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ENGL 365 – Technical Writing

Sec. 013

16 January 2024 (updated 17 January 2025)

Résumé and Application Letter (RAL)

**The RAL consists of three parts: 1. A** **r****ésumé, 2. Screenshots of an active online job listing, and 3. A job application letter tailored to the job listing screenshots. The résumé and job letter should be user friendly documents that effectively anticipate the needs of the audience (usability).**

Résumé requirements

All résumés should include name, contact information, career objective, and education. A career objective should state how the jobseeker defines themselves as a current or future worker, which fields they are interested in working in, and what type of work they are seeking (ex. a creative marketer looking to work for a nonprofit full-time). Name, contact information, career objective, and education should all be listed first on the resume, in that order. Students with extensive work experience may wish to place their job history before their education information.

Students who have no paid work experience do not need to include employment history but those with paid work experience should include it. Students should also include volunteer and internship experience, if applicable.

Employment history should include the name, city, state, and time of employment for all employers, current and previous.

Résumés should have a clean design that emphasizes the reader’s needs. A moderate use of color in a résumé can help your document stand out from the competition.

Skills should be included if they are specific (ex. Specific programming languages like Python), unless you lack work experience, in which case skills should be included. References are optional. Do not list any person as a reference unless you know them *and* they have agreed to be listed as a reference on your résumé.

Foreign language competency

Students with foreign language competency should include it on their résumé. The level of foreign language competency (or competencies) should be listed as well. This level should reflect the present reality of the applicant, not the idealized or aspired level of fluency (minimal working proficiency, professional working proficiency, etc.). Students with foreign language competency should list their native language alongside their foreign language(s). Students with no foreign language competency need not designate their native language as English. Students should mention their foreign language competency in their job letters depending on the responsibilities of the job and the nature of the agency or hiring company.

Identity protection

Students who wish to not make their phone number and or address public for peer review should use the UL Lafayette address (104 E. University Avenue, Lafayette, LA 70504) and a fake phone number using a (555) area code for their résumé and job letters.

Criteria for job listing

Students should choose a job listing that they are interested in applying for either now or in the future. The job can be full or part time. The job does not have to be in Lafayette and the surrounding area. The job should be one for which the student is qualified. The job listing must be available online (and students must take screenshots of the listing to include the pertinent information necessary for composing the letter. The screenshots should include the requirements for the position, information about the company or agency, and contact information for the hiring manager or HR employee responsible for the job listing.

Students may apply directly at the company’s (or agency’s) website. Alternatively consider using the following job sites:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| WEBSITE NAME | URL | DESCRIPTION |
| Indeed | <https://www.indeed.com/> | Private and public sector positions |
| Monster | <https://www.monster.com/> | Private and public sector positions |
| SimplyHired | <https://www.simplyhired.com/> | Private and public sector positions |
| Handshake | <https://louisiana.joinhandshake.com/stu> | Only open to college students and alumni, private and public sector positions |
| USAJobs | <https://www.usajobs.gov/> | Only US federal government positions |
| GovernmentJobs | <https://www.governmentjobs.com/> | Only US federal, state, and city government positions |
| Glassdoor | <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm> | Useful for researching a company or agency’s reputation through ex-employee reviews |
| LinkedIn | <https://www.linkedin.com/> | Social media platform geared toward finding career contacts, names of Human Resources (HR) personnel |

Note that some of these websites may require the user to sign up with an email address to access certain features.

Letter requirements

All job application letters require the date, contact information, an addressee, the addressee’s address, an introduction, body paragraph(s), a conclusion, and a closing signature line with your digital signature and your typed name. The addressee (the person to whom the writer writes) should be the *person* familiar with hiring at the company or agency or government department etc. of the job posting, not the name of the company or agency. If students cannot find the name of the person responsible for hiring at the company they select then they should research the company’s website (or LinkedIn) to find the relevant HR employee responsible for hiring. The addressee’s address is usually the same as the company’s address.

Letter content

The content or body of a job application letter (or cover letter) should do the following:

1. Introduce yourself as a job candidate
2. Discuss how you found the job listing
3. Explain why you would excel at the job if hired
4. Explain your rationale for wanting to work with this particular company or agency
5. Discuss how you would prefer the company to contact you

The first paragraph should expand on your career objective by discussing what sort of job you’re interested in and whether you’re planning on pursuing a different job post-graduation or later in your career. This paragraph should also address whether you have any contacts with the company or agency. You should also briefly state where you found the job ad (which website) so as to improve the company or agency’s recruitment metrics.

The second paragraph should discuss knowledge transfer from your previous job history (if applicable) and or from your coursework toward the duties and responsibilities of the job ad. Knowledge transfer can also occur from your hobbies or interests (ex. school clubs) or from any previous volunteer work.

The third paragraph should be about why you want to work for *this* particular company instead of a competitor. Your rationale for this should be based on the company’s values or culture or history, not the salary or benefits, which are appropriate topics only *after* you’re offered a position so don’t mention these issues in the letter. Information about the company’s culture may be in the job ad or else can be found on the company’s website.

If you’re applying to a public sector job at a nonprofit or a city, state, or federal government position, make sure that you address why you want a career in public service. This is important given that most government jobs already have a private sector equivalent, so HR employees want you to discuss what draws you to the public sector. For government jobs you generally don’t need to compare one agency to another (ex. FBI vs CIA) the same way you may want to do so for the private sector.

Finally, make sure you thank the reader for considering them for the position and provide some preference for how you want them to contact you (phone, mail, email). If you would prefer a phone call back, please state the best time for them to call you. Contact preferences can either be in their own paragraph (before the closing greeting and signature) or alternatively attached to the third paragraph.

To maintain professionalism and avoid potential offense, please address men as “Mr.” and women as “Ms.” Remember to include a closing greeting and a signature at the end of your document, as well as your typed name below it. For your signature, either scan your printed signature into the document or use a service like DocuSign or use the “Draw” feature in Microsoft Word (the latter is the easiest method).

Length requirement

The résumé and letter should be *each* be approximately 250 words (about 1 page). Therefore, the RAL should be about 500 words or 2 pages in length. The job application screenshots do not count toward the length requirement.

Practice résumé review

Students wishing to test the usability of their résumé may wish to consult the UL Lafayette Office of Career Services [Office of Career Services Student Affairs Division (louisiana.edu)](https://career.louisiana.edu/).

This office provides in-person help with job searching (check Handshake for details) as well as quick feedback on resumes résumés by emailing [resume@louisiana.edu](mailto:resume@louisiana.edu).

Due dates

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| --- | --- | --- |
| SECTION | ROUGH DRAFT | FINAL DRAFT |
| 007 | 5 February 2025 | 12 February 2025 |
| 008 | 5 February 2025 | 12 February 2025 |
| 011 | 4 February 2025 | 11 February 2025 |
| 012 | 4 February 2025 | 11 February 2025 |

Students should bring print or digital copies of their work to class for peer review, as stated in the syllabus. The final draft should be submitted to Moodle as a .pdf file or a combination of .doc or .docx files (for the résumé and letter) and .png, .jpeg, or .jpg files (for the screenshots).