

Job market materials

ENG 381, Spring 2007, Bradley Dilger

Summary: find a job advertisement which you would strongly consider. Create a résumé, cover letter, and interview worksheet which is tailored to the advertisement. Polish the documents and submit the advertisement, draft, and final materials in a folder.

Objectives

- help you improve job market materials you may already have created (such as in business writing courses) and/or establish a portfolio you can improve later;
- learn techniques for customizing documents to meet the needs of specific audience segments;
- practice presenting specialized, discipline specific information (such as your work in a particular course) to a general audience;
- improve your ability to read a document and consider its rhetorical situation and exigence;
- learn conventions of business letters;
- practice reviewing, revising, editing, and polishing written work.

Description

This assignment provides an introduction to the course by taking up documents which I hope are already familiar to you: job market materials. Without a doubt, these documents are some of the most critical you'll produce in your career at Western. Of course, there are as many ways to create these documents as there are people. One of your tasks is deciding how or if you should follow the advice you are given by various readers—in the end, it's your stuff.

Begin by finding some advertisements for jobs which interests you. Look to big city newspapers, online sources such as Monster.com, or the job listings provided by Career Services. Narrow this field to one particular job which is especially attractive.

Create a résumé and cover letter tailored to the job you've selected, following the suggestions in our textbooks and based on our discussions in class. There are many ways to accomplish this work, and we will spend quite a bit of time reviewing best practices for both preparations and the final form.

Create an interview worksheet which contains answers to questions you think might occur in an interview, more detailed descriptions of your accomplishments, any details you might not be able to fit into your documents, information about the position and employer, and questions you have for your interviewer(s). Imagine this as the document you'd review right before walking into the interview room. Since our textbook doesn't have models for this specific form, we will discuss this in class and adapt its material on oral presentations.

The materials you produce should be polished, attractive, reader-centered documents which follow conventions, create interest, provide detailed and organized information which can be used efficiently, but most of all show that you fit the job description you provide.

For the final draft, submit all relevant materials—the job advertisement, worksheets, drafts, etc. in a folder. (But don't use those plastic sheets or sleeves.)

Suggestions

- ✓ You can interpret “job” loosely—targeting an internship is quite appropriate.
- ✓ Start early and return to this assignment continually as we learn more skills which are applicable to it—for example, organizing information, persuading, designing for usability.
- ✓ If a European style curriculum vita or an academic vita is more appropriate for you, feel free to substitute that for the résumé.
- ✓ Be bold. This “protected” environment is a good place to learn how to create materials which promote yourself effectively without stretching the truth.
- ✓ Don’t try to write the “final” documents at once. Take advantage of the review and draft process we’ll engage. Begin with a list of your accomplishments, classes, skills, etc. Worry about organizing the document as you move forward—not from the start.
- ✓ Save all your drafts. What’s not appropriate for one job might be for another.
- ✓ Remember that the best documents are integrated; the cover letter gets readers interested, the résumé reinforces the cover letter’s opening, and material for your interview reinforces both. Consider the purpose for each document; let each one do its work.

Resources

- Career Services provides assistance, job listings, models, and a million other things. Visit them in Sherman 116 or online: <http://www.student.services.wiu.edu/careers/>
- English & Journalism students should watch for the department professional development series, which will address many of the things you’ll need to know to complete this assignment. Currently the sessions are scheduled for 1/30 and 2/6 at 5:30pm in Simpkins 020.

Assessment and schedule

The schedule is subject to change.

milestone	date	points
Assignment distributed	1/18	
Discuss assignment in class	1/18, 1/23	
Draft	1/25	20
Peer evaluation	2/6	10
Final	3/8	70
Total points		100