The Importance of Resume Tailoring for Higher Education

By Daniel DeSousa | June 22nd, 2023

There is no arguing that resumes are the absolute most important thing to focus on when looking for your next opportunity. Most might think the resume is something you work hard on for about an hour or two and then send it out to as many job requisitions as possible – and most would be wrong. Creating a general resume template is a great idea but before you submit anything, you should take the time to align it to the needs of higher education, the institution, and the job description you are applying for.

It is estimated that hiring managers, on average, spend about 6 seconds scanning your resume. When applying to a larger institution that uses the automated scanning features of an applicant tracking system, the time is even less. The best way to get past the initial screening and be invited to an interview is to tailor your resume to each opportunity you choose to pursue. It may also be a good idea to produce a template per field or industry that you can alter as needed.

What does that look like?

Higher education may be more formal than other fields you look try to pursue working within, so make sure the language in your resume reflects that. Punctuation and grammar are also important. Watch for typos and grammatical errors and remember that software can help with this. Higher education has a belief in serving the common good. The field is built around changing lives and it is impact focused. It is important your resume focuses not just on the work you did *but the outcome of the work as well.* Make sure your resume is results-oriented. Hard skills tend to be software-based unless you are applying to a specialized function, so make sure to highlight *how* your technical skills with your level of proficiency by providing examples of what you do with those skills to achieve your impact. Additionally, higher education focuses heavily on collaboration across departments and sticks much closer to deadlines due to the field's cyclical nature. Where appropriate, be sure to bring in examples that support both collaboration and meeting deadlines.

While we can give you general tips on higher education you will want to learn about the institution you are applying to. Do not just go to their website to check out their benefits. It is important to get as much information as you can about the institution. What is the institution's mission? In addition to education, what research does it conduct, and does it have a clinical focus? Who is on the leadership team? Is it private, state-funded, for-profit, or not-for-profit? Is it a cultural fit with you and your areas of interest? Most importantly, do you want to work there? This quick research can help you to emphasize projects and responsibilities in prior roles that are of greatest interest to the prospective employer.

Then do a little bit more digging into the role. Pull out any keywords or skills listed within the job description and carefully mold that into your "resume template". You don't want to over-embellish or misrepresent yourself, but you need to show that you have the skills they are looking for. Make sure that the summary at the top of your resume is relevant and compelling, emphasizing your ability to contribute to the institution's success. You want to come across as the right person for the job so highlight the skills that are the best fit for the role you are aiming to get.

Additionally, consider common interests. If you are interviewing for a Human Resources role and you find out the Head of HR is a huge advocate for volunteer work with veterans, use it. If you have related experience, call it out in your resume or cover letter, and again in the interview, to help separate you from the competition. Having a connection to speak about in the interview is huge and if you have something that resonates, chances are you are headed in the right direction moving forward.

This is just one of the many things you can do to better prepare yourself for your resume. Click here to see more [resume tips](#) from nextSource.