know?** Employers spend approximately  
**15 seconds**  
scanning a résumé to form their initial  
impression of you as a candidate.  
**Make those seconds count.**

## When Will You Need a Résumé?

- When applying to jobs, internships, and in some cases, graduate and professional school
- When networking online and in person
- When attending career and internship fairs
- When applying to *Colgate Premier* (Colgate's formal recruiting) positions and other applications on *naviGATE*
  - Having your résumé certified annually allows you to upload documents and participate in *Colgate Premier*

## Starting Points for All Résumés

The example below highlights required components for résumés and gives tips to organize your document

**Anita A. Job**  
13 Oak Drive | Hamilton, NY 13346 | jdoe@colgate.edu | 555.555.5555

**EDUCATION**

**Colgate University**, Hamilton, NY  
**Bachelor of Arts**  
**Major:** Environmental Geography, Minor: Psychology

- GPA: 3.41/4.00
- Dean's Award for Academic Excellence
- Senior Thesis: Environmental Policy Impact on Natural Forest Preservation in Ghana
- Relevant Coursework: Social Science Research Methods, Geographic Information Systems, U.S. Environmental Politics, Applied Math: Social Sciences

**Colgate Environmental Study Group**, University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia

- Engaged in interdisciplinary academic exploration of environmental studies within a global context while immersed in a foreign culture

**EXPERIENCE**

**Google Inc.**, New York, NY  
**Social Media Intern**

- Develop social media campaign to focus attention on new company project
- Create daily Facebook and Twitter posts via Hootsuite to market new product and promote Google's brand
- Achieved 100,000 Facebook "Likes" in 1 hour upon product launch. Increased Twitter following by 15% in 4 weeks

**Callout Boxes:**

- Maintain a margin around your document, but use the full width of the page for your content.
- Keep your name and this contact information at the top of your résumé. Choose home and/or school address.
- Include your overall or major GPA if it is > 3.00.
- Education follows contact information.
- Experiential dates are all consistently written in season, year or month, year.
- Begin each bullet with a strong action verb.
- Section headers reflect their content.
- Bullets aren't written in full sentences; delete extra words and personal pronouns.
- Use present tense for ongoing experiences. Past experiences will be described in past tense.
- Quantify your impact wherever possible.
- Include details of major accomplishments and core responsibilities.
- Each entry includes the employer or organization, location (city, state/country), position title (if held), and dates of involvement. Be consistent in how you lay out each entry on the page.

## Listing Your Experiences

Brainstorm a list of all positions and activities in which you have been involved. In your experience section(s), select which experiences best showcase your strong candidacy by demonstrating your skills and non-academic qualifications. Include both paid and unpaid experiences: jobs, internships, community service, activities, clubs/organizations, and research projects.

## Writing Bullet Points

For each experience, showcase your major accomplishments and core responsibilities by creating 2-3 bullets that answer the following three questions. Brainstorm the questions, then move your work into résumé writing format: Short statements that begin with a strong action verb and outline your impact (see page 16).

### WHAT DID YOU DO?

What tasks or projects did you accomplish or complete?

### HOW DID YOU DO IT?

Specifically outline your process and add quantifying or qualifying details where possible.

### WHY DID IT MATTER?

What value did you add? What was your impact? What results did you achieve? Why was it important?

**Consider:** Did you achieve the goal you set? Did you have a positive impact on the community or organization? Did you increase sales, productivity, or volume? Did you generate new business or increase the client base? Did you save the organization money? Did you design and/or institute any new systems and/or procedures? Did you suggest and/or help launch a new product, process or program? Did you deliver a presentation?

*Annual Fund Student Caller, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY*

Spring 20xx

- Cold-called 500 alumni to yield \$5,000 over 10 weeks that will support university priorities
- Met team phone-a-thon goals to raise \$660,000 from 5,407 donors in 24 hours
- Delivered exceptional customer service to constituents from diverse cultural and geographic backgrounds

## Showcasing Your Skills

- Create a list of your “hard skills:” foreign languages, software programs, social media, research tools (SPSS, etc.), or laboratory techniques.
- Qualify your level of competency (i.e.: “Conversant in Spanish”)
- Avoid listing “soft skills” (i.e.: team player, organized, hard worker, great communicator). Rather, illustrate them with strong examples in a cover letter and interview.
- Strategize the placement of the skills section based on how critical the skills are to the position you seek.

### SKILLS

Language: Proficient in Spanish

Technology: Basic HTML, JAVA, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign

Science Equipment & Techniques: Scanning Electron Microscopy, Fluorescence Microscopy

Certifications: CPR (Valid through April XXX)

# General Résumé

This simplified version is great as a starter document and most appropriate for students unsure of their professional interests. As you build experiences and clarify your interests your résumé should become targeted to a specific industry and position.

## Franky First-Year

13 Oak Drive | Hamilton, NY 13346 | ffirstyear@colgate.edu | 315.123.4567

Your name should be the largest font size on the page.

If you have not yet declared a major/minor, you may list it as Intended major or minor.

### EDUCATION & HONORS

**COLGATE UNIVERSITY**, Hamilton, NY  
**Bachelor of Arts**

- Intended Major: Biology; Intended Minor: Sociology

May 20xx

**THE LATIN SCHOOL OF CHICAGO**, Chicago, IL

- Graduated with honors
- Daniel Murphy Scholarship, awarded for academic merit

Your high school may be listed on your résumé as an underclassman OR beyond if you attended a school that employers may recognize.

June 20xx

Use descriptive section headers to group relevant content. For example, "Volunteer Experience," "Colgate Activities," or "Leadership Experience."

### ADVISING EXPERIENCE

*Student Assistant*

**COLGATE UNIVERSITY KECK RESOURCE CENTER**, Hamilton, NY

- Identify and determine solutions for Mac, PC, scanner, and printer problems
- Wrote detailed procedures manual for student staff to increase troubleshooting efficiency
- Deliver exceptional customer service to students, faculty, staff, and guests under time-pressure

Fall 20xx-Present

You can use "Summers" (or another season) to capture seasonal work over multiple years.

*Daniel Murphy Program Mentor*

**LAKE FOREST COLLEGE**, Lake Forest, IL

- Collaborated with four colleagues and senior staff members to develop and execute an academic and internship program for 25 disadvantaged high school students
- Mentored, tutored, and advised six students developing college application materials
- Kept careful records of students' work hours; coordinated transportation for extracurricular activities

Summers 20xx-20xx

Within each section, list your experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent first, based on end date).

### ACTIVITIES

*President*

**LATIN AMERICAN STUDENT ORGANIZATION**, Colgate University

- Manage and maintain a \$2,000 budget annually; allocated funding for special events
- Organize two community-wide events by vetting vendors and coordinating 25-50 volunteers
- Encourage cross-cultural understanding by participating in discussions about Latino Culture at Colgate

Fall 20xx-Present

*Disk Jockey*

**WRCU 90.1 HAMILTON**, Colgate University

- Produce and air public service announcements weekly with minimal supervision
- Develop new procedures in collaboration with station managers and five other disc jockeys to increase station effectiveness and organization

Fall 20xx-Present

If multiple positions end at the same time, prioritize based on the most impressive or relevant experience.

*Captain*

**INTRAMURAL SOCCER TEAM**, The Latin School of Chicago

- Promoted sportsmanship amongst players and motivated team of 15 on and off field
- Balanced academics with coaching responsibilities achieving Dean's List concurrently with winning season

Fall 20xx-Present

### SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

**Computer:** Excel, PowerPoint, Photoshop, Prezi, and Access (proficient)

**Social Media:** Instagram, Facebook, Vine, Pinterest, and Twitter

**Languages:** Spanish (conversational)

**Certifications:** CPR (expires April 20xx)

Categorize your skills section and qualify your level of proficiency where possible.

# Targeted and Certified Résumés

## WHAT DOES “TARGETED” MEAN?

As you begin your internship/job search, your application materials should be targeted to the industry, employer, and position. Targeting builds your credibility and demonstrates the strength of your candidacy by speaking to what is most important to the employer. **Our advisors can help you target your documents.** See examples on pages 10-15.

## WHAT DOES “CERTIFIED” MEAN?

The Center for Career Services “certifies” a résumé when it meets professional standards for résumé writing, as outlined in the résumé rubric (pgs.6-7). While each résumé is unique, our advisors will guide you through the common standards and formatting for the industry you seek to enter.

## WHO CAN CERTIFY MY RÉSUMÉ?

A professional Career Advisor or a Peer Career Advisor. This can be done during a 15-minute Quick Question or 30-minute appointment. Please call (315.228.7830) to schedule. To expedite the certification process, you should self-critique your résumé using the checklist on the following pages.

## WHEN WILL MY RÉSUMÉ BE CERTIFIED?

When the document scores a rating of “excellent” or “acceptable with minor corrections” in each category, it is certified. Juniors’ and seniors’ résumés must be targeted to be certified. See criteria under ‘targeting’ in the rubric for specific goals of a targeted résumé, as well as examples on pages 10-15.

## YOUR RÉSUMÉ MUST BE CERTIFIED EACH ACADEMIC YEAR TO MAINTAIN YOUR FULL NAVIGATE PERMISSIONS.

Employers will expect a more targeted version of your résumé each year. Seniors whose résumés were certified junior year maintain that status through graduation, although we highly recommend working with an advisor to target your document senior year.

## WHY SHOULD I GET MY RÉSUMÉ CERTIFIED?

Having a résumé annually certified grants you eligibility to upload documents and submit applications through *naviGATE*, including for *Colgate Premier* (formal recruiting) internships and jobs. It also ensures your document will stand out as relevant to the employer among a competitive pool of applicants.

## ONCE CERTIFIED, I AM DONE TWEAKING MY RÉSUMÉ, RIGHT?

Nope, not yet. Your résumé will be updated continually as your experiences and academics evolve. You will want to continue to enhance, target and strategically position your experiences. Even after your résumé is certified, you can see our advisors’ feedback on your edits, but you are not *required* to have it critiqued again until the next academic year.

## CAN I HAVE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF A TARGETED OR CERTIFIED RÉSUMÉ?

Absolutely! You should have different targeted résumés for different unique opportunities. However, once you have achieved certification with one, you are not required to have all other résumés certified until the next academic year.

# How to Deliver Your Documents

## IN PERSON

- Print your documents one-sided on résumé paper in black and white (no color)
- Do not staple documents together (paper-clip is fine)
- Always have extra copies on hand
- Sign your cover letter in blue or black ink

## VIA E-MAIL

- E-mail documents as attachments
- Do not copy and paste your document(s) in the body of an e-mail unless instructed to do so
- Save each document as a .pdf and name your document clearly (i.e. Last Name Résumé)
- Attach each document separately
- Include a brief message in the body of the e-mail that acknowledges your attached documents and expresses interest in the position. Thank them for their time and mention, if appropriate, when you will follow up

## ONLINE APPLICATION

- Submit materials in the format requested (i.e. .pdf), named clearly
- Follow directions carefully. Unless otherwise specified, always submit a cover letter to differentiate your candidacy



# CAREER SERVICES RÉSUMÉ RUBRIC

For a résumé to be “certified” by Career Services, it must score an excellent or acceptable with minor corrections for each section.

Criteria	Excellent	Acceptable with Minor Corrections	Needs Revisions
<b>Overall Style/ Appearance</b>  <b>Goal:</b> To ensure your document is easily read and appears polished.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanly fills one page without overcrowding</li> <li>• Order of information presented is consistent within each section</li> <li>• Information is only presented once</li> <li>• Centered on page with acceptable margins</li> <li>• Font is sized appropriately (no smaller than 10pt) and readable</li> <li>• Consistency in formatting (use of bold, italics)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page appears clean, but crowded, but not exceeding one page</li> <li>• Order of information presented is consistent within each section</li> <li>• Information is only presented once</li> <li>• Centered on page with acceptable margins</li> <li>• Font is sized appropriately (no smaller than 10pt) and readable</li> <li>• No more than three errors in formatting consistency (bold, italics, spacing, formatting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document exceeds one page or does not fill the majority of one page</li> <li>• Document appears cluttered</li> <li>• Inconsistency in the order of information within one or more sections</li> <li>• The same information is presented more than once</li> <li>• Document is not centered</li> <li>• Margins are not appropriate</li> <li>• Font size is too small/too big or not consistent; Font is not easily read</li> <li>• Inconsistency in formatting (use of bold, italics)</li> </ul>
<b>Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation</b>  <b>Goal:</b> To ensure résumé is polished and demonstrates your attention to detail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé has no errors—spelling/ grammar is correct, punctuation and spacing are consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé contains 1-2 minor errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation)</li> <li>• Résumé has a pattern of a single error (i.e.: some bullets have periods, some do not)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé contains three or more individual errors</li> <li>• Résumé has a pattern of two or more errors</li> </ul>
<b>Contact Information</b>  <b>Goal:</b> To ensure an employer can easily contact you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes name, street address, e-mail, phone</li> <li>• Name is largest and most pronounced information in section</li> <li>• E-mail address used is professional</li> <li>• If included, LinkedIn™ profile/ portfolio has customized URL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes name, street address, e-mail, phone</li> <li>• Name is not most pronounced information in section</li> <li>• E-mail address is not professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing one of the following: name, e-mail, street address, phone number</li> <li>• E-mail address used is unprofessional/inappropriate</li> <li>• If included, LinkedIn profile/ portfolio does not have customized URL</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>  <b>Goal:</b> To convey academic qualifications and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree is spelled out</li> <li>• Major/minors (if declared) and graduation month/year is indicated</li> <li>• Each institution attended includes name, location, dates</li> <li>• For undergraduates: Colgate is listed first, then other institutions in order of relevance</li> <li>• If listed, GPA is in correct format (maintain number of decimal places: e.g. 3.05/4.00 or 3.0/4.0)</li> <li>• If GPA other than cumulative is listed, it's identified (i.e. Major GPA)</li> <li>• Relevant honors and scholarships listed and include dates, and description if not indicated in the title. (May be in separate section)</li> <li>* Study abroad should be included, if applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree is abbreviated (BA)</li> <li>• Major/minors (if declared) and graduation month/year is indicated</li> <li>• Each institution attended includes name, location, dates</li> <li>• For undergraduates: Colgate is listed first, then other institutions in order of relevance</li> <li>• If listed, GPA is in correct format</li> <li>• Relevant honors and scholarships listed and dated, but lack context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect degree listed (not Bachelor of Arts)</li> <li>• Declared major/minor not indicated</li> <li>• Graduation date not listed (month, year)</li> <li>• Each institution attended does not include name, location, dates</li> <li>• Colgate is listed after another institution</li> <li>• Irrelevant/outdated high school information listed</li> <li>• If listed, GPA is not in correct format</li> <li>• GPA is rounded up</li> </ul>

<p><b>Experience</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To contextualize your skills and non-academic qualifications in a concise manner, showing their relevance to your employer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each entry lists organization name, dates, position title (if needed), and location</li> <li>• Bullets begin with strong action verbs</li> <li>• All verbs reflect the correct verb tense</li> <li>• Bullets are concise, direct.</li> <li>• Bullets indicate one's impact or contribution to the organization with specificity.</li> <li>• Bullets are not written in complete sentences, and appropriately omit extra words (i.e.: articles, verbose phrases); contains no personal pronouns</li> <li>• Bullets are listed in order of importance within an experience</li> <li>• Results are quantified when possible</li> <li>• The most significant entries include at least one bullet point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-2 entries omit(s) organization name, dates, position title (if needed), or location</li> <li>• Résumé has a pattern of a single error (i.e: no position titles)</li> <li>• Action verbs could be stronger</li> <li>• 1-2 individual errors in verb tense</li> <li>• Bullets could be more concise, direct.</li> <li>• Bullets indicate one's impact on the organization – could include more specificity</li> <li>• Bullets are written in complete sentences</li> <li>• Bullets are listed in order of importance within an experience</li> <li>• Results are quantified when appropriate</li> <li>• The most significant entries include at least one bullet point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three or more entries do not include organization name, dates, position title (if needed), or location</li> <li>• Bullets begin with weak action verbs</li> <li>• Multiple verb tenses are inconsistent with dates</li> <li>• Bullets are wordy, vague or do not indicate one's impact</li> <li>• Bullets contain personal pronouns</li> <li>• Bullets are not listed in order of importance within an experience</li> <li>• Results are not quantified when appropriate</li> <li>• Bullets are not included on significant entries</li> <li>• Irrelevant/outdated information listed (i.e.: high school) that would not be discussed in an interview</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skills/Interests/ Language/ Certifications sections (optional)</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To include skills or information that do not appear elsewhere on the résumé and, are relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listings are concise and specific</li> <li>• Level of proficiency is indicated for skill-based entries (language, laboratory, technology)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listings are concise and specific</li> <li>• Level of proficiency is indicated for skill-based entries (language, laboratory, technology)</li> <li>• Personal qualities are listed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listings are wordy or vague</li> <li>• No level of proficiency indicated for skills-based entries (language, laboratory, technology)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organization of Sections</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To group relevant information together to draw attention to experiences that resonate with your target employer; to increase readability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section headers accurately reflect content</li> <li>• Adequate content exists within a section to substantiate the heading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section headers reflect content</li> <li>• Content of a section is not best placement of information (see comments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No use of sections or one "Experience" section lists all entries</li> <li>• Too many sections—not enough content to warrant a section</li> <li>• Section titles do not reflect content</li> </ul>
<p><b>To achieve certification, juniors and seniors' résumés must also meet the following criteria:</b></p>			
<p><b>Targeting</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> To ensure your strengths are strategically highlighted to your specific audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section headers are relevant to the targeted audience</li> <li>• Uses language represented in the job description, employer's materials, or that is industry-specific</li> <li>• The most relevant information is grouped and appears on the first half of the document</li> <li>• Most relevant bullets appear first under each entry</li> <li>• Listed coursework (optional) is tailored to the targeted field</li> <li>• The format/structure of the document is reflective of acceptable industry standards and trends</li> <li>• In formatting entries, the most relevant/strategic information among title and organization name is emphasized by positioning and style (bold, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience is addressed, but more focus is required</li> <li>• Language could be more relevant to the reader (section titles, descriptions)</li> <li>• The most relevant information is grouped but does not appear on the first half of the document</li> <li>• The most relevant information could be further emphasized by formatting (bold, italics, etc.)</li> <li>• Listed coursework (optional) is tailored to the targeted field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé does not show evidence of being targeted to a specific purpose. (NOTE: This rating is assigned to all general résumés)</li> <li>• Section titles and descriptions do not support targeted field</li> <li>• The most relevant information is not grouped</li> <li>• The most relevant information does not appear on the first half of the page</li> <li>• The most relevant information is not emphasized by formatting (bold, italics, etc.)</li> <li>• Coursework (optional) is not tailored to the targeted field</li> </ul>

## Crafting Your Cover Letter

You will most likely be asked to submit a cover letter with your résumé. The cover letter is a separate document, designed to complement, not repeat, your résumé's content. It needs to accomplish two things:

- Highlight your best examples of skills and experiences specifically relevant to the position you seek
- Use your research to directly connect your content to how it might add value to the employer's needs

To begin writing a strong cover letter:

- Gather the job/internship description, a highlighter, and your résumé
- Spend time reading the employer's website to understand their purpose, goals, values, culture, language, and tone
- On the job/internship description, highlight the required and desired qualifications and characteristics sought
- On your résumé, highlight specific entries that evidence these desired skills, qualities, and qualifications. Brainstorm or replicate the table below. No need to aim for perfection yet; just get your thoughts on paper

Desired skills and qualifications	Relevant experiences	Specific example to demonstrate skills
Exceptional Customer Service	Student Assistant, Keck Resource Center	Helped emotional student whose computer crashed the day before thesis was due
Team-player	DJ, WRCU; Captain, Intramural soccer	Collaboratively developed and executed an academic and internship program

- From this table, choose your 2 or 3 strongest examples or note a theme that runs through your entries. Use the STARR method to develop these into concise and persuasive phrases that add depth beyond the résumé. This content will comprise the body paragraph(s) of your cover letter. See examples of how the STARR method is applied over the next few pages.



## Cover Letter Tips:

- Cover letters should be no more than 1 page (3-5 paragraphs) as an undergraduate.
- Use the same font and font size as the résumé (size 11-12 pt).
- Employers make hiring decisions based on what a candidate can offer, not what an employer can offer the candidate. Be careful not to overemphasize what you want out of the experience. Use your space to show why you are a good fit.
- Do your research! It is impossible to write a strong cover letter without knowing your audience. Generic cover letters DO NOT impress and come across as you being lazy. You should write a unique cover letter for each opportunity.
- Choose a writing style reflective of the industry. When in doubt, err on the side of formality.
- Read your cover letter aloud before sending it. Be careful of misplaced words, run-on sentences, or awkward phrasing. Be sure to address it to the correct person/employer.



# General Cover Letter:

## Header:

Your Address  
City, State, and Zip Code

Date

Mr./Ms./Dr. (First and) Last Name  
Title  
Name of Employer/ Organization  
Street Address  
City, State, and Zip Code

Use the person's full name if you are unsure of gender (E.g. "Dear Cameron Marx"). If you are unable to find a name after a thorough search, you may use "Dear Hiring Manager" as a last resort.

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Opening Paragraph:

Grab your reader's attention within the first two lines. Avoid, "My name is..." or "It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for..." Instead, try a creative approach to pack a punch. For example, "Designing, developing, and leading physical fitness training programs are my passions and expertise. As a physical trainer at Colgate University, I ..."

Avoid outlining *details* of experiences in the first paragraph. Your middle paragraphs should elaborate on this content.

- Indicate the reason for your letter and state the specific position to which you are applying.
- Tell how you learned of the position and name your referral (if applicable, and only if you have that person's consent).
- Make a connection to the employer. Why do you want to work for them? What excites you most about the position/employer? Be specific and show your research. Differentiate your letter from a generic copy that could be sent to any employer.
- End with a brief teaser (thesis statement) for topics you discuss in the remaining paragraphs.

## Middle Paragraph(s):

- Share specific and concise examples of experiences or themes of your entries that demonstrate your skills and fit.
- Explain concretely how these skills/experiences will contribute to advancing a specific goal of this employer.
- Be sure to study the job posting to prioritize what to highlight. If you have more than one paragraph, prioritize your paragraphs in the order that reflects what is most important to the employer.
- Add depth and detail beyond what can be found on your résumé; tell your story.

Describe only your qualifications and potential. Do not call attention to parts of the job description that do not match your experience.

## Closing Paragraph:

- Confidently reiterate your interest in the position.
- Indicate that you look forward to discussing your candidacy with them further. You may mention that you will follow-up soon.
- Offer to provide any additional information if needed.
- Explain the best way to contact you (phone, Skype, or email).
- If you are studying off campus and anticipate challenges scheduling an interview, be proactive and suggest alternatives (e.g., Skype interviews, times in their time zone) to make it easy for employers to contact you.
- Thank the employer for their consideration.

Close with "Sincerely," "Sincerely Yours," "Yours," or similar  
Type your name \_\_\_\_\_

If printed, leave room to sign your name. This is not necessary if you are sending an electronic version.

## TARGETED EXAMPLE FOR NON-PROFIT SECTOR

### Sample Job Description:

**POSITION:** Summer Intern

**EMPLOYER:** Somewhere Out There (SOT)

**ABOUT US:** The SOT Foundation is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization reinventing politics for the millennial generation through innovative social and political action. Through civic engagement, leadership, development and advocacy work, we're working to build a hands-on democracy of engaged and educated young citizens across the state. Our internship teaches social change through political and social engagement, and workshops from SOT staff and seasoned politicians. The internship is focused on building grassroots campaigns that impact state- and local-level policies affecting young people. Our expert team teaches interns Colorado's legislative and political systems soup to nuts: how to lobby, run grassroots campaigns, and enact progressive change on the state level.

#### WE'RE LOOKING FOR INTERNS TO:

- Gain skills through hands-on field work and workshops
- Use new media tools to get your voice heard and engage thousands
- Utilize online and offline forms of outreach for grassroots action
- Register and use grassroots tactics to register voters
- Recruit and train volunteers for issues they care about

### Targeted Non-Profit Cover Letter:

Dear Mr. Pine:

As a fellow Coloradan with a passion for advancing social change among my generation, I am excited to apply for the Somewhere Out There (SOT) summer internship. After learning more about SOT through my classmate and former intern, Amanda Smith, I am confident I can add value to this organization. SOT, in particular, interests me because it offers a unique model of utilizing new social media trends and traditional political activism. My academic studies as a Peace and Conflict major coupled with my grassroots and campaigning experiences have prepared me for this position.

A week-long service trip to Haiti initially ignited my interest in civic engagement and led me to pursue opportunities to expand my exposure and experience in political and social activism. For example, this past summer I had the opportunity to gain campaign experience as a Field Intern at Donnelly for State Senate in Indiana. During this time, I acquired direct experience in a multifaceted campaign and was tasked with engaging voters in person and online. Whether discussing current issues at community forums or through Twitter and Facebook updates (#VoteDonnelly), I maintained a dialogue with voters in order to establish our candidate's presence in the race. It was through my new social media efforts that we saw an increase in millennial registration by 15%. I look forward to contributing this same energy to SOT's outreach efforts given your priority of reinventing politics for the millennial generation.

Furthermore, I understand that direct contact with prospective supporters is highly effective in advancing a candidate or issue. As a member of the College Democrats at Colgate, I cold-called approximately 500 people to recruit new members for the party. This was not an easy task, as I was often faced with the challenge of hang-ups and uninterested callers. I had to convey my enthusiasm and authenticity about our message to truly engage and persuade callers to listen and subsequently register. I would bring the same tactics to the SOT summer position.

Focusing my passion through the SOT Foundation under the guidance of seasoned staff and politicians would help prepare me to make real change for our state and our millennial constituents. I welcome the opportunity to provide you with additional information regarding my candidacy. I can be contacted at 315.123.4567 or nnonprofit@colgate.edu.

Make an instant connection to the employer.

Showcase your shared values and best fit. Use the job description and webpage to reflect brand and culture.

These specific examples demonstrate that you possess desired skills and characteristics from the job description.

**SITUATION**

**TASK**

**ACTION**

**RESULT**

**RELATE**

Include contact information in the final paragraph to make a callback easier for the employer.

# Targeted Non-Profit Résumé:

## NATALIE NON-PROFIT

13 Oak Drive | Box B235 | Hamilton, NY 13346 | nnonprofit@colgate.edu | 315.123.4567

### EDUCATION & HONORS

#### COLGATE UNIVERSITY, Hamilton, NY

##### Bachelor of Arts

- Major: Peace and Conflict Studies
- Major GPA 3.63/4.00; Cumulative GPA: 3:41/4.0
- Dean's Award for Academic Excellence (Fall 20xx-Fall 20xx)
- Advanced Coursework: Contemporary Political Philosophy; Politics of Poverty; International Political Economy; Power, Racism and Privilege; Politics of Race & Ethnicity

#### THE LATIN SCHOOL OF CHICAGO, Chicago, IL

- Graduated with honors
- Daniel Murphy Scholarship for academic merit

### POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

#### Field Intern, Donnelly for State Senate, Indianapolis, IN

- Gained exposure to major political campaign operations at headquarters and remotely engaged voters in dialogue about high-profile issues at community forums

#### Member, College Democrats, Colgate University

- Recruit new members by cold-calling approximately 500 people during a local calling campaign

### NON-PROFIT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Council for International Educational Exchange, Hanoi, Vietnam

- Engaged in academic program and fieldwork focused on the international and local impact of community development and globalization
- Expanded social and political awareness by learning from grassroots movements, living with host families, meeting with NGOs, corporations and government agencies while focused on issues such as dams, mining, slums, HIV/AIDS, and agriculture policy
- Developed and created 2 reports on human rights abuses

#### Finding Money For Social Change Grant-Writing Course, Colgate University

- Gained overview of foundations, non-profits, and grant funding, and solicited proposals for grant applications from local organizations during a 9-week, non-credit class

#### Educational Network for Global & Grassroots Exchange, Spartanburg, SC

- Participated in vision planning and goal setting sessions to create and sustain student-created organizations
- Co-facilitated 4 workshops on strategies to expand study abroad experiences with opportunities for domestic grassroots activism

### SERVICE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### Farm Volunteer, Community Supported Agriculture, Hamilton, NY

- Connect issues of food security, social justice, and local economies with farming by participating in community discussions
- Plant seasonal crops and learn inner workings of community-supported organic farm by volunteering 3 hours/week

#### Volunteer Relief Work, Colgate Alternative Break Trip, Cap-Haitien, Haiti

- Collaborated on a team of 10 students to clean up post-flood debris to make neighborhoods safer for residents
- Engaged in discussions about the impact of natural disasters on Haitian culture

#### Youth Mentor, Sidekicks, Colgate University

- Build and maintain an ongoing, three-year relationship with a local child to foster self-esteem and positive attitudes towards education
- Foster campus-town relationship through community involvement and positive relationships

#### Benefit Coordinator, Student Global AIDS Campaign, Colgate University

- Planned and executed semi-formal benefit event that raised over \$1,000 for HIV/AIDS charities

### SKILLS & INTERESTS

**Language:** Proficient in Spanish, Conversational Vietnamese

**Technical:** Mindcoast GrantWave, Photoshop, InDesign

**Social Media:** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest

**Travel:** Extensive travel throughout China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam

Use "Relevant Coursework" to demonstrate knowledge in relevant topical areas – especially those in which you have yet to gain experience.

May 20xx

June 20xx

Create targeted sections to group experiences together that are relevant to the position, and increase readability.

Summer 20xx

Prioritize your most prominent experiences that directly apply to the position description.

Summer 20xx

Use industry language strategically.

Spring 20xx

Highlight relevant specialized training in a separate heading.

Spring 20xx

Summer 20xx

Include content reflective of the header.

Fall 20xx-Present

Omit irrelevant content. You may have amassed other experiences, but select and include only those most related to the desired position.

Spring 20xx

Fall 20xx-Present

Fall 20xx-Present

List skills beyond those that are "required" or "desired," as they may give you an edge above other applicants.

# TARGETED EXAMPLE FOR TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

## Sample Job Description:

**POSITION:** Software Developer Engineer (entry-level)

**EMPLOYER:** Amazing Online Store (AOS)

### DESCRIPTION:

Do you want to own cutting edge technology, solve new problems and see the impact of your successes? AOS is growing, and we need SDEs who move fast, are capable of breaking down and solving complex problems, and get things done. SDEs work on real world problems on a global scale, own their systems end-to-end, and technology that impacts hundreds of millions of customers globally.

An SDE can expect to design flexible and scalable solutions for some of the most complex challenges in large-scale computing by utilizing your skills in data structures, algorithms, and object-oriented programming. Work on a small development team in Web Services, ecommerce Services, Marketplace, Operations, or Platform Technologies and Retail.

### Basic Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in computer science, computer engineering or related technical discipline
- Must be a current senior or graduated within the last 12 months

### Preferred Qualifications

- Strong, object-oriented design and coding skills (C++ and/or Java preferably on a UNIX or Linux platform)
- Knowledge of Perl or other scripting languages
- Experience with distributed (multi-tiered) systems, algorithms, and relational databases
- Experience in optimization mathematics (linear programming, nonlinear optimization)
- Ability to effectively articulate technical challenges and solutions
- Deal well with ambiguous undefined problems; think abstractly
- Previous technical internships

## Targeted Technology Cover Letter:

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Thank you for answering my questions during the Amazing Online Store (AOS)'s information session last week at Colgate University. I enjoyed learning about the innovative ways AOS is employing technology to provide service and to value to its global customer base. From your remarks, and through my networking with Colgate alumni employed at AOS, I know my problem solving and communication skills are well-suited to the culture at AOS. I am eager to apply for a Software Developer Engineer position in your Seattle office.

As a Computer Science major, I have applied Python, C/C++ and Java to solve complex problems through classroom projects, work experience, and independent learning initiatives. During a semester-long design project, I partnered with three classmates to develop a multi-tiered system for Career Services. It allows for the collection, review, and management of employer data. While I contributed to design of application and data tiers, my technical responsibilities primarily focused on creating a user interfaces for mobile and desktop platforms. I was required to work closely with our customer to elicit user needs and interpret them into clear technical specifications for a robust and functional product. I learned first-hand the vital role of effective interpersonal and technical communication in the software development. I am excited to bring this team approach to the SDE position at AOS. This experience, alongside my liberal arts education, will prepare me to excel under AOS' culture of global growth, innovation, and impact.

I would be pleased to provide you with additional information or samples of my work. I look forward to following up with you regarding this position. Alternatively, please feel free to contact me at 330-555-1212 or pprogrammer@colgate.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Writing is concise. Tone is confident, not overly aggressive.

Show your research.

Start with your best selling point. Grab their attention by using their language

**SITUATION**

**TASK**

**ACTION**

**RESULT**

**RELATE**

Use good proactive follow-up strategy to show initiative.

# Targeted Technology Résumé:

## Pasqual Programmer

100 Main Street · Worcester, MA 10001  
(330) 555-1212 · pprogrammer@colgate.edu

### EDUCATION

#### Colgate University—Hamilton, NY

- Bachelor of Arts
- Double Major: Computer Science and Philosophy
- Dean's Award for Academic Excellence (Fall 20xx to present)
- Patriot League Academic Honor Roll (Fall 20xx to present)

May 20xx  
Computer Science GPA 3.1/4.00

List Major GPA, as it was stronger than overall GPA, and above 3.0.

### TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- Programming Languages: Java, MIPS, Python, Haskell, HTML, C, C++, C#
- Software: Casper, Terminal, Photoshop, Illustrator
- Coursework: Discrete Structures, Operating Systems, Analysis of Algorithms, Programming Languages, Computer Graphics, Database Management Systems, Principles of Design for Large Systems, Computer Networks
- Design for mobile platforms
- Computer Diagnostics

Highlight programming languages, software platforms, and other relevant technical skills that apply to the position.

### CLIENT SUPPORT EXPERIENCE

#### Cloud-based Design, Course Project—Colgate University

- Collaborated with three classmates and Career Services' staff to build interactive employer database
- Developed documents and spreadsheets with client, addressing technology capabilities, goals, and solutions
- Created architecture and desired functionality; modeled wireframes using Axure
- Delivered platform functionality on mobile and desktop platforms per client's specifications and on schedule

Spring 20xx - present

This entry is listed first in this section, as it's the most recent.

Reference course project as relevant professional experience.

Use industry language.

#### Student Technical Staff, Information Technology Services—Colgate University

- Expedited routing and resolution of work orders by prioritizing inbound calls to customer help desk
- Troubleshoot technical difficulties related to smart classroom equipment for faculty and alumni presenters while successfully resolving classroom issues within an average of two-minutes
- Provided technical assistance for all Colgate-supported hardware as well as application installation and user guidance for software products

Fall 20xx – Spring 20xx

### NCAA DIVISION 1 ATHLETICS

#### Varsity Swimming—Colgate University – Hamilton, NY

- Devote over 20 hours/week to practice, competition, and travel in nationally ranked program; maintain strenuous training program off season
- Optimize individual and team performance by analyzing practice films weekly and incorporating coach's feedback, leading to improved technique during competition
- Provide athletic and academic mentorship to 5 younger swimmers, creating positive team dynamic
- Visit local elementary classroom monthly to model value of academic persistence

Fall 20xx- present

Frame your athletic experiences by focusing on transferable skills gained, not just the sport.

### CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

#### Member, Senior Class Gift Committee – Hamilton, NY

- Inspire giving through targeted outreach to fellow classmates, building stronger connections to campus initiatives
- Solicited 25 Colgate seniors and tracked giving status through Google Docs to reach 100% participation goal

Fall 20xx- present

Quantify results to share impact.

#### Member, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee – Hamilton, NY

- Collaborated with 29 peers to advocate for student-athlete interests and welfare. Promoted community involvement and leadership development

Fall 20xx– Spring 20xx

### ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

#### Head Coach (2014), Assistant (2011-2014) Gators Swimming – Worcester, MA

- Supervised, coached and motivated 50 athletes (4-18 years) to first state championship
- Planned and implemented age group training program to maximize swimmers' development

Summers 20xx – 20xx



## TARGETED EXAMPLE FOR FINANCE INDUSTRY

### Sample Job Description:

**POSITION:** Financial Advisor (entry-level)

**EMPLOYER:** Incredible Financial Group (IFG)

Success, for you and your clients. Earn the ability to create your own financial success through helping clients enjoy their own. You don't need prior finance experience to join us, but you do need energy, great people skills, a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. We'll provide the training, resources and support you'll need to do better than your best.

What a financial advisor does:

- Identifies and sets appointments with potential clients
- Meets with clients to assess their financial needs
- Develops a customized financial plan to address each client's goals
- Maintains strong relationships with clients, helping to track their progress over time

Some of the features of this position include:

- One-on-one training from seasoned local leaders in the financial planning leaders
- A comprehensive training program that includes coaching in financial planning, marketing techniques, consultative selling, client service, and regulatory compliance
- Local and national marketing support, including brand advertising, that will help to expand and grow client relationships

### Targeted Finance Cover Letter:

Dear Hiring Manager:

In learning of an opening for a Financial Advisor at Incredible Financial Group (IFG), I was immediately drawn to the opportunity. After some extensive research, it became clear that I could contribute greatly to the IFG's financial advising team by utilizing my established skills in finance. Over the past few years at Colgate University, I have gained the necessary skills through my work in VITA and Colgate's Budget Allocation Committee that will allow me to excel in this role.

As a tax preparer through Colgate's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), I have gained client-centered skills which will transition me seamlessly to a financial advisor. I was pleased to see face-to-face client interactions would be a main role of Financial Advisors at IFG. During tax season, I manage a client load of 15 local families to compile their Federal and State tax documents. Through this work I have grown accustomed to building rapport with a diverse body of clients with complex financial considerations. Additionally, I completed ongoing IRS training, including augmenting my understanding of tax credits. This allows me to be a reputable source for my clients. My ability to provide clients with accurate information and sound advice will assist me to maintain a return client base for IFG.

Moreover, my involvement with the Budget Allocation Committee has afforded me insight into managing campus funds and making sound financial decisions. Our committee managed a budget of \$700,000. These funds are ultimately distributed to student organizations. To determine organization's financial need, our committee reviewed proposals for roughly 125 student organizations, and subsequently assessed each organizations' fiscal responsibility and the potential value of the projects to campus life. As a result, I developed awareness for how to effectively manage and distribute funds while collaborating with my peers to reach these important decisions. Not only will I bring these skills to IFG in advising potential clients, but will welcome the opportunity to collaborate with peers and seasoned advisors in order to offer clients and the IFG team, a positive experience.

I am confident that my past experiences have provided me with the skills to succeed. I welcome the opportunity to have a formal interview so I may discuss my potential for this role. Please feel free to contact me at (315) 228-4445 or at ffinance@colgate.edu. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

After calling HR to determine the contact's name, was directed to use "Hiring Manager."

A good thesis statement draws the reader in by highlighting what you'll reference in your body paragraph.

Use language to confirm your fit with the culture of the employer.

Add a fuller description of the experience beyond résumé bullet points.

**SITUATION**

**TASK**

**ACTION**

**RESULT**

**RELATE**

# Targeted Finance Résumé:

## FIONA FINANCE

51 Ampersand Street, Albany, NY 12202  
315-228-4445 • ffinance@colgate.edu • www.Linkedin.com/in/FFinance

Include LinkedIn™ address after utilizing Career Services' LinkedIn™ Guide to a complete a profile.

### EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

**Colgate University**, Hamilton, NY

*Bachelor of Arts*

- Major/Minor: Chemistry/Economics
- Dean's Award for Academic Excellence (all semesters)
- Alumni Memorial Scholar – awarded to top 200 applicants in class

May 20xx

**GPA: 3.48/4.00**

**Wall Street Prep**, General Assembly, New York, NY

- Completed self-directed intensive Advanced Excel focused on valuation and financial modeling
- Independently constructed models accounting for discounted cash flow, public comparables, leveraged buy outs, and mergers and acquisitions

Summer 20xx

Include academic and nonacademic training relevant to the position.

**Colgate University Extended Study**, Dhaka, Bangladesh

- Completed 3-week research study examining NGO's role in alleviating poverty in developing nation
- Conducted SWOT analysis of NGO's impact through case studies and site visits with local agencies

Winter 20xx

Lead section with most applicable financial internship to the job sought.

### BUSINESS & FINANCE EXPERIENCE

**Federal Corporation**, Consumer Finance Research Intern, Washington, D.C.

- Reviewed pricing data; used Excel for statistical analysis to detect price disparities between banks
- Compiled economic data to analyze risk factors facing banks. Monitored trends within consumer groups
- Conducted research for unbanked households: examined frequency of foreclosures and reverse mortgages, growth potential, factors producing inadequate retirement income

Summer 20xx

Use a descriptive position title that accurately reflected your role (i.e. "Marketing Intern" not "Intern").

**Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program**, Tax Advisor, Colgate University

- Filed federal and state tax returns on behalf of 15 low-income residents resulting in \$20,000+ returned revenues
- Completed IRS training program and passed IRS tax preparer test
- Maintained ongoing training to monitor changing tax credits to maximum returns for clients

Spring 20xx-present

### ACTIVITIES

**Budget Allocations Committee**, Board Member, Colgate University

- Selected as one of eight students to allocate \$700,000 in student initiative funding
- Reviewed proposals from up to 125 student organizations; assessed fiscal responsibility and potential value of projects to campus life

Spring 20xx

**Delta Delta Delta Sorority**, Recruitment Chair, Colgate University

- Pitched to local businesses yielding \$40,000+ for St. Jude's Hospital with chapter members
- Coordinated receptions for potential and current members to highlight sorority's philanthropic successes and build community

Fall 20xx

Prioritize bullet focused on financial aspect.

### SKILLS & INTERESTS

**Technology:** Proficient with Capital IQ, Bloomberg, Excel, Taxwise, and PowerPoint

**Interests:** Personal investing – realized 20% gain in portfolio since 2013

**Language:** Conversant in Spanish

List a personal interest that shows industry interest.

## Résumé and Cover Letter Action Verb Cheat Sheet

Planning Verbs				
Administered Allocated Anticipated Commissioned	Determined Developed Devised Evaluated	Forecasted Formulated Identified Planned	Prepared Prioritized Researched Reserved	Revised Strategized Studied Tailored
Organizing Verbs				
Acquired Activated Adjusted Allocated Arranged Assembled Assessed Authorized Cataloged	Classified Collected Committed Confirmed Contracted Coordinated Customized Delegated Designated	Designed Dispatched Established Facilitated Housed Implemented Incorporated Instituted Issued	Linked Logged Obtained Ordered Procured Programmed Recruited Retrieved Routed	Scheduled Secured Selected Simplified Sought Suggested Tracked
Executing Verbs				
Acted Administered Collected Completed	Conducted Displayed Distributed Enacted	Exercised Forwarded Installed Operated	Performed Processed Produced Proved	Shipped Sold Stocked Transacted
Leadership Verbs				
Adjusted Analyzed Assessed Built Certified Chaired Compared Controlled Corrected Developed	Directed Discovered Elected Encouraged Established Examined Explored Facilitated Founded Inspected	Inspired Judged Launched Led Licensed Maintained Measured Modified Monitored Officiated	Overhauled Oversaw Pioneered Prohibited Promoted Refined Regulated Reviewed Revised Scrutinized	Stimulated Strengthened Supervised Tightened Trained Updated
Problem Solving Verbs				
Alleviated Analyzed Brainstormed Collaborated Conceived	Created Debugged Decided Deciphered Detected	Diagnosed Engineered Foresaw Formulated Found	Investigated Recommended Remodeled Repaired Revamped	Revitalized Satisfied Solved Synthesized Theorized
Communicating Verbs				
Adapted Addressed Clarified Communicated Composed Concluded Consulted Convinced Corresponded Critiqued Dedicated Defined	Deliberated Demonstrated Drafted Edited Educated Explained Extracted Greeted Highlighted Illustrated Improvised Indicated	Informed Instructed Interpreted Interviewed Justified Lectured Marketed Mediated Moderated Negotiated Persuaded Presented	Publicized Questioned Referred Reinforced Reported Represented Shaped Specified Spoke Submitted Suggested Summarized	Supplemented Surveyed Synthesized Systematized Taught Tested Translated Transmitted Verified Welcomed Wrote